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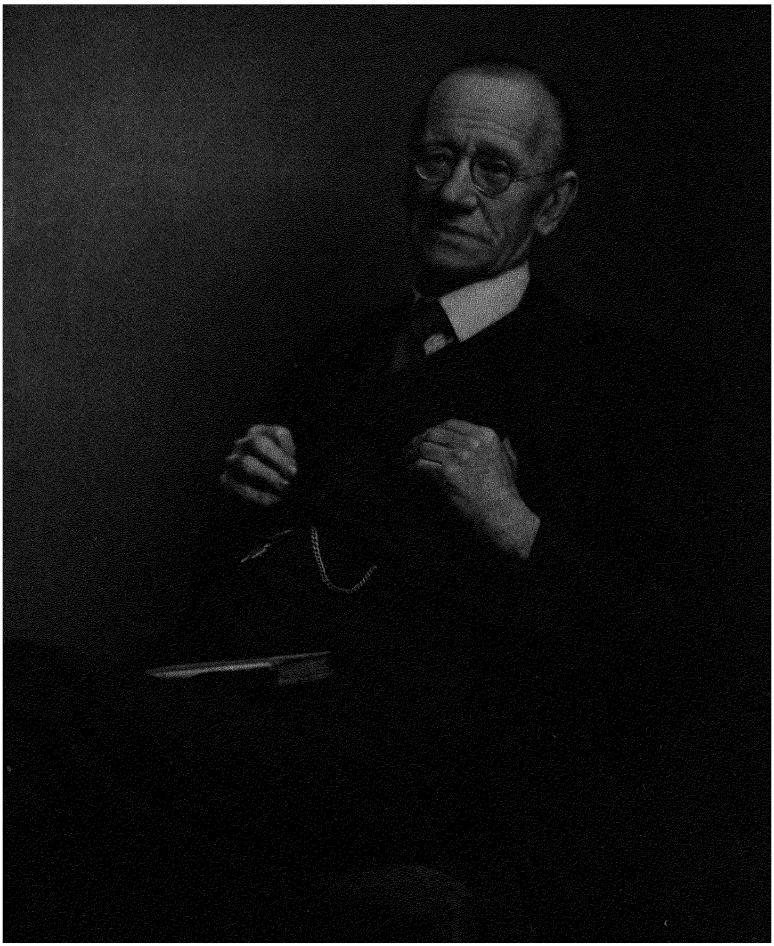

H. J. C. Grierson

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY STUDIES

PRESENTED TO

SIR HERBERT GRIERSON

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PREFACE

IN the summer of 1935 Professor Grierson, to use the style long familiar in the world of scholarship and to thousands of former pupils, resigned from the chair of Rhetoric and English Literature at the University of Edinburgh, which he had occupied with signal distinction for twenty years, having before that held the corresponding chair at Aberdeen for a like period. And in January 1936 he celebrated his seventieth birthday. He seemed to be crossing the threshold of old age and about to enter the peaceful seclusion of a well-earned retirement. A few months later, therefore, this volume was being discussed by a small unofficial committee of his Edinburgh colleagues, who felt that such a moment should not be allowed to pass without public testimony to the services rendered by one of the greatest scholars of the age to learning, to letters, and to the cause of university education. They felt also that a more shapely book than the ordinary Festschrift, with its heterogeneous collection of articles, might perhaps be produced, if they decided to commemorate one only of Professor Grierson's special interests by confining the volume to topics and figures belonging to the seventeenth century.

Authorities on that period were accordingly approached, and so ready was the response that in less than a year from the inception of the scheme twenty-three essays and a dedicatory poem were in the hands of the printer. The committee desire me to thank the distinguished scholars and critics from different parts of the world for their generous assistance, itself an eloquent proof of the universal admiration entertained for the master in whose honour the book is designed. They also wish to record a special debt of gratitude to their colleague Mr. John Purves, upon whom the duties of editorship have chiefly fallen, and who undertook, with the help of Dr. Melville Clark, the task of seeing the essays through the press. They are grateful also for advice and help of various kinds which they have received from their colleagues Professor O. L. Richmond, Professor Kemp Smith, Mr. A. J. D. Porteous, and Mr. W. A. Sinclair.

It only remains to add that within the two years since his

retirement and while these essays were in preparation Professor Grierson has received the honour of Knighthood from His Majesty and has been recalled to the University by the students as their Rector. Despite the occasion of its origin, therefore, the volume here presented has nothing valedictory about it. Moreover, the publication this year of *Milton and Wordsworth: Poets and Prophets*, regarded by many as its author's best volume of criticism, and the completion of the monumental edition of Scott's *Letters*, making possible for the first time an authoritative biography, upon which Sir Herbert is already engaged, are but two indications that his literary output, so far from declining, is but now beginning to ripen towards full harvest.

J. DOVER WILSON

EDINBURGH
September, 1937

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REKENSCHAP

Voor SIR HERBERT GRIERSON

Een zware slaper was 'k altijd,
Als een diepwatervisch bereid
Te dompelen in elke, zelfverkozen
Of onvermijdelijke, grondelooze
Kolk die uit eerdre duizeling
In nieuw verduizlen openging.

Meteen een vaardigst vliegenier
Ik bleek, die vond in zijn bestier
Het eigen blindbevleugeld wezen,
Bewerktuigd op zoo vaste pezen,
Dat altijd met één lichten ruk
Ik elke' aanvankelijksten druk
Ontging, die stond op 't punt te stremmen
In de angst van zijn gereede klemmen
De ziel en haar vertrouwde vlucht
Op vrijheids ingeboren tucht.
Nooit heeft één droom haar in de omklauwing
Gegrepen van zijn keelbenauwing
Of in haar oogengrond gesticht
Zijn onvergeetlijk dwanggezicht,
Dat langzaamaan haar durf verminkt
En haar voorgoed gevangen klinkt
Binnen den koortsverwaakten kerker
Van lijfs doorzichten heimwee-erker.
Geen der gepatenteerde slechten
Die zich aan andren deugdzaam rechten,
Heeft ooit ook maar één vingersmet
Op 't ongerepte dons gezet
Van hare vlerken die onttogen
Door bovenwolksche regenbogen
Haar oogenblikkelijken schrik
Naar den oneindgen overblik
Die uit al wereldverten daagde

En waar al nood zich in verklaagde:
„ Nog niets, nog niets beleefden wij!
't Was alles maar tennaastebij! "

't Werd één vizioen, dat trekt geen duur
Met dag of nacht, met eeuw en uur;
De diepste droom, de hoogste wake
Kan op het beeld geen inbreuk maken,
Zooals herinnring klaarbedacht
Het langzaam heeft in kaart gebracht
In zijn verlokkende uitgestrektheid,
Geheimenis en onontdektheid,
Nog maar sporadisch aangekleurd
Met plekken halverweg doorspeurd.

Omlaag ik kwam uit elke vlucht
Gestijfd in ondernemingszucht,
En zeker dat hier niets kon winnen
Dan die met al zijn ziel en zinnen
Zich onverdeeld zou wijden aan
Een taak voorgoed onafgedaan . . .
En toch, hoe achteropgezet
Wist ik mijzelven in de wed,
Die me al van kind af nooit kon stalen
Op eigen krachten te behalen
Eén uitgeloofden kampprijs in
Het allerzijds bestreefd gewin,
Die, even de oogenlust van allen,
Aan één tenslotte toe moest vallen . . .
Wilde ik niet alle kans verspelen,
Dan was gedoemd ik uit de velen
Te winnen tot mijn hachlijk spel
Den schoonste' en edelsten gezel,
Ik, waar het ging op eigen naam,
Niet tot het minste ding bekwaam,
Maar steeds afhanklijk van een maat,
En slechts bij liefdes gunst instaat
Om al mijn gaven uit te leven
En mij aan iets geheel te geven . . .

Als vastberaden minnaar ging
Sindsdien ik op verovering,
En mocht van menigen beminde
De klare lamp der geestdrift vinden
Gereed om met mij op te gaan
In dubbel dageraadsbestaan
Tot de' éenen zeekren langen dag
Die 't leven overduren mag . . .
O eindloos-eindige avonturen
Bij lentelange morgenuren
Onder het onverhoedsch ontdekken
Van door geen mensch ontwijde plekken,
Waaruit als aardsche bliksemstraal
De leeuwrik in één langen haal
Verschoot zijn blindverjubeld lied
En leêg en bang ons achterliet,
Als was zijn gouden drift gestart
Het nest uit van ons éene hart . . .
Ach, waarom raakten ze allen mat
Nog vóor de middag loomde 't pad,
Te moede om verder meê te maken
De inspanning van zoo helle wake?
Eén laat, een ander vroeger al
Daalden naar 't meer vertrouwde dal,
Latend getroost hun jeugd begraven
In de eenzaamheid der cenotaven
Die met hun overbeelde zerken
De lange mijlen blijven merken;
Want daar bestelden hen mijn handen
Binnen de leigrauwe onweêrswanden
Van tijdeloos versloten smart,
Die hield de hemelen versperd,
En keerde 't wonderschoone spel
Der aarde in marteling en hel,
Een doelloos pijnelijk gebeuren
Van overwakkre valsche kleuren
In angstgespannen wachten op
Een enklen zwaren regendrop
Waardoor de helle bliksemvlam
Zijn wilden schrik verschieten kwam,

Of die den donkren schal mocht zaamlen
Van het afgrondlijk donderstaamlen. . .

Totdat één, onverwinlijk moê,
Met mij meêkwam tot stervens toe,
En met den glimlach van den knaap
Inging den nooit beleefden slaap,
In overgave volbewust
Uit al vertwijfeling berust,
Als zou voorgoed dit harte mijn
Zijn onbetwiste peluw zijn.
Ontslapen deed hij zoo nabij,
Dat de diepste echo binnen mij
In maagdelijksten hartegrond
Van woord tot heimlijk woord verstond
De hooge stilte waarin scheidt
Uit deze schoone sterflijkheid
De ziel die weet dat leven is
Gods simpele geheimenis
Beleven zonder voorbehoud
En met de zekerheid vertrouwd
Dat niets en niets ter wereld dan
Het zuivre wonder duren kan. . .

Zoo werd mijn drift, beproefd, gestaald,
Gemurwd tenslotte en uitgemaald
Tot godlijke verteedering
Die elken korrel in zich ving
En rijpte in zaligend doorvoelen
Van zijn genadige bedoelen,
En daaruit blijdschaps mondkost won
En moed tot al wat ik begon
En heel of halverweg volbracht
Op allerzijds geleende kracht,
Alleen met eigen achterstand
Begaan wanneer ik overmand
Door lijfs geregelde versagen
De reis en de' arbeid moest verdagen. . .
En zij zij klein, mij blijft één hoop,
Dat als ik uit vertraagden loop

Voorgoed mij eindlijk nedervlij,
In liefde één ziel mij zij nabij
Om bij het vredig avondduistren
Geboeid in aandacht te beluistren
Den eigen blijden zwanezang
Waartoe ik al de jaren lang
Het schoonst dat bleef onuitgezegd
In stillen schroom heb opgelegd.

P. C. BOUTENS.

BACON AND THE DEFENCE OF LEARNING

By GEOFFREY BULLOUGH

THE accession of James I in 1603 gave Bacon, like many other courtiers, an anxious time, for him all the more anxious because of the part he had played against Essex. In vain he appealed to his friends, to Cecil; his hopes of a speedy rise were disappointed, and in July he renounced politics: 'My ambition now I shall only put upon my pen, whereby I shall be able to maintain memory and merit of the times succeeding' (to Cecil). The work he contemplated was *The Proficiency and Advancement of Learning*. If he could not gain the King's attention by indirect influence, obsequiousness, or legal prowess, perhaps his philosophy might stand him in good stead with the British Solomon. The limits of the latter's wisdom were not yet obvious. Hence the First Book of *The Advancement*, composed before the spring of 1604, was an appeal to James as well as a glorification of humanism written by one defender of the faith to another.

How characteristic of Bacon that he was led to write the first formal presentation of his great scheme by motives more worldly than disinterested! So long as personal ambition was not concerned he had thrown out a few indecisive sketches, a few aphorisms (the *Essays* of 1597); it needed some hope of office to bring him to a 'Method'. Though this First Book was printed off before the Second, it is unlikely that he ever intended to publish it separately. More probably he hoped to write the whole rapidly—in time to catch the ear of the King before all the plums were picked—but was prevented during 1604 by parliamentary business, and maybe too by some difficulty in developing his theme. Certainly the Second Book, written during 1605, leaves an impression of inadequate fulfilment, which may be due partly to haste in writing, partly to a certain immaturity of ideas. The matter of the First Book was familiar; that of the Second was novel, even to the author.

This novelty has naturally led critics to give more attention to the later half of *The Advancement* than to the earlier.

Philosophically it is the first important clue to his thought. So the philosophers have taken Book I for granted, while literary critics have usually passed over it with a few comments on its wealth of style, or have considered it as little more than a conventional introduction to Bacon's real subject. Thus P. Villey, whose *Montaigne et F. Bacon* (Paris, 1913) was an important contribution to Bacon studies, describes most of the arguments in Book I as conventional, and considers that Bacon

> a fait trop de place aux argumentations rebattues. Malgré des observations intéressantes et des analyses précises, la dissertation de Bacon rappelle toute cette tradition, elle s'y rattache étroitement. Elle a conservé beaucoup de sa frivolité.

It is worth while inquiring how far indeed 'cette introduction . . . reste un morceau d'apparat autant qu'une profession de foi sincère'. Is this how Bacon, the King, and other readers would regard a section of the work which, although only a small part of the whole, was carefully denoted in the title of the enlarged *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum* of 1623?

Bacon was a man of the world, a courtier, not a professional philosopher. In *The Advancement* he was writing a popular exposition for men of the world, and against most professional philosophers of the day. His appeal throughout was to lovers of action rather than of metaphysics; he attacked those who spun webs of words and ideas. Of what use would a merely conventional discussion of the validity of learning be to the cause he had at heart? Quite apart from the vigour of his style, suggesting the apostle rather than the re-arranger of platitudes, the whole tenor of Bacon's discourse and our knowledge of his character imply that he took the First Book as seriously as the Second.

Moreover we have his own word, written about 1603, that he feared a collapse of learning. And we have a mass of contemporary witness from writers with many of whom Bacon was personally acquainted that the objections he met were frequently raised in all sincerity. It is my purpose in this essay to examine the nature of some contemporary attacks on and defences of learning so as to sketch in something of the background of Bacon's book.

But first, Bacon's own words. Summarizing, in the *De Interpretatione Naturae Proemium*, his ideals, his qualifications,

and the difficulties confronting him, he noted several menaces to learning:

> Nor am I discouraged from it because I see in the present time some kind of impending decline and fall of the knowledge and erudition now in use.
>
> Not that I apprehend any more barbarian invasions . . .; but from the civil wars which may be expected I think . . . to spread through many countries, from the malignity of religious sects, and from those compendious artifices and devices which have crept into the place of solid erudition I have augured a storm not less fatal for literature and science. . . . And doubtless these hostile influences are destined to overwhelm that fair-weather learning, which needs the nursing of luxurious leisure and the sunshine of reward and praise, and which can neither withstand the shock of adverse opinion nor escape the imposture of quackery. . . .[1]

The new science was to be the means of saving knowledge from strife without and disintegrators within.

In *The Advancement* itself he defended learning against four forces: 'the zeal and jealousy of divines', 'the disgraces which learning receiveth from politiques', 'that third sort of discredit . . . that groweth unto learning from learned men themselves', and another springing out of this, 'the errors and vanities which have intervened among the studies themselves of the learned'. Were these merely academic or really topical questions in England in Bacon's time? Who before him put, or met, the several objections which he faces?

Long before Bacon began to write, the first flush of humanist enthusiasm was over, and while the denunciatory vigour of the early anti-humanists had waned, the praise of learning was for the most part no longer lyrical, although at times, as in Marlowe's *Faustus*, the rhapsodic note of the early Renaissance was recaptured. In the nineties it was widely felt that since neither Renaissance nor Reformation had brought the millennium, nothing remained but to accept the natural man for what he was and not to deify him by magnifying his gifts of body, mind, or spirit. The economic and religious troubles, the political intrigues, of the last ten years of the Queen's life brought a disillusion which widened to include all human activities. If often morbid in its symptoms and results, this disillusion was a

[1] Ed. Spedding, iii. 519.

salutary corrective to the overweening aspirations of the previous generation—Bacon's work was one result of it which could scarcely have appeared in a time of mystical humanism —yet all the old arguments against learning were particularly rife during this decade or so of bewilderment and discontent. Of these we may well take the religious objections first.

The tradition of scholarship in the early Church associated with such names as Justin, Clement, and Origen had been crossed by another strain, that of devout ignorance, preached by Tertullian, which was carried over through the Catholic Church into Protestantism and fostered by the teaching of Luther and Calvin (themselves no foes to learning) about the essentially intuitive nature of our knowledge of God. Mystical doctors insisting on salvation by Grace tended often to despise earthly knowledge, and, in avoiding the errors of the Romish schools, preached a *docta ignorantia* very different from that of Nicholas of Cusa. Their objections were: that curiosity after knowledge brought the Fall; that such curiosity was still the fruit of pride; that speculation, even about the Word of God, produced heresy; and that the literature of the Revival of Learning was pagan and immoral. The attack on poetry, drama, translation was often related to a general suspicion of learning, in accordance with the belief (which endured)

> That knowledge without Grace is worse than ignorance.[1]

Even courtiers renowned for their patronage of scholars shared this belief. Thus we find one of Bacon's friends, Fulke Greville, spurning bookish knowledge for religious as well as metaphysical reasons. Because he seeks

> Eternall Truth, almighty, infinite,
> Onely exiled from man's fleshly heart,[2]

he reflects that

> The greatest pride of humane kind is Wit,
> Which all Art out, and unto Methode draws,[3]

cries

> Man, dreame no more, of curious mysteries,
> As what was here before the world was made,
> The first Mans life, the state of Paradise,

[1] Edward Wollay, *A Plaine Pathway to Perfect Rest.*
[2] *Cælica*, 97. [3] Ibid. 63.

Where heauen is, or hells eternall shade,
For Gods works are like him, all infinite;
And curious search, but craftie sinnes delight;[1]

and even refuses to delight his mind with books because they are

False Antidotes for vitious ignorance,
Whose causes are within, and so their cure.[2]

Greville was not uncompromisingly hostile, for his *Treatie of Humane Learning*, apparently a reply to *The Advancement*, while reiterating the pietist arguments, admits the value of practical knowledge in the work of the world. The dualism was characteristic of him.[3] But the Puritan opposition persisted. It made Milton, in *Paradise Regain'd*, Book IV, turn against the classical learning of his youth in favour of a purely Hebraic culture. Milton's argument, however, was an old one; and we find it clearly expressed in De Mornay's *De la Vérité de la Chrétienne Religion* (1581) which Philip Sidney began to translate and Arthur Golding completed in 1587.[4]

De Mornay's book was written against infidels and atheists. Nothing at the end of the century served so much to excite hostility to learning as the growth of religious speculation.[5] The word 'atheist' covered most forms of heterodoxy, from political heresy to blasphemy, pantheism, the denial of immortality, or ultimate disbelief. Nashe, in *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem* (1593), distinguishes from the 'inward Atheist' who 'deuoures widowes houses under pretence of long prayers', the 'outwarde Atheist' who

establisheth reason as his God, and will not be persuaded that God (the true God) is, except he make him priuie to al the secrecies of his beginning and gouernment.[6]

Learning had no doughtier champion than Thomas Nashe, but he reveals a fear of too-ambitious rationalism which was almost universal in his day. There is no reason to believe that Bacon was less sincere when he used the notion of 'double truth' as at once a fortress and a *ne plus ultra*.

[1] *Cælica*, 88.
[2] Ibid. 66.
[3] I have dealt with this important work, which gives an almost complete summary of the various objections to learning, in my forthcoming edition of Greville.
[4] Cf. ch. 24, p. 514.
[5] Cf. J. M. Robertson, *A Short History of Free Thought*, 3rd ed., 1915.
[6] *Works*, ed. McKerrow, ii. 114 f.

The limits of the natural exercised Lyly when he introduced into *Campaspe* (1580) a scene of discussion between philosophers:

Cleanthes (to Plato). I am of this minde, that a first mouer, which you tearme God, is the instrument of all the mouinge, which we attribute to nature. The earth which is masse, swimmeth on the sea, seasons deuided in themselues, the maiestie of the skie, the whole firmament of the world, and whatsoeuer else appeareth miraculous, what man almost of meane capacitie but can proue it naturall?

Anaxagoras. These causes shal be debated at our Philosophers feast, in which controuersie I will take parte with Aristotle, that there is *Natura naturans* and yet no God.

Crates. And I with Plato, that there is *Deus optimus maximus*, and not Nature. (Act I. iii.)

Lyly also used the matter of this scene in a dialogue, *Euphues and Atheos*, in which the dangers of naturalism were proved theologically. But Lyly, like Nashe, although aware of the perils of humanism, did not therefore claim that all knowledge was folly. Apart from the Puritans, most Elizabethans showed quite as much ingenuity as their medieval ancestors in keeping the borders of reason and faith vague and fluctuating, and apologists allowed the use of secular learning as a handmaid to the faith. Thus Thomas Morton, in a dialogue between a doubter and his monitor, gives a place to the sciences, and after showing how the astronomer, the physician, and the observer of 'the lowest flower' or 'the silliest worme' know the wonders of God, concludes:

For the which purpose the studie of naturall Philosophie is to bee accounted, as pleasant so also very profitable, and worthy to be followed by Christians, as their gifts and calings do permit; for without question, they that go downe into the depth of it, see the wonderfull wisedome of God.[1]

—a comment quite in keeping with Bacon's own remarks on atheism.

Similarly Nashe urged all teachers to study hard to overcome the witty atheists:

No one Arte is there that hath not some dependance upon another, or to whose toppe or perfection we may climbe without

[1] *A Treatise of the Nature of God*, 1599, p. 111.

steppes, or degrees of the other. . . . No knowledge but is of God. Vnworthy are wee of heauenly knowledge, if we keepe from her any one of her handmayds. Logique, Rethorique, History, Phylosophy, Musique, Poetry, all are the handmaides of Diuinitie. Shee can neuer be curiously drest or exquisitely accomplisht, if any one of these be wanting.[1]

The apologist must meet argument with argument, scholarship with scholarship. In this field De Mornay's book and *L'Académie française* of La Primaudaye (translated 1586) were cardinal works which popularized much elementary knowledge of psychology and theology. To their influence we owe the didactic poems of Sir John Davies and his imitator, John Davies of Hereford. Both of these latter writers knew Bacon—Sir John Davies so well that in 1603 Bacon appealed to him for help in his pursuit of office—but he can hardly have approved of their literary works. Sir John's *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), although it begins by depreciating human knowledge as so marred by the Fall as to be untrustworthy, then proceeds to argue about the nature of the soul and its immortality in a strain of derivative self-assurance. Similarly his verbose namesake's *Mirum in Modum* (1602)—on the soul—and *Summa Totalis* (1607)—on the attributes of God—ventured into speculations with which Bacon had no sympathy. The latter confined himself to the large domain of intelligence which he saw as free from the rule of religious dogma, for he was primarily interested in the means of advancing man's control over the world of this present life. Hence he was at pains to defend his conception of learning against both those who denied its validity on religious grounds and those who wished to use secular knowledge *merely* as an incentive to piety.

The 'disgraces which learning receiveth from politiques' include the following: that learning unfits men for arms or action; that it makes them love retirement; that it makes them disputatious and rebellious. The learned man has always been either unduly reverenced or (more frequently) suspected and despised as a bookworm, a parasite, one who lives at second-hand, incapable alike of leading and of following the lead of others. In the Renaissance, when the ideal of *virtù* clashed with that of humanism, controversy on the topic was long—

[1] Op. cit.

and inconclusive. We see it in such discussions as that between Lodovico da Canossa and Bembo in Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (Bk. I. xlii-xlvi.) whether the courtier should love letters and whether arms or learning were the more worthy pursuit; it occurs in Guazzo's *Dialoghi Piacevoli* ('Del Paragone dell' Arme e delle Lettere'); it is mentioned by Sidney in his *Apologie*; while N. Breton gave both sides of the question in his *Discourse of a Scholler and a Souldiour* (1599). The arguments became commonplaces by repetition, but they were commonplaces which never went stale, because they represented real beliefs and recurrent prejudices. As we shall see, debate on Action as against Contemplation was particularly live during the rivalry of Essex and Raleigh.

Opponents of learning who declared the learned unfit for civil life had plenty of evidence in the person of pedants and eccentrics of all kinds who might be able to 'settle *Hoti's* business', but certainly no other. Elizabethan comedy had its fair share of such figures. But armed with the maxim *Experientia docet*, the enemy went farther. Since life is an empirical business, what need of study and theory? This common self-justification of 'Barbarisme' Ascham had met in *The Scholemaster* (1570) when he regretted that out of sheer boorishness 'some yong Ientlemen of ours count it their shame to be counted learned' while

> Some other, hauing better nature, but lesse witte . . . do not utterly despise learning, but they saie, that without learning, common experience, knowledge of all facions, and haunting all companies, shall worke in yougthe both wisdome and habilitie, to execute anie weightie affaires. Surelie long experience doth proffet moch, but moste, and almost onelie to him . . . that is diligentlie before instructed with preceptes of well doinge. . . . Learning teacheth more in one yeare than experience in twentie: And learning teacheth safelie, when experience maketh mo miserable then wise.

Few would go as far as Ascham in substituting secondary for primary experience. Certainly Nashe did not when in his *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589) he declared: 'Endeuour to adde vnto Arte Experience: experience is more profitable voide of arte then arte which hath not experience'. Ascham, however, was no apostle of pedantry, but a lover of Castiglione and the

man developed on all sides of his nature, who, joining 'learning with comelie exercises', was the courtly ideal of the day. And where, against those who held that a learned prince must be an ineffectual prince Castiglione (like Bacon) pointed to many historical examples proving the contrary, Ascham (also like Bacon) pointed to a living example not to be denied, the English monarch. In this part of his argument Bacon closely followed the 'courtly' tradition, which disposed likewise of the allegation that learned men were disposed to 'privateness' or disaffection.

Other objections brought by 'practical' people and classed by Bacon as 'discredits from learned men themselves' were that scholars are usually poor men and are forced to earn their living in mean employments (e.g. as teachers), that they are too rigid in their idealism and too impersonal in their disinterestedness, that they sometimes behave oddly or indiscreetly.

The abnormal behaviour of scholars had of course long been food for comedy. Their poverty, however, received special attention in literature just before *The Advancement* was written. Graduate unemployment is no new phenomenon; it was rife at the end of the sixteenth century; and the plight of those who obtained employment was little better. A graduate of little means had normally two courses open to him. He could enter the Church and seek a curacy or chaplaincy; or he could become a teacher in a school or a family. In either event his income and his social position would probably be wretched. Simony was rampant in the Church, and a tutor's position was little better than menial.

> Can Commonweales florish where learning decaies? [wrote Nashe in 1589] Shall not felicitie haue a fall when as knowledge failes? yea, peace must needes perrish from amongst us when as we rather seeke to choke then cherrish, to famish then feede, the Nurses of it.

He was not alone in complaining that 'Learning nowadaies gets no liuing if it come empty handed'. Joseph Hall supported the poor scholars in *Virgidemiarum* (1597), contrasting the splendour of the colleges with the poverty of their inhabitants, but defending learning against the worldly fool who desires no part in Solon, Parmenides, or Heraclitus:

> We scorn that welth should be the finall end,
> Whereto the heauenly Muse her course doth bend,

And rather had be pale with learned cares,
Then paunched with thy choyce of changed fares.[1]

Yet in two stinging satires he showed that he knew what miseries ensued. One is in the form of an advertisement issued by a country squire requiring a tutor for his children:

A Gentle Squire would gladly entertaine
Into his house, some trencher-Chaplaine:
Some willing man that might instruct his sons,
And that would stand to good conditions:
First, that He lie upon the Truckle-bed,
Whiles his young Maister lieth ore his head.
Secondly, that he do, in no default,
Euer presume to sit aboue the salt.
Third, that he neuer change his trencher twise.
Fourth, that he vse all comely curtesies:
Sit bare at meales, and one halfe rise and wait.
Last, that he neuer his yong master beat,
But he must aske his mother to define,
How many ierkes she would his breech should line.
All these obseru'd, he could contented bee,
To giue fiue markes, and winter-liuerye.[2]

The other might well be the advertisement of a would-be vicar, with the author's comment. I cite only part:

Who wants a Churchman, that can seruice say,
Read fast, and faire his monthly Homiley?
And wed, and bury, and make Christen-Soules? . . .
Thou seruile Foole: why could'st thou not repaire
To buy a Benefice at Steeple-Faire?
Stake three yeares *Stipend*: no man asketh more:
Go take possession of the Church-porch-doore:
And ring thy bels: lucke stroken in thy fist:
The Parsonage is thine, or ere thou wist.

Such complaints continued from the seventeenth century down to our own day. We think of John Oldham's *Satyr addressed to a Frend that is about to leave the University*, of Johnson's bitter 'pause awhile from letters, to be wise', of a long line of wretched ushers and clerics in the novel from Fielding to Joyce. Space allows only the mere mention of the three *Parnassus* plays written and performed in Cambridge between 1598 and 1602, in which the

[1] Bk. ii. 2. [2] Bk. ii. 6.

disillusionment of students during and after their university courses was treated in detail.[1]

Most of these objections Bacon met by justifying the learned or by refusing to condemn them for occasional abuses. He praised the teaching profession, the disinterested attitude to life, and attacked the fashion of fulsome dedications (this after his own address to James!). But he had little to say 'concerning want', except to mention the estimation of poverty in ancient Rome, declaring slyly: 'it were good to leave the common place in commendation of poverty to some Friar to handle', and preferring to cite Machiavelli, who praised it for no religious reasons. Clearly the fortune-hunter in Bacon was not at ease on this topic. Nor did he mention here the compensations of the learned—the pleasures of the search for Truth, the hope of lasting fame. These he left for his later summary of the positive benefits of learning.

The social and economic objections had, however, been recently raised and answered very forcefully by Samuel Daniel in *Musophilus* (1599). This verse-dialogue, dedicated to Fulke Greville, provides not only a defence of poetry but 'A generall Defence of all Learning' which burns with the ardour and idealism of the earlier Renaissance. When Philocosmus urges Musophilus to leave his 'ungainefull Arte' and follow 'this profit-seeking age', Musophilus replies that he loves his art and hopes for fame. This hope Philocosmus mocks by showing how easily reputations may be destroyed by 'some viperous Criticke', or by the prevalent contempt for arts. He should try 'to fit the times'; otherwise he will bury his deserts 'In the obscure graue of Singularitie'. Musophilus then attacks the vulgar herd and points out that the monuments of the worldly perish while virtuous learning survives, witness Chaucer, whose immortality proves the possibility of lasting fame:

> O blessed Letters, that combine in one,
> All Ages past, and make one liue with all:
> By you, we doe conferre with who are gone,
> And, the dead-liuing vnto Councell call:
> By you, th'vnborne shall haue communion
> Of what we feele, and what doth vs befall.
> Soule of the world, Knowledge, without thee,
> What hath the Earth, that truly glorious is?

[1] Cf. F. S. Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age*, 1914, ch. xiii.

His opponent retorts that fame is at best local and ephemeral:

> How many thousands neuer heard the name
> Of *Sidney*, or of *Spencer*, or their Bookes?

The spread of 'Schooles, Artes, Professions' is a disease marked by wrangling and competition. Scholars are retiring and unpractical:

> The worlds affaires require in managing,
> More Artes then those wherein you Clerkes proceede:
> Whilst timorous Knowledge stands considering,
> Audacious Ignorance hath done the deede.

He goes on to attack the flowery eloquence of scholars in a manner of which Bacon might partly approve:

> A manly stile, fitted to manly eares
> Best grees with wit. . . .

Answering these points, Musophilus admits that Fame is local, but says that the real reason for his following the Muses is to fulfil himself:

> This is the thing that I was borne to doo,
> This is my Scene, this part must I fulfil.

Learning needs no ambition; enough for it to explore the world and mankind. Its present state of disrepute is due to the overthrow of the 'bound That parted learning and the laiety'. The learned fall into strife and competition only through being robbed of their proper rewards,

> For if that learnings roomes to learned men
> Were as their heritage distributed,

they would be content, the universities would revive, and get on with their real work, which is to

> . . . set their bolde *Plus Ultra* farre without
> The pillers of those Axioms Age propounds:
> Discou'ring daily more and more about,
> In that immense and boundlesse Ocean
> Of Natures riches; neuer yet found out,
> Nor fore-clos'd, with the wit of any man.

The weapons of the mind are 'States best strengths', for though some 'unlettred practique' may occasionally succeed in politics, in times of difficulty 'letred armes and armed letters' will come into their own.

No state stands sure, but on the grounds of Right,
Of Vertue, Knowledge, Iudgement to preserue,
And all the powres of Learning requisite.

He ends by celebrating the power of words—with a special tribute to the genius of the English language.

In its warmth and sincerity, in its vindication of 'privateness' on the one hand and of 'letred armes' on the other, in its insistence that 'the monuments of wit and learning are more durable than the monuments of power or of the hands', above all, in its view of the learned man as an explorer of Nature's riches, *Musophilus* worthily anticipates *The Advancement of Learning*. It surveys, however, only part of our field of inquiry, saying little about either the religious objections or the intellectual objections to which we must now turn.

Many of these 'errors . . . which have intervened amongst the studies themselves of the Learned' belong strictly to philosophy, and have been frequently treated, so they need no attention in a study which deals only with the less formal and more literary anticipations of the problems raised. In approaching these questions Bacon was not so much defending learning against its traducers as admitting faults which he wished to see eliminated, and anticipating generally some of the more particular remarks of the Second Book.

His attack on 'delicate learning'—on Ciceronianism, *copia*, 'when men study words and not matter', has recently been related by American scholars to a contemporary Senecan fashion and to a cult of 'Attic' style; the evidence brought by M. Croll[1] and G. Williamson[2] places Bacon well in the vanguard of a most important movement in English prose, yet proves him no isolated forerunner. Similarly his attack on 'vain matter' as illustrated in the Schoolmen, and on imposture and credulity as exemplified in 'Alchemy, Natural Magic and Astrology' and the inordinate respect for Aristotle, had been anticipated by others. But though he met half-way such common objections as these, Bacon did not consider in this part of his book the frontal assault made upon learning by

[1] Cf. *Studies in Philology*, xviii; *Schelling Anniversary Papers*, 1923; *P.M.L.A.* xxxix; *Studies in English Philology*, 1929.

[2] Cf. 'Senecan Style in the Seventeenth Century', *Philological Quarterly*, xv, Oct. 1936.

contemporary sceptics who denied the intellectual validity of human knowledge. This assault was made by men at court with whom Bacon was well acquainted; his answer is implicit.

The revival of philosophic scepticism in the sixteenth century owed much to Cornelius Agrippa's *De Vanitate et Incertitudine Scientiarum atque Excellentia Verbi Dei Declamatio* (1530), which attacked those who idolized Aristotle, Boethius, and Aquinas in 102 chapters of stinging mockery, some in the manner of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, some serious in their logic, some in a strong religious vein. Surveying all the sciences and arts, Agrippa argued from the limitations of the human body and mind as instruments of science, from the diversity of opinions in all matters of inquiry, and from the evils connected with all human activities, that knowledge is defective and futile, and concluded by urging his readers to seek only the Word of God. The treatise, translated into English in 1569, was widely read, and had much more influence on Bacon's predecessors than Sanchez's *Quod Nihil Scitur* (1581) and Montaigne's *Essais*. Hence Nashe in *Pierce Pennilesse His Supplication to the Divell* (1592) took it as the type of foolish attack on learning, calling it

> a Treatise that I haue seene in dispraise of learning, where he saith, it is a corrupter of the simple, the schoolemaster of sin, the storehouse of treacherie . . . how studie doth effeminate a man, dim his sight, weaken his braine, and ingender a thousand diseases. Small learning would serue to confute so manifest a scandale, and I imagine all men like my selfe so vnmouablie resolued of the excellencie thereof, that I will not by the vnderpropping of confutation seeme to giue the idle witted aduersarie so much encouragement as hee should surmize his superficiall arguments had shaken the foundation of it: against which hee could neuer haue lifted his penne, if her selfe had not helpt him to hurte her selfe.

Nashe mentioned only the moral and social objections, ignoring in contemptuous silence the arguments Agrippa took from Sextus Empiricus and earlier sceptics. But these were current at court as Raleigh's treatise *The Sceptic* shows, in which, beginning with the idea that the sense-impressions of animals and men differ according to bodily structure, he suggests that reason and other mental activities may be no more absolute. The train of thought might lead to complete scepticism. Solipsism, however, was not the leading motif of Raleigh's creed, for

although he was an 'atheist' according to Nashe's definition and in popular fancy, he was passionately devoted to learning, a leader in 'The School of Night', and an intimate of Harriot the mathematician. While he always remembered the frailty of man, his final belief was in 'double truth': 'We have sense and feeling of corporal things, and of eternal grace but by revelation'; but he gave reason a much wider field than Bacon, until it is difficult to see where he thought the work of reason should end and reliance on faith begin. He seems to have had no coherent philosophy, and it is difficult to take *The Sceptic* very seriously. That Bacon had similar arguments of the 'Pironicks' in mind, however, is proved by his several references to the 'deceits' of the senses, which he considered 'very sufficient to certify and report truth, though not always immediately,' and to 'the weakness of the intellectual powers and . . . manner of collecting and concluding upon the reports of the senses', which weakness it was his hope to rectify by his Method.

Recent work on 'The School of Night' makes it unnecessary to do more than mention the passion for learning which burned in Raleigh's friends.[1] Chapman was of all Elizabethan poets the most truculent and persistent in his attacks on 'Barbarism', as witness not only his preface to *The Shadow of Night* (1594), but his poem *To M. Harriots* (1598), and the long proof, in *The Teares of Peace* (1609), that learning makes man in God's Image by teaching man

> To give the soul her empire, and so reach
> The rule of all the body's mutinous realm.

The knowledge which Chapman sought was ethical and esoteric. If Raleigh saw the limitations of the mind, yet worshipped reason, Chapman preached the validity of 'inspiration', of an intuitive contemplation above reason by which man might escape from the night of the world's confusion to the 'mystical night' of union with God.

Into such spheres Bacon could not follow Chapman. He had just a little more in common with Northumberland. The Wizard Earl was a lover of the arts, himself an experimentalist, and patron of Harriot from 1597 to 1619. An essay cited by

[1] Cf. F. A. Yates, *A Study of Love's Labour 's Lost*, Camb. 1936; M. C. Bradbrook, *The School of Night*, Camb. 1936. Two very stimulating books.

Miss F. A. Yates shows him setting the pursuit of learning even above the ties of love, seeing in it

> Myndes quiet, sowles felicitie, resolution of future state, wonderinge at nothinge, Inseeinge into all, judiciall aboue ordenary, . . . good deedes in abundance, honored of the most, embracing goodnes for goodnes sake.[1]

Bacon knew Percy, though not intimately, in 1603, for he appealed for his help at Court when the Queen was dying, chiefly on the ground

> that your great capacity and love towards studies and contemplations of an higher and worthier nature than popular . . . is to me a great and chief motive to draw my affection and admiration to you.[2]

Later, in 1608, when Percy and Raleigh, in the Tower, were turning their prison into a research laboratory, Bacon thought of them as potential investigators for his *Instauratio Magna*; a jotting in his *Commentarius Solutus* suggests 'the setting on w(ork) my l(ord) of North(umberland), and Ralegh, and therefore Haryott, themselves being already incline to experiments'.

But it is clear that he thought of them only as experimenters, not as thinkers. In his ideas he was at once more and less daring than they; less daring in his expressed attitude to religion, more daring in his proposals for a general reorientation of all science. Percy and Raleigh were dilettanti of talent; he was a systematic philosopher. With the transcendental aspirations of their school he had nothing in common; and in *The Advancement* he showed his disapproval of the alchemy and the hermetic notions in which they dabbled.

It must also be remembered that from 1589 until the abortive rising, Bacon was a member of the Essex faction. His attitude to learning from first to last was much closer to that of other members of his group than to that of 'The School of Night', as can quite briefly be shown. Essex himself, though 'the fittest instrument to do good to the state', well read, generous to intelligence in others, was no speculative dabbler, but a man of moods and gestures who delighted to think of himself as a soldier, a statesman, or a religious solitary. When he sought

[1] *A Study of Love's Labour 's Lost*, chap. vii and appendix iii.
[2] Spedding, *Life*, iii. 58.

retirement it was to sulk and pine, not to philosophize. Two contradictory ideals seem to have influenced him and his friends, 'Magnificence' and renunciatory Puritanism. Neither of these led to a passion for learning as an end in itself, and it is a striking fact that of the two of his friends who wrote formal treatises on learning, one, Fulke Greville, took a Puritan view, while both Greville and Bacon emphasized its practical aims. According to Miss Yates, other members of the circle took up a more strictly 'villanist' attitude during the rivalry with Raleigh, while Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* must be regarded as a move in the controversy.

'Shakespeare's interest was in the general theme of active *versus* contemplative living' (Bradbrook). Hence we find Berowne declaring:

> Small have continual plodders ever won
> Save base authority from others' books.
> These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights
> That give a name to every fixed star,
> Have no more profit of their shining lights
> Than those that walk, and wot not what they are.
> Too much to know, is to know naught but fame;
> And every godfather can give a name.[1]

To which attack on bookishness and astronomy the king replies, like Nashe to Agrippa: 'How well he's read, to reason against reading!'

Berowne, however, is no barbarian. His contempt is for the fanaticism of learning, the academic blindness which leads men to take means for ends, and to abandon the world, love, responsibility, in a selfish pursuit of barren ideas.

> Learning is but an adjunct to ourself

he says, and sets knowledge of life above knowledge of books. This is not to flout learning altogether, but to set it in its place as a servant of humanity. So Shakespeare mocks the intellectual arrogance, the pretended asceticism, the transcendentalism of 'The School of Night'. I incline to believe that Bacon did the same.

The speeches of the six counsellors in *Gesta Grayorum* (1594–5) were almost certainly written by Bacon. The first urges the Prince of Purpoole to war, the second to study the secrets of

[1] *Love's Labour's Lost*, I. i. 92 ff.

nature, the third to build himself great monuments, the fourth to study statecraft, the fifth to seek virtue, and the sixth to indulge in pastimes and sports. Each speech is a little study in special pleading, but though the second is remarkable for the practical proposals—a library, a botanical and zoological garden, a museum of machines, and a chemical laboratory—the sixth, as befitted the occasion, gained the day. The whole conception was playful, and I do not see in any part of the relationship between *Gesta Grayorum* and *Love's Labour's Lost* 'a reflection of some friendly crossing of swords between the two greatest wits of the age, Shakespeare and Bacon' (Yates). Bacon's *Device on the Queen's Day* in November 1595 suggests that if they drew swords at all it was in the same cause.

In this entertainment a Knight, played by Essex, was tempted by 'an old Hermit, a Secretary of State, a brave Soldier', all messengers of Self-love, to leave the love of his mistress (the Queen) for the activities they represented. The Hermit preached Contemplation:

> Let thy master, Squire, offer his services to the Muses. It is long since they received any to their Court. . . . The gardens of love wherein he now playeth himself are fresh today and fading tomorrow, as the sun comforts them or is turned from them. But the gardens of the Muses keep the privilege of the Golden Age: they ever flourish and are in league with time. The monuments of wit survive the monuments of power; the verses of a poet endure without a syllable lost, while states and empires pass many periods . . . that hill of the Muses is above tempests, always clear and calm; a hill of the goodliest discovery that Man can have, being a prospect upon all the errors and wanderings of the present and former times. . . . So that if he will indeed lead *vitam vitalem*, a life that unites safety and dignity, pleasure and merit; if he will win admiration without envy; if he will be in the feast and not in the throng, in the light and not in the heat; let him embrace the life of study and contemplation.[1]

As Abbott saw, 'Contrasted with the first passionate *Praise of Knowledge* written in 1592, the *Praise of Contemplation* in 1595 seems cold indeed.' It is cold, too, as compared with the spirited fancy of *Gesta Grayorum*. I think the reason for this was probably that Bacon was writing on a different theme in this *Device*, and

[1] Spedding, *Life*, i. 378–80.

with more than a touch of satire. The object of knowledge as praised in 1592 was 'the sovereignty of man'; in *Gesta Grayorum*, 'the conquest of the works of nature'. Here it was the 'contemplation', the selfish enjoyment, of the dilettante School of Night. The Hermit spoke in a style reminiscent of Northumberland's essay; in rejecting his counsel Essex was made to reject the ideals of Raleigh and Percy, and with a trace of scepticism not unlike Raleigh's in *The Sceptic*:

> You, Father, that pretend to truth and knowledge, how are you assured that you adore not vain chimeras and imaginations? that in your high prospect, when you think men wander up and down, that they stand not indeed still in their places, and it is some smoke or cloud between you and them which moveth, or else the dazzling of your own eyes? Have not many which take themselves to be inward counsellors with Nature, proved but idle believers, that told us tales which were no such matter?

That the *Device* was believed by spectators to be a skit on members of the court is proved by the letter in which Rowland White described it to Sir Robert Sidney:

> The world makes many untrue constructions of these speeches, comparing the Hermit and the Secretary to two of the Lords, and the Soldier to Sir Roger Williams. . . .[1]

Were all the 'constructions' untrue? Was the Hermit Northumberland? We cannot tell; but it is clear that in refusing to abandon love for illusions the Knight (Essex) was not rejecting learning as Bacon conceived it. The truths which the New Method was to discover were to have a sounder basis than 'heavenly meditation'. They would be practical in their scope and serve the good of humanity. On this he continually insisted, and it is interesting to note that in summarizing the value of moral philosophy in *The Advancement* he said first that

> it decideth the question touching the preferment of the Contemplative or active life, and decideth it against *Aristotle*. For all the reasons which he bringeth for the Contemplative are private, and respecting the pleasure and dignity of a man's self. . . . But men must know, that in this Theatre of Man's life it is reserved only for God and Angels to be lookers on. . . . But for contemplation which should be finished in itself, without casting beams upon society, assuredly Divinity knoweth it not.

[1] *Sidney Papers*, i. 362.

in its estimation of the social needs of ordinary human nature *The Advancement* carried on the ideals of the Essex group. It may indeed be regarded as in some measure an aftermath of the debate on life and learning in which the two factions at court took part. But it is so much more—as even our brief inquiry into the background of its preliminary ideas shows—that we might with more justice call that controversy a preparation for *The Advancement.* For here, taking the current arguments and prejudices against the study which was the better part of his life, and answering them in his strain of inspired common sense, Bacon built a rampart for true learning against which the little forces of later opponents—Greville in his *Treatie,* Denham in his *Progress of Learning,* Rochester in his *Satyr against Mankind*—broke in vain.

BACON'S PART IN THE INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT OF HIS TIME

By RUDOLF METZ

TO-DAY, after more than three hundred years, Francis Bacon's part in the intellectual movement of his time is as much disputed as is the importance of the philosophic and scientific point of view which he represented. Nor does this imply merely a difference of opinion about the minutiae of criticism or interpretation; it involves rather a divergence on the most fundamental issues. There are in fact few figures in the history of western philosophy of whose significance there have been more diverse and fluctuating estimates.

By some he is revered as the father of modern philosophy, the founder of empiricism, the great scientific innovator and reformer, the pioneer of the modern spirit, blazing a trail through the most diverse realms of the intellectual life. They see him as one of the great precursors of the Enlightenment, liberating men from the trammels of medieval thought, destroying the tradition of Aristotelian scholasticism, breaking fetters and burning bridges behind him, revolutionizing almost all the established values of his time. They honour him as a genuinely creative spirit, as one of the most comprehensive and many-sided intellects of his day, eminent as a man of letters, enlightened as a statesman, and a most powerful influence upon the thought of his age.

To illustrate the high esteem in which Bacon has been held, let us consider a few characteristic pronouncements by various authorities. Leibniz, for example, called him 'cet incomparable Verulamius qui, des divagations aériennes et même de l'espace imaginaire, rappela la philosophie sur cette terre où nous sommes et à l'utilité de la vie'. Bacon was especially esteemed by French thinkers of the Enlightenment, and above all by the Encyclopaedists, who saw in him one of the standard-bearers of their own ideas. Numerous passages in the works of Voltaire bear witness to his unbounded admiration for Bacon; D'Alembert considered him 'comme le plus grand, le plus

universel et le plus éloquent des philosophes'; and Bacon's name adorns the title-page of the great Encyclopaedia. Kant thought him the first and greatest physicist of modern times, and showed his regard by placing a passage from the *Instauratio Magna* at the head of his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Frederick the Great must be added to the list of Bacon's admirers, for he declares that the Chancellor Bacon inspired the Europe of Elizabethan times, and became as it were the oracle of philosophy. 'He investigated scientific problems with the piercing eye of Jupiter's eagle, and reflected upon them with the wisdom of Minerva. Bacon's genius is one of those rare manifestations which make their appearance from time to time, adorning both their own age and the spirit of humanity.' And Goethe, who dedicates to Bacon a considerable section of his *Geschichte der Farbenlehre*, speaks of his intellect as worthy of high admiration. 'The impact of Bacon's genius directed the mind of his age towards reality. This extraordinary man performed the inestimable service of calling attention to the whole field of natural science.' 'The writings of Bacon remain a precious heirloom.' Again, there is Nietzsche, whose opinion wavers but who remarks: 'We do not know nearly enough about Lord Bacon, the first realist in the most important meaning of the word, to appreciate the extent of his achievement, his aim, and the width of his experience.'

Let us now glance at the other side, to make clear the two extremes between which the estimate of Bacon oscillates. The bold innovator, the liberator of thought from the bonds of a rigid tradition, the overthrower of medievalism disappears, and in his place we see a man whose thoughts are completely imprisoned in the scholastic system of ideas, who remains subject to the medieval tradition, and has been scarcely touched by the spirit of modernism. He is denied any merit either as a philosopher or as a scientist. He is declared lacking in the essential philosophic qualities, inconsistent and inconclusive in his thought, a talented eclectic but by no means an original or creative genius. He is seen as a Proteus appearing in many guises, a Janus-head looking backward into the past and forward into the future. His theory of knowledge is called naïve dogmatism, his metaphysic uncritical realism, his philosophy mere utilitarianism, his religious teaching an impossible and insincere

compromise, and his scientific work the production of a mere dilettante. There is held to be a fatal conflict between desire and performance, words and deeds, plan and execution. Bacon the scientist is even more severely condemned than Bacon the philosopher. What he took to be new discoveries are said to have been made without his knowledge by others long before him. His observations on natural philosophy are said to be grounded in the obsolete categories of Aristotelian physics, while the spirit of modern science escaped him altogether. This is ascribed to his complete lack of understanding of the nature of mathematics and of its significance for scientific discipline. There can be no question of his having made any advance in natural science, or even of his having stimulated it: natural science has developed independently, and has made triumphant progress in spite of him. He is denied any merit at all, since it is impossible to bridge the gulf between the doctrine of Bacon, which approaches most nearly that of the alchemists, and modern science. Considering all this, it is scarcely surprising that he is dismissed by certain critics as a mere charlatan, a dilettante, a boaster, and a pompous phrasemonger. They declare that there is nothing genuine about Bacon, but that everything is specious and theatrical. They call him the mountebank of science, and say that his doctrine is really an attack on the philosophic spirit, that his achievement is a mere castle in the air, that he is a man of talent but not of genius, and that he knew only how to pile up big words and to adorn his meagre and superficial thoughts with dazzling rhetoric. To complete the picture Bacon has been observed from yet another angle, as a result of war neurosis. From this angle German opinion depicts him as the creator of war-mindedness, a man greedy for power, a Machiavellian, the champion of British imperialism, and contrasts him sharply with the pacifist Bentham. We have here an exact parallel to the way in which the English traduced Hegel, Nietzsche, and Treitschke during the last war.

Lack of space prevents me from illustrating with quotations these representative criticisms. They are made by critics of the most widely differing periods and nationalities, who must be considered seriously, even if on occasion they are biased and unscientific. Throughout the history of philosophy, alongside the

positive and friendly attitude to Bacon there appears sporadically a negative and hostile attitude. We find it, for example, in the *Examen de la Philosophie de Bacon* by Joseph de Maistre (written 1815, published posthumously 1826), a work full of prejudice and exaggeration, in which fanatical catholicism leads the author to try to bring about Bacon's complete annihilation. A similar point of view appears in a controversial work by the famous German chemist, Justus Liebig, entitled *Über Francis Bacon von Verulam und die Methode der Naturforschung* (1863). Liebig arraigns Bacon before the bar of strict natural science and holds him up to contempt as a scientific quack. Again, in the pamphlet of Oskar Kraus, *Der Machtgedanke und die Friedensidee in der Philosophie der Engländer: Bacon und Bentham* (1926) Bacon is branded as the philosopher of militarism and of Machiavellian imperialism; and finally, in a recently published essay by J. Schick with the curious title *Drei Genies und ein Talent, oder Bacons Stellung unter den Grossen seiner Zeit*[1] Bacon is weighed against Shakespeare, Galileo, and Kepler, and found wanting in every respect. However, this last and culminating attack need not be taken too seriously, in view of the fact that it is directed not so much against Bacon himself as against the Bacon myth and the so-called Baconians who have for a long time been filling the world with their hideous noise.

During the course of history the estimate of Bacon varies between these two extremes, and it is hardly necessary to mention all the intermediate shades of opinion. Instead of this let us try to form for ourselves an estimate of Bacon's achievement in the light of present-day research and at the same time discover the part played by Bacon as a philosopher in the intellectual movements of his time.

If, as Hegel holds, it is the task of philosophy to express its age in intellectual terms, and to raise to the level of philosophic awareness the spiritual energies and tendencies latent in an epoch or expressed in unreflective action, then we can say that Bacon has accomplished better than any other a genuinely philosophic task. Both during Bacon's lifetime and before it the way was being prepared for a new departure in scientific thinking, and from this departure what we know as exact science in western Europe has developed. A complete break was made

[1] *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 72, 1936.

with the spirit and methods of ancient science, which remained unaltered until the late Middle Ages and even into the beginning of modern times. The new science is based on experience and so on a direct apprehension of nature; starting from observation, experiment, and induction, it rises to the height of an exact science by adopting the spirit of mathematics and enlisting its aid. Bacon himself was no scientist, however much he might pride himself on playing that part, but he lived and breathed in an intellectual atmosphere which had been engendered by the new scientific thought and research; and by directing reflective awareness upon the new departure which had so far remained unconscious, he first expounded and proclaimed the new science and its great achievements. Bacon's service consists in this, that he proclaimed the law through which this revolution in scientific thought received its Declaration of Right, or, to express it differently, he vindicated it to the philosophic consciousness of his age.

It may be said perhaps that this vindication was unnecessary, that even without Bacon's efforts natural science would have advanced successfully. This is certainly true; but what really matters is the fact that a man holding high office as a statesman and of considerable scientific reputation constituted himself the champion of the new research, devoted himself to it heart and soul, proclaimed to the whole world its value and utility, and all this with the voice of deep conviction, and through the powerful medium of his remarkable and persuasive style. Matters that had up till then been largely the concern of individuals and groups of specialists became the concern of all educated men. Thus there was created an intellectual atmosphere extremely favourable to the dissemination of these new doctrines. But it did not greatly matter whether Bacon himself had penetrated deeply into the real nature of the new research, or really grasped its spirit; whether or not he relied on its methods or was conspicuously successful in putting them into practice. It was of much greater importance that he lent this new science the power of his word and the authority of his personality. Bacon here plays the part of the merchant who does not himself manufacture his goods, but puts them on the market, with a striking advertisement, and again and again proclaims their goodness, their value, and their usefulness so as to obtain the

largest possible sale. Hence we can understand why Bacon has maliciously been called a *Marktschreier der Wissenschaft.* This disparaging epithet none the less contains a grain of truth, and points to the important fact that although he himself was no scientist, although he grossly misunderstood certain important aspects of the new science, and even passed over such a revolutionary discovery as the doctrine of Copernicus, Bacon yet did this science a great service which must not be undervalued, in that he made himself its mouthpiece and propagandist.

But Bacon did not rest content with such a role, and indeed, it would not have sufficed to establish his great reputation as a philosopher. He wanted not only to propagate the new science, but also to determine its entire scope, establish its methods, and work them out in detail. He wanted to point out the ways which would lead most quickly and surely to success, and wished to derive from the random occurrence of new discoveries a systematically worked-out art of investigation, an *ars inveniendi.* It was his aim to extend indefinitely the scope of research, and to include within it the whole *globus intellectualis,* to bring nature under the rule of man, and through knowledge to exalt the *Kultur* of mankind to undreamed-of heights. In short, he possessed a boundless scientific ambition which permitted no undertaking to daunt him. From this arises the tragic element in Bacon's scientific and philosophic work, due to the vast discrepancy between desire and power, between programme and execution, which is already fully evident in the fact that most of his writings have remained fragments, projects, and 'advancements' which have not achieved completion. So inordinate were his ambitions that he wished to do not only what he himself was incapable of performing, but even that which could not have been accomplished within the span of a single lifetime. It is on account of this fact that he is so often charged with boasting, pomposity, bombastic utterances, and the like, charges which unfortunately are not without a certain foundation. In this connexion we may quote the apposite remark of Kuno Fischer: 'With Bacon the bill of fare exceeds the provisions in the pantry, the display window is more brilliant than the stock-in-trade.' None the less, Kuno Fischer was very well disposed towards Bacon, and through his publication *Francis Bacon und seine Schule* (1865; 3rd edition 1923)

contributed much towards a just and appreciative estimate of Bacon in Germany. Thus it comes about, curiously enough, that the man who constituted himself the herald of the new science, who proclaimed its fame more loudly and clearly than any other of his age, who wished himself to produce a scientific revolution, produced virtually nothing of lasting scientific value. Exact natural science passed him by, with a certain respect and admiration to be sure, but without being able to make the slightest use of his contributions, his programmes, or his investigations into scientific method.

There is another respect too in which Bacon's fate (apart from his personal fate, with which we are not concerned here) shows a certain element of tragedy, or at least of tragi-comedy. He considered himself to be one of the most progressive spirits of his epoch, and was regarded as such by his contemporaries and successors. In particular the generation of the Enlightenment prostrated itself in reverence before him as the great precursor of its own ideas. Bacon conceived his principal mission to be the liberation of humanity from all the prejudices, errors, and illusions which had accumulated during the course of centuries. He had very little regard for the contributions of the past to civilization. He was lacking in historical sense and could not understand the value and quality of what had been done before his own time. A typical innovator and revolutionary, he was intensely conscious that he was inaugurating a new era and pointing out to mankind new ways of advance. Thus we can understand why he devoted a great part of his life-work to the removal of rubbish accumulated from the past, in order to erect a new structure on the foundations cleared in this manner. He took the field against the tremendous authority of Aristotle and endeavoured to shatter it to pieces. He fought against the verbal controversies of scholasticism and its useless speculations, against the sophistries of the syllogism and of formal logic, in short, against the entire Platonic-Aristotelian scholastic tradition. But 'all are not free who mock their chains' (Lessing), and this expresses exactly the situation in which Bacon found himself. He fought an enemy whom he had not yet conquered in himself. Recent investigations have demonstrated that Bacon's thought was much more strongly imprisoned in the universal ideology of scholasticism

than had previously been supposed. I must content myself here with a few observations without being able to discuss this theme in greater detail. We have already seen that Bacon did not really grasp the essence of the new science, although he believed himself to be permeated with its spirit, so that he frequently treated it with complete lack of understanding, and even with misunderstanding. And far though he had travelled from certain positions in ancient physics, he was none the less completely rooted in its fundamental views. He was not acquainted with the mathematical nature of modern science; like Aristotle and the scholasticism and medieval alchemy which developed from him, he was acquainted only with things and their qualities. And if ancient science is governed essentially by the idea of substance, and modern science by the idea of mathematical function and law, then Bacon's outlook remains in the former category, and he was without any understanding of the latter. Bacon's thought was that of the medieval alchemist, not of the modern physicist. This is shown in his completely separating experiment and theory. First of all he assembled the instances of a certain phenomenon, arranged them together, separated out the negative instances, and so on. Only when this process was concluded did he consider their theoretical significance and endeavour to formulate a universal law. But it is in the nature of modern science that experiment and theory go hand in hand, so that frequently the man of genius requires only a single investigation of a typical instance in order to obtain a universal law. Goethe had this already in mind when he called this enumeration of endless instances *Verulamisch* and characterized Bacon's method as *Zerstreuungsmethode*, which would have split up science for ever, had it not been promptly reunited by Galileo. In confirmation of this we need only remember Bacon's absurd and, measured by modern standards, completely mistaken theory of heat.

That Bacon has not in other ways emancipated himself from scholasticism seems to me to be clearly revealed in the second book of the *Novum Organum*, where he gives the most detailed account of his doctrine of method. What is here worked out concerning the forms of things, the so-called tabulation with the thought processes allied to it, and the doctrine of instances and their prerogatives—Bacon adduces no less than twenty-

seven of these, and keeps a further selection in the background—certainly contains an occasional good and useful idea; but taken as a whole it is revealed as a collection of arid scholastic formulae borrowed for the most part from the armoury of Aristotelianism. The judgement which has been passed on this by so scrupulous and influential a logician as Sigwart seems to me completely justified:

> Neither Bacon himself nor any one after him has discovered anything by making use of Bacon's method. Neither Kepler nor Huygens, neither Galileo nor Newton has followed it. Throughout the recent history of natural science all progress depends precisely on that for which Bacon has drawn up no rules, on the discovery, namely, of effective causes, and on their expression in mathematical form. There is no method of investigation at all in our sense in Bacon's procedure.

Thus Bacon stands Janus-headed at the meeting point of two ages. His aims reach forward into the future, his performance remains firmly bound to the past. His real spiritual home is the Renaissance, but since this great movement had come to a standstill almost everywhere in Bacon's lifetime, we must regard him as one of its last representatives. Spiritually he stands in much closer relationship to such Renaissance philosophers as Vives, Ramus, Paracelsus, Telesio, Bruno, and Montaigne, than to Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Locke, though in point of time he stands exactly mid-way between these two groups. The literary activity of the former group is apparent throughout the sixteenth century; that of the latter begins, at the earliest, after Bacon's death and extends till about 1700. Bacon's philosophic and scientific activity begins relatively late, that is about the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, and occupies about three decades. Of the great scientists, Galileo and Kepler are his exact contemporaries; Gilbert's and Harvey's lives cover largely the same period, Gilbert being his senior and Harvey his junior by a few years. Chronologically, too, then, Bacon's philosophic position is one of transition: he stands between two ages, looking back into the past rather than forward into the future.

Typical Renaissance traits in Bacon's intellect are his inordinate scientific ambition, his indomitable zest for life, for organizing and reforming, his disregard of tradition and lack

of historical sense, the new attitude to life which seeks expression throughout his work, his Utopian schemes, his rhetorical gestures, his Machiavellism, his many-sided interests and activities, his utilitarianism, the restlessness of his life, the discrepancy between desire and performance which I have already stressed, and so on. Like almost all representative Renaissance thinkers, he was inspired with the Faustian urge. In this context may be mentioned one of the most significant and impressive elements of his doctrine; whose motto is 'Knowledge is power', and its aim the *regnum hominis*. It is the pragmatic utilitarianism of the Baconian philosophy which is here first and most adequately stated. Bacon strikes an entirely new note, which derives directly from the heightened zest for life characteristic of the Renaissance, but which before his time had not been heard in its full strength. For the first time the philosopher meets us not as a sedentary figure closeted away from the affairs of the world, not as a mere onlooker who seeks truth for its own sake, but as a being possessed by a passionate impulse to action, who places his knowledge at the service of practical ends and assigns to it as its greatest task the subjection of nature to the will of man. Bacon has established a vital connexion between theory and practice, knowledge and life, and has done so not, like his less-gifted later followers, by degrading knowledge, but by assigning to it a mission of the highest order. In this, Bacon's thought and feeling are entirely modern, and there is no vestige of medievalism left. Whenever he strikes this note he appears to be filled with exaltation; and it is significant that, although echoes of the Renaissance are to be found even here, there is a decided shifting of the leading *Kulturwert*, which is no longer art, but technics. The science which is placed at the service of humanity has as its final aim technical mastery, which now supplants artistic culture. This shifting from art to technics represents, it seems to me, an important difference between early and late Renaissance thinking. Thus Bacon is one of the first to celebrate the coming of the technical age, and his doctrine is full of faith in future progress. The following centuries have realized beyond all expectation the possibilities which he envisaged, and to which he gave effective expression in his unfinished Utopia, *The New Atlantis*.

Bacon's philosophy of technical culture is based on what I

have called above his pragmatic utilitarianism. Bacon, however, does not belong—and stress must be laid on this point—to those superficial apostles of utility and shallow worshippers of success who are found in such profusion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is not a pragmatist in the sense that he wanted to pursue thought and science only for the sake of immediate profit. He recognized the value of knowledge in itself and desired in no way to restrict its scope. He distinguished between *experimenta fructifera* and *experimenta luctifera*, and ascribed great importance to the latter. But he detested all purely academic learning as profitless; and he did not know what to make of the ideal of pure knowledge, for ever turning in vacancy on its own axis and detached from every contact with life. He did not, however, regard knowledge as subservient to mere utility or success; on the contrary, he prescribes for knowledge a sublime purpose, the creative advancement of civilization. But this can only be attained if man achieves mastery over inanimate nature. In this task his best and most powerful helper is scientific investigation, and thus the *interpretatio naturae* and the *regnum hominis* are blended into one inseparable unity. Such a point of view is far removed from that crude utilitarianism which has been substituted for it by his later followers. It is, rather, a utilitarianism inspired by idealism and giving expression to a noble cultural aim.

There is one last point which must be dealt with in order to clarify our knowledge of Bacon's doctrine and position; that is his attitude to religion. Here, too, opinions are widely divergent. Among his apologists and also among his opponents are to be found believers, sceptics, and atheists. It is admitted that Bacon made a sharp distinction between belief and knowledge, religion and philosophy, and that he wished to make both of them as far as possible independent of each other. This resulted in the doctrine of a twofold truth. On the one hand stands philosophy, which makes no claim to penetrate into the mysteries of the supernatural world, on the other, religion, which has nothing to do with knowledge of the natural world. This comprises the essence of what Bacon as a philosopher has to say on the subject of religion. Thus he apparently returned to the old thesis of Tertullian, to the *credo quia absurdum*. The question now arises, on which of the two factors Bacon laid

more stress; and here it seems to me quite clear that it was on philosophy or science. The difference between Tertullian and Bacon consists in the fact that behind Bacon's thesis stands the whole *dignitas scientiarum*, whereas with Tertullian this is not the case. In the great process of setting learning free from the shackles of faith and secularizing it, which begins with the Renaissance and continues its advance with humanism, Bacon's teaching plays an important part, as in a certain sense he may be said to have brought the development to its conclusion. He was fully conscious of the radical consequences which the change would have, and he discovered the clear, simple, and impressive formula which from his time on has stood like a motto above the gateway of modern philosophy, and which at the same time forms a *Leitmotiv* throughout the whole subsequent course of British thought. In its essentials this formula is nothing other than a declaration of the coming of age and responsibility and autonomy of theoretic reason. Henceforth faith may leave knowledge to cultivate its garden in peace and to cease from wasting its strength in unprofitable strife with religion. Bacon wished to strengthen science by confining religion within its proper boundaries, and his efforts led to an essential strengthening of the secular at the expense of the spiritual. In spite of statements to the contrary, he himself was an agnostic, and the course which he adopted in religious matters led directly to the deism of the Enlightenment, and further to the scepticism of Hume, with which his attitude has much in common. Be that as it may, Bacon definitely belongs to the modern world. More than any of his contemporaries, he succeeded in freeing philosophy from the clerical tutelage of the Middle Ages, and establishing the one-time *ancilla theologiae* in a new position as her own mistress.

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A FRENCH PRÉCIEUX LYRIST OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: PIERRE MOTIN

By T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN

J'aime mieux Bergerac et sa burlesque audace
Que ces vers où Motin se morfond et nous glace.
Boileau, *L'Art Poétique*, iv, 39–40.

THE French 'precious' or 'metaphysical' poets of the period 1600–30 have long interested me greatly. I regret that I have not had the time or the means to study them as I should have wished in the original editions or manuscripts, except in the cases of Pierre Motin and La Valletrye. I will confine my notes to Motin.

Let me first make it clear that I do not regard these poets as mere makers of arabesques on the surface of experience. A poem of Motin's may appear at first sight superficial. His sorrows are those of unrequited love; but they are also those of love which, by its very nature and essence, cannot be requited. The cruelty of his lady veils a more fundamental cruelty, the hopelessness of all aspiration. Such a poem as Motin's

De quoy sert à mes yeux le retour de l'Aurore

is as pessimistic as Racine's tragedies. The daffodils 'sheeting the floors of April' may imply emotion as deep as any of the brutalities of realism. Motin has that awful vacuity of hope in this world or the next which marks French classicism. For the seventeenth century (despite its veneer of orthodoxy) is more profoundly atheistic than the eighteenth, which believed in the perfectibility of man, and therefore in a just and kind Providence. The God of the seventeenth century is a fury 'à sa proie attachée'. Racine has no hope, cis- or ultra-tombal. His work is a bitter arraignment of the ordinance of the world. Corneille is little better. His heroes and heroines sacrifice all they love to their sense of honour and duty—always to no purpose. In Motin we must not expect the joy of the 'Bergère' of Queen Margaret of Navarre, who can say, in ecstasy,

Mon ame perir et noier
Or puisse en ceste doulce mer
D'Amour, où n'y a poinct d'amer!

who can believe (as to-day once more, despite the horror of a Fascist world, we can and must believe)

> Encor, quant morte je seray,
> L'esprit en aura souvenance.

Hope, the fleeting vision, whether of earthly love or eternal life, is for Motin only 'l'air et le vent', as the image of his lady in a poem of MS. Condé 534 (p. 28):

> Qu'on me cache le Ciel de vostre beau visage
> J'en garde le portraict dans mon ame vivant!
> Pauvre amant mon bien n'est plus rien qu'une image
> Et l'image et mon bien n'est que l'air et le vent.

Most of Motin's work is contained in the *Recueils collectifs* published between 1597 and 1620. The bulk is in *Le Nouveau Recueil* (1609) and *Le Second Livre des Délices* (1620). MS. 534, Musée Condé, contains fifty-three pieces by Motin, some of which are not found in any of the *Recueils* of the time. Paul d'Estrée's *Œuvres inédites* of Motin (1882) does not contain by any means all the unpublished poems. There are also poems by Motin in several manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale and in a manuscript of the Arsenal, in the *Cabinet Satirique* (1666) and elsewhere. It is not my purpose to give a bibliography. Miss Margaret B. Stephens, M.A., formerly Assistant Lecturer in French in Queen's University, Belfast, projected in 1929 a complete edition of Motin's work. It is to her unpublished transcripts that I am indebted for all my material.

Of the poems not printed until 1666 one of the most curious is the *Dialogue du Jacquemart et de la Samaritaine du Pont Neuf*. It is a light-hearted jest, but has some good lines, showing Motin's ever-recurring feeling for 'Nature'.

> Les vents plus frisottés qui sortent de la Seine . . .
>
> Je vous garde un beau nid de cresserelles grises,
> Que s'esbattent ensemble et voleront demain. . . .
>
> Les abbois des mastins et les cris des hibous. . . .

But his sadness pierces his gaiety; La Samaritaine declares:

> Mon cœur, vous n'entendez qu'une triste musique,
> Les cris du chat-huant, les hurlements du lou;

Et moy j'entens siffler les courtaux de boutiques,
Et dix mille laquais qui chantent le filou.

. . . . . .

Ou que n'ay-je un vaisseau comme avoit Cleopatre,
Pour chercher mon Antoine. . . .

Pierre Motin could write quite simply and directly when he liked. But he could also, and often did, write in the most 'precious' manner, with a surfeit of not only all the accepted metaphors and conceits, but with a personal addition of extremely recondite images and far-fetched conceptions. His poem *Pour des cheveux*[1] is a repertory of hair preciosity, while the *Hymne des beaux yeux de* *[2] gives the whole *précieux* arsenal of eye metaphor and image (it contains, like the former, some excellent lines).[3]

The most curious example of Motin's 'metaphysical' style is, I think, the very long poem *Contentement* (MS. Condé 534), which recounts a dream of his lady, and reflections thereon.

Esprict qui que tu sois du Ciel ou de la terre,
Pour le moings je scais bien que tu n'es pas mortel;
Je te fais à genoux de mon cœur un autel.
Si tu n'es que l'abus d'une ame solitaire
Que ton abuz me plaist d'une erreur volontaire. . . .

It contains several fine passages:

Je veux pour sommeiller contraindre la Nature,
Faisant de pavots noirs toute ma nourriture;
Ou, pour n'estre jamais de mon bien separé,
Ressembler le Berger de la Lune adoré
Qui reçut endormy les baisers de la belle.
Eussions nous en ces lieux une nuict eternelle
Et que l'air tenebreux par la nuit espaissy
Endormant sans cesser me fit songer ainsy. . . .

Du superbe Ixion l'erreur m'est advenue
Qui pour une Deesse embrassoit une Nue. . . .

Mais si par un esprit pour ma plainte venu

[1] MS. Condé 534, *Second Livre des Délices.* [2] *Second Livre des Délices.*

[3] Qui faictes qu'un Printemps nous suit,
Qui faictes un Esté renaistre.
Et jamais d'Automne, et de fruict.
(*Hymne des beaux yeux de* *.)

Rets subtils ou se pourroient prendre
Le vent mesme, et la vanité.
(*Pour des cheveux.*)

D'un faux mais doux objet je fus entretenu,
Soit qu'il vienne du ciel ou du cœur de l'averne,
Ou fust-il dans le rond d'une bague ou d'un cerne,
Dans l'enclos d'un Cristail le puissai-je arester
Et serré d'une chesne a mon col le porter!

The *Stances* (MS. Condé 534) beginning

Tant de boulans esprits parmi l'air espanduz

are also an excellent example of this vein:

Ainsi plus de soupirs dans les Cieux eslançant
Que je n'alois de temps et de pas avançant
Je courois m'embraser aux beaux yeux de Madame:
Mais que le papillon en mourant est heureux,
Il void ce qui le brule et mon sort amoureux
Veut que sans voir ses yeux je me brule a leur flamme.
Le funeste present par Medée enchanté,
S'allumoit aux rayons de la seule clarté
Sans qu'il touchat du feu la chaleur coustumiere;
Mon cœur est mile fois plus facile a bruler,
Privé de ces beaux yeux qui se veulent celer
Et sans estre esclairé de leur vive lumiere.

I will give a few examples of Motin's unusual and personal 'preciosity'. In the *Stances* of MS. Condé beginning

Quelle chaisne d'aimant, quelle puissante loy,

referring to his lady's throat, which, of course, he likens to snow—there is nothing novel in that—he calls this snow a

Lumineuse blancheur qui des feux nous envoye.
Qui les void sans bruler il doit mourir de froid
Ainsi que les trancis aux neiges de Savoye.

His lady's tears are of course compared to pearls, but Motin (*Larmes de vif argent . . .*, MS. Condé 534) has an original twist to his simile:

Aux roses de son teint ils alloient variant
Qu'alors si le destin les eut faict plus solides
Ilz fussent devenuz des perles d'Orient. . . .

In an *Ode* in MS. Condé 534, Motin gives an ingenious turn to the comparison of his lady's hair with (1) a 'chesne amiantine', (2) 'des cedres de Palestine', (3) 'des filetz', by adding

Cheveux, mon cordage,
Les Parques qui filent aage
N'ont pour moy d'autres nœuds que vous.

The unpublished *Chansons* in MS. Condé 534 are interesting. I particularly like the song beginning:

Ha que vous estes timides,
Petitz oyseaux bien heureux,
Qui par ces Rives humides
Fuyez un pauvre amoureux:

which contains the charming lines:

Que ne suis-je une estincelle
Pour hault en l'air m'eslancer?
Que ne sûis-je une[1] arondelle,
Ou bien plus tost mon penser?

Among Motin's longer poems *Le Phœnix* stands out.[2] The poet describes the home of the Phœnix in

une forest, prés du lit de l'Aurore,
Que Neptune environne et qu'il va respectant
Des Cedres éternels la racine humectant . . ,

a spot 'inaccessible aux hommes'. The Phœnix requires no food except

les ardeurs seulement
Du Soleil son amy. . . .
Un rayon du Soleil luy couronne la teste,
Qui rend de sa belle Ombre alors qu'il veut sortir.
Les champs peints d'écarlate, ou des couleurs de Tyr.

He is not born from an egg. But 'il est de luy-mesme et le Pere, et l'Enfant'. When the Phœnix nears his thousandth year

L'oyseau se treuve vieil, et par l'âge agravé,
Ainsi qu'un grand sapin sur Caucase eslevé
Proche de sa ruine à qui le sommet panche. . . .

he prepares to renew his youth.

Cherchant le rameau sec, et la feüille tombée
Des arbres odorants que porte la Sabée,

he prepares 'un lit, ou plustost un cercueil'. He calls upon the Sun to light the pyre, and the Phœnix 'se consume' while the heavenly bodies arrest their courses and the winds are still.

Et le Phœnix reprend ses premieres vertus. . . .

[1] MS. un.

[2] *Nouveau Recueil* (1609), *Second Livre des Délices* (1620).

The birds of the air gather to escort the Phœnix while he carries 'les restes de son Pere' to a Temple in Egypt consecrated to the Sun.

> Tel se fait voir le Parthe en habits somptueux,
> Quand des Barbares ports du Tygre impetueux
> Attirant des guerriers une noire tempeste,
> Il conduit son armée, et se treuve à la teste,
> Sur les peuples vaincus son orgueil estandant,
> Et par les champs de Tyr en armes commandant. . . .

The 'despoüille Saincte' is given to the 'brasier destiné', and the Phœnix flies away.

> Des yeux de leurs pensers les Prestres le conduisent,
> Les Portes du grand Temple, et les voûtes reluisent
> De la flamme allumée, aux Autels apprestez,
> Les divines senteurs fument de tous costez:
> Le Parfum, qui l'enclos du grand Temple refuse,
> Embaume de son air les Marets de Peluse. . . .

Then follows an address to the Phœnix.

> Nul desir ne te trompe, aussi nul ne t'époint,
> Tu vois changer ton âge, et tu ne changes point. . . .
> Sacré, devotieux, cognoissant toutes choses,
> Et combien l'Univers a de Metamorphoses.

The Phœnix, says the poet, remembers the Deluge—'des animaux tu fus seul reservé'—he remembers the passion of Jesus Christ:

> Quand luy nouvelle hostie, à nos maux salutaire,
> Mourut sur une Croix, d'une mort volontaire,
> Lors que trahy, moqué, des siens abandonné,
> Couvert de mille coups, d'espines Couronné,
> Il s'offrit Prestre ensemble, et Victime propice,
> Nouveau Phœnix luy-mesme, au Soleil de Justice.

Motin likens the resurrection of Christ to that of the Phœnix.

The poem ends with a panegyric of the King (Henri IV). The Phœnix, in all its existence, has not seen his like! When Henri reaches 'le terme limité' the poet asks that his

> Esprit ardant de vives flammes

shall sacrifice itself, like a Phœnix, 'au grand Soleil des ames'.[1]

[1] There is a reference to the occasion when 'l'œil du Romain|fit tomber du meurtrier le poignard de la main' (1594). Motin has a poem on the same subject entitled *Stances sur ce qui fut attenté contre le Roy, le Lundy 19 jour de decembre* in *Le Nouveau Recueil* (1609).

In the *Second Livre des Délices* (1620) appeared a poem *Au Roy, sur son entrée à Paris*, which contains some fine, if over-laudatory, lines:

Grand Roy de qui le bras trace la renommée,
Escritte avec le traict d'une lettre formée
D'éternels Diamans sur le front du Destin,
Dont les braves desseins bien-tost doivent parfaire
Ce qu'aux Peuples du soir le grand Charles pûst faire,
Et tout ce que fit Brenne aux Peuples du matin.

Là fuiront devant luy le desordre et la crainte,
Au jugement confus, à la face desteinte,
Dont l'halleine tousjours pantelle dans le flanc,
Là doit-il au milieu de leur terre occupée
S'eslever un triomphe, et avecques l'espée
Planter la Fleur-de-Lis, et l'arroser de sang.

If Henri IV was not

Le plus grand Roy qui fut, et qui sera jamais,

if, though 'un César à la guerre', he was hardly 'un Auguste à la Paix', he was to his time undoubtedly the 'rare et premier homme de l'Empire des Gaules'.

The long *Hymne des Dauphins*,[1] from the Latin of le P. Vital-Théron, is worthy of Ronsard. It ends with a panegyric of

Ce Dauphin bien fortuné
Que sur tous je voy paroistre,
De grands lys d'or couronné,

Louis, the son of 'la Toscane Deesse', Marie de Medicis,—born 1601:

Dauphin vostre main guerriere
Tiendra des mers le Trident.
Vous rendrez la mer trempee
Au sang de l'Anglois leger,
S'il irrite votre epee,
Ou vous irez saccager
L'orgueil du soldat Ibere. . . .[2]

Soubs vos loix je voy rangee
L'audace des Ottomans:
Je voy les bords de l'Egee
Blanchir de corps Musulmans. . . .

[1] *Parnasse*, 1607.

[2] Further adulation of Henri IV, his Queen, and his son is found in a number o other poems, dating from 1599 (or earlier), 1605, and 1610.

Vous conduirez vos armees
Où le More va tout nud
Aux campagnes Idumees,
Dans le Bresil incognu,
Au Parthe, au Chinois, au Perse. . . .

Puis quand le destin prospere
Vous donnera le bon-heur
D'estre appellé du saint Pere
A l'Imperial honneur,
Dit Auguste entre les Princes,
Mettez les Aigles à bas,
Portant aux serves Provinces
Les Dauphins en vos combats.

Le Pertuis (*Second Livre des Délices*, 1620) calls to mind the anecdote told of Pierre Camus, Bishop of Belley, a novelist of the period, a great admirer of St. Francis of Sales: 'Wenn François bei ihm zu Gaste weilte, pflegte er ihn eingestandenermassen durchs Schlüsselloch bei der Toilette und bei der Arbeit zu beobachten, um von ihm zu lernen.'[1] It is, however, unlikely that Motin was thinking of the Bishop, whose first novel dates from 1621. Motin watches his lady-love through the *pertuis d'une porte* and learns to despise her.

Ce que la raison ne pouvoit
Ny de tant de femmes l'histoire,
A la fin tu me l'as fait croire,
S'il faut croire ce que l'on voit. . . .

He saw Nays

Reparer dessus son visage
Ce que l'aage auroit pu gaster
. . . .
Ou se frotter dessous l'aisselle
De Litarge et d'Alun bruslé.

And he concludes:

O si les humeurs et les gestes
Des Dames estoient manifestes,
Verroit-on tant de Cavaliers
Les Dimanches en sentinelle
Aller jouer de la prunelle
Au Temple contre les pilliers!

[1] W. von Wurzbach, *Geschichte des französischen Romans*, vol. i, p. 328.

And finally:

Mes yeux en reçeurent la playe,
Mes yeux m'en rendent la santé.
Et toy, Conseiller favorable,
Pertuis, tu m'es plus venerable,
D'office, d'honneur, et de lieu,
Que les pertuis Mathematiques,
Ny que les pertuis Prophetiques,
Des vieux oracles d'un faux Dieu.

The *Stances* with the opening

De quoy sert à mes yeux le retour de l'Aurore

contain some of Motin's finest lines. The poem appears in the *Nouveau Recueil* (1609), the *Second Livre des Délices* (1620), and also in MS. B.N. 884, and MS. Condé 534. It shows definite imitation of Guarini in the well-known lines:

A vos pieds voyez-moy vostre fatale prise,
Et recevez mon sang en larmes converty.

The manuscripts give the correct rendering of the lines:

Mais pourquoy, mon beau cœur, d'injuste licence
M'allez-vous ravissant mon thresor le plus dous . . .

where all printed versions give *d'une juste licence*, making nonsense of the passage. In this poem are such lines as:

Tout joüyt de la paix, les villes et les plaines,
Et seulement les bois en demeurent privez,

or

Il trouble des forests la solitude noire. . .

MS. Condé 534 contains a set of *Stances* (beginning 'Au milieu des ennuictz dont mon ame est la proie') which is extremely precious in conception. The poet writes a greeting to his lady:

le bon jour je t'envoye
Si je puis t'envoyer cela que je n'ay pas.

He wishes he might speak his message instead of writing it, so that

Ma bouche en soupirant eut l'honneur de se dire
Sans estre de ce bien jalouse de mes mains.

Helas mais ne pouvant, ce chaud souspir s'envole
Avecques mon penser son frere bien aimé,
Au Ciel de tes beautez Amour fut son Eole,
Et mon cœur la caverne où il fut enfermé.

O ma belle qui rend mes volontez fidelles,
Les temps ne rendront point mes desirs inconstans.

Ils semblent aux metaux et aux pierres plus belles
Et se vont raffinant à la suite des temps. . . .

The same manuscript has an *Ode* which begins 'Où sont les beaux jours de ma gloire', with the lines:

C'est bien la mesme tresse blonde
Et les yeux tirans de ma foy,
C'est bien elle pour tout le monde
Mais ce n'est pas elle pour moy.

Estes vous ces beaux yeux encore
Dont le feu si doux m'a conduict,
Fault-il que d'une mesme aurore
Me viennent le jour et la nuict?

I should like to quote part of a long poem, entitled *Recognoissance faicte à l'inconstance* [1599].

J'ai despité l'erreur de ma vie abusée,
Et par toy qui me sers comme un fil à Thesee,
J'eschappe du Dedale où j'estois esgaré.

Je veux dans un tableau la Nature pourtraire,
J'y peindray la Fortune, et le change ordinaire
De tout ce qui se void sous la voute des cieux:
L'Amour y sera peint d'une forme nouvelle,
Non comme de coustume, avec une double aile,
Je luy en donne autant comme Argus avoit d'yeux.
L'on y verra la mer et les ondes esmeues,
L'arc avec ses esclairs, son tonnerre et ses nuës,
Le feu prompt et leger vers le Ciel aspirant,
Girouettes, moulins, oiseaux de tous plumages,
Papillons, Cerfs, Dauphins, et des Conins sauvages
Qui perdent de leurs trous la memoire en courant.
Des fantosmes, des vents, des songes, des Chimeres,
Sablons tousjours mouvans, tourbillons et poussieres,
Des pailles, des rameaux, et des feuilles de bois,
Et si je le pouvoy, j'y peindroy ma pensee,
Mais elle est trop soudain de mon esprit passee,
Car je ne pense plus à ce que je pensois.

Motin's *Rape of the Lock*, entitled *Adoration amoureuse*, is included in the unpublished poems of MS. Condé 534. It begins:

Tout ce que les Amants souffrent en apparence,
L'absence, la Rigueur, et le peu d'esperance,
Leonte par effect l'avoit desja souffert. . . .

Leonte goes to see his Lady. He finds his rival Erilas already there.

L'esté regnoit partout et les fleuves sans ondes
Tous monstroient le fond de leurs arenes blondes
Quand Leonte alla voir par son bon heur porté
De son cœur amoureux la seule Déité,
Elle estoit dans un lict et Venus immortelle
Quelques graces qu'elle aist ne fust jamais si belle,
Quant allumant ses yeux de ses feux les plus doux
Elle voulust ravir les sens de son espoux. . . .

Les amours assemblez enfans officieux
Comme Atomes voloient aux Rayons de ses yeux,
Ministres diligens a servir Licidée,
Petitz soldatz ailez dont elle estoit gardee
Avec un esventail en la rafraichissant:
Des presens de Sabée un autre l'emplissoit:
Les aultres sans soucy d'une grace enfantine
Se jouoient follement aux plis de sa Courtine:
Quelquesuns a ses yeux leurs flesches embrasoient,
Puis au Roc de son sein les fers en aiguisoient . . .

De ces petits guerriers le plus malicieux
Rendit d'un de ses traicts Erilas souscieux,
Erilas amoureux et jaloux tout ensemble,
Qui palit, qui rougit, qui s'eschauffe et qui tremble . . .

Leonte plays with his lady's hair. Erilas is bashful and jealous.

Jamais le beau Jason ne receut tant de joye
Quand de la Thoison d'or il fit sa chere proie,
Ny le pauvre vieillart d'avarice touché
Qui sans rien ignorer trouve un tresor caché.
Il serre ces cheveux, estroitz neuds de son ame,
Le cœur luy bat au sein, son œil est plain de flame,
Ravy d'autant de gloire et de contentement
Qu'Erilas le voyant en eust eu de tourment.
Cheveux blonds, disoit-il, dont la chesne si forte
M'areste soubz les loix de celle qui vous porte,
J'adore voz liens et ne veux consentir
Malgré le désespoir de jamais en sortir:
Beaux cheveux, s'il est vray que l'Hercule de France
Ainsi que d'un chesne avec son eloquence
Les peuples attiroit par l'oreille ravis,
Vous rendez par les yeux tous les cœurs asserviz.

Of Motin's religious poems I note especially a *Paraphrase du Pseaume 90* [*Parnasse* (1607), *Second Livre des Délices* (1620)]; *Les Sept Pseaumes de la Pénitence de David* [Recueil Conrart XIX, Arsenal 4124]; *Méditation sur un Crucifix Mourant* [*Nouveau Recueil* (1609), *Second Livre des Délices* (1620), MS. Condé 534]; *Méditation sur le Memento Homo* [*Muses Ralliées* (1599), *Fleurs* (1601)]; and an Ode to *Saint Estienne* [MS. Condé 534]. From the last I quote:

Je me bastiray dans ces pierres
Un pallais contre les tonnerres,
Les vents, les eaux, l'antiquité,
Les fers, les flammes, et les guerres,
Dans le sein de l'Eternité.

Meurs donc soudain, cede a la force,
Crainte, douleur, faveur, amorce,
Ne te retardent le trespas,
Corps pesant, ma debile escorce,
Lourd fardeau qui m'areste a bas.

A mes yeux du fondz de la nue
De Dieu la gloire est parvenue,
Au travers du Ciel qui se fend
Je voy l'umanité congnue
De Jesus la hault triomphant.

From *Méditation sur le Memento Homo* a few stanzas are worth remembering:

Souvien toy que tu n'es que cendre,
Et qu'il te faut bien tost descendre
Dans le fonds d'un sepulcre noir,
Où la Terre te doit reprendre,
Et la cendre te recevoir.

Le peril te suit à la guerre,
Dessous la Mer, desous la Terre,
Le peril te suit en tous lieux:
Et tout ce que le Monde enserre
Vit en peril dessoubs les Cieux. . . .

Puis apres la mort enduree
De ta despoüille demeuree
Les membres seront sans chaleur,
Et ta face desfiguree
Et tes deux levres sans couleur.

Des Prestres la triste cohorte
Viendra chanter devant ta porte:
Un drap de morts et un lincueil
Couvriront ta charongne morte,
Prisonniere dans un cercueil.

Les torches luiront par la ruë
Et des tiens la trouppe accouruë,
Couverte d'un long habit noir,
A ton Ame mal secouruë,
Payeront le dernier devoir.

Finally I may quote a few single lines and short passages taken from different parts of Motin's works:

Ne verray-je jamais un jour qui me contente
Baisant vos belles mains et muet de plaisir . . .
[*Elegie* in *Temple d'Apollon* (1611), *Cabinet des Muses* (1619).]

Surpassant Phalaris d'outrageuse malice . . .
Plaignoient leur liberté par César occupée . . .
[*Stances* (Si cela qui nous donne . . .), MS. Condé 534.]

Le trésor de David n'y pourroit satisfaire
Ny le riche rançon du Roy mal secouru,
Que le fier Espagnol ruina dans le Peru . . .

Tesmoin Semiramis, qu'un cheval embrasa,
Et celle qu'au taureau Dedale supposa . . .

Vous aimez en vipere, et ceux que vous baisez
S'avancent au sepulchre où vous les conduisez . . .
[*Elegie contre les femmes* in *Cabinet Satirique*, 1666.]

Heureux si dans ces fleurs escloses
Mes pensers sont ensevelis,
Ils auront un tombeau de roses,
Semé de perles et de lis.[1] . . .

Et comme la Troyenne blesme
De sa fille oyant le trespas
Irritoit son dueil elle-mesme
Et la nommait à chaque pas,
La mere que le mal emporte
Ne va point sa pleinte achevant,

[1] Here Motin adds a characteristic 'precious' touch:

Mais en vain s'en vont mes pensees,
Contre ce roc plein de rigueur
Ainsi que flèches repoussées
Elles retournent sur mon cœur.

[*Stances* (Que de douleurs), MS. Condé 534, MS. 884, *Nouveau Recueil* (1609), *Second Livre des Délices* (1620).]

Et son regret tousjours vivant
Luy tient lieu de sa fille morte . . .

[*Ode sur la Mort de Madame la Duchesse de Deux-Ponts*, MS. Condé 534, *Nouveau Recueil* (1609), *Second Livre des Délices* (1620).]

And to conclude, here is one of the most curious poems of the early seventeenth century, with its excessive mythological allusion, and its very far-fetched preciosity:

Beauté qui sur mon cœur exercez vostre Empire,
Tirant vostre pouvoir du Caribant Archer,
Je ressemble à Clitie alors que je souspire,
Et l'escu de Melas ne m'en peut empescher.

Rare et divin subject des armes Gorgontées,
Vous captivez les cœurs des agrestes Guerriers,
Vous mettez soubs le joug des braves Dorothées,
Jusqu'aux peuples d'Affrique estandant vos Lauriers.

L'un et l'autre Soleil qui nostre jour limite,
Ne fait sur ce Tropique un jour si beau que vous,
Et l'Arimaspe ombreux qui les Titans imite,
Ne void rien de si cler, ne void rien de si doux.

Aussi feustes-vous faits comme Dieux de la vie,
Rois de nostre Destin, Misanthropes puissants,
(Quand sur le mont Lidor le Ciel en eut envie,)
De feux, d'esclairs, de traicts, et d'attraits menaçans.

Recevez, chers Titans de mes douces pensées,
Mes souspirs embausmez de Panchaïques fleurs,
Mes desirs ressemblans aux Driades versees,
Et l'eau de Thermodon qui s'escoule en mes pleurs.

[Entitled *Gausserie* in *Second Livre des Délices*, 1620.]

In a poem *Contre les Mesdisans en faveur de M^r. Chenu*, Motin says:

j'aime mieux entendre
Qu'on parle mal de moy, que l'on n'en parle point.

Perhaps he was looking forward to attacks such as that Boileau afterwards made on him. But Motin did not deserve his contempt, unless (as may be indeed the case) Boileau's contempt is a passport to fame!

KING JAMES THE FIRST OF ENGLAND AS POET AND POLITICAL WRITER

By C. J. SISSON

Here, where the scepter's swaied with æquall power,
and æquall goodnesse, æquall law, and awe,
here, where the hand of Iustice doth ech hower
forward good Actions, and the ill withdraw:
Here, where the King, like Salomon doth sitt
Crowned with bounty, honor, peace, & witt.

Here, where there lives a Prince, soe full compleate
with all the vertues, fitt for maiesty;
here, where the Senate is as good as greate,
where honesty is held cheife pollicy:
Here, where whole hoastes of holy Clerkes doe live,
Whose like, for learning, Europe cannot give.

SO wrote, in 1619, towards the end of the reign of James, the unidentified author of a long poem, *Calonder's Dreame*, from which these stanzas are taken.[1] Deploring the corruptions of the times, he is projecting missionary enterprises among heathen nations. But the times are corrupt, in his view, despite the excellence of the King, to whom he pays a tribute that is free from all suspicion of flattery or personal interest. It may well be that this obscure poem represents the general view in its own day more faithfully than better-known documents. We are concerned here in particular with one of the 'vertues, fitt for majesty' ascribed to the King by this sober and serious witness, the virtue of wit, a term of far wider significance in Tudor and Stuart English than to-day.

'Justice has seldom been done to James I', wrote Professor Hearnshaw in 1926, 'whether as a statesman or as a thinker', and, one might well add, as a man of letters. Professor Hearnshaw goes so far, indeed, as to include him among the great thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries whose social and political ideas repay study. Such a view is rarely

[1] Dr. Robin Flower kindly communicated to me knowledge of this poem, which exists in two manuscripts, one belonging to Mr. Cartwright of Aynhoe, from the collection of Sir Peter Manwood, the antiquary (d. 1625), the other Sloane 3706, f. 58, in which the poem is dedicated to the author's 'Hon^{d} Brother Robert Harcourt Esq^{r}.'

met with, and yet is certainly nearer the truth than the abusive contempt and ridicule which has for long been generally associated with the name of James I, thanks in the main to the superb journalistic gifts of an earlier historian. Macaulay, admitting that humanity progressed in some respects despite the efforts of the King, explains that 'we owe more to his weakness and meanness than to the wisdom and courage of much better sovereigns'.

Macaulay's view is still the accepted view, on the whole, and is assumed as an essential factor in the history of the age in England, not least as a background to the pictures drawn by historians and critics of literature, especially of late. And this seems to be in some measure ungrateful in men of letters passing judgement upon a fellow craftsman.

It would certainly be impossible, at any rate, to deny to James the title of the greatest man of letters among English monarchs, whether as poet, critic, or writer upon political and social affairs. James's own country alone can present a rival, in the person of James I of Scotland, a very notable poet, unless we take the matter back to Anglo-Saxon days and to King Alfred. Henry VIII spread his wings and, in a small way, Queen Victoria gratified herself, and embarrassed her ministers, with voluminous *Journals*. Queen Elizabeth achieved some translations, as did James's own mother, Mary Queen of Scots. But the writings of James the Sixth and First are of the highest importance, and of great variety. Unfortunately, they are very seldom read.

The time will come, and may well come soon, when popular views concerning his character, and his policy and its results, will sway strongly in his favour. The man who wrote, or inspired, *The Peacemaker*, a tract of 1618, deserves better things of the twentieth century, if not of the nineteenth, when more dashing policies in international affairs had not yet brought the wisdom of disillusionment. In such matters James, a humanist himself, was at one with the greatest of humanists, Erasmus. He was a man who, led in earliest childhood to the waters of learning, drank deep, a true Scotsman in his assurance of the value of knowledge and letters, and in his zealous devotion to them. His reward has been to be accused of pedantry. His science, as we have it in his *Demonologie*, for example, so highly

thought of by the expert Robert Burton, was the science of his own day, a day when the great Harvey himself had secret remedies, or when, long after James was dead, another great physician and scientist, Sir Thomas Browne, could write, 'I have ever believed, and do now know, that there are Witches', and those who denied this were 'a sort of Atheists'. But in James this science is condemned as gloomy superstition. As for his general views concerning the place of kingship in the Commonwealth, they are such views as in Hooker are allowed to share the general praise accorded to the philosophic breadth and detachment from party zeal of one of the ornaments of English political literature. But in James they are heresy and fatal. Strangest of all is the misrepresentation of the atmosphere in which his accession took place in England, the atmosphere which his coming brought to England, one of relief from the dangerous haunting shadow under which his new kingdom had long lain, the shadow of the hitherto precarious succession, a spirit of fresh hope and renewed vigour. With him came peace and the expansion of trade and colonial enterprise. And he united two great peoples, for centuries at odds one with another and a danger one to another, and now linked together in a great common destiny.

So it is that the approach to the literary work of the most voluminous and most versatile man of letters among English kings has been clouded by political and religious prejudice. 'Judge me charitably', he pleaded for himself to the English Houses of Parliament in 1607, when he was defending the country of his birth before their suspicious minds, and setting forth his persuasive vision of 'peace, plenty, and love' to come of the union of two great nations, then in debate. Yet no Scot has arisen to devote himself to the literary memory of a King of England who was also a Scotsman dyed in the wool, who spoke Scots to his last days, whose first metrical lispings are almost unintelligible to the uninstructed Southron, and who was never more a Scot than in his theory of the divinity of hereditary kingship.

There were Englishmen enough in his own day to bear witness to his quality. Robert Burton praises him as king and statesman, and no less as 'a famous scholar and the sole Patron, Pillar, and sustainer of learning', and this after his death. 'He

is now gone, the Sun of ours set.' Something like an echo of this tribute from a fellow-scholar, I am glad to record, has come from a Scotsman of authority in the matter. It was W. P. Ker who instructed a Cambridge audience that James had 'abilities which would have entitled him to be a Professor of Literature', an observation of weight from one who was himself a great professor and not given either to flattery or to the underrating of his calling. Such an opinion, at any rate, may serve to modify any suspicion attaching to the splendid tribute paid by the greatest mind of Europe in James's day, and to help us to accept in some measure Bacon's celebration of the excellent treasure of his master's mind. James was certainly a better poet than his great Chancellor, a fuller and more scholarly student of literature, in some ways more completely equipped by education and interest for the theory and practice of the art of letters. And his prose-writing falls behind the work only of the greatest masters of English prose, of whom Bacon was one, yet by no vast margin, and has its own peculiar and characteristic merits as literature.

The great Scottish tradition of humanistic learning, unshaken until these latter days of confusion, governed already the education of young King James, as of his predecessors on the English throne. And there is no reasonable doubt that it was most thoroughly put through by his tutors George Buchanan and Peter Young, aided and abetted by the abnormally quick and precocious mind of a child who from early days was determined to excel. Not without the groanings of a young spirit, as when he complained in a remark commemorated by Young upon the manuscript list of his library: 'They gar me speik latin ar I could speik Scotis.' But he went through a laborious course of instruction which left him with a mastery of Latin, Greek, and French, and with a wide reading in poetry, philosophy, history, and politics as well as theology and scriptural knowledge. We cannot tell how far he had read in the very considerable, varied, and representative collection of books in the chief languages of Europe of which the record remains as having composed his library. But we have the certain knowledge of his reading with his tutor in the Bible, Erasmus, Buchanan's *History*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Virgil, Xenophon, and Terence. And the later evidence is clear that his reading, in fact, was as ample as it

was solid, and that it was a permanent and cherished occupation throughout his life. His *Basilikon Doron*, addressed to Prince Henry, is expressly stated to be the fruits of his own practical experience, directed to the particular problems which he had faced in his own country and which young Henry would have to face in turn, and not a general treatise upon kingship, founded upon the wisdom of the ages and the authority of universal thought. Yet it is buttressed and weighted with frequent references to a wide variety of classical quotations, both from Greek and from Latin, as well as such plentiful proof of intimate and disposable knowledge of the Bible as might have satisfied Buchanan and Knox themselves.

Never was a more liberal-minded, sensible, and unpedantic programme than that set forth by James in his advice upon reading to his son, with a fine sense of proportion as well as of the purpose to be had in mind. 'Studie not for knowledge nakedly' is a counterblast to pedantry. And in the King's understanding 'all Arts and sciences are linked every one in the other', so that out of their harmony comes true knowledge. The pure scientific spirit of Archimedes is alien to his conception of the purpose of reading and education. Indeed, the ancient conception of education, as practised by the Scottish universities, was in harmony with the root of James's thought in this matter, and we may question whether the modern spirit of high specialization, upon an increasingly inadequate foundation of liberal arts and sciences, might not learn from James a wider and better concept of education even for a vocation. For Henry was to be trained, and to train himself, for his craft, the craft of kingship. And the craft of citizenship to-day could well be prepared for by much that James considered necessary.

If, however, such reading and study form parts of a 'King's Duty in his office', it is among 'Indifferent Things' that we find the King's views upon the practice of literature. This is, indeed, where it ought to be. But it is by no means evidence of contempt for the art. Nor does the King forbid excellence in the craft of letters, as he forbids too great skill in playing upon instruments or in mechanic arts, which are beneath a king's dignity as being commercial and bread-winning arts. On the contrary, a king is entitled like any other man to give way and scope to the artistic impulses of his human genius, a true and right

conception: 'If your engine spur you to write any works, either in verse or in prose, I cannot but allow you to practise it.' And he proceeds to speak of the need for 'letting that fury and heat, wherewith they were written, cool at leisure'. It is well to remember these premisses of the King's conception of the art of literature. For in other things too he insists upon the demands of craftsmanship and critical judgement. It is, indeed, the keynote of his thought upon all matters of practical life.

It is characteristic of the King that his first publication insisted in its deprecatory title upon the divinity of poetry and the need for sedulous study of the art. He is 'the Prentise', though a king, and in no way ashamed of the title. He is more modest for himself than the official trumpeters who herald the volume in verse. And I like the practical, canny spirit that found an empty leaf on the last sheet and filled up 'the vacand pageis'. Here are specimens of his childish exercises, the fruits of his 'Infancie and chyldheid'. And they are couched in the tight, difficult form of the sonnet. Even here—and no one can say at what early age they were written as exercises—James showed himself an inheritor of the invincible naturalness of the Scot when writing poetry. It will break through, as when, for example, he sees, with no help from Ovid or Horace or any one, the dust-clouds in summer flying high in the wind across meadowlands. And 'the whiddering Boreas' has an epithet for once that the windy god could never have looked to enjoy in warmer climates.

At the age of nineteen James is ready to set his experience on record. He has learnt much from practice, prentice as he is, and from his readings, and sets forth *Reulis and Cautelis* for Scottish poesy, upon which no one had hitherto written. He is zealous for his country and its own poetic art. His little treatise is intensely practical, intensely earnest; beyond the realm of vanity and self-satisfaction. Like Gascoigne's *Notes of Instruction*, James's notes point the way in which verse was developing towards that smooth metrical music which he describes as 'flowing', while at the same time he goes far beyond syllable-counting and understands how syllables can be 'eaten up' in the pronouncing. 'Your ear must be the only judge' of such matters. 'Tumbling verse' he is well aware of, fitted for flyting, as no Scot of his day could fail to be aware—he had,

indeed, practised it himself—and it has its own rules. And he observes and comments upon 'broken and cuttit verse', which are also 'out of reul and daylie invented by dyvers Poets'. The root of the matter is, indeed, critical and observant analysis of existing practice rather than the laying down of laws. And this is the most useful kind of criticism. It is only fair to add that no craftsman ever got out of a kind of difficulty that James warned poets against in his *Reulis* more ingeniously than did James himself when he managed to scrape up a rhyme for 'reflex' in his *Phœnix*:

> Although thy fowle (whose name doth end in X).

In general, the *Reulis and Cautelis* should be read in close relation to the King's practice of the art in which he longed to excel, and which he had perforce to set aside. (Ingenuously critical of himself, even as a boy, in these matters, he acknowledged higher merits in others, not only in Buchanan but also in Alexander Montgomerie, that 'Maister Poete' of a starveling age in Scottish poesy.) So, for example, his rules concerning diction in poetry in relation to the character of the speakers reflect clearly the nicely graded standards of speech in his fragmentary *Masque*. And he draws several times upon his own verses, e.g. his *Admonition to the Maister Poete*, to exemplify his critical statements.

It would certainly seem that some remarks in the *Reulis*, concerning rhymes and words like 'Arabia', may be a direct 'reflex' of painful moments with his *Phœnix*, that 'tragedy' with 'a comike end'. It was no mean 'invention', a poetic element greatly stressed by James as by Gascoigne, that brought that famous bird to Scotia, there to consort with Scottish ravens, stanchils, and gleds, for a time, until she

> homeward had returned againe
> Where she was bred, where storms dois never blow,
> Nor bitter blasts, nor winter snows, nor raine,
> But sommer still: that country doeth so staine
> All realmes in fairness.

Certainly James could write 'flowing' verse. And his *Phœnix* should be in every anthology of early Scots poetry, both for its form and its matter, which can both bear close examination. What he could do in 'broken and cuttit' verse is better known from the charming and sincere stanzas addressed to Anne of Denmark before the King went to Norway to fetch her home.

There were the makings in James, it would seem, of a not inconsiderable poet. And his prose work bears the stamp not only of a sinewy and lively mind, but also of a powerful and original gift for expression.

The historians of literature have observed the existence of his *Demonologie* and his *Counterblast to Tobacco*, relegating them to the category of social documents, as a kind of scientific writing. They are occasionally read, however, even if the lively competence of the writing is less frequently realized. But the political tracts convey the fullest picture of the treasures of the King's mind, of his character and thought, and of his gifts as a writer. They deserve more attention, as literature, than is commonly given to them.

It is fatally easy to misjudge the thought and spirit of the political writings of James. It is reasonably common knowledge that in them is set forth, in high and uncompromising terms, a theory of kingship which derives its power from divine sources and sets it above the law, which makes its office hereditary and inalienable, and which exalts its prerogative.

> God gives not Kings the style of Gods in vain
> For on his Throne his Sceptre do they sway,

wrote James in the prefatory sonnet introducing his *Basilikon Doron*. It is also observed that the later history of England exhibits the long debates between this view of the monarchy and opposing views. There are outstanding episodes in the story, headlines in history, the Non-Jurors, the advent of the Hanoverians, the Jacobite risings, the King's Friends under George III, and so forth, and the happy ultimate development of the constitutional monarchy. It might be pointed out that even to-day there are clear indications of the survival in England of attachment to the inalienable hereditary right of the King to his throne, as was manifest in recent events. But it is infinitely more important to consider the real significance of the position held by James, in the light of his own times and of preceding history, rather than of history yet to come, and to realize what true alternative was possible to such views.

We are apt to forget how narrow is the line of cleavage between the position of James in this matter and that even of a Whig or a Liberal Churchman. The Articles of Religion lay

down precisely dogmatic statements concerning the prerogative 'given always to all godly Princes in Holy Scripture by God Himself'. These Articles, drawn up in 1562, were ratified in England in 1571 when King James was a child of five years of age. They were accepted by him when he ascended the English throne, and they are to this day assented to by all who undertake the ministry of the Church. Throughout the long reign of Victoria nineteenth-century England used a form of prayer upon the anniversary of her accession which laid stress upon all that James had in mind. God, the disposer of all kingdoms, had placed Victoria upon the throne of England, by His grace and providence. The Epistle commands men to submit themselves 'to the King as supreme' and to the governors appointed by him. The sovereign has been called by God to defend the true faith and to promote the spiritual welfare of His people. Finally, the Queen has ascended 'the Throne of her Ancestors'. The man in the street, impatient always of reasonings about dogma or principle, might well, on reading a summary of James's views, apply casual exegesis to conclude that the differences appear to be insignificant.

Certainly the questions involved were not, in James's time or before, treated as a constitutional issue between the King and the people. The clue to the real position, a position that was familiar knowledge even to the man in the street at the time, lies before us in the very Article of Religion quoted above. For immediately before the definition of the function of the Queen comes the statement that the power of the Queen 'is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction.' And immediately after follow the words: 'The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England.' Political debate, in fact, was almost entirely concerned with religious and ecclesiastical issues, and their implications. The constitutional position of the monarchy had to be asserted, not against the freedom of the subject to choose or control his governors, but against the pretensions of ecclesiastical authority whether of the Papacy or the Synod, above all of the Papacy. This was a problem that arose to fresh urgency with the Reformation, which underlay Henry VIII's assertion of his supremacy in matters ecclesiastical as well as temporal, which was brought home most vividly to Englishmen by the Papal Bull of

Deposition of 1570 against Queen Elizabeth, followed as it was by attempts at assassination of the Queen and by the crisis of the Spanish Armada, and which James inherited when he succeeded Elizabeth on the throne she held in despite of Rome and Spain. And James had some experience of the rival theocratic claims of his Scottish ministers of religion.

The problem had two main limbs, with both of which the monarchy was deeply concerned. The Pope, as Vicar of Christ and successor to Peter, claimed the power to intervene in temporal matters if this were necessary for the spiritual welfare of his Christian flock, in whatever country they might be. And it followed that this involved the power to dispose of crowns, and to depose a Christian king when spiritual ends demanded this extreme form of intervention. There is no mystery about the resentment and apprehension felt by Queen Elizabeth when Shakespeare's play of *Richard the Second* was acted at a time of political danger in London. And there was good reason for that action of the censorship which deleted the great deposition scene in that play on its appearance in print, in the first three Quarto editions of 1597 and 1598. It is more surprising that it was allowed to appear in the fourth Quarto of 1608, under James. It is, perhaps, a tribute to the greater security of the new King's throne.

The answer that James made to the various claims of Papacy or Synod to apportion to a king the limits of his function and power, reserving to themselves spiritual and ecclesiastical power, with its unlimited implications, was in the main the answer of Henry VIII, whereby his supremacy was asserted in ecclesiastical as in temporal matters and causes. Nothing could be farther from the truth than to conceive of this position as arising fundamentally out of the desire of a vain and grasping despot to vindicate his own personal status in the commonwealth against the welfare of his subjects, subordinating the common interest of the people to his private interests. There are side-winds, it is true, which confuse the main issue. Certainly James was influenced by the feudal concepts that governed land-tenure in Scotland, and was apt to make no distinction between a right to property and a right to royal dignity and prerogative.

Certainly, too, the vast debate between the great institution

of the Common Law in England and the growing power of its rivals swelled to graver proportions under James, and reflected the major implications of the doctrine of the prerogative.

But it is abundantly evident that to look upon this great question as one that was chiefly the personal concern of James in relation to his own country is to look at it through the wrong end of the historical telescope, and to reduce it to petty proportions. It was a European question from the beginning, and it took on a fresh and acute urgency in James's time with the growth and success of the Counter-Reformation. James wrote upon these matters as spokesman for the Protestant peoples of Europe and for all their princes, an acknowledged disputant of skill, learning, and authority. He stood in the lists as champion against the most redoubtable controversialist of the time, Cardinal Bellarmine. And he organized the battle, enlisting in his support great divines of his own Church like Lancelot Andrewes, and inviting to England upon definite undertakings to enter the lists by his side such a scholar as Isaac Casaubon. It is well to recall how James was engaged, with others, in this debate before he ever ascended the throne of England, and how William Barclay's work in support of his master's position fell into two parts, the one treatise defending the divine right of kings, the other analysing destructively the claims to superior power of the Papacy.[1]

The touchstone for the right reading of James's political writings, after all, is the *Basilikon Doron*. It is the earliest. It is written most intimately and freely. And it is addressed to a privileged audience. We should do well to read it with an open mind, as if we were considering the advice of the owner of a great and prosperous business to his son and heir, being prepared to admit, as we read, the rights and privileges within its own laws of a capitalistic society. We could not then fail to be struck by the essential high-mindedness of the man of wealth and power, insisting throughout upon the duties rather than the privileges of such a position, upon the heavy weight of the great charge of one 'rather born to onus than to honos', in a word, upon the trusteeship to which a king is called. Faults which in an ordinary man might be venial in a king are heinous, magnified a hundredfold. His justice must be 'blind

[1] *De Regno et Regali Potestate; De Potestate Papae.*

and friendless'. In him all causes must give way to the supreme task allotted to him and to which all thoughts and actions must be dedicated, under the eye of his one Judge, whose judgement is stern and implacable, 'the sorest and sharpest schoolmaster'.[1] In the last pamphlet that came from his pen—for I hold it to be his—his *Meditation on 27 Matthew* of 1619, so deeply does he feel the burden of kingship and the failure of its power to sway opposition, that he ventures to compare the royal crown to the bitter crown of thorns borne by the King of Kings.

There is the heat and fire of a dark sincerity in the dreadful conclusion of the *Basilikon Doron* which calls down a stern curse upon the best beloved of the King, the adored fruit of his own loins, Prince Henry, if he should fail to observe the full measure of this divine calling to his kingly responsibility. 'I am no hypocrite', writes James more than once, and we should be chary of questioning the fundamental honesty and uprightness of thought and intent which went to the writing of this intimate treatise, written as it was to counsel the brightest hope of a coming generation in a happily settled society of which the foundation, seemingly so firm, was the monarchy. It may well be observed that James fell away from much that he set down, though by no means from the private virtues on which he laid great stress. The more one knows and learns about the intimacies of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scotland and England, the less one wonders at human frailty in a man in great place, beset by unscrupulousness, flattery, self-seeking, vice, temptation, vanity, suspicion, cruelty, at the very centre of the endless wars of evil and good, these mighty opposites forever embattled in mankind, with good fighting what seems to have been then more than ever a losing rearguard action. When all is said and done, the ideal of kingship set before Prince Henry in the *Basilikon Doron* can stand to-day for the expression of all that is best and highest in that conception of the monarchy which binds the British peoples to the Crown, and which guides the aspirations of the successors of James in his Siege Perilous, a mighty throne. Nowhere is this more fully manifest than in his discussion of marriage and of the family. And never has the case been put more high than by James in this treatise. It is well to bear in mind that it was the King's own marriage that

[1] *The New Law of Free Monarchies.*

involved him in the greatest adventure of the eventful threescore years of his life. Far from reading into his political writings the egotism of a self-willed tyrant—no man ever wrote of tyrants with freer condemnation than James—I find rather a steady undercurrent of pathos, the pathos of high ideals incapable of fulfilment, unaware of the lions in their path and, unless the King was an arch-hypocrite, and words are but words however nobly put together, a high-minded sincerity of purpose and intent.

We have only to turn to Shakespeare's dramatic picture of a king setting forth his own view of his office, in the person of Henry V, and this in the intimacy of soliloquy, to see how closely James's exposition harmonizes with the general view. And when Shakespeare's Ulysses, or his Sir Thomas More, speaks with eloquence and passion of the virtues of order and degree and of the mortal perils of their opposite, anarchy, we find there the very foundation of society as James conceives of it:

> Heaven itself is governed by order, and all the good Angels there; nay, Hell itself could not subsist without some order; and the very devils are divided into Legions, and have their chieftains: how can any society upon earth subsist without order and degrees?[1]

As a controversialist, King James has qualities which are rare in his day, the fruits of high-mindedness. There is dignity and good temper in his debating as in his exposition. He is as reasonable and measured as Hooker, seeking to arrive at the truth of the matter rather than to bear down opposition. 'I am not unwilling to be persuaded',[2] he will write, and we are apt to believe. Throughout his grievous quarrel with Rome, though it were a matter of his own Crown, and of his personal safety, as he saw it, he is never stampeded into violence, and held firmly to a more tolerant position than was natural in his time. There is food for much thought in considering the possible implication of his comments upon the Hierarchy of the Western Church and the Patriarchate:

> And for myself (if that were yet the question) I would with all my heart give my consent that the Bishop of Rome should have the first Seat: I being a Western King would go with the Patriarch of the West.[3]

[1] *A Premonition to all Kings of Christendom.*
[2] *A Defence of the Right of Kings.*
[3] *A Premonition.*

For he is haunted by thoughts of the unity of the Christian world under one faith. In general, indeed, had James's *A Premonition* not been relegated to the limbo of controversial political writing, and but for the long digression upon Antichrist, it might well have later taken its place alongside Browne's *Religio Medici* as a confession of faith and a self-examination of high personal interest. Never, certainly, was such a discussion carried on in his day with less of the spirit of assertive dogmatism:

> as I will not presume to bind any other man to my opinion herein, if his own reason lead him not thereunto, so shall I propone such probable conjectures, as (I hope) shall be free from Heresy or unlawful curiosity.[1]

And rarely does James fall into that ugliness of controversy, characteristic of his day, which makes a mock of matters of reverence, as when he writes once of 'Cake-incarnation' and 'the monstrous birth of the breaden-God'.[2] Bishop Hall and many another may show how distastefully such weapons may be used as an ordinary means of attack.

But it was difficult for him to escape some few lapses of taste, when his way of thinking and writing had the invincible freshness and vividness that is his most notable characteristic. When James instructed young Henry in *Basilikon Doron* that a natural, plain, and sensible style best befits a king, eschewing all affectations, he recommended what he practised himself. That 'naturalness', above all, which was part of his hereditary equipment as a Scottish-born prince, colours all his writing. There are passages in his prose which might well have served for 'inventions' for his poetry: speaking (prophetically concerning his own son) of the deposition of kings, he writes:

> I believe it is almost impossible for him to warrant his own life who was not able to warrant his own Kingdom. Let a cat be thrown from a high roof to the bottom of a cellar or vault, she lighteth on her feet, and runneth away without taking any harm. A King is not like a cat, howsoever a cat may look upon a King: he cannot fall from the lofty pinnacle of Royalty, to light on his feet upon the hard pavement of a private state, without crushing all his bones in pieces. It hath been the lot of very few Emperors and Kings to outlive their Empire: for men ascend to the lofty

[1] *A Premonition.* [2] *A Defence.*

Throne of Kings, with a soft and easy pace, by certain steps and degrees: there be no stately stairs to come down, they tumble head over heels together when they fall.[1]

His prose is everywhere thickly strewn with this figured speech, with images and phrases from familiar life and his own experience, often full of a pawky Scottish humour:

behold, The Royal Majesty of the King hangeth as it were by loose gimmals.

The swallow is no cause, but a companion of the Spring . . . the Pope is no founder but a follower of (Kings') good fortunes.

to give the truth leave to lie gasping and sprawling under the violence of a foreign faction.

these miracle-mongers that surfeit the world, and raise the price of paper daily.

(Enoch and Elias) making an ordinary Post betwixt Heaven and Earth.

this article of the Third Estate, like a sigh of Liberty breathing her last.

it becometh best . . . not that a colt should draw the plough, and an old horse run away with the harrow.

to fish in other folkes' waters.

the Devil is so busy a Bishop.

(dress) not over lightly like a Candy soldier.

The Lord Cardinal . . . speaketh as if he would give men counsel to dry themselves in the river, when they come as wet as a water spaniel out of a pond; or to warm themselves by the light of the Moon, when they are stark-naked, and well near frozen to death.

the holy Father . . . falls now to dandle and cocker the King in his fatherly lap.

provoked and inflamed with desire to truss the Kingdom in his talons.

Nor are James's naturalness and humour alone in showing the Scot in him. His diction and turn of phrase betray his origin and training throughout his writings, as in his commemorated speech and accent. *Basilikon Doron* illustrates this most clearly, apart from his poems and other early writings of his boyhood, but they survive into his latest prose work and letters. The Franco-Scottish cousinship appears in his use of 'oblished', of 'burreaux' for executioner, of 'morgue', and in one of his favourite

[1] *A Defence.*

adjectives 'faschious', with its noun 'fashery'. (One might almost take the frequency of the words 'kith', 'press', and 'Momus' as a touchstone of authenticity for his writings.) Where else in memorable prose in English of his day will be found so rich a treasure of Scottish speech? 'Ask at' or 'speir at', 'tigging with', 'orping', 'vaike', 'chalmer', 'sib folks', 'sib to', 'peart without scarring', 'sik another', 'nourish-father', 'anent', 'bypast', 'faulter', 'fectless', 'take tent', 'sliddriest', 'thrawen', 'dairned', 'middesses', 'born-men', 'able for'. And, for James, Elijah is fed, not by ravens, but by 'corbies'.

Truly enough did he write to his son, 'Your writes will remain as true pictures of your mind to all posterities', and his books are in fact 'a vive Idee of the author's mind', in the King's own phrase. There is, in James's prose works, as in his recorded speeches, the reflection of the same mind in maturity which in boyhood rejoiced in learning and in letters, which nourished poetic ambitions and abandoned them with regret, which loved poetry and poets and sought to understand the art, which respected the craftsmanship of letters and bent his young intelligence and experience to record its processes, and, not least, which retained its fresh outlook, its quick perception, its imaginative grasp and collocation of the abstract with the concrete and familiar, its naturalness, and its humour. As for the graver problems of character, it may well seem that history has done injustice to the man. Coming fresh from the reading of these works of a king, the free-minded reader is left with the impression of a man of singular candour, devoid of affectation and self-deception as of desire to deceive, self-critical in an age of self-approval, earnest in his desire to be fair and tolerant, hating cruelty to his fellow men, zealous to meet error with argument and fact, and, in the end, with a strange sense of a certain sweetness of spirit. Scarred as his thoughts and dreams were by the terrors of childhood, beginning as he tells us while he was yet in his mother's womb, of the Gowry affair and of Gunpowder Plot, his public utterances and his policy still refused mere vengeance. Had the Plot succeeded, he commented to Parliament, he thanked God that so

it should never have been spoken nor written in ages succeeding, that I had died ingloriously in an Ale-house, a Stews, or such vile place, that mine end should have been with the most Honourable

and best company, and in that most Honourable and fittest place for a King to be in, for doing the turns most proper to his office.

Here is the right heroic note, the material for the finest dramatic utterance. For the rest, his first declared thought is for the innocent who may be in danger from a general indignation, and of defence of the loyal Catholics among his subjects.

There is a world of shrewd understanding, as well as a moral view far in advance of his time, in the way in which he couches his admonition to his son respecting the chastity of a prince coming to his marriage, an admonition which he had every right to administer:

Be not ashamed then to keep clean your body, which is the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

It would seem that James could penetrate the hearts of men and the frailties of the age in which he lived, but there was also the understanding that comes of love in this glimpse of his thought. And it is typical of him that wherever he gleaned from others, as here he had St. Paul in mind, he gave to the fruit of his reading something of himself that enriched it and made it reflect his own mind and character.

DONNE AND LOVE POETRY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

By C. S. LEWIS

'Little of Manfred (but not very much of him)'
W. S. GILBERT.

I HAVE seen an old history of literature in which the respective claims of Shelley and Mrs. Hemans to be the greatest lyrist of the nineteenth century were seriously weighed; and Donne, who was so inconsiderable fifty years ago, seems at the moment to rank among our greatest poets.

If there were no middle state between absolute certainty and what Mr. Kellett calls the whirligig of taste, these fluctuations would make us throw up criticism in despair. But where it is impossible to go quite straight we may yet resolve to reel as little as we can. Such phenomena as the present popularity of Donne or the growing unpopularity of Milton are not to be deplored; they are rather to be explained. It is not impossible to see why Donne's poetry should be overrated in the twentieth and underrated in the eighteenth century; and in so far as we detect these temporary disturbing factors and explain the varying appearances of the object by the varying positions of the observers, we shall come appreciably nearer to a glimpse of Donne *simpliciter*. I shall concern myself in what follows chiefly with his love poetry.

In style this poetry is primarily a development of one of the two styles which we find in the work of Donne's immediate predecessors. One of these is the mellifluous, luxurious, 'builded rhyme', as in Spenser's *Amoretti*: the other is the abrupt, familiar, and consciously 'manly' style in which nearly all Wyatt's lyrics are written. Most of the better poets make use of both, and in *Astrophel and Stella* much of Sidney's success depends on deliberate contrast between such poetry as

That golden sea whose waves in curls are broken

and such poetry as

He cannot love: no, no, let him alone.

But Wyatt remains, if not the finest, yet much the purest example of the plainer manner, and in reading his songs, with their conversational openings, their surly (not to say sulky) defiances, and their lack of obviously poetic ornament, I find myself again and again reminded of Donne. But of course he is a Donne with most of the genius left out. Indeed, the first and most obvious achievement of the younger poet is to have raised this kind of thing to a much higher power: to have kept the vividness of conversation where Wyatt too often had only the flatness; to sting like a lash where Wyatt merely grumbled. The difference in degree between the two poets thus obscures the similarity in kind. Donne has so far surpassed not only Wyatt but all the Elizabethans in what may be called their Wyatt moments, and has so generally abstained from attempting to rival them in their other vein, that we hardly think of him as continuing one side of their complex tradition; he appears rather as the innovator who substituted a realistic for a decorated kind of love poetry.

Now this error is not in itself important. In an age which was at all well placed for judging the comparative merits of the two styles, it would not matter though we thought that Donne had invented what in fact he only brought to perfection. But our own age is not so placed. The mellifluous style, which we may agree to call Petrarchan though no English poet is very like Petrarch, has really no chance of a fair hearing. It is based on a conception of poetry wholly different from that of the twentieth century. It descends from old Provençal and Italian sources and presupposes a poetic like that of Dante. Dante, we may remember, thinks of poetry as something to be made, to be 'adorned as much as possible', to have its 'true sense' hidden beneath a rich vesture of 'rhetorical colouring'. The 'Petrarchan' sonneteers are not trying to make their work sound like the speaking voice. They are not trying to communicate faithfully the raw, the merely natural, impact of actual passion. The passion for them is not a specimen of 'nature' to be followed so much as a lump of ore to be refined: they ask themselves not 'How can I record it with the least sophistication?' but 'Of its bones what coral can I make?' and to accuse them of insincerity is like calling an oyster insincere because it makes its disease into a pearl. The aim of the other style is quite different.

It wishes to be convincing, intimate, naturalistic. It would be very foolish to set up these two kinds of poetry as rivals, for obviously they are different and both are good. It is a fine thing to hear the living voice, the voice of a man like ourselves, whispering or shouting to us from the printed page with all the heat of life; and it is a fine thing, too, to see such life—so pitiably like our own, I doubt not, in the living—caught up and transfigured, sung by the voice of a god into an ecstasy no less real though in another dimension.[1] There is no necessary quarrel between the two. But there are many reasons why one of them should start with overwhelming odds in its favour at the present moment. For many years our poetics have been becoming more and more expressionistic. First came Wordsworth with his theory, and we have never quite worked it out of our system; even in the crude form that 'you should write as you talk', it works at the back of much contemporary criticism. Then came the final break-up of aristocracy and the consequent, and still increasing, distaste for arduous disciplines of sentiment—the wholesale acceptance of the merely and unredeemedly natural. Finally, the psychological school of criticism overthrew what was left of the old conception of a poem as a construction and set up instead the poem as 'document'. In so far as we admire Donne for being our first great practitioner in one of the many possible kinds of lyric, we are on firm ground; but the conception of him as liberator, as one who substituted 'real' or 'live' or 'sincere' for 'artificial' or 'conventional' love lyric, begs all the questions and is simply a prejudice *de siècle*.

But of course when we have identified the Wyatt element in Donne, we have still a very imperfect notion of his manner. We have described 'Busie old foole' and 'I wonder by my troth' and 'For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love'; but we have left out the cleaving remora, the triple soul, the stiff twin compasses, and a hundred other things that were not in Wyatt. There were indeed a great many things not in Wyatt, and his

[1] Those who object to 'emotive terms' in criticism may prefer to read '... used by an accomplished poet to produce an attitude relevant not directly to outer experience but to the central nucleus of the total attitude-and-belief-feeling system'. It must not be supposed, however, that the present writer's theory of either knowledge or value would permit him, in the long run, to accept the restatement.

manly plainness can easily be over-praised—'pauper videri Cinna vult et est pauper'. If Donne had not reinforced the style with new attractions it would soon have died of very simplicity. An account of these reinforcements will give us a rough notion of the unhappily named 'metaphysical' manner.

The first of them is the multiplication of conceits—not conceits of any special 'metaphysical' type but conceits such as we find in all the Elizabethans. When Donne speaks of the morning coming from his mistress's eyes, or tells how they wake him like the light of a taper, these fanciful hyperboles are not, in themselves, a novelty. But, side by side with these, we find, as his second characteristic, what may be called the difficult conceit. This is clearly a class which no two readers will fill up in quite the same way. An example of what I mean comes at the end of *The Sunne Rising* where the sun is congratulated on the fact that the two lovers have shortened his task for him. Even the quickest reader will be checked, if only for an infinitesimal time, before he sees how and why the lovers have done this, and will experience a kind of astonished relief at the unexpected answer. The pleasure of the thing, which can be paralleled in other artistic devices, perhaps in rhyme itself, would seem to depend on recurrent tension and relaxation. In the third place, we have Donne's characteristic choice of imagery. The Petrarchans (I will call them so for convenience) had relied for their images mainly on mythology and on natural objects. Donne uses both of these sparingly—though his sea that 'Leaves embroider'd works upon the sand' is as fine an image from nature as I know—and taps new sources such as law, science, philosophy, and the commonplaces of urban life. It is this that has given the Metaphysicals their name and been much misunderstood. When Johnson said that they were resolved to show their learning he said truth in fact, for there is an element of pedantry, of dandyism, an *odi profanos* air, about Donne—the old printer's address not to the *readers* but to the *understanders* is illuminating. But Johnson was none the less misleading. He encouraged the idea that the abstruse nature of some of Donne's similes was poetically relevant for good or ill. In fact, of course, when we have once found out what Donne is talking about—that is, when Sir Herbert Grierson has told us—the learning of the poet becomes unimportant. The image will stand or fall like any other by its

intrinsic merit—its power of conveying a meaning 'more luminously and with a sensation of delight'. The matter is worth mentioning only because Donne's reputation in this respect repels some humble readers and attracts some prigs. What is important for criticism is his avoidance of the obviously poetical image; whether the intractable which he is determined to poetize is fetched from Thomas Aquinas or from the London underworld, the method is essentially the same. Indeed it would be easy to exaggerate the amount of learned imagery in his poems and even the amount of his learning. He knows much, but he seems to know even more because his knowledge so seldom overlaps with our own; and some scraps of his learning, such as that of angelic consciousness or of the three souls in man, come rather too often—like the soldiers in a stage army, and with the same result. This choice of imagery is closely connected with the surprising and ingenious nature of the connexions which Donne makes between the image and the matter in hand, thus getting a double surprise. No one, in the first place, expects lovers to be compared to compasses; and no one, even granted the comparison, would guess in what respect they are going to be compared.

But all these characteristics, in their mere enumeration, are what Donne would have called a 'ruinous anatomie'. They might all be used—indeed they all are used by Herbert—to produce a result very unlike Donne's. What gives their peculiar character to most of the *Songs and Sonets* is that they are dramatic in the sense of being addresses to an imagined hearer in the heat of an imagined conversation, and usually addresses of a violently argumentative character. The majority of lyrics, even where nominally addressed to a god, a woman, or a friend, are meditations or introspective narratives. Thus Herbert's 'Throw away thy rod' is formally an apostrophe; in fact, it is a picture of Herbert's own state of mind. But the majority of the *Songs and Sonets*, including some that are addressed to abstractions like Love, present the poet's state of mind only indirectly and are ostensibly concerned with badgering, wheedling, convincing, or upbraiding an imagined hearer. No poet, not even Browning, buttonholes us or, as we say, 'goes for' us like Donne. There are, of course, exceptions. *Goe and catche a falling starre*, though it is in the form of an address, has not this effect; and

Twicknam Garden or the *Nocturnall* are in fact, as well as in pretension, soliloquies. These exceptions include some of Donne's best work; and indeed, one of the errors of contemporary criticism, to my mind, is an insufficient distinction between Donne's best and Donne's most characteristic. But I do not at present wish to emphasize this. For the moment it is enough to notice that the majority of his love lyrics, and of the *Elegies*, are of the type I have described. And since they are, nearly always, in the form of arguments, since they attempt to extort something from us, they are poetry of an extremely exacting kind. This exacting quality, this urgency and pressure of the poet upon the reader in every line, seems to me to be the root both of Donne's weakness and his strength. When the thing fails it exercises the same dreadful fascination that we feel in the grip of the worst kind of bore—the hot-eyed, unescapable kind. When it succeeds it produces a rare intensity in our enjoyment—which is what a modern critic meant (I fancy) when he claimed that Donne made all other poetry sound less 'serious'. The point is worth investigation.

For, of course, in one sense these poems are not serious at all. Poem after poem consists of extravagant conceits woven into the preposterous semblance of an argument. The preposterousness is the point. Donne intends to take your breath away by the combined subtlety and impudence of the steps that lead to his conclusion. Any attempt to overlook Donne's 'wit' in this sense, or to pretend that his rare excursions into the direct expression of passion are typical, is false criticism. The paradox, the surprise, are essential; if you are not enjoying these you are not enjoying what Donne intended. Thus *Womans Constancy* is of no interest as a document of Donne's 'cynicism'—any fool can be promiscuously unchaste and any fool can say so. The merit of the poem consists in the skill with which it leads us to expect a certain conclusion and then gives us precisely the opposite conclusion, and that, too, with an appearance of reasonableness. Thus, again, the art of *The Will* consists in keeping us guessing through each stanza what universal in the concluding triplet will bind together the odd particulars in the preceding six lines. The test case is *The Flea*. If you think this very different from Donne's other poems you may be sure that you have no taste for the real Donne. But for the accident that

modern cleanliness by rendering this insect disgusting has also rendered it comic, the conceit is exactly on the same level as that of the tears in *A Valediction: of weeping*.

And yet the modern critic was right. The effect of all these poems is somehow serious. 'Serious' indeed is the only word. Seldom profound in thought, not always passionate in feeling, they are none the less the very opposite of gay. It is as though Donne performed in deepest depression those gymnastics which are usually a sign of intellectual high spirits. He himself speaks of his '*concupiscence* of wit'. The hot, dark word is well chosen. We are all familiar—at least if we have lived in Ireland—with the type of mind which combines furious anger with a revelling delight in eloquence, nay grows more rhetorical as anger increases. In the same way, wit and the delight in wit are, for Donne, not only compatible with, but actually provoked by, the most uneasy passions—by contempt and self-contempt and unconvinced sensuality. His wit is not so much the play as the irritability of intellect. But none the less, like the angry Irishman's *clausulae*, it is still enjoyed and still intends to produce admiration; and if we do not hold our breaths as we read, wondering in the middle of each complication how he will resolve it, and exclaiming at the end 'How ever did you think of *that*?' (Carew speaks of his 'fresh invention'), we are not enjoying Donne.

Now this kind of thing can produce a very strong and a very peculiar pleasure. Our age has nothing to repent of in having learned to relish it. If the Augustans, in their love for the obviously poetical and harmonious, were blind to its merits, so much the worse for them. At the same time it is desirable not to overlook the special congeniality of such poetry to the twentieth century, and to beware of giving to this highly specialized and, in truth, very limited kind of excellence, a place in our scheme of literary values which it does not deserve. Donne's rejection of the obviously poetical image was a good method—for Donne; but if we think that there is some intrinsic superiority in this method, so that all poetry about pylons and *non obstantes* must needs be of a higher order than poetry about lawns and lips and breasts and orient skies, we are deceived—deceived by the fact that we, like Donne, happen to live at the end of a great period of rich and nobly obvious

poetry. It is natural to want your savoury after your sweets; but you must not base a philosophy of cookery on that momentary preference. Again, Donne's obscurity and occasional abstruseness have sometimes (not always) produced magnificent results, and we do well to praise them. But, as I have hinted, an element of dandyism was present in Donne himself—he 'would have no such readers as he could teach'—and we must be very cautious here lest shallow call to shallow. There is a great deal of dandyism (largely of Franco-American importation) in the modern literary world. And finally, what shall we say of Donne's 'seriousness', of that persistency, that nimiety, that astringent quality (as Boehme would have said) which makes him, if not the saddest, at least the most uncomfortable, of our poets? Here, surely, we find the clearest and most disturbing congeniality of all. It would be foolish not to recognize the growth in our criticism of something that I can only describe as literary Manichaeism—a dislike of peace and pleasure and heartsease simply as such. To be bilious is, in some circles, almost the first qualification for a place in the Temple of Fame.[1] We distrust the pleasures of imagination, however hotly and unmerrily we preach the pleasures of the body. This seriousness must not be confused with profundity. We do not like poetry that essays to be wise, and Chaucer would think we had rejected 'doctryne' and 'solas' about equally. We want, in fact, just what Donne can give us—something stern and tough, though not necessarily virtuous, something that does not conciliate. Born under Saturn, we do well to confess the liking complexionally forced upon us; but not to attempt that wisdom which dominates the stars is pusillanimous, and to set up our limitation as a norm—to believe, against all experience, in a Saturnocentric universe—is folly.

Before leaving the discussion of Donne's manner I must touch, however reluctantly, on a charge that has been brought against him from the time of Ben Jonson till now. Should he, or should he not, be hanged for not keeping the accent? There is more than one reason why I do not wish to treat this subject. In the first place, the whole nature of Donne's stanza,

[1] In this we have been anticipated. See *Emma*, ch. 25: 'I know what worthy people they are. Perry tells me that Mr. Cole never touches malt liquor. You would not think it to look at him, but he is bilious—Mr. Cole is very bilious.'

and of what he does within the stanza, cannot be profitably discussed except by one who knows much more than I do about the musical history of the time. *Confined Love*, for example, is metrically meaningless without the tune. But I could make shift with that difficulty: my real trouble is of quite a different kind. In discussing Donne's present popularity, the question of metre forces me to a statement which I do not make without embarrassment. Some one must say it, but I do not care for the office, for what I have to say will hardly be believed among scholars and hardly listened to by any one else. It is simply this—that the opinions of the modern world on the metre of any poet are, in general, of no value at all, because most modern readers of poetry do not know how to scan. My evidence for this amazing charge is twofold. In the first place I find that very many of my own pupils—some of them from excellent schools, most of them great readers of poetry, not a few of them talented and (for their years) well-informed persons—are quite unable, when they first come to me, to find out from the verse how Marlowe pronounced Barabas or Mahomet. To be sure, if challenged, they will say that they do not believe in syllable-counting or that the old methods of scansion have been exploded, but this is only a smoke screen. It is easy to find out that they have not got beyond the traditional legal fiction of longs and shorts and have never even got so far: they are in virgin ignorance. And my experience as an examiner shows me that this is not peculiar to my own pupils. My second piece of evidence is more remarkable. I have heard a celebrated belle-lettrist—a printed critic and poet—repeatedly, in the same lecture, so mispronounce the name of a familiar English poem as to show that he did not know a decasyllabic line when he met it. The conclusion is unavoidable. Donne may be metrically good or bad, in fact; but it is obvious that he might be bad to any degree without offending the great body of his modern admirers. On that side, his present vogue is worth precisely nothing. No doubt this widespread metrical ignorance is itself a symptom of some deeper change; and I am far from suggesting that the appearance of *vers libre* is simply a result of the ignorance. More probably the ignorance, and the deliberate abandonment, of accentual metres are correlative phenomena, and both the results of some revolution in our whole sense of rhythm—a

revolution of great importance reaching deep down into the unconscious and even perhaps into the blood. But that is not our business at the moment.

The sentiment of Donne's love poems is easier to describe than their manner, and its charm for modern readers easier to explain. No one will deny that the twentieth century, so far, has shown an extraordinary interest in the sexual appetite and has been generally marked by a reaction from the romantic idealization of that appetite. We have agreed with the romantics in regarding sexual love as a subject of overwhelming importance, but hardly in anything else. On the purely literary side we are wearied with the floods of uxorious bathos which the romantic conception undoubtedly liberated. As psychologists we are interested in the new discovery of the secreter and less reputable operations of the instinct. As practical philosophers we are living in an age of sexual experiment. The whole subject offers us an admirable field for the kind of seriousness I have just described. It seems odd, at first sight, that a sixteenth-century poet should give us so exactly what we want; but it can be explained.

The great central movement of love-poetry, and of fiction about love, in Donne's time is that represented by Shakespeare and Spenser. This movement consisted in the final transmutation of the medieval courtly love or romance of adultery into an equally romantic love that looked to marriage as its natural conclusion. The process, of course, had begun far earlier—as early, indeed, as the *Kingis Quhair*—but its triumph belongs to the sixteenth century. It is most powerfully expressed by Spenser, but more clearly and philosophically by Chapman in that under-estimated poem, his *Hero and Leander*. These poets were engaged, as Professor Vinaver would say, in reconciling Carbonek and Camelot, virtue and courtesy, divine and human love; and incidentally in laying down the lines which love poetry was to follow till the nineteenth century. We who live at the end of the dispensation which they inaugurated and in reaction against it are not well placed for evaluating their work. Precisely what is revolutionary and creative in it seems to us platitudinous, orthodox, and stale. If there were a poet, and a strong poet, alive in their time who was failing to move with them, he would inevitably appear to us more 'modern' than they.

But was Donne such a poet? A great critic has assigned him an almost opposite role, and it behoves us to proceed with caution. It may be admitted at once that Donne's work is not, in this respect, all of a piece; no poet fits perfectly into such a scheme as I have outlined—it can be true only by round and by large. There are poems in which Donne attempts to sing a love perfectly in harmony with the moral law, but they are not very numerous and I do not think they are usually his best pieces. Donne never for long gets rid of a medieval sense of the sinfulness of sexuality; indeed, just because the old conventional division between Carbonek and Camelot is breaking up, he feels this more continuously and restively than any poet of the Middle Ages.

Donne was bred a Roman Catholic. The significance of this in relation to his learned and scholastic imagery can be exaggerated; scraps of Calvin, or, for that matter, of Euclid or Bacon, might have much the same poetical effect as his scraps of Aquinas. But it is all-important for his treatment of love. This is not easily understood by the modern reader, for later-day conceptions of the Puritan and the Roman Catholic stand in the way. We have come to use the word 'Puritan' to mean what should rather be called 'rigorist' or 'ascetic', and we tend to assume that the sixteenth-century Puritans were 'puritanical' in this sense. Calvin's rigorist theocracy at Geneva lends colour to the error. But there is no understanding the period of the Reformation in England until we have grasped the fact that the quarrel between the Puritans and the Papists was not primarily a quarrel between rigorism and indulgence, and that, in so far as it was, the rigorism was on the Roman side. On many questions, and specially in their view of the marriage bed, the Puritans were the indulgent party; if we may without disrespect so use the name of a great Roman Catholic, a great writer, and a great man, they were much more Chestertonian than their adversaries. The idea that a Puritan was a repressed and repressive person would have astonished Sir Thomas More and Luther about equally. On the contrary, More thought of a Puritan as one who 'loved no lenten fast nor lightly no fast else, saving breakfast and eat fast and drink fast and luske fast in their lechery'—a person only too likely to end up in the 'abominable heresies' of the Anabaptists about communism of

goods and wives. And Puritan theology, so far from being grim and gloomy, seemed to More to err in the direction of fantastic optimism. 'I could for my part', he writes, 'be very well content that sin and pain and all were as shortly gone as Tindall telleth us: but I were loth that he deceved us if it be not so.' More would not have understood the idea, sometimes found in the modern writers, that he and his friends were defending a 'merry' Catholic England against sour precisions; they were rather defending necessary severity and sternly realistic theology against wanton labefaction—penance and 'works' and vows of celibacy and mortification and Purgatory against the easy doctrine, the mere wish-fulfilment dream, of salvation by faith. Hence when we turn from the religious works of More to Luther's *Table-talk* we are at once struck by the geniality of the latter. If Luther is right, we have waked from nightmare into sunshine: if he is wrong, we have entered a fools' paradise. The burden of his charge against the Catholics is that they have needlessly tormented us with scruples; and, in particular, that 'Antichrist will regard neither God nor the love of women'. 'On what pretence have they forbidden us marriage? 'Tis as though we were forbidden to eat, to drink, to sleep.' 'Where women are not honoured, temporal and domestic government are despised.' He praises women repeatedly: More, it will be remembered, though apparently an excellent husband and father, hardly ever mentions a woman save to ridicule her. It is easy to see why Luther's marriage (as he called it) or Luther's 'abominable bichery' (if you prefer) became almost a symbol. More can never keep off the subject for more than a few pages.

This antithesis, if once understood, explains many things in the history of sentiment, and many differences, noticeable to the present day, between the Protestant and the Catholic parts of Europe. It explains why the conversion of courtly love into romantic monogamous love was so largely the work of English, and even of Puritan, poets; and it goes far to explain why Donne contributes so little to that movement.

I trace in his poetry three levels of sentiment. On the lowest level (lowest, that is, in order of complexity), we have the celebration of simple appetite, as in *Elegy XIX*. If I call this a pornographic poem, I must be understood to use that ugly

word as a descriptive, not a dyslogistic, term. I mean by it that this poem, in my opinion, is intended to arouse the appetite it describes, to affect not only the imagination but the nervous system of the reader.[1] And I may as well say at once—but who would willingly claim to be a judge in such matters?—that it seems to me to be very nearly perfect in its kind. Nor would I call it an immoral poem. Under what conditions the reading of it could be an innocent act is a real moral question; but the poem itself contains nothing intrinsically evil.

On the highest, or what Donne supposed to be the highest, level we have the poems of ostentatiously virtuous love, *The Undertaking*, *A Valediction: forbidding mourning*, and *The Extasie*. It is here that the contrast between Donne and his happier contemporaries is most marked. He is trying to follow them into the new age, to be at once passionate and innocent; and if any reader will make the experiment of imagining Beatrice or Juliet or Perdita, or again, Amoret or Britomart, or even Philoclea or Pamela, as the auditress throughout these poems, he will quickly feel that something is wrong. You may deny, as perhaps some do, that the romantic conception of 'pure' passion has any meaning; but certainly, if there is such a thing, it is not like this. It does not prove itself pure by talking about purity. It does not keep on drawing distinctions between spirit and flesh to the detriment of the latter and then explaining why the flesh is, after all, to be used. This is what Donne does, and the result is singularly unpleasant. The more he labours the deeper 'Dun is in the mire', and it is quite arguable that *The Extasie* is a much nastier poem than the nineteenth *Elegy*. What any sensible woman would make of such a wooing it is difficult to imagine—or would be difficult if we forgot the amazing protective faculty which each sex possesses of not listening to the other.

Between these two extremes falls the great body of Donne's love poetry. In certain obvious, but superficial, respects, it continues the medieval tradition. Love is still a god and lovers his 'clergie'; oaths may be made in 'reverentiall feare' of his

[1] The restatement of this in terms acceptable to the Richardian school (for whom all poetry equally is addressed to the nervous system) should present no difficulty. For them it will be a distinction between parts, or functions, of the system.

'wrath'; and the man who resists him is 'rebell and atheist'. Donne can even doubt, like Soredamors, whether those who admit Love after a struggle have not forfeited his grace by their resistance, like

> Small townes which stand stiffe, til great shot
> Enforce them.

He can personify the attributes of his mistress, the 'enormous gyant' her Disdain and the 'enchantress *Honor*', quite in the manner of *The Romance of the Rose*. He writes *Albas* for both sexes, and in the *Holy Sonnets* repents of his love poetry, writing his palinode, in true medieval fashion. A reader may wonder, at first, why the total effect is so foreign to the Middle Ages: but Donne himself has explained this when he says, speaking of the god of Love,

> If he wroung from mee a teare, I brin'd it so
> With scorne or shame, that him it nourish'd not.

This admirable couplet not only tells us, in brief, what Donne has effected but shows us that he knew what he was doing. It does not, of course, cover every single poem. A few pieces admittedly express delighted love and they are among Donne's most popular works; such are *The Good-morrow* and *The Anniversarie*—poems that again remind us of the difference between his best and his typical. But the majority of the poems ring the changes on five themes, all of them grim ones—on the sorrow of parting (including death), the miseries of secrecy, the falseness of the mistress, the fickleness of Donne, and finally on contempt for love itself. The poems of parting stand next to the poems of happy love in general popularity and are often extremely affecting. We may hear little of the delights of Donne's loves, and dislike what we hear of their 'purity'; the pains ring true. The song *Sweetest love, I do not goe* is remarkable for its broken, but haunting, melody, and nowhere else has Donne fused argument, conceit, and classical imitation into a more perfect unity. *The Feaver* is equally remarkable, and that for a merit very rare in Donne—its inevitability. It is a single jet of music and feeling, a straight flight without appearance of effort. The remaining four of our five themes are all various articulations of the 'scorne or shame' with which Donne 'brines' his reluctantly extorted

tributes to the god of Love; monuments, unparalleled outside Catullus, to the close kinship between certain kinds of love and certain kinds of hate. The faithlessness of women is sometimes treated, in a sense, playfully; but there is always something—the clever surprise in *Womans Constancy* or the grotesque in *Goe and catche a fallinge starre*—which stops these poems short of a true anacreontic gaiety. The theme of faithlessness rouses Donne to a more characteristic, and also a better, poetry in such a hymn of hate as *The Apparition*, or in the sad mingling of fear, contempt, and self-contempt in *A Lecture upon the Shadow*. The pains of secrecy give opportunity for equally fierce and turbulent writing. I may be deceived when I find in the sixteenth *Elegy*, along with many other nauseas and indignations, a sickened male contempt for the whole female world of nurses and 'midnight startings' and hysterics; but *The Curse* is unambiguous. The ending here is particularly delicious just because the main theme—an attack on *Jalousie* or the 'lozengiers'—is so medieval and so associated with the 'honour of love'. Of the poet's own fickleness one might expect, at last, a merry treatment; and perhaps in *The Indifferent* we get it. But I am not sure. Even this seems to have a sting in it. And of *Loves Usury* what shall I say? The struggle between lust and reason, the struggle between love and reason, these we know; but Donne is perhaps the first poet who has ever painted lust holding love at arm's length, in the hope 'that there's no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet'—and all this only as an introduction to the crowning paradox that in old age even a reciprocated love must be endured. The poem is, in its way, a masterpiece, and a powerful indirect expression of Donne's habitual 'shame and scorne'. For, in the long run, it must be admitted that 'the love of hatred and the hate of love' is the main, though not the only, theme of the *Songs and Sonets*. A man is a fool for loving and a double fool for saying so in 'whining poetry'; the only excuse is that the sheer difficulty of drawing one's pains through rhyme's vexation 'allays' them. A woman's love at best will be only the 'spheare' of a man's—inferior to it as the heavenly spheres are to their intelligences or air to angels. Love is a spider that can transubstantiate all sweets into bitter: a devil who differs from his fellow devils at court by taking the soul and giving nothing in exchange. The

mystery which the Petrarchans or their medieval predecessors made of it is 'imposture all', like the claims of alchemists. It is a very simple matter (*foeda et brevis voluptas*), and all it comes to in the end is

> that my man
> Can be as happy as I can.

Unsuccessful love is a plague and tyranny; but there is a plague even worse—Love might try

> A deeper plague, to make her love mee too!

Love enjoyed is like gingerbread with the gilt off. What pleased the whole man now pleases one sense only—

> And that so lamely, as it leaves behinde
> A kinde of sorrowing dulnesse to the minde.

The doctors say it shortens life.

It may be urged that this is an unfair selection of quotations, or even that I have arrived at my picture of Donne by leaving out all his best poems, for one reason or another, as 'exceptions', and then describing what remains. There is one sense in which I admit this. Any account of Donne which concentrates on his love poetry must be unfair to the poet, for it leaves out much of his best work. By hypothesis, it must neglect the dazzling sublimity of his best religious poems, the grotesque charm of *The Progresse of the Soule*, and those scattered, but exquisite, patches of poetry that appear from time to time amidst the insanity of *The First and Second Anniversaries*. Even in the *Epistles* there are good passages. But as far as concerns his love poetry, I believe I am just. I have no wish to rule out the exceptions, provided that they are admitted to be exceptions. I am attempting to describe the prevailing tone of his work, and in my description no judgement is yet implied.

To judgement let us now proceed. Here is a collection of verse describing with unusual and disturbing energy the torments of a mind which has been baffled in its relation to sexual love by certain temporary and highly special conditions. What is its value? To admit the 'unusual and disturbing energy' is, of course, to admit that Donne is a poet; he has, in the modern phrase, 'put his stuff across'. Those who believe that criticism can separate inquiry into the success of communication from

that into the value of the thing communicated will demand that we should now proceed to evaluate the 'stuff'; and if we do so, it would not be hard to point out how transitory and limited and, as it were, accidental the appeal of such 'stuff' must be. But something of the real problem escapes under this treatment. It would not be impossible to imagine a poet dealing with this same stuff, marginal and precarious as it is, in a way that would permanently engage our attention. Donne's real limitation is not that he writes *about*, but that he writes *in*, a chaos of violent and transitory passions. He is perpetually excited and therefore perpetually cut off from the deeper and more permanent springs of his own excitement. But how is this to be separated from his technique—the nagging, nudging, quibbling stridency of his manner? If a man writes thus, what can he communicate but excitement? Or again, if he finds nothing but excitement to communicate, how else should he write? It is impossible here to distinguish cause from effect. Our concern, in the long run, must be with the actual poetry (the 'stuff' *thus* communicated, this communication of *such* 'stuff') and with the question how far that total phenomenon is calculated to interest human imagination. And to this question I can see only one answer: that its interest, save for a mind specially predisposed in its favour, must be short-lived and superficial, though intense. Paradoxical as it may seem, Donne's poetry is too simple to satisfy. Its complexity is all on the surface—an intellectual and fully conscious complexity that we soon come to the end of. Beneath this we find nothing but a limited series of 'passions'—explicit, mutually exclusive passions which can be instantly and adequately labelled as such—things which can be readily talked about, and indeed, must be talked about because, in silence, they begin to lose their hard outlines and overlap, to betray themselves as partly fictitious. That is why Donne is always arguing. There are puzzles in his work, but we can solve them all if we are clever enough; there is none of the depth and ambiguity of real experience in him, such as underlies the apparent simplicity of *How sleep the brave* or *Songs of Innocence*, or even *Αἰαῖ Λειψύδριον*.[1] The same is true, for the most part, of the specifically 'metaphysical' comparisons. One idea has been

[1] The superficial simplicity here is obvious; the deeper ambiguity becomes evident if we ask whether Lipsydrion is an object of detestation or of nostalgic affection.

THE LOVE POETRY OF JOHN DONNE

A REPLY TO MR. C. S. LEWIS

By JOAN BENNETT

IN that brilliant and learned book *The Allegory of Love* Mr. Lewis writes, 'cynicism and idealism about women are twin fruits on the same branch—are the positive and negative poles of a single thing'. Few poets provide a better illustration of this than John Donne. These *Songs and Sonets* and *Elegies* which, Mr. Lewis would have us believe, never explain 'why people write poems about love at all', are the work of one who has tasted every fruit in love's orchard, from that which pleased only while he ate it—

> And when hee hath the kernell eate
> Who doth not fling away the shell?—

to that which raised a thirst for even fuller spiritual satisfaction, so that he wrote:

> Here the admyring her my mind did whett
> To seeke thee God.

How is it then that distinguished critics wonder what it is all about; that Dryden declares 'Donne perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts and entertain them with the softness of love'; and that Mr. Lewis wonders 'what any sensible woman can make of such love-making'? A part of the trouble is, I believe, that they are accustomed to, or that they prefer, another kind of love poetry, in which the poet endeavours to paint the charms of his mistress:

> Some asked me where Rubies grew
> And nothing I did say:
> But with my finger pointed to
> The lips of Julia.
> Some asked how Pearls did grow and where?
> Then spoke I to my Girle,
> To part her lips and show them there
> The Quarelets of Pearl.

Donne tells us very little about that beauty of 'colour and skin' which he describes in *The Undertaking* as 'but their oldest clothes'. He writes almost exclusively about the emotion, and not about its cause; he describes and analyses the experience of being in love, if I may use that word for the moment to cover his many kinds of experience which range from the mere sensual delight presupposed in *Elegy XIX* to the 'marriage of true minds' celebrated in *The Good-morrow*, or in *The Valediction: forbidding mourning*. In *Elegy XIX*, for instance, Donne is writing of the same kind of experience as that of which Carew writes in *The Rapture*. But Carew expends his poetic gifts in description of the exquisite body of the woman, so that the reader can vicariously share his joys. Donne, on the other hand, gives two lines to description, and even so they are not really about what he sees; he is content to suggest by analogy the delight of the eye when the woman undresses:

> Your gown going off, such beauteous state reveals,
> As when from flowry meads th' hills shadow steales.

The poem is not about her exquisite body, but about what he feels like when he stands there waiting for her to undress. Now it may be that 'any sensible woman' would rather be told of

> Thy bared snow and thy unbraided gold,

but I am not sure. She can see that in her looking-glass, or she may believe she sees these things reflected in the work of some painter, for the painter's art can show such things better than any words. It may interest her more to know what it feels like to be a man in love. In any case, it is of that that Donne chooses to write. He is not incapable of describing physical charms; his description of a blush in *The Second Anniversary*:

> her pure, and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheekes, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one might almost say, her body thought;

is better, in my judgement, than Spenser's

> And troubled bloud through his pale face was seene
> To come and goe with tydings from the hart.[1]

Or again, Mr. Lewis speaks of the radiance of Lovelace's line,

> But shake your head and scatter day,

[1] *The Faerie Queene*, I. ix, 51.

which was anticipated, and perhaps suggested, by Donne's

> Ev'ry thy haire for love to worke upon
> Is much too much, some fitter must be sought;
> For, nor in nothing, nor in things
> Extreme, and scatt'ring bright, can love inhere.

But the fact remains that such touches of description are very rare in Donne's poetry. His interest lay elsewhere, namely in dramatizing, and analysing, and illustrating by a wealth of analogy the state, or rather states, of being in love.

But what does he mean by love? We have the whole mass of Donne's poems before us, thrown together higgledy-piggledy with no external evidence as to when or to whom any one of them was written. And in some of them love is 'imposture all', or 'a winter-seeming summers night'; in others physical union is all in all so that two lovers in bed are a whole world; and elsewhere we are told that

> Difference of sex no more wee knew
> Than our Guardian Angells doe.

And elsewhere again:

> Our bodies why doe wee forbeare?
> They are ours, though they are not wee, Wee are
> The intelligences, they the spheare.
> We owe them thankes because they thus
> Did us, to us, at first convay,
> Yeelded their forces, sense, to us,
> Nor are drosse to us, but allay.

The temptation to assign each poem to a particular period and to associate each with a particular woman is very strong. It has been yielded to again and again, not only in Sir Edmund Gosse's biography, but much more recently. Yet it must be resisted for two reasons: first because we have no evidence as to when any one of the *Songs and Sonets* was written, and secondly because we cannot know how far the experience of which any one of them treats was real or imaginary. Mr. Lewis is very well aware of these things. But it is no less misleading to go to the other extreme and read them as though they were all written at one time, or all with equal seriousness and sincerity. We have some important facts to guide us. Between the years 1597 and 1601 Donne fell in love with Anne More. He married her

in 1601, as Walton puts it, 'without the allowance of those friends whose approbation always was, and ever will be necessary, to make even a virtuous love become lawful'. He had nine children by her, and watched over them with her when they were sick, and suffered with her when some of them died. He had been married seven years when he wrote a letter headed 'From mine hospital at Mitcham', in which he says:

> I write from the fire-side in my parlour, and in the noise of three gamesome children, and by the side of her whom, because I have transplanted to such a wretched fortune, I must labour to disguise that from her by all such honest devices, as giving her my company and discourse.

Three years later, in 1611, Donne is reluctant to leave home and travel with his patron Sir Robert Drury, because his wife, who was then with child, 'professed an unwillingness to allow him any absence from her saying her divining soul boded her some ill in his absence'. The wording of that sentence, quoted by Walton, is heard again in one of Donne's loveliest songs, but the sense is reversed. Experience tells us that when we are afraid to let a loved one go it is not, as a rule, because *we* may come to harm in his absence. It is much more probable that Anne Donne was afraid for her husband on those dangerous seas to which his poetry so often refers, and that he then wrote the lyric for her, which pleads:

> Let not thy divining heart
> Forethinke me any ill,
> Destiny may take thy part,
> And may thy feares fulfill;
> But thinke that wee
> Are but turn'd aside to sleepe;
> They who one another keepe
> Alive n'er parted bee.

This is of course conjecture, and I claim no more than a strong probability. It was on this journey with Sir Robert, which Donne finally and reluctantly undertook, that he saw that 'vision of his wife with a dead child in her arms' that Walton so convincingly describes. I am not concerned with the authenticity or otherwise of the vision, but with the direction of Donne's thoughts. In 1614, thirteen years after his marriage, we have further evidence of the constancy and of the quality of

Donne's love for his wife. In a letter to Sir Robert More, on 10 August of that year, he again explains why he cannot and will not leave Anne in solitude:

> When I begin to apprehend that, even to myself, who can relieve myself upon books, solitariness was a little burdensome, I believe it would be much more so to my wife if she were left alone. So much company therefore, as I am, she shall not want; and we had not one another at so cheap a rate as that we should ever be weary of one another.

Such words need no comment. But if any more evidence is required as to the nature and endurance of Donne's love for his wife, we have *Holy Sonnet XVII*, written after her death in 1617:

> Since she whom I lov'd hath payd her last debt
> To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,
> And her Soule early into heaven ravished,
> Wholly on heavenly things my mind is sett.
> Here the admyring her my mind did whett
> To seeke thee God; so streames do shew their head.

Without claiming any knowledge as to the dates of particular poems, we are bound to recognize that seventeen years of married love will have taught Donne something he did not know when he wrote, for instance, *Elegy VII*. And we do, in fact, find that the poems express views of love which could scarcely all have been held at the same time.

Mr. Lewis, of course, recognizes that Donne's love poetry is 'not all of a piece'. 'There are poems', he admits, 'in which Donne attempts to sing of a love perfectly in harmony with the moral law, but they are not very numerous and I do not think they are usually among his best pieces'. That judgement seems to me very odd, but it is impossible to discuss it without first deciding of what 'moral law' we are thinking. The moral law governing sexual relations has been very differently conceived of in different periods of the world's history. No one has expounded the medieval view more clearly than Mr. Lewis himself in *The Allegory of Love* where he explains[1] that, for the medieval Church,

> love itself was wicked and did not cease to be wicked if the object of it were your own wife. . . . The views of the medieval churchman on the sexual act within marriage are limited by two complementary

[1] On page 14.

agreements. On the one hand nobody ever asserted that the act was intrinsically sinful. On the other hand all were agreed that some evil element was present in every concrete instance of it since the Fall.

Mr. Lewis believes that Donne never for long freed himself from this 'medieval sense of the sinfulness of sexuality'. Born a Roman Catholic, and deeply read in the Fathers of the Church, he must of course have considered it. But does his poetry support the belief that he continued to accept it? The value of Donne's love poetry largely depends upon the answer. 'The great central movement of love poetry in Donne's time', Mr. Lewis reminds us, was at variance with the medieval view. It was now believed that marriage sanctified sexual love; and for Spenser, once the marriage ceremony is over, the sexual act is its proper consummation and the chaste moon bears witness to it in the *Epithalamion*:

> Who is the same, which at my window peepes?
> Or whose is that faire face that shines so bright?
> Is it not Cinthia, she that never sleepes,
> But walkes about high heaven al the night?
> O fayrest goddesse, do thou not envy
> My love with me to spy:
> For thou likewise didst love, though now unthought,
> And for a fleece of wooll, which privily
> The Latmian shepherd once unto thee brought,
> His pleasure with the wrought.
> Therefore to us be favorable now;
> And sith of womens labours thou hast charge,
> And generation goodly dost enlarge,
> Encline thy will t'effect our wishful vow,
> And the chaste wombe informe with timely seed,
> That may our comfort breed:
> Till which we cease our hopeful hap to sing,
> Ne let the woods us answere, nor our Eccho ring.

On the other hand, in Chapman's *Hero and Leander*, to which Mr. Lewis especially invites out attention, we have the reverse aspect of this view of the morality of love. The sexual act before marriage, albeit the expression of true love, is not in harmony with the moral law:

> By this the Sovereign of Heavens golden fires,
> And young *Leander*, Lord of his desires,

Together from their lovers armes arose:
Leander into Hellespontus throwes
His Hero-handled bodie, whose delight
Made him disdaine each other Epithete,
And as amidst the enamoured waves he swims,
The God of gold of purpose guilt his lims,
That this word guilt, including double sence,
The double guilt of his *Incontinence*,
Might be exprest, that had no stay t'employ
The treasure which the Love-God let him joy
In his deare Hero, with such sacred thrift,
As had beseemed so sanctified a gift:
But like a greedie vulgar Prodigall
Would on the stock dispend, and rudely fall
Before his time, to that unblessed blessing,
Which for lusts plague doth perish with possessing.

Where does Donne stand in relation either to this belief that marriage, and marriage alone, sanctifies the sexual act, or to the medieval view that it is alike sinful within or without the marriage bond? If I read the poetry aright, he accepts neither view, or rather he totally rejects the second and does not consider the first. The purity or otherwise of the act depends for him on the quality of the relation between the lovers. We have in *The Sunne Rising* a celebration of the same event as in the stanza quoted from *Epithalamion*; but the difference in treatment is noteworthy. Donne is joyously impudent to the sun, whereas Spenser is ceremoniously respectful to the moon, and (which is the point here relevant) in Donne's poem we neither know nor care whether the marriage ceremony has taken place. For Donne, if delight in one another is mutual, physical union is its proper consummation; but, if the lovers are not 'inter-assured of the mind', then 'the sport' is 'but a winter-seeming summers night', and

at their best
Sweetnesse and wit they are but *mummy* possest.

There are a number of poems in which Donne is writing about love which has not reached physical consummation, but there is only one, *The Undertaking*, in which he writes as though this state of affairs were satisfactory. Elsewhere he makes it plain that he has merely acquiesced, not without protest, in the human laws that forbade what he holds to be the natural

expression of human loves. This reluctant obedience to the rules is most clearly stated in *The Relique*, where he explains precisely how he and the woman behaved, and makes known in a parenthesis what he thinks of the law that inhibited them:

> Comming and going, wee
> Perchance might kisse, but not between those meales
> Our hands ne'er toucht the seales,
> Which nature, injur'd by late law, sets free.

Donne's poetry is not about the difference between marriage and adultery, but about the difference between love and lust. He does not establish the contrast between them in any one poem, but we arrive at his views by submitting ourselves to the cumulative evidence of all his poetry and, in so far as they are relevant, of his prose and of his life as well. The most important part of this evidence is the violent contrast between his cynical poems and those in which he celebrates

> our waking souls
> Which watch not one another out of feare.

In order to establish that contrast I must, unfortunately, refer to the vexed question of Donne's rhythm. Mr. Lewis assures us that 'most modern readers do not know how to scan'. However that may be, unless they can hear the difference between quick and slow movements, or between smooth and staccato, and unless they can submit to the rhythm sufficiently to throw the emphasis precisely where Donne has arranged for it to fall, they cannot understand his poetry. If they can hear these things they will be aware of the difference between the bored, flippant tone of

> Will no other vice content you?
> Will it not serve your turn to do, as did your mothers?
> Or have you all old vices spent, and now would finde out others?
> Or doth a feare, that men are true, torment you?
> Oh we are not, be not you so,
> Let mee, and doe you, twenty know;

and the tone of angry scorn in

> Must I alas
> Frame and enamell Plate, and drinke in Glasse?
> Chase waxe for others seales? breake a colts force
> And leave him then, beeing made a ready horse;

and, so utterly remote from either, the controlled emotion in

> I scarce believe my love to be so pure
> As I had thought it was,
> Because it doth endure
> Vicissitude, and season, as the grasse;
> Methinks I lyed all winter when I swore,
> My love was infinite, if spring make' it more.

The greatness of Donne's love poetry is largely due to the fact that his experience of the passion ranged from its lowest depths to its highest reaches. No one, not even Shakespeare, knew better than he that

> The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action; and till action, lust
> Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
> Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
> Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
> Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
> Past reason hated.

Many of the *Songs and Sonets* and the *Elegies* dramatize the experience which Shakespeare here describes. But Donne came to know also the 'marriage of true minds', and many of his poems are about that experience. Nor does he repent of this love poetry in the *Holy Sonnets*; on the contrary, he expressly states that love for his wife led directly to the love of God. He does not even overlook his grosser experiences, but is prepared to use 'prophane love' to illustrate his faith in Christ's pity:

> No, no, but as in my idolatrie
> I said to all my profane mistresses
> Beauty, of pitty, foulnesse only is
> A signe of rigour: so I say to thee,
> To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign'd
> This beauteous forme assures a piteous minde.

There is no note of shame here, neither wallowing self-abasement nor a hiding or forgetting of the past. He is simply using, characteristically, just what is relevant for his present purpose. Physical beauty, which his poetry so seldom describes, he nevertheless accepts as a type of the soul's beauty:

> For though mind be the heaven where love doth sit
> Beauty a convenient type may be to figure it.

Donne never despised the flesh. Even in a Lenten sermon he asks his hearers 'what Christian is denied a care of his health and a good habitude of body, or the use of those things which may give a cheerfulness to his heart and a cheerfulness to his countenance', and in his *Litany* he prays

> From thinking us all soule, neglecting thus
> Our mutuall duties, Lord deliver us.

Mr. Lewis's objections to *The Extasie* depend upon Donne's treatment of the relation between soul and body, and it is therefore important to discover what in fact Donne thought about this. 'Love does not', writes Mr. Lewis, 'prove itself pure by talking about purity. It does not keep on drawing distinctions between spirit and flesh to the detriment of the latter and then explaining that the flesh is after all to be used.' I must admit that I find this rather perplexing. Perhaps nothing can be proved by talking about it, neither the purity of love nor the purity of Donne's poetry. But language is the poet's only means of communication, and if Chapman is allowed to express his conception of the immorality of premarital relations by talking about it, why may not Donne, by the same means, express his belief that

> As our blood labours to beget
> Spirits as like soules as it can,
> Because such fingers need to knit
> That subtile knot that makes us man:
> So must pure lovers soules descend
> T'affections, and to faculties,
> Which sense may reach and apprehend,
> Else a great Prince in prison lies.

On what grounds does Mr. Lewis object to Donne 'drawing distinctions between spirit and flesh to the detriment of the latter'? What else could he do? Could a man of his time and of his religion have thought of the flesh either as equal to or as indistinguishable from the spirit? Donne, like any man of his time, and, I suppose, any Christian of any time, thinks of the body as inferior to the soul, although it can be the 'temple of the Holy Ghost'. He is not singular in supposing that, in this life, the soul can and must express itself through the body. Milton goes so far as to assert that even the Angels need some equivalent for this means of expression:

Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
(And pure thou wert created,) we enjoy
In eminence; and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars;
Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, union of pure with pure
Desiring, nor restrain'd conveyance need,
As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.[1]

Donne, in *The Extasie*, is attempting (by his usual means of employing a series of analogies) to explain that the union of spirit with spirit expresses itself in the flesh, just as the soul lives in the body and, in this world, cannot exist without it. The passage quoted above includes one of these analogies, an obscure one for modern readers because it depends on contemporary physiology. Sir Herbert Grierson supplies a quotation from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* which gives the explanation:

The spirits in a man which are the thin and active part of the blood, and so are of a kind of middle nature, between soul and body, those spirits are able to doe, and they doe the office, to unite and apply the faculties of the soul to the organs of the body, and so there is a man.

Sir Herbert also refers us to Donne's twenty-sixth sermon which throws yet more light on the notion to which the poem refers:

As the body is not the man [writes Donne], nor the soul is not the man, but the union of the soul and the body, by those spirits through which the soul exercises her faculties in the organs of the body, makes up the man; so the union of the Father and the Son to one another, and of both to us, by the Holy Ghost, makes up the body of the Christian religion.

There are, I suppose, three possible views of the relation between soul and body: the Manichaean view that the body is the work of the Devil; the materialist view that 'explains all psychical processes by physical and chemical changes in the nervous system', and so makes the soul non-existent; and the orthodox Christian view that the body and the soul are both from God and therefore both good. We seem to have wandered far from Donne's *Extasie*, and if Mr. Lewis is right in thinking it a 'nasty' poem, these philosophical considerations are irrelevant, and these theological considerations even worse. But is he

[1] *Paradise Lost*, Bk. viii, 622–9.

right? The point Donne wishes to make in *The Extasie*, as in so many of his serious love poems, is that a man and a woman united by love may approach perfection more nearly than either could do alone:

> A single violet transplant
> The strength, the colour, and the size,
> (All which before was poore, and scant,)
> Redoubles still, and multiplies.
> When love, with one another so
> Interinanimates two soules,
> That abler soule, which thence doth flow,
> Defects of lonelinesse controules.

I have tried to show that Donne was very far from retaining 'the medieval view of the sinfulness of sex'; but Mr. Lewis has yet another accusation to bring, equally incompatible with my own belief that Donne is one of the greatest love poets in the English language. Contempt for women seems to him to permeate the poetry. Once again I shall be forced to assume that readers are more sensitive to rhythm than Mr. Lewis supposes, for I am going to quarrel with Mr. Lewis's interpretation of *Elegy XVI* largely by appealing to the reader's ear. He admits that he 'may be deceived' when he finds here 'a sickened male contempt for the whole female world of nurses and "midnight startings"'. Most certainly he is deceived, and the varied rhythms of that poem are an important index of the extent of that deception. One of the most remarkable things about the poem is the contrast between the solemn, tender music of the verse whenever Donne addresses the woman, and the boisterous staccato in which he describes the foreign lands to whose dangers she will be exposed if she insists upon following him abroad. I must beg leave to quote the poem at sufficient length to illustrate the nature and extent of this difference.

> By our first strange and fatall interview,
> By all desires which thereof did ensue,
> By our long starving hopes, by that remorse
> Which my words masculine perswasive force
> Begot in thee, and by the memory
> Of hurts, which spies and rivals threatned me,
> I calmly beg: But by thy fathers wrath,
> By all paines, which want and divorcement hath

I conjure thee, and all the oathes which I
And thou have sworne to seale joynt constancy,
Here I unsweare, and overswear them thus,
Thou shalt not love by wayes so dangerous.
Temper, O faire love, loves impetuous rage,
Be my true Mistris still, not my faign'd Page.

It is tempting to quote even more of this melodious pleading, but this is enough to illustrate the liturgical music of his address to this beloved of whom Mr. Lewis can think Donne is contemptuous. When, in the same poem, he wants to express contempt, his music is very different:

Men of France, changeable Camelions,
Spittles of diseases, shops of fashions,
Loves fuellers, and the rightest company
Of Players, which upon the worlds stage be,
Will quickly know thee, and no lesse, alas!
Th'indifferent Italian, as we passe
His warme land, well content to thinke thee Page,
Will hunt thee with such lust, and hideous rage,
As *Lots* faire guests were vext.

And now, in case the point is not yet proven, let us hear how he speaks of her 'midnight startings', and how the rhythm changes once again as she comes back into the picture:

When I am gone, dreame me some hapinesse,
Nor let thy lookes our long hid love confesse,
Nor praise, nor dispraise me, nor blesse, nor curse
Openly loves force, nor in bed fright thy Nurse
With midnight startings, crying out oh, oh
Nurse, O my love is slaine, I saw him goe
O'r the white Alpes alone; I saw him I,
Assail'd, fight, taken, stabb'd, bleed, fall, and die.
Augure me better chance, except dread *Jove*
Thinke it enough for me to'have had thy love.

I said I would argue my case 'almost' solely on the grounds of rhythm, but in case Mr. Lewis is right in thinking modern readers are for the most part impervious to the music of verse, they will, I trust, be convinced that the mere prose sense of the last line is incompatible with contempt for the woman.

No one will deny that at one period of his life Donne wrote of women with contempt. At this time he despised them equally

for yielding to his lust or for denying themselves to him. There is nothing to choose between his contempt for the woman whom he addresses as 'Nature's lay Idiot' in *Elegy VII* and his contempt for the woman who has refused him, and to whom he addresses that brilliant piece of vituperation *The Apparition.* (Whether either situation had its exact counterpart in real life is beside the point, the contempt in the poems is real enough.) At this time he treats with equal scorn the whore, both

> Her whom abundance melts and her whom want betraies,

and the 'fain'd vestall', and the woman who

> will bee
> False e'er I come, to two or three.

But the measure of his contempt for easy virtue, coyness, and faithlessness is the measure of his admiration when he finds a woman to whom he can say

> So thy love may be my love's sphere.

But to Mr. Lewis that, too, sounds contemptuous; and as *Aire and Angels* has been variously understood, it is worth while to pause and examine the sentence in its context. The poem is an account of Donne's search for, and final discovery of, the true object of love. It begins with much the same idea as he expresses in the first stanza of *The Good-morrow*:

> If ever any beauty I did see,
> Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

In *Aire and Angels*:

> Twice or thrice had I loved thee,
> Before I knew thy face or name;
> So in a voice, so in a shapelesse flame,
> *Angells* affect us oft, and worship'd bee;
> Still when, to where thou wert, I came
> Some lovely glorious nothing I did see.

And here, as so often elsewhere in the *Songs and Sonets*, Donne asserts his belief that 'pure lovers soules' must 'descend t'affections, and to faculties':

> But since my soule, whose child love is,
> Takes limmes of flesh, and else could nothing doe,
> More subtile than the parent is,
> Love must not be, but take a body too.

And at first he imagines that the physical beauty of the loved woman is the object of his search:

> And therefore what thou wert, and who,
> I bid love aske, and now
> That it assume thy body, I allow,
> And fix it selfe in thy lip, eye, and brow.

So far the progress is one to which we are accustomed, both in the literature of love and in experience; from a general reaching out after beauty to a particular worship of one person who sums up and overreaches all that had seemed fair in others. So Romeo catches sight of Juliet and forgets Rosalind:

> Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
> For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

But Donne is not satisfied. There is no rest for his love in the bewildering beauty of his mistress:

> Whilst thus to ballast love, I thought,
> And so more steddily to have gone,
> With wares that would sinke admiration,
> I saw, I had loves pinnace overfraught,
> Ev'ry thy haire for love to worke upon
> Is much too much, some fitter must be sought;
> For, nor in nothing, nor in things
> Extreme, and scatt'ring bright, can love inhere.

The search is not yet over. But it is to end in a discovery surely more pleasing to any woman in love than would be the mere worship of her beauty. Beauty is transient, but love can last if it be for something which, though expressed in the body, is yet not the body:

> Then as an Angell, face and wings
> Of aire, not pure as it, yet pure doth weare,
> So thy love may be my loves spheare.

The doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, about the Angels assuming a body of air, provided Donne with the analogy he wanted:

> Et sic Angeli assumunt corpora ex aere, condensando ipsum virtute divina, quantam necesse est ad corporis assumendi formationem.

So much is necessary; the point of the image for Donne is that the air-body of the Angels is neither nothing, nor too much, but just sufficient to confine a spirit on earth. So the woman's love for him is a resting-place for his spirit. It is, of course, the

final couplet of the poem that has led to mis-understanding. Dr. Leavis, in *Revaluations*,[1] speaks of 'the blandly insolent matter-of-factness of the close' of *Aire and Angels*; and, isolated from its context, that is how it sounds:

> Just such disparitie
> As is twixt Aire and Angells puritie,
> 'Twixt womens love, and mens will ever bee.

There are two possible ways of reading this. The way which I am combating supposes that Donne, reversing the sentiment of the rest of the poem, throws out a contemptuous generalization about the impurity of woman's love in comparison with man's. My own view is that Donne, satisfied with the logical aptness of his image, is, characteristically, indifferent to the associations of the word 'purity', whose meaning is, to his mind, made sufficiently clear by the context. The air-body is only less pure than the angel in so far as it can exist on earth and so enable a spirit to appear to men. A woman's love is only less pure than a man's in so far as it is focused upon a single object and does not continually reach out towards 'some lovely glorious nothing'. I would support this view by referring the reader to other instances in which Donne shows a similar indifference to the irrelevant associations his words may suggest. The use of the word 'pure' in *Loves Growth* is similarly circumscribed by its context:

> I scarce believe my love to be so pure
> As I had thought it was,
> Because it doth endure
> Vicissitude, and season as the grasse.

The sense in which it is not so pure is explained in the next stanza:

> Love's not so pure, and abstract, as they use
> To say, which have no Mistresse but their Muse,
> But as all else, being elemented too,
> Love sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do.

Donne is not saying that love is unclean, or less clean than he had supposed; we have already seen that he does not think of the flesh as impure in that sense, but that, like everything else on earth, it is composed of diverse elements. He is arguing that

[1] p. 12.

the quickening of love in the springtime is not an increase, since his love was complete before,

> And yet no greater, but more eminent
> Love by the spring is growne;
> As, in the firmament,
> Starres by the sunne are not inlarg'd, but showne;

and, to make his meaning clear, Donne adds three more images or illustrations:

> Gentle love deeds, as blossomes on a bough,
> From loves awakened root do bud out now.
> If, as in water stir'd more circles bee
> Produc'd by one, love such additions take,
> Those like so many spheares, but one heaven make,
> For, they are all concentrique unto thee.

And finally, the 'blandly matter-of-fact' image:

> As princes doe in times of action get
> New taxes, but remit them not in peace.

Here, however, the last line of the poem,

> No winter shall abate this spring's increase,

prevents the reader from supposing that the prosaic image implies a reversal of the emotional tone of the poem. The point relevant to my argument about *Aire and Angels* is that Donne always trusts the reader to ignore irrelevant associations. The political image here is logically apt, and that is a sufficient reason for him to use it. In a sermon on *The Nativity* he develops at some length an image in which the Saviour is likened to a good coin with which man's debt to God is paid:

> First he must pay it in such money as was lent; in the nature and flesh of man; for man had sinned and man must pay. And then it was lent in such money as was coined even with the image of God; man was made according to his image: that image being defaced, in a new mint, in the womb of the blessed Virgin, there was new money coined; the image of the invisible God, the second person in the Trinity, was imprinted into the human nature. And then, that there might be all fulness, as God, for the payment of this debt, sent down in bullion, and the stamp, that is, God to be conceived in man, and as he provided the mint, the womb of the blessed Virgin, so hath he provided an exchequer, where this money is issued; that is his church, where his merits should be applied to the discharge of particular consciences.

No one, I suppose, will imagine that because Donne uses this mundane imagery he is speaking irreverently of God, of the Virgin Mary, of Christ, and of the Church. He chooses the image, here as elsewhere, because it provides him with an apt analogy.

I hope I may have persuaded some readers that Donne did not think sex sinful, and that contempt for women is not a general characteristic of his love poetry. But Mr. Lewis brings yet one more accusation against him: 'He is perpetually excited and therefore perpetually cut off from the deeper and more permanent springs of his own excitement.' Now one way of answering this would be to say that love is an exciting experience, and that great love poetry is therefore bound to communicate excitement. But with this I am not quite content. Love is exciting, but it is also restful. Unreciprocated love is a torment of the spirit, but reciprocated love is peace and happiness. In the astonishment and uncertainty of the early stages of love there is excitement and there is also fear, but there comes a time when there is confidence and a sense of profound security. Donne is a great love poet because his poetry records and communicates these diverse experiences. He would be less great if it were true that he is 'perpetually excited'. The truth is that, just as his early contempt for women is the measure of his later reverence for one woman, so his vivid experience of the torment of insecure love has made him the more keenly relish the peace of a love

> inter-assured of the mind.

He tells in *The Good-morrow* of lovers who

> Watch not one another out of feare;

and in *The Anniversarie* the final glory of a well-spent year is the sense of safety with which it has endowed the lovers:

> Who is so safe as wee? Where none can doe
> Treason to us except one of us two.

In *The Canonization* he tells us that future lovers will address him and his mistress as

> You to whom love was peace, that now is rage.

And in *The Dissolution* we read of a love so secure that the 'clements' of love, 'fire of Passion, sighs of ayre, water of teares

and earthly sad despaire' were 'ne'ere worne out by loves securitie'. There are two alternative readings of this line; it may be 'ne'ere worne out' (never) or 'neere worne out' (nearly). The former seems to me the more probable reading, since Donne is arguing that he is now overburdened with elements, which he is more likely to be if they had not been spent. Moreover, in 'loves securitie', 'fire of Passion, sighs of ayre, water of teares and earthly sad despaire' are not 'worne out' (such love does not call for the expense of spirit); 'never' fits the sense better than 'nearly', but, for my present argument, it is not of vital importance which reading we choose, the significant word is 'securitie'. Nor does Donne merely tell us of the fearlessness, safety, peace, and security that love may give; the serenity of which he speaks is reflected in the movement of his verse, the quiet speaking voice is heard in the rhythm of *The Good-morrow*, and in *A Valediction: forbidding mourning*, and quiet pleading in the last stanza of *A Valediction: of weeping*:

> O more then Moone,
> Draw not up seas to drowne me in thy spheare,
> Weepe me not dead, in thine armes but forbeare
> To teach the sea, what it may do too soone;
> Let not the winde
> Example finde,
> To doe me more harme, than it purposeth;
> Since thou and I sigh one another's breath,
> Who e'r sighs most, is cruellest, and hasts the others death;

and in that gracious lyric, 'Sweetest love I do not goe'.

Since writing the above I have read Professor Crofts's article on John Donne in *Essays and Studies*, vol. xxii, in which he presents much the same case against the love poetry as Mr. Lewis. Their hostility to Donne springs from the same causes. Both are unable to believe that a poet so brilliantly cynical is to be taken seriously when he is reverent or tender. Yet this very diversity of experience and feeling is among Donne's singular merits. Professor Crofts complains (p. 131) that for Donne 'Love when it comes is not an experience which . . . wipes away the trivial, fond records of youthful apostasy'. And that is true; the memory of trivial and bitter moments was clear enough for him to draw upon them for analogies even in the *Holy Sonnets*; whether this is regrettable or no is a matter of

taste. There is no doubt, however, that Donne's habit of drawing upon all and any of his past experience bewilders some readers; it is not customary. Equally unusual is the absence of description which vexes both Mr. Lewis and Professor Crofts. 'He cannot see her—does not apparently want to see her; for it is not of her that he writes but of his relation to her.' That also is perfectly true; the only question is whether good love poetry need be descriptive.

But, in addition to these matters of taste and opinion, Professor Crofts adduces two matters of fact in opposition to the view that Donne's conception of love was altered by his relations with Anne More. The first is Ben Jonson's remark in the *Conversations with Drummond* that 'all his best pieces were written ere he was twenty five years of age'. But we neither know which poems Jonson had read when he made this remark, nor which he thought were the best. The second fact is that the *Metempsychosis* was dated by Donne himself Aug. 1601, four months before his marriage, and it contains cynical generalizations about women. As it is a fragment of a bitter satire against Queen Elizabeth, prompted by the sacrifice of Essex, that is not surprising. Moreover, is it so strange to be contemptuous of many, or even of most women and to love and reverence a few? The love and friendships which Donne enjoyed did not expunge his former experiences, but they enlarged his understanding so that the body of his poetry has a completeness which it could not otherwise have had. He had felt almost everything a man can feel about a woman, scorn, self-contempt, anguish, sensual delight, and the peace and security of mutual love. And he shapes such poems out of all this that we are, as Professor Crofts says, 'aware of the man speaking in a manner and to a degree hardly to be paralleled in our reading of lyric poetry. Every word is resonant with his voice, every line seems to bear the stamp of his peculiar personality.' Is this not enough to set him among the great love poets?

JOOST VAN DEN VONDEL

By A. J. BARNOUW

JOOST VAN DEN VONDEL was born in 1587, the eighth year of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. He came of age when envoys from the King of Spain were negotiating a twelve years' truce with delegates from the States General at The Hague; he celebrated the final victory over Spain, clinched by the Treaty of Westphalia, with a patriotic drama; he sang the exploits of Holland's sea heroes in three successive naval wars with England, and passed away in 1679, shortly after the Republic, by the Peace of Nijmegen, had regained its freedom from the invading armies of Louis XIV. The century, short of a decade, that was covered by his life was the Golden Age of the Netherlands. When Vondel came to Amsterdam as a little boy the Dutch merchant fleet was seeking new routes to distant parts of the world and beginning to pour into the city rich treasures from exotic countries—the Mediterranean, the coasts of Africa, the West and East Indies, China, Japan. The Hollanders followed everywhere in the track of Englishmen, Spaniards, and Portuguese, and ousted them from well-entrenched positions by dint of energy and stubborn persistence that knew neither scruples nor fear. Even the Arctic was explored for a possible north-east passage to Java, and Dutch exploits in those barren regions, where only the English had ventured before them, supplied sensation to the newsmongers along the quays and on the exchange in London and opportunity to the playwrights for humorous allusion. Says Fabian to Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night*, 'you are now sailed into the north of my lady's opinion, where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard'. The seafarers of Holland and Zeeland wrote Dutch names upon the map in all parts of the world, from Cape Horn deep down in South America to Spitzbergen in the far north, from New Amsterdam on the island of Manhattan to Batavia on the island of Java.

This sudden and phenomenal expansion of commerce found its aesthetic counterpart in the development of Dutch art.

The Low Countries, ever since the fourteenth century, had been rich in painters, but never was there such a production of good pictures as there was in Holland during Vondel's lifetime. John Evelyn, on arriving at Rotterdam in the summer of 1641, was amazed to find the annual fair there richly stocked with paintings. He found upon inquiry that this unusual output of pictures was stimulated by the scarcity of land available for the investment of savings, so that it was an ordinary thing to find a common farmer laying out two to three thousand pounds in this commodity. Dutch houses were full of such works, and the artists found a ready public at the fairs. Holland was, indeed, a busy workshop of craftsmen supplying both the home and foreign markets with pictures of all sorts. The expansive force that stirred the Dutch art world affected not only the size of its output but also the range of the painter's view. There was nothing that he did not find paintable, from Biblical scenes and the heroic imaginings of classic antiquity in the Italian manner to the simplest reality of everyday life—a pasture with cows and pollard willows, a drunken brawl, a butcher's shop, a poor man's breakfast-table. The landscape, the still-life, the drollery, the genre-piece were produced in endless variety by craftsmen trained from their early teens in the mystery of the painter's technique. The Dutch artist made all the world his own, even as the Dutch merchant and sailor were at home all over the world.

Vondel's poetry must be read with that picture of Dutch expansion in mind. Holland's literary output, no less than her commerce and her art, was stirred and revolutionized by the sudden access of vitality that was called forth by the revolt against Spain. Vondel, too, made all the world his own. His imagination followed the sailor to the Arctic and the Indies, accompanied the Republic's ambassadors to foreign courts, its generals and admirals into battle, its scholars and historians into the literatures of ancient Palestine, Greece, and Rome, and from those flights of fancy into space and time he brought home treasures to decorate his house of poetry.

The language that Vondel's generation had inherited from its sixteenth-century ancestors showed similar expansive force. It was but a clumsy tool to the rhymesters who wrote in their native tongue at a time when Erasmus chose to address

Europe in Latin. The speech of the common folk was a racy, picturesque idiom, but the range of its vocabulary was limited, as their thoughts and concerns did not reach out beyond the narrow sphere of town or rural community. If in the late Middle Ages a genius such as Chaucer's had made the vernacular the bearer of his artistic message, the Dutch language that Vondel's parents wrote might have been a more flexible and subtler instrument. But Erasmus and his fellow humanists in the Netherlands rejected the use of a vehicle that would have reached only a small provincial audience. And the nobility, if they expressed themselves at all on paper, wrote French, the language of the Burgundian court. With the scholars and the aristocrats disdaining to cultivate their native speech, the care of it was left to the small fry of middle-class rhymesters and scribblers, whose speech was plastic enough, but who lacked a literary model and, if they had possessed one, the taste to mould their work in its image. They had an abject awe of Latin learning and French culture, and naïvely believed that their Dutch verse would gain in dignity and elegance by an imitation of involved Latin constructions and by the lavish grafting of bastard French words upon the simple, honest stock of their own idiom. Rhymes glut their stanzas, rhymes of three and four syllables, rhymes that run on for ten, and twelve, and fifteen lines, and recur in the middle of lines, lest the reader should forget the jingle. These rhetoricians, as they called themselves, took a parvenu delight in frills and a profusion of decorative detail, which, by obscuring the sense, were intended to create a false impression of profundity. Reading their stuff gives one the same uncomfortable, choked-up feeling that one gets on entering a late-Victorian drawing-room obscured by hangings and crammed with a styleless conglomeration of tortuous furniture, knick-knacks, statuettes, and *objets d'art.*

It was in the southern Netherlands, especially in Brabant and Flanders, that this type of poetic gibberish was cultivated. Holland and the other Low Countries in the north had contributed but little to late medieval literature, apart from the prose writings of the mystics in the Ysel valley. Northern Dutch was a simple, straightforward utterance, unmarred by the vulgar display of mannerisms that were the vogue among the sixteenth-century burgher poets of Antwerp, Brussels, and

the cities of Flanders. Vondel was of Brabant stock. He was born in Cologne, the son of Baptist parents who had fled from their native city of Antwerp to escape the Spanish Inquisition and martyrdom at the stake. Joost was not yet ten years of age when his parents moved their belongings to Amsterdam. There he grew up a Brabander among Brabanders, who formed a numerous colony of refugees in the metropolis of Holland. The first generation of settlers from the southern Netherlands seem to have kept to themselves. Vondel's circle of acquaintances, at any rate, was limited in his early years to the Brabant community. And when he began to write verse he wrote in the manner of the Antwerp rhetoricians. In his twentieth year he composed a clumsy new-year song, in which sense is sacrificed to rhyme. Thus at the opening of the year 1607 he lamented the fall of our first parents:

> Mors // sorrow's source // shot her arrows perforce,
> Vice // in a trice // rejoiced with Satan's heirs,
> Loss // of her gloss // drove Virtue to remorse,
> Her price // sin-enticed // was changëd into cares,
> O Lord // the ford // of Truth to us is barred!
> We view // and rue // how Faith is cruelly slain,
> Love's hoard // God's ward // the fruit of Eden's gard',
> A wo//man slew // Alas, our hope amain.

Soon, however, the new environment had a wholesome effect upon the young rhymester. There were talented Amsterdam poets who, free from any deadening tradition, as the city had never known a local literature, expressed their thoughts in the only language they knew, that of everyday speech. They were the better poets. Vondel was aware of his own inferior craftsmanship, and laboured hard to free himself from the Brabant tradition. In 1609 he wrote a sonnet in praise of the twelve years' truce with Spain. It had no merit except by comparison with the rhymed doggerel with which he had greeted the new year in 1607. A revolution in taste had taken place. The poet had learnt that sense is paramount over rhyme, that artifices do not make art, and that the poet's first concern is to carry his message over through clarity of diction unencumbered by meaningless decoration. Forty years later he published a brief *Art of Poetry* for the instruction of apprentices in the guild of poets. The accomplished master of the craft, proudly conscious

of his power, but not oblivious of the errors committed in his early days, warned the young who would follow in his steps against the very mistakes he had corrected in himself:

One must not distort the language [he wrote] for the sake of rhyme and metre, on pain of stammering and stumbling like a child. The rhyming word must not seem to occur for the sake of the rhyme, but must occur as if it made no rhyme. Epithets must not be aimless, nor serve as stop gaps, but ought to emulate the statues that support a beam or an arch and, while performing their function, help to decorate the building. . . . The earliest and best poets were most natural and simple. Their successors, eager to outrun them, resorted to grandiloquence and bombast or to the use of gloss and polish. That pleased at first the less discerning as something newfangled, and sounded to the faddists like a thunderbolt; but their admiration was short lived, and the clear-eyed saw through the pretence. They weighed the earlier works against the later in the scales of a considered judgement, and found the later ones too light. . . . Unbalanced extravagance, foolish pomp, and unsuitable profusion are not beauties that satisfy a sound judgement. If you adorn your verse with flourishes in the manner of the rhetoricians, your flowers of speech must not be far-fetched, but should preserve adequate colours, and not exceed our powers of comprehension. If you want others to understand your part, you must first understand it thoroughly yourself, and speak it clearly.

Vondel must have felt himself a modernist, when he compared his sonnet on the twelve years' truce with his earlier *tours de force* in the art of rhyming. From an apprentice in an antiquated school he had become a master in a new, superior craft. He had grown up with Brabant people who knew no better than that richness of rhyme was the test of true poetry. His mother's father had been a rhetorician, and the Brabant refugees in Amsterdam had their own Chamber of Rhetoric, where young Joost could hear poetasters of his parents' generation shake down the roof with the rolling thunder of their rhymes. Brought up in a strict, God-fearing home, he had learnt not to question the authority and judgement of his elders and betters. What they considered to be beautiful deserved to be admired and imitated. He came near to disloyalty when he learnt to despise their taste and discarded the Antwerp manner for the style of Amsterdam.

His literary conversion was part of the naturalizing process

that was gradually turning the Brabander Vondel into a complete Hollander. But he was not a passive convert, who chameleon-like took on the colour of his new environment. He gave as much as he received. Having adopted the speech of Holland as his own, he helped to mould, enrich, and expand it, until it became universally recognized throughout the United Netherlands as the standard form of the Dutch language. He was fully, and proudly, conscious of the part he had taken in the shaping of this model speech. In his *Art of Poetry* of 1650 he described the genesis of that standard language in these terms:

> This speech is nowadays heard to perfection at The Hague, in the Council Room of the High and Mighty Lords, and at the Court of their Stadtholder, as well as in Amsterdam, the most powerful emporium of the world, it being spoken by people of good education, barring the un-Dutch jargon of courtiers, lawyers, and merchants. For old Amsterdam speech is too queer, and broad Antwerpese too repellent, neither being distinct enough. That is why we must temper and mix their idioms and prune them with discernment, speaking neither a Latinized, nor an over-purified, newfangled Dutch, in such a way that the language does not lose its native character, to which the speech reformers are apt to do violence.

Vondel was a contemporary of John Donne. The Dean of St. Paul's was the fortunate heir of the Elizabethan poets, who left him a language attuned to the subtlest moods and the highest flights of fancy. Vondel and his fellow poets of Amsterdam had to devise their own instrument wherewith to call forth music out of their native speech, and lacking models such as Donne possessed in Elizabethan literature, they turned to foreign poets for guidance and inspiration. 'A knowledge of foreign tongues is a great help', Vondel told the young beginners in his *Art of Poetry*, 'and translating from illustrious poets aids the novice, even as the copying of masterpieces of art speeds the painter's apprentice.' Vondel turned for his first schooling to Saluste du Bartas. The theme of *La Sepmaine* attracted the young Baptist poet, and he turned *Les Pères* and *La Magnificence de Salomon*, both forming part of the Second Week, into Dutch alexandrines, as a twofold exercise in versification and devotion. He was nearly thirty years of age when *De Vaderen* ('The Fathers') saw the light. Forty-five years later he published a

translation in alexandrines of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the intervening decades he tried, with stubborn persistence, to improve his mind and style by copying the masters he admired, Seneca, Sophocles, Tasso, Grotius, Virgil. 'When a man's education is said to be completed his first lesson has begun', was one of his maxims. It was more to him than a smart paradox; he spoke it in dead earnest, and turned its wisdom to stern practice. The productive periods of his long life alternated with studious intervals in which he sat at the feet of the masters whom he believed to be greater than himself.

His achievement as a translator alone would entitle him to a place of honour among the poets of Holland. Vondel's *Virgil* is no less an inspiring book than Chapman's *Homer*. Chapman, according to Wood, was well grounded in school learning by the time he went to the university. Vondel never attended a university, and the school learning that he possessed was acquired in the so-called 'French school', which could have taught him little more than arithmetic and commercial correspondence in French and Dutch. For he was trained to succeed his father in business, and at the age of twenty-five found himself alone responsible for the management of the silk shop in the Warmoesstraat. Greek and Latin had formed no part of his education, and the knowledge he possessed of both in later life was won laboriously by private study with the assistance of learned friends. He was taught the rudiments of Latin grammar by an Englishman, says his seventeenth-century biographer Gerard Brandt, leaving us to guess at the teacher's identity. It may have been Thomas Leamer, a member of the Brownist community in Amsterdam. In 1614 Leamer entered into a public debate with Jan Theunisz, the learned landlord of the inn 'The Ox at the Wedding', on the meaning of the first word of the Bible, which Leamer translated as 'In the spirit'. The inn was the favourite meeting-place of the ministers and members of the Baptist congregation, and Vondel, who did not scorn a glass of wine, may there have met his first teacher of Latin. It is possible that Leamer taught him more than the rudiments of a dead language. For Vondel is the only one among the Dutch poets of that period who tried his hand, occasionally, at a Shakespearian sonnet. But there is no clear evidence that he ever learnt to read English; he had, apparently,

no inkling of the literary wealth which, through his ignorance of the language, he left unexplored. But he did learn Greek, though not so well as Latin, and he acquired a sufficient knowledge of Italian to make a prose translation of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

If Vondel had passed away before his fortieth year he would be remembered as one of the minor poets of devotional and didactic verse. The growth of his genius was slow. He tended it with assiduous study, in the firm conviction that learning was the steep and narrow path which led to the summit of Parnassus. He that believeth shall not make haste. Vondel had faith in himself. He knew from the start what he wanted to achieve. The highest poetry was that of the tragic playwright; from the very outset his ambition was to become the Seneca of Holland. Tragedy was to him the magic mirror in which man's history is symbolized. All the world is a stage, and the scene behind the footlights a projection in miniature of that vast spectacle stripped of inessentials and irrelevancies. In a poem of 1650 he described himself as the man who 'tried to found the Greek and Roman stage in the Netherlands'. He would have expressed his purpose more clearly if he had applied to the stage these words of Erasmus, 'I brought it about that Humanism began nobly to celebrate Christ.' For his drama is Roman or Greek only in its structure. Its spirit is Christian, and Christ, though invisible Himself, is the centre from which all action radiates. It is the conflict between Christ and Satan that is the leading *motif* of Vondel's dramatic work.

Vondel conceived of history as the record of divine reality projected upon this world in images that have no independent existence but only serve as allegories of transcendent fact. We can know God's greatness only by the contemplation of that reflected reality, and since God is eternal, all periods of human history are of value and interest. But its image, being preserved by the fallible ingenuity of man, was blurred in comparison with the flawless reflection of the Scripture, which derived immediately from God. That is why 'the sacred histories are always attended by a certain divine majesty and adorable dignity, which are nowhere so much needed as in tragedies'. Subject-matter from the Bible, therefore, surpassed in his opinion pagan fables as far as 'the sun of the Holy Ghost extinguishes all pagan stars with its brilliance'.

In this preference for the sacred stories of the Scriptures as the fittest subject-matter for tragic drama Vondel at eighty remained consistent with his youthful self. His earliest attempt at play-writing was a dramatization of the exodus from Egypt, his last original drama, published fifty-five years later, was *Noah, or the Destruction of the First World.* The chorus that concludes the performance of *Het Pascha*, his first play, explains to the audience the hidden meaning behind the show. The Israelites in the power of Pharoah betoken the world in the grip of sin and Satan, and as the Jews, by their passage through the Red Sea, attained release from temporary torment, even so mankind, through the fountain of Christ's blood, was saved from the eternal pain of hell. In his later plays this allegorical purport is less crudely revealed or, with better artistic effect, not revealed but merely hinted at by subtle suggestion. But though the manner differs, the intent is always the same. Vondel's drama, then, is a late survival of the medieval mystery play cast in the form of Senecan tragedy. It is divided into five acts; each act is concluded by a chorus; the unities of action, time, and place are punctiliously observed; the dialogue is restricted to three speakers at most; and atrocities, such as murders and executions, whose stark realism would detract from the spectator's illusion of reality, are relegated behind the scene to be recounted by a messenger. Violent passions do not come into play, for the tragic heroes of these mysteries are not human beings possessed by irrational urges and desires, but rather embodiments of the capital sins ineffectually pitting their strength against divine Omnipotence. There is, consequently, no suspense, for the victory of God is a foregone conclusion. A clash of arguments supplies the dramatic conflict, the *dramatis personae* being gesticulating orators rather than speaking actors. The dialogue is often a mere monologue in disguise, the one speaker's part in it being restricted to interruptions that ask for the sequel of the story, which the other speaker would have imparted anyhow; and where the poet resorts to the other extreme of *stichomythia*, retort follows retort with the artificial regularity of clock-work.

It is difficult for us moderns to understand how a drama so strait-laced and so barren of excitement could captivate the poet's Amsterdam audiences. But we must remember that

the spectators, not barring the groundlings, were intimately familiar with the Scriptures. The majority of them knew no other book than the Bible; but its very uniqueness made it precious. Their fathers and grandfathers had fought for the right to read and interpret the Holy Book according to their own understanding. Its free perusal had demanded a national sacrifice, and the price paid for it in human lives made it a highly valued possession. They knew its stories by heart, in the very phrasing of the States' Bible version. Vondel's dramatizations could not attract them to the theatre by the novelty of the subject-matter. Their tragic poignancy to a contemporary Amsterdam audience was in their faithful adherence to the familiar stories rather than in the dramatic tension upon the stage. If the show took the spectators' breath away, it was due to nothing unexpected except surprise at finding everything visualized as they themselves remembered it. And Vondel took good care that no deviation from Holy Writ should mar that pleasure. He made Gerard Vossius's maxim his own: 'The poet must necessarily say what is said by God's Book; he must say sparingly what it does not say; he must never say what would conflict with it'. Theatre-goers in Vondel's time went to see his plays in much the same mood in which their twentieth-century descendants go to hear Beethoven's symphonies at the Concertgebouw. To recognize a familiar theme in the poet's verse and the conductor's rendering is an artistic joy which, unfortunately, has lost its appeal in the present-day theatre. Vondel was a master conductor of familiar themes from the Bible. He rendered them with a verve and a grandeur that captivated the connoisseurs. The rhythm of his verse, the sweep of his periods, the iridescence of his diction imparted to the themes a new and startling beauty, even as a great conductor can reveal a new Beethoven by his reading and rendering of the composer's symphonies.

Music and pageantry were indispensable accessories of Vondel's mystery plays. Music was to him an echo of the heavenly harmonies wrought by the revolution of the spheres. The 'divine art of song' was an earthly prelude to the strains of the angelic choirs. His sacred drama, therefore, which staged earthly reflections of divine reality, needed the aid of the musician in its production. The strophe and antistrophe of the

chorus were sung by choir-leaders to the accompaniment of stringed instruments, while dumb shows and *tableaux vivants*, adding movement and colour to the scene, mingled optic enjoyment with the pleasure afforded by verse and song. The Vondel enthusiasts in seventeenth-century Amsterdam found in his drama what they vainly looked for in the church. The Reformation had stripped the medieval houses of worship of everything that reminded the Calvinists of popery. The walls had been whitewashed; all images had been destroyed; stained glass had been replaced by colourless panes; the minister and elders were clothed in black which, like an ugly inkstain, blotted out the memory of gorgeous vestments; and in the monotonous singsong of the psalms, all notes being of equal length, no echo lingered of the music for which the Netherlands had been famous in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Dutch people are fond of bright colours; they love red-tiled roofs, and red-and-yellow stones for a floor pattern, and blue Delft tiles to cover their walls, and red-and-green shutters on walls of bright pink brick; but in church they were not allowed to feast their eyes on colours. White walls and black clothes did not distract the congregation's attention from the Bible lesson and the sermon, which were all that the pious and orthodox came for. But in that land of painters and lovers of painting there were thousands whose artistic souls were emotionally starved in church, and those found in Vondel's drama a religious service that touched them more deeply than the Word of God as it was expounded from the pulpit. Vondel's drama preserved, in an anti-popish society, a most precious feature of medieval Roman worship, the presentation of eternal verities in artistic symbols, both visible and audible. His plays were liturgical dramas written for an audience that had banished all liturgy from its churches; and it may well be that many sensitive souls were attracted towards it by a subconscious nostalgia for the beauty which their fathers had discarded in anger and disgust, and which, in loyalty to them, they still pretended to despise.

It is no wonder, then, that the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church were Vondel's declared enemies. They frowned upon an art which presented for money a Biblical story with all sorts of devices for carnal amusement. One Calvinist divine

called the poet in black print 'a teacher of lies, a propagator of vanity, frivolity, and pagan godlessness'. If the ministers and elders had had their way, the theatre would have been closed for good. In 1666 they pleaded with the burgomasters for a permanent padlock on its doors. 'We are the watchmen in the tower', they told the magistrates in justification of their interference. But the four chief rulers of the city were opposed to extreme measures against the stage, and dismissed the petitioners with the reminder that the watchmen might not act except as they were ordered and instructed by their masters.

Vondel's Biblical plays include *Het Pascha*, the story of the exodus from Egypt; a Joseph trilogy; *The Brothers*, the tragedy of the seven men who were hanged by the Gibeonites in revenge for Saul's cruelty to them; *Peter and Paul*; *Jeptha*; *King David*; *Samson*; *Adonias*; *Adam in Exile*; and *Noah*. In all of these the poet seeks to justify the ways of God to men. His greatest drama, *Lucifer*, though the story is not taken from Holy Writ, belongs to this group. For the Scripture, to Vondel, was a grandiose drama revealing God's mysterious purpose, and of that drama the fall of the angels, the fall of Adam, and the salvation of man by the passion of Christ were the chief and most imposing acts. And all the minor stories that intervene between the fall of Adam and the Crucifixion are variations of the great *leitmotiv*, the Old Testament being a mirror of the New. Jephthah's daughter dying to atone for another's sin signifies the passion of Christ; Joseph buried in the well and rescued from it to become a ruler of men in Egypt betokens Christ buried and risen from the dead to sit in majesty at the right hand of the Father; David, after his victory over Goliath, triumphantly hailed by Jerusalem, means Jesus Christ entering the Holy City on Palm Sunday; Samson victorious in death over his enemies is a prototype of the crucified King of Kings.

It was a hazardous task that the poet set himself in the tragedy of *Lucifer*. His words had to picture a scene at the portals of heaven, where in the light that emanates from the Sun of Suns archangels are the actors. Below them they know, in the centre of the nine concentric spheres, lower than the moon and the clouds, is the new Eden with the new-created couple. Apollyon has been down there to reconnoitre, and the report that he brings back to Belial and Beelzebub wakes their

envy of man. Their sense of injury is aggravated when Gabriel half reveals and half conceals in veiled language the purpose of God with His new creature. For it is clear that they must serve him and be content to see him take his place in heaven above themselves. The host of angels, however, is ready to submit to God's will and, having heard Gabriel's message, intones a magnificent hymn in praise of Divine majesty. But Lucifer will not resign himself to his fate. Beelzebub, Belial, and Apollyon will aid his rebellion. They know how to stir up the lurking discontent among the heavenly hosts. Even Michael's authority cannot lay the unruly spirit they have aroused, and when the three deem the moment ripe, Lucifer appears upon the scene, seemingly to counsel submission, but actually to lure the rebels into offering him the leadership of the revolt. So well does he dissimulate his purpose while speaking the very words that fan the smouldering fire into flame that, when he receives their oath of allegiance, he seems to yield to their importunity. But Lucifer cannot conceal his real purpose from the omniscience of God. God knows by what towering ambition he is driven, and he sends Raphael to the archangel to plead with him and promise him mercy if he desists from his fatal course. Raphael's words make him realize the enormity and the abortive nature of his crime. He stands vacillating, when suddenly the trumpet sounds summoning the loyal hosts of Michael to God's banner. That makes him persist in his rebellion, but without hope of victory he goes to battle. Despair drives him on to fight and fall. The course and the outcome of the battle are related to Raphael by Michael's shield-bearer Uriel. But their joy in the triumph does not outlast the telling. He has hardly finished speaking when Gabriel brings the sad news of Adam's fall. The banished archangel has taken his revenge on God, and excluded after all His creature from heaven. But Gabriel knows also God's promise to the sinner whom He exiled from paradise. He will raise from the seed and blood of the first woman the Strong One, who shall crush the serpent's head. And the chorus of angels concludes the play with an appeal to the Saviour for His mercy.

Vondel termed his first play, *Het Pascha*, a tragi-comedy, because it was a tragedy with a happy ending. Gabriel's prophecy of the coming of Christ supplies the happy ending to *Lucifer*.

In fact, all Vondel's plays are tragi-comedies in that sense. For the Christian poet, who saw in all history an allegory of the eternal truth, could not dismiss his audience without a message of comfort, reminding them that by the downfall of his hero God's purpose was mysteriously accomplished. Even in his *Palamedes* a prophecy of a happy reverse relieves the gloom, although the drama was an allegory of a political tragedy that had caused irreparable loss to the Republic. Palamedes, one of the Greek commanders in the Trojan war, was brought under suspicion, by the crafty wiles of his enemy Ulysses, of having accepted bribes from Priam to betray his own people, and stoned to death in retribution for his uncommitted crime. Under the cloak of that fable Vondel dramatized the political plot by which Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the great Advocate of Holland, after forty years of loyal service to the Republic, was brought to trial and condemned to death on the scaffold. Vondel was an ardent admirer of the statesman. The old man's execution had seared his soul. The wound rankled for years, for as long as Prince Maurice of Orange was alive it was not safe for the poet to seek relief from pain in biting verse. The Stadtholder died in 1625, and Vondel's *Palamedes* appeared in print in the autumn of that same year.

The Trojan story was but a transparent veil. The recent tragedy that had ended on the scaffold at The Hague was clearly discernible under its disguise to all contemporary readers. To leave no one in doubt of his intention, the poet had made the dying Palamedes utter the very words with which the Lord Advocate had said farewell to his people. In the preface to *Jeptha*, which he wrote a generation later, Vondel published his dramatic credo. He there declared that the story of Jephthah yielded the true matter for a tragedy, because the conflict is between near relations; and Jephthah, who is neither a stainless saint nor an abandoned sinner, is of the mettle that makes a tragic hero. Palamedes does not answer these requirements. Vondel, blinded by his passionate worship of the Advocate, saw the root of all his suffering, not in his own pride and lust for power, but solely in the envy and hatred of his enemies. Hence Palamedes falls a victim to passions too base and too brutal for so noble a prey, so that his death, while arousing our horror, leaves us tearless. We cannot feel moved to pity by a hero's

fate who is too saintlike to touch our heart with sympathy. The English poets of *The Tragedy of Sir John of Olden Barnavelt* were less partial to their hero. They did not acquit him; the extreme severity of the sentence made it impossible for them not to believe in his guilt. But the greater is their merit in that they did not allow the sin of pride, of which they thought him possessed, to blind them to his moral greatness.

As a drama, therefore, Vondel's play is a failure. But it was not intended for the stage and has never been acted, I believe. As a satire and political pamphlet it did not miss its mark. The party that had triumphed over Barnevelt was still in power, and the poet had the satisfaction of seeing clear evidence of the pain he had inflicted in an order from The Hague for his arrest and surrender to the jurisdiction of the Court of Holland. But Vondel was a citizen of Amsterdam, and the city's right and honour were involved in this peremptory demand. 'What becomes of our authority if we allow our citizens to be taken to The Hague?' asked one of the *Schepens*. The city's charter forbade that a citizen should be tried in the first instance before a court outside the jurisdiction of Amsterdam, and Vondel's case was, accordingly, referred to the bench of *Schepens* in his own city. He escaped with a fine of three hundred guilders. That was buying country-wide fame at a small price. Up to that time he had been merely one of many local poets; the prosecution and the publicity which it gave to *Palamedes* made him a national celebrity. The confiscated book was reprinted within a few weeks, and before the year had passed it had reached its seventh edition.

The forces of reaction stood ever ready to advertise the poet's writings. They came to his assistance again after the publication of another political drama, *Mary Stuart, or Martyred Majesty*. Vondel's preoccupation with English politics dated from a few years before the appearance of the drama. In 1641 he had vented his wrath over the execution of the Earl of Strafford, and three years later he wrote a *Lament over the Rebels in Great Britain*, whom he called 'Semi-Jews and stubborn Sabbatarians, who crucified their God-anointed kings'. English Puritans and Dutch Calvinists were birds of a feather, black birds of ill omen croaking death and disaster to God-ordained authority. It escaped him that these semi-Jews were doing what the Dutch

had done in the preceding century when they revolted against their sovereign lord, the King of Spain, a revolt which, in his earliest play, he had compared to the exodus of the full-Jews from Egypt. Strafford was a British Palamedes and a brother in martyrdom of Oldenbarnevelt, both victims of rebellious puritanism. And in the threatening revolt against King Charles I Vondel saw a repetition, not of the rising of the Netherlands against Spain, but of Queen Mary's tragedy.

The poet's chief source for his version of Queen Mary's tragedy was Nicolas Causin's *La Cour Sainte* (Paris, 1629), especially one chapter of it, entitled, 'Le Combat de toutes les passions, représenté au vif en l'histoire de la Reine Marie Stuart'. He also consulted Camden, to whom he found a reference in Causin, and various Roman Catholic writers. It cannot be denied that Vondel gave his countrymen a more historical presentment of Mary Queen of Scots than the picture of her that was familiar to Dutch Calvinists. But the poet was mistaken in his implied application of her fate to contemporary events in England. In vindicating the martyred queen he took pleasure in painting Elizabeth as the embodiment of that puritanism which he saw victorious in his own day, both in England and Holland. The audience is spared the spectacle of the execution. They hear it described in the fifth act by Mary's physician to her confessor:

> She kneels at the block and, from this vale of tears,
> Cries, 'Lord, my constant hope, do not forsake me.
> Receive, receive my spirit.' She bows her neck,
> Yet prouder than a swan, spite all misfortune,
> Upon the puritan altar.

Still, the executioner's block on which the poet's heroine lost her head was not a 'puritan altar'. Nor was the age that is called after Elizabeth an age of triumphant puritanism. But the names of Shakespeare and Spenser were unknown to Vondel, and the greatness of the Elizabethan drama was to remain unrevealed to the continent for yet another century. The Independents, the sabbatarians, the semi-Jews, whom Vondel hated because he recognized in them the fellows of the art-denying Calvinists of his own country, were sacrificing on their puritan altar the joy in life and the worship of beauty which gave to the Elizabethan era its powerful creative impulse. As

an attack on puritanism, Vondel's *Mary Stuart, or Martyred Majesty* was an artist's appeal to the very ideals that were dear to the age of her in whom he, strange to say, saw the hateful embodiment of their denial.

The poet dedicated his play to the heroine's great-grandson Edward, the fifth son of Frederick, Count Palatine, and of Elizabeth, daughter of King James I, because he was the first among her posterity 'to quicken her holy ashes and spirit by embracing the Roman Catholic religion'. He thought it unjustifiable, he wrote, that the Dutch should not try to emulate other nations which have empurpled their stages with this precious blood, and he found additional inducement to glorify Mary on the Amsterdam stage in the coincidence of his own birth year with the year of her death. 'For the Holy Church has been accustomed of old to celebrate the birth of its martyrs on the anniversary of the birth of the soul, not of the body.'

'There will always be a strong presumption against the sincerity of a conversion by which the convert is directly a gainer.' Thus wrote Macaulay in his unjust and biased discussion of the motives that led John Dryden to embrace Catholicism. No Calvinist historian in Holland has ever accused Vondel of having gone over to Rome for material reasons. The purity of his motives was beyond suspicion. Contemporaries who called him a traitor and a renegade could not impute his treason to greed or ambition. For it was self-evident that Vondel could not expect any social or financial gain from his admission into a Church whose members were forced to worship in secret and barred from holding public office. There was little baiting of papists in the Dutch Republic. Many families had retained their devotion to the Mother Church all through the eighty years' war against Spain. As Hollanders they could approve of the revolt against a foreign ruler estranged from his subjects; as faithful Catholics they denied that the breach with His Catholic Majesty involved a breach with His Holiness the Pope. They could go to Mass and still be loyal subjects of the Republic. Theirs was, indeed, a conditional loyalty, for ecclesiastic doctrine allowed them to submit to a heretical government only as long as there was no hope of successful resistance. But the rulers of the Republic did not take that theory too seriously. They did not molest quiet Catholic

citizens, connived at their meetings for purposes of worship, and used their conditional loyalty as a useful pretext for excluding them from all public offices. No self-seeking opportunist would have joined their community. Vondel the silk merchant foresaw loss of custom from his conversion; Vondel the citizen realized that he would sever social ties and friendships. But Vondel the poet and mystic knew that those losses were as nothing to the gain that was in store for him. In 1650 he brought out a volume of collected verse which included the following simple lines:

Touchstone

If Roman or un-Roman verse
Should, Reader, win your praise or curse,
Don't blame the pen that wrote this rhyme,
But judge the matter by its time.
Saint Paul admired the Pharisees,
Saint Augustine the Manichees,
Before they saw the shining light
That chased the darkness from their sight.
My youth was by inheritance
Bound to one sect, till by good chance
A clearer vision came to me
Of this world and eternity,
And in a more resplendent day
I found the pearl that hidden lay,
For which one loses all with gain.
They're blest who to that best attain.

The 'one sect' to which he had belonged was the Baptist community. The followers of Menno were a quiet, peace-loving flock, averse to dogmatic controversy. They cared little for doctrine, but set great store by the practice of the Christian life. In that they were the spiritual descendants of Erasmus. The Holy Book was the beacon by which they steered their course through the stormy sea of mortal life. In the twenties of the seventeenth century the Mennonites in Amsterdam saw the peace among their sect disturbed by adherents of Schwenkfeld, the sixteenth-century German mystic, who attached greater weight to the promptings of the inner voice than to the written word of God. Vondel saw the danger of a movement that would make individual exaltation a court of last appeal in spiritual matters,

and administered in vigorous verse an *Antidote against the Poison of the Fanatics in defence of the written word of God.* All his life he showed a profound respect for authority, a need of a fixed standard, both in religion and literature. The Bible was to this pious Baptist what Virgil was to his poetic self. His Mennist conception of a virtuous life was to walk in the light of the Gospel, practising the piety and simplicity of the early Christians. The world had never known a better age than the era of primitive Christianity. In the thirties Vondel was working on an epic poem that had Constantine the Great for its hero. Having made a prose translation of *Gerusalemme Liberata*, he felt his ambition kindled to become the Tasso of the Low Countries. In choosing his subject he was not guided by admiration for the hero, but by nostalgia for his hero's age; not the greatness of the Christian emperor, but the purity of the Christian religion was his real theme. The poem was never completed. Being epic in form, but didactic in substance, it died of its own duality. But, though it never reached the public, it had a profound effect upon its maker. His long preoccupation with the history of the early Christian era, in the study of which he was encouraged by Hugo Grotius, set his mind thinking on the need of a catholic religion in which the warring sects of his own age could find peace. The Mennist poet, whose irenic disposition idealized the age of the Apostles, was distressed at the spectacle of Protestant intolerance, of orthodox Calvinism excommunicating the Arminians for rejecting the doctrine of predestination, of theological controversy injecting its venom into the body politic, till it was racked by convulsions of civil war and judicial murder. Calchas in *Palamedes* personifies the militant priestcraft of orthodox Calvinism. Agamemnon, in order to entrap his enemy,

> Exploits the ancient hatred of the priests,
> Ministers of predestinated doom;
> Those make him drip with sweat amid the press
> Of slanderers and, lying what they list,
> Count wickedness no crime that serves the Gods.

Even so Prince Maurice, as Vondel saw it, had employed the ministry of the Calvinist church to rid him of Oldenbarnevelt, and their reward was his aid in curbing the heresy of the Arminians, who were the liberals of that age. What difference was

there between the Catholic clergy in the days of the Spanish Inquisition, and these Dutch Reformed divines who persecuted and unfrocked fellow ministers for refusing to subscribe to every Calvinist dogma? Liberty of conscience, for which the Dutch had waged their war with Spain, had become an empty word in the free Republic. An undogmatic catholic religion, such as the early Christians knew, could save the modern world from strife and disruption.

Vondel's enthusiastic belief in the possibility of an all-embracing church drew strength from the opinions of Grotius. The learned jurist was an ardent advocate of a universal religion in which all denominations should be merged. But such conformity demanded concessions that no sect was willing to make, and Vondel, despairing of ever seeing Grotius's ideal realized, made his peace with Rome as the one church that came nearest to that ideal.

The artist in him, no less than the pacifist, approved of the step. There was a strange contrast between the simplicity of life and manners to which his Mennist upbringing had accustomed him, and the magnificence of his poetic work, a baroque temple built up of beautiful words and profusely decorated with sculptured imagery. In the grandeur of his style he is closely akin to his countryman Rubens, who glorified the Counter-Reformation in gorgeous paintings that invested saints and martyrs with an exuberant and pagan vitality. Vondel was aware of his affinity to Rubens. When he visualized a scene in his drama *The Brothers*, it was of Rubens that he thought as the painter most able to render in line and colour the vision suggested by his poetry. Moreover, his Biblical plays, which were frowned upon by the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, were sublimated school dramas such as the Jesuits staged in their seminaries as exercises in ethics and rhetoric. As a playwright he belonged to the Church of Rome, and the son of heretical parents who had narrowly escaped martyrdom at the stake was led back by his art to the Church they abjured.

Three of his dramas mark the stages by which he travelled back to Rome. It was natural for the wavering convert to try and imagine what his city must have looked like in pre-Reformation days, when convents and monasteries were sheltered within its walls and the churches were still resplendent

with sculptures, images, and paintings. The city's past became in the thirties the object of his studies. He read medieval chronicles, consulted historians and local antiquaries, and with the aid of sixteenth-century maps tried to visualize Amsterdam in its infancy. The city was to inaugurate its first theatre on Christmas Eve, 1637, and Vondel, not yet an open convert, dramatized for the inaugural performance an episode from early Amsterdam history, the siege and sack of the castle of Aemstel in revenge for the murder of Floris V, Count of Holland. For Gijsbrecht, the Lord of Aemstel, had been one of the nobles involved in the conspiracy against the Count, whose popularity with the common people—a thorn in the flesh of the nobility—had earned him the nickname of 'God of the Churls'. Gijsbrecht's stronghold was destroyed by his enemies and he himself forced to go into exile.

The plot of the play is a skilful dramatization of the story of the sack of Troy as it is told in the *Aeneid*. Virgil was also Vondel's guide out of the wild forest of this world to the peace within Christ's Church, whose coming he is imagined to have foreseen and predicted. The city's Catholic past was revived on the stage of Calvinist Amsterdam, the Mass being openly celebrated before the theatre audience. When the play was still rehearsing, rumours reached the consistory that it glorified the superstitions of popery, and the ministers protested at once against the desecration of Christ's birthday. The burgomasters humoured them and forbade the performance on Christmas Eve. The first performance took place on the fourth day of the new year, and on twelve subsequent days during January and February the superstitions of popery were seen and applauded by a full house. The audience did not applaud the superstitions but the romantic spectacle of which their city was the heroine; and civic pride, indifferent to ecclesiastic censure, revived year after year, in the first weeks of January, the performance of *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*, a tradition that has survived down to the present day.

Four years were still to pass before Vondel took the decisive step. His artistic soul had been caught by the spell of Roman liturgy and worship, and *Gijsbrecht* was his emotional response to their appeal. But before he dared enter the Mother Church, he needed the intellect's sanction on the dictates of the heart.

There was no rashness in his surrender. He realized what price he would have to pay for the pearl of great price. Social martyrdom, he foresaw, must be his lot. But he fortified himself with the examples of the eleven thousand virgins who were massacred by Attila's Huns in his native city of Cologne. His drama *Virgins* appeared in print in 1639. Standing on the threshold of the sanctuary, Vondel turned in thought to early recollections of the scene of his birth. He felt a romantic elation at the thought that he was born in the shadow of Cologne Cathedral, as if by the accident of birth he was predestined for the church which his parents had forsaken. In 1641 Vondel was admitted into the Roman Catholic community. In that same year he published *Peter and Paul*. Again the glory of martyrdom was his theme. Christ conquered, through the death of His two apostles, the ancient conquest of the Caesars. From their dungeon they warred, with prayers and tears for weapons, against the imperial court; humility, whose emblem is the crown of thorns, defeating pride, crowned with laurels.

Even as the apostles and St. Ursula and her companions had glorified Rome and Cologne by their deaths, Vondel would gladly have dedicated his life to the glory of Amsterdam rewon for the Mother Church. But the fierce intolerance of Reformation days had spent its fervour. In seventeenth-century Holland a convert to Rome did not go to Mass at the risk of his life. Vondel did not even suffer the martyrdom of social ostracism. The Catholic poet's loyalty to his adopted city was never in doubt. Adherence to Rome was no longer confused with submission to Spanish tyranny. When the city, in the spring of 1648, celebrated the conclusion of the peace of Westphalia, it was Vondel's pastoral *Leeuwendalers* that gave most exuberant expression to the general rejoicing over the restoration of peace and the final recognition by Spain of Dutch independence. In 1653 some hundred painters, poets, and lovers of the two arts assembled at dinner in St. George's *Doelen*, the guild house of the archers, and crowned Vondel with a laurel wreath the prince of poets. In 1655 Amsterdam inaugurated its new City Hall, and again it was Vondel who outsang all other poets in its praise:

> The husbandman now wades through a golden sea
> And strikes his scythe across the billowing ears.

Even so I revel in the abundant harvest
Of Amsterdam's renown, the pen my scythe,
To celebrate in joyous exultation
Democracy's and City Hall's high feast.

He remained, in popular esteem, Amsterdam's poet laureate. When in his old age he sacrificed all he possessed to save his spendthrift son from the disgrace of bankruptcy, the authorities gave him well-paid employment in the Lombard, a municipal institution that lent money upon pawn at a moderate interest. Here he kept the register of pawns from his seventieth to his eightieth year. Then he tendered his resignation, and the burgomasters, in accepting it, let him retain his salary for the few years that he was yet likely to live. Domestic sorrow, though it bowed him down, could not unnerve him. His trust in God, the strength that religion gave him, and the irrepressible urge to speak his mind in verse sustained him throughout those trying years.

The inmost thought
Wells to the throat with pressure unrestrained,
Acting as new-made wine that bursts the cask.

Thus he wrote in the late twenties; but forty years later, new wine was still fermenting in his ageing frame. He was like the mower of the fairy-tale before whose feet as many ears grew up as he cut down, and who mowed, mowed, as long as his feet could sustain him. The unflagging productivity of his mind was a mark of his genius. He must have worked, like any craftsman, day after day, his fixed ration of hours, never waiting with hands folded for the gush of inspiration, but preparing himself by steady, unremitting effort for the worthy reception of its inflowing grace. And it would seem as if this constant practice in the technique of his art increased the frequency of the divine promptings. The chosen vessel owes its selection to no whim or accident: it is chosen because it made itself worthy of the choice. One has to know Dutch, and know it intimately, to realize the beauty and grandeur of Vondel's poetry. 'A true poet', he wrote in his *Art of Poetry*, 'should resemble the rivers, which for ever increase and with a full bosom flow out at last into the mighty ocean.' He was true, indeed, to his own description. His poetry gathered steadily in force and volume,

winding its way through the golden age of the Dutch Republic, and reflecting in its mirror the life of its people in infinite variety. The wealth that Rembrandt and his fellow painters gathered for posterity on panel and canvas has its verbal counterpart in Vondel's verse. Portrait, landscape, marine piece, genre picture, still-life scene, allegory, baroque mythology, pastoral idyll, coarse drollery, it is all included in his work. He knew how to paint with words as no one in Holland before him or after. One may say of his collected poetry what Dryden said of Chaucer's, 'Here is God's plenty'.

AN APOLOGY FOR MR. HOBBES

By A. E. TAYLOR

THE dispensers of literary good and ill repute have, in the main, dealt hard measure to Thomas Hobbes. He has never quite lived down the imputation, early fixed on him by unscrupulous antagonists, of inculcating 'libertinism', or, at least, of supplying the 'libertine' with a specious defence of his practice. With the rise of the Whig tradition in history-writing a second no less grave accusation grew up against him; the champion of private licence, it was said, was also the apologist of unrestricted arbitrary 'tyranny' in politics. It was not unusual in the nineteenth century, and may not be impossible to-day, to pit him against his younger contemporary Milton, almost as Scripture opposes Belial to Christ. Yet, just as closer acquaintance will teach us that Milton, however great as a poet, is an unsatisfactory representative of the distinctively Christian *ethos*, we may also learn from a similar study that Hobbes is something very different from a Belial.

It has been an undeserved misfortune for the philosopher's good name that, in his old age, he enjoyed the appreciation and protection of Charles II. This has led, by association of ideas, to an unhistorical conception of him as the deviser of a novel and ingenious defence of the morals of the Duke of Buckingham and the Duchess of Portsmouth and the statesmanship of the Treaty of Dover. In point of fact Hobbes's personal conduct was highly decorous; he led the life not of a courtier, but of a retired scholar and thinker, and his characteristic theories had taken shape and found literary expression before the outbreak of the Civil War, while the 'Merry Monarch' was a child. To see him as a son of the age to which he really belongs, we must think of him as a man of the generation immediately after Francis Bacon, and a contemporary of Selden, Clarendon, Cromwell, and Lord Falkland. We must remember that at the Restoration he was a man of over seventy, and that his thought, for good or ill, had taken its definitive form twenty years earlier still. The mistake of looking on him as a figure of the Restoration period

is probably responsible for much loose misconception of his real place in the history of thought.

To understand him properly, it is first of all necessary to see clearly where his thought on public and private morals diverges from the lines of the accepted Christian tradition, and where it does not. The modern reader of the *Elements of Law* or the *De Cive* is likely to take exception to Hobbes on one or both of two grounds which are closely inter-connected. He may attack the *naturalism* of a moral doctrine which takes no account of the hard-and-fast distinction now so commonly drawn between *values* and *facts*, and therefore tries to determine what we *ought* to do, what is *good* to do, by asking what, as a matter of known fact, men *desire* to do. Here, it will be said, is an initial confusion of moral ideal with psychological fact which makes the construction of a sound moral and political theory impossible. And, it will be added, from this same confusion arises a second defect. For want of an ideal, Hobbes is driven to think wrongly of morality as mere conformity of conduct to a *command* imposed on us by an external authority, and obeyed, therefore, in the last resort, not from any sense of the intrinsic goodness of the act commanded, but with the view of getting agreeable or avoiding unwelcome consequences. The 'duty of a man and citizen' thus turns out to be, in the end, a matter of pure self-seeking; the dignity of the moral law, to speak with Kant, has been abolished.

Now, while I would not deny that Hobbes has fallen into serious error in his construction, the precise nature of his error is, I think, often misconceived for want of sufficient understanding of the tradition from which he is deviating. Hobbes was, to be sure, no neo-Kantian; he never dreamed of 'a realm of values' simply and wholly divorced from the 'realm of facts'. But so far he is at one with the tradition of Greek philosophy and Christian orthodoxy. Neither Aristotle nor St. Augustine nor St. Thomas would deny that when we set to work to construct a theory of the way in which life ought to be lived, we must start from the fact that there *is* something on which all men's hearts are unalterably set; all men are so made that they inevitably aspire after εὐδαιμονία, *felicitas*. This fact the moralist accepts as an ultimate postulate; his business as a moralist is to make it plain how this *felicitas* may be won. If it is

naturalism to deny the complete severance in principle between the 'ought' and the 'is', the great Greek moralists and Christian divines must be branded together as naturalists. The real distinction between Hobbes and the tradition is to be drawn differently, and it is this. Good, says Hobbes, is that which satisfies desire. 'Whatsoever is the object of any man's Appetite or Desire; that is it which he for his part calleth good.' So far the moralists of the tradition would agree. But they would go on to say, 'since I am a man, with the *rational* nature of a man, there are some "Appetites or Desires" from the gratification of which I get genuine satisfaction, and some from which I do not. There are rational desires, aspirations springing from the very nature of reasonable personality and there are irrational desires due to the presence in me of an animal nature which is not specifically human but common to me with the beasts. Being, as I am, a man, a reasonable creature, I can get real and genuine satisfaction from gratifying the first; from gratifying the others I get only the transitory and illusory semblance of it.' Taking *good*, then, to mean 'that which satisfies me', the first business of the moralist is to construct a true scale of satisfactions and desires, placing at the top of the scale the aspirations most intimately bound up with rational personality, and at the bottom those which approximate most nearly to the level of the passing appetites of the brutes. But Hobbes's pronounced nominalism forbids him to believe that a 'universal', such as 'rational personality', can be the name of anything real. The reality is the particular individual, Peter, or Paul, or John, in all his particularity; if we call all three of these 'rational persons', we mean no more than that we remark certain similarities between them. Clearly this doctrine, taken seriously, forbids us to make any distinction in principle between more and less rational desires and satisfactions, and thus Hobbes makes the construction of a scale, or ladder, of goods impossible. For him, all desires the individual may feel, and the satisfactions of them, must stand on the same footing. Or, if one desire is to be distinguished from another, it cannot be in virtue of any superior rationality; it can only be because one is, as a psychological fact, more clamorous and insistent, or more persistently recurrent than another. The breach with tradition does not arise from his refusal to divorce value from fact, but from his inability to

construct a scale of goods, in other words, from inadequate apprehension of the facts themselves.

So again with reference to the conception of the moral life as one of obedience to a command. This is not, indeed, how Plato or Aristotle looks at the matter, but it is a way of thinking which the combination of Greek philosophy with Hebrew piety and Roman law had made universal in the Middle Ages. The thought of the good life as one of obedience to the *lex aeterna* and of wrong-doing as the violation of a command is central in the teaching, e.g. of St. Thomas. And I do not believe that he, or any Christian divine, would have taken exception to Hobbes's assumption that a command involves a relation between two distinct wills, that of the legislator who issues the command and that of the subject to whom it is addressed. When Cudworth urges against Hobbes that good and evil are what they are 'by nature' and not by 'meer will', he is not in the least maintaining the Kantian doctrine of autonomy. He denies that the commands of God are ever purely arbitrary, but he does not mean to deny that obedience to the moral law is commanded by God, or that God's will and mine are really two distinct wills. Neither Cudworth nor Cumberland would have dreamed of questioning such familiar positions.

Here again Hobbes's divergence from the tradition is due at bottom to his nominalism. What is common to supporters of the tradition is their belief in 'common notions', or 'practical principles', elementary truths about right and wrong accessible to all reasonable creatures, independently of any special revelation. This belief, implicit in the opening words of the *Institutes* about the *ius naturale* taught by nature herself to all creatures, appears in the schoolmen in the generally accepted doctrine of *synderesis*, an apprehension of the principles of right and wrong held to be present in all rational beings, and to be infallible. (It was only *conscientia*, the application of the principles to the particular case which was commonly held in the Schools to be subject to error.) Since the existence of God and His moral government were regularly included among 'common notions', it was easy, on this theory, both to provide a definite content for the moral law and to recognize its character as a command, though not an arbitrary and capricious command, of the Creator.

Hobbes's difficulty is that his nominalism will not permit him to believe in any such 'common notions'. As he has cut himself off from the possibility of constructing a scale of goods, he cannot really provide the moral law with a content. And his conception of philosophy as discovery of the causes of that which comes into being compels him to deny—as he did to Descartes—that there can be any 'notion' of God, an eternal Being, at all. Of God philosophy can tell us only that He is the unknown cause of the natural world. That the natural world is not eternal but has a cause seems simply to be assumed; but it is a unique effect and we can learn nothing from it of the character of its cause. Hence Hobbes cannot base the duty of obeying the moral law—a duty he never disputes—on knowledge that to do otherwise would be to disobey a divine command. Yet for Hobbes, in whom the sense of duty, as Professor Laird has said, was unusually keen, it was impossible not to regard right and wrong-doing as, essentially, obedience and disobedience to command. Therefore, and not, as opponents were apt to suspect, for worse reasons, he takes the only course left open to him. The moral law is before everything a thing commanded. Without a special revelation—and of special revelations philosophy can take no account—it cannot be affirmed to be commanded by God. So we are driven to say that it is the command of one who is visibly and undeniably in authority over us, our political superior, the 'sovereign'. Hence Hobbes's characteristic identification of the moral law with the 'law of the land'. Hence also his view that the moral philosopher has completed his task when he has shown that implicit obedience to the civil law is always reasonable and disobedience always unreasonable.

How serious Hobbes is with this doctrine is shown, for example, by the well-known passage in *Leviathan*[1] where he lays it down that a man liberated by bandits on promise of a ransom is strictly obliged to pay the sum promised, unless the bargain has been declared invalid by a court of law. This is not the casuistry of a moralist indifferent to obligation, or anxious to make things easy for the licentious. Indeed, when we remember

[1] Ch. 14. 'And even in Common-wealths, if I be forced to redeem my selfe from a Theefe, by promising him money, I am bound to pay it till the Civill Law discharge me. For whatsoever I may lawfully do without Obligation, the same I may lawfully Covenant to do, through feare: and what I lawfully Covenant, I cannot lawfully break.'

that the fully dutiful man would, on Hobbes's principles, have to comform not merely to the statutes visiting offences with penalties, but to the 'injunctions' of the legislator against various forms of loose living which are not penalized at all, we may doubt whether any room has been left for 'licence'. It must not be forgotten that the objection taken to all forms of law-breaking is not that they involve penal consequences, but that the offender is violating the duty of obedience to the 'sovereign's' declared will. The Hobbist who lives strictly up to his master's teaching, and does no more, may not be a person of high spirituality, but it must in fairness be admitted that he will at least, like Hobbes himself, lead a most regular and decorous life.

It is another question whether Hobbes is as successful as he wishes to be in proving on his own principles that 'reason' demands this thorough-going subjection to the 'sovereign's' commands. Is it true that if we admit Hobbes's professed principles, the 'sovereign's' authority is shown to be reasonable? It is indispensable to his position that he should be able to satisfy us of this, since it never enters his mind to confuse authority with mere strength. Had Hobbes held, like Machiavelli, that 'might is right', it would have been enough for him simply to urge that the 'sovereign' has the power to attach undesirable consequences to breach of his regulations and that I shall therefore be ill-advised to disregard them. To say this would, no doubt, be to open the door to 'licence', since if the only obligation to obedience is a purely prudential one, when I can count with reasonable probability on concealment or impunity, the prudential motive no longer has any force. It would equally open the door to 'tyranny' on the part of the 'sovereign', since it would follow that whatever he is strong enough to enforce he has a right to enforce. It is these consequences that Hobbes tries to evade by the curious use he makes of the old notion of the 'social contract'. He wants to argue that disobedience in the subject is not merely impolitic but wrong, because the 'sovereign' has a *right* to obedience, and he cannot make out his case for this all-important tenet without by implication recognizing that there is an inherent restriction on the 'sovereign's' right to command; his right to do so, unconfined as it sometimes appears in Hobbes's polemic against all theories

of 'constitutional checks', is bound up with the allegation that the plenitude of political sovereignty is a means, and a necessary means, to an end; it is this end which legitimates the absolutism of the 'sovereign'. The question for us to consider is whether the doctrine, as Hobbes presents it, is either fully consistent with itself or compatible with the nominalist metaphysics to which Hobbes commits himself.

To judge of the theory fairly we need to divest it of the sensational form into which Hobbes has cast it by his use of what he himself fairly allows to be the fiction of the 'state of nature'. It is easy to understand the impression which must have been produced on slow-witted readers by an author who told them that in 'the state of nature' there is no moral law at all, unless you can call it a moral law that 'that is to be every man's which he can get, and for so long as he can keep it', and that in such a state of things 'force and fraud' are the two cardinal virtues. These sound like the utterances of an 'immoralist' of the type of Nietzsche, but they are really something very different. Hobbes is really saying only that men surrounded by hostile savages, or living in a country where civil war has ended in anarchy, have to judge for themselves what precautions to take for the preservation of their persons and goods, and to trust to their own strength of arm and quickness of wit to make the precautions effective; where the state's writ does not run, I have to be my own code, my own judiciary, and my own police. This is not, of course, a desirable state of things; it is one in which life is 'nasty, poor, solitary, brutish and short', and Hobbes only describes it at such length in order to drive home the miseries of the situation; you chafe at the burdensomeness of political subjection—so he, in effect, says to malcontents—but remember that subjection is the price which must be paid for the benefits of settled peace, known law, and even justice. The really interesting thing about his position is that he is not satisfied to argue that a domination originally founded on mere violence is sufficiently justified *ex post facto* if it provides these benefits. He cannot be content until he has legitimated the position of the 'sovereign' by arguing that I am in a tacit agreement with my fellow subjects to take his commands as the rule of life so that to disobey is to be guilty of violating a solemn engagement, an act which is clearly immoral. In disobeying I am not merely

rebelling against my 'sovereign'; I am breaking an implied pledge which I have given to every one of my fellow citizens, and showing myself to be a *Nichtswürdiger.*

In the well-known description of the passage of a group of men from the 'state of nature' to that of civil government[1] there is an inconsequence which has always been remarked by Hobbes's critics. We are told as expressly as could be that the 'state of nature' is completely unsocial, and the conclusions are drawn that in such a condition 'nothing can be unjust. The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law.' Yet, as we all know, in the immediate sequel Hobbes goes on to speak of a number of 'laws of nature', and in particular to deduce the right of the 'sovereign', once instituted, to unqualified obedience from such a 'natural law' that 'men perform their Covenants made', in fact that promises are sacred. Now how can the sacredness of promises be a *natural* law if in the 'state of nature' there is *no* law? The apparent contradiction is, no doubt, lessened by Hobbes himself when he identifies the 'Lawes of Nature' with 'Articles of Peace' and speaks of them as 'theorems' discovered by reason about the conditions necessary for the termination of the supposed primitive anarchy. He could be taken to mean no more than that considerations of a purely self-regarding kind are enough to show any man in a cool hour that he stands a better chance of a tolerable existence for himself if he and his neighbours will come to terms and keep them. To call covenant-keeping a 'law of nature' might be taken to mean only that each of us can see that it will be to his advantage that he and his neighbours should respect their passed word; they are likely to lose badly if they do not. Hobbes does, in fact, use this argument. He is at pains to remind the prospective 'rebel' that a man who shows by his acts such disregard for his own pledges cannot reasonably expect others to keep faith with him, and thus stands to lose a good deal more than he gains. But if this is all there is to be said against breach of 'covenant', right and wrong, as distinguished from mere prudence and imprudence, will have no more existence in the civil society than they had in the supposed 'state of nature'. If all that

[1] *Leviathan*, chs. 13, 14.

Hobbes really means by calling rebellion *wrong* is that the chances are usually against the rebel, he would have done better to base his case against disobedience simply on the *de facto* strength of the 'sovereign', without the very artificial attempt to justify his authority by a supposed consent of his subjects. Clearly Hobbes means something more, and that he does so is shown by the very suggestive language of his definition of a law of nature; such a law is said to be a 'precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is *forbidden* to do that which is destructive of his life . . . .' The important word here is 'forbidden'. Reason, it seems, not merely discovers that a certain course of conduct will 'destroy' my life; it *prohibits* that conduct. The law is, after all, not simply a theorem to be expressed in the indicative mood; it is a *command*, an imperative. Reason, as Hobbes conceives of the matter, says not simply 'you will preserve your life by covenant-making and covenant-keeping', but 'you ought to preserve your life'; though Hobbes may explain that a law of nature—in his sense of the word—is a theorem, or general truth, he cannot escape from his conviction that it is also a *law* in the strict and proper sense of the word, it is something which reason *commands*.[1]

It is clear, however, that if the account which Hobbes has previously given of human nature is a sufficient one, there is no justification for this conception of reason as issuing imperative commands and prohibitions. We must remember that in his theory the transition from the supposed primitive anarchy to settled government is assumed neither to cause nor to be caused

[1] This seems to me to be the point on which Spinoza, who borrowed so much of his moral and political theory from Hobbes, diverges from him. Spinoza's own account of the difference between them is that, unlike Hobbes, he supposes the individual *not* to surrender his 'natural right' by entering into society, but to retain it intact. This, I think, means that Spinoza rejects Hobbes's view that the 'rebel' is not merely making a miscalculation, but offending against a moral 'imperative' that men keep their 'covenants'. In fact Spinoza expressly denies that any one can have any obligation to keep his word other than his conviction that it will be to his advantage to do so, and draws the inference that an independent state may always repudiate its engagements when it stands to gain by doing so. In this respect his moral theory is, as Professor Laird has said, 'wicked', in a way in which Hobbes's is not. Yet Spinoza has no more succeeded than Hobbes in being strictly 'naturalistic'. For, as Professor Guzzo has pertinently observed, his whole theory is based on the assumption that it is desirable to live by the 'dictate' of reason, and the very expression 'dictate' conceals a sense of the *imperativeness* of 'reason's' directions. (They are not *consilia* but *dictamina*.)

by any change in 'human nature'; that remains fundamentally the same in all circumstances. Each of us, if Hobbes's picture of man is a faithful one, is just a bundle of appetites and desires, some more and some less clamant. No doubt in a 'cool hour' the desires which we regard as probably capable of gratification will be more prominent than those which reflection sees to be all but certain to be frustrated, and so far it is possible to distinguish rational from irrational desire. Rational desire will mean only desire which, in my cooler hours, I judge likely to be gratified. But suppose I am the kind of man with whom these cooler hours are infrequent; suppose I prefer the exciting pursuit of the difficult and dangerous to that of the safe and easy; how can it be said that 'reason' has the right to prohibit me from following my bent? If I stake everything on the effort to be *aut Caesar aut nullus*, the chances may be, as Hobbes maintains, a thousand to one that I shall end by being *nullus*. But if I am the typical adventurer I shall probably prefer one chance in a thousand of becoming Caesar to a reasonable certainty of inglorious quiet. The arguments from the probability of failure with which Hobbes confronts the possible rebel may be convincing to one of his own 'feminine' temperament; they are not likely to carry much weight with the 'brave bad men' who make the rebellions of history.

What really should be shown, and never is shown, is that there is an intrinsic difference between desires which are created by my possession of rational personality and desires which might equally be felt by an impersonal 'animal'. It should be shown that there is an *ideal* of felicity only attainable and only imaginable to a being who is a rational person, and necessarily imagined and aspired to by every one who is such a person. To confess this would be to recognize from the outset the reality of the 'scale of good', and it would be at least to raise the question whether, in my own personality, there is not given the foundation for a 'law' of conduct independent of the statute book and the prince, and, at the same time, knowable as authoritative without any need to go outside the province of philosophy by an appeal to commands accredited by a specific 'supernatural' revelation. We should find ourselves back at the Platonic thesis that within each of us there is that whose proper place it is to command and that whose function is to obey. But clearly to concede as much would be granting that

the 'universal' *rational personality* is something real in all of us, and that none of us is a mere bundle, or as Hume would say, 'heap', of successive desires only to be graded by their violence and the frequency of their recurrence. And Hobbes's nominalism compels him to reject this one possible philosophical foundation for a moral law independent of the civil:

> The Felicity of this life, consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied. For there is no such *Finis ultimus* (utmost ayme,) nor *Summum Bonum* (greatest good) as is spoken of in the Books of the old Morall Philosophers. . . . I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death.[1]

'Reason' is supposed to be able, in our calmer moods, to compute the chances that one of these desires will be gratified, but it creates none of them, nor is it, apparently, entitled to say which of them are *worth* gratifying. Hence, as I have said, Hobbes's earnest attempt to convince a prospective 'rebel', who has a fighting chance of success, that he is doing something unreasonable and wrong in 'breaking his covenant' to live as a law-abiding citizen is a failure. He was far from wishing it to fail, as the impassioned language in which it is couched shows. His purpose is not to excuse 'licence', but to insist vehemently on the importance of strict observance of morality as the only bulwark against general anarchy, but his view of human nature permits him to use no arguments but those which presuppose in his reader his own devotion to the principle of 'safety first'. It is hard not to suspect that the length and earnestness with which this plea is urged in the fifteenth chapter of *Leviathan* betrays the writer's own uneasy consciousness that his case, as stated by himself, is a weak one.

There is a corresponding weakness in the reasoning by which Hobbes seeks to show that his doctrine of the duty of passive obedience does not encourage tyranny on the part of the 'sovereign'. It is part of his theory, though the point is too often overlooked, that though the subject is bound to take the 'sovereign's' commands as law, the 'sovereign' is also bound to regulate his commands strictly in regard to the 'natural law' which prohibits all iniquity. It is true, of course, that this is not an obligation which can be enforced by any court of law.

[1] *Leviathan*, ch. xi.

The courts are the 'sovereign's' courts, and the law which they administer is his. And Hobbes thinks it self-evident that in any conceivable government there must always be somewhere a law-making and law-enforcing power from which there is no appeal. Whoever is 'sovereign' must, in the last resort, decide for himself what the well-being of society requires to be commanded or forbidden. And the course on which he decides is, by definition, the just course. Yet Hobbes is equally convinced that though the ruler's conduct to a subject can never be unjust—a subject being, by definition, one who has 'covenanted' to regard the ruler's command as his rule of life—the ruler's behaviour may be 'iniquitous', and such iniquity in the ruler is a breach of the law of nature. To take Hobbes's own example, David did no injustice to Uriah (because, as he puts it, Uriah was David's subject, and had therefore 'given David the right' to deal with him at his pleasure); yet in stealing Uriah's wife and compassing his death, David had broken the natural law, and therefore became guilty of iniquity.

We might expand Hobbes's thought in this way. The general well-being may demand that a particular marriage shall be annulled, as it may, and often does, demand that a particular soldier shall be entrusted with a task which will entail loss of life. Whether the general good demands either of these things in a particular case is a matter for the judgement of the 'sovereign', and from this judgement there can be no appeal. And to live as a subject of any government is to recognize in some one or other, not yourself, this right to finality of judgement. Hence the prince who determines by his own discretion that a man's marriage shall be annulled, or sends him on certain destruction, is committing no formal injustice. In making such a use of his discretionary power he is exercising the very functions to discharge which 'sovereignty' was invented, and is therefore within his rights. Yet, as sovereignty was invented, and the 'sovereign' invested with this large discretion, for the public benefit, the 'sovereign' who uses his discretion, as David did, not for the protection of the public but to gratify his appetite, is assuredly doing something which is morally wrong.

So far all is plain sailing. Now our difficulties begin. If the 'sovereign', though incapable of injustice, can be guilty of 'iniquity', there is clearly some law of right and wrong antecedent

to the civil law of the 'sovereign', which has been declared to be the standard of justice; and if, as Hobbes asserts, this antecedent moral law is 'the natural law', how is this to be reconciled with the earlier explicit declaration that 'the notions of Right and Wrong' have no place in the state of nature? If all law is a command laid down by one will for the obedience of another, and the 'natural law' is binding on the 'sovereign' who creates the civil law, whose will does the natural law express?

I can see no answer to these questions that would be compatible with Hobbes's insistence on command as essential to law, unless we suppose him to be simply in earnest in what he himself says in the passage about David, that David, though Uriah's 'sovereign', was himself God's subject, and forbidden by God to commit iniquity, that is, violation of the natural law.[1] It is, I know, usual to suppose that such language, in Hobbes's mouth, is merely conventional, and signifies little or nothing. Yet it seems clear to me that Hobbes means what he says when he speaks of the 'sovereign' as capable of iniquity. In fact he must mean what he says, unless we suppose him to entertain the paradox that Nero, King John, and Ivan the Terrible are blameless characters. And I think it follows immediately from his conception of wrong-doing as transgression of a command that the natural law by which iniquity is forbidden must be a code due to the Creator.

It is true, no doubt, that Hobbes had declared that there can be no philosophical or scientific knowledge of God, since God is admittedly 'ingenerable'.[2] And it would follow from this that if God has prescribed a code of conduct for us, we are precluded from any rational knowledge of its contents. But it is quite possible to combine this scepticism about the possibility of a philosophical theory of morals with the belief that we have

[1] *Leviathan*, ch. xxi: 'For though the action be against the law of Nature, as being contrary to Equitie (as was the killing of *Uriah*, by *David*;) yet it was not an Injurie to *Uriah*; but to *God*. Not to *Uriah*, because the right to doe what he pleased was given him by *Uriah* himself; And yet to *God*, because *David* was *Gods* Subject; and prohibited all Iniquitie by the law of Nature, which distinction, David himself, when he repented the fact, evidently confirmed, saying, *To thee only have I sinned*.' [Ps. l. 6 (Vulg.): *Tibi soli peccavi*.]

[2] *Concerning Body*, i. 8: 'The *subject* of Philosophy, or the matter it treats of, is any Body of which we can conceive any generation . . . therefore it excludes *Theology*, I mean the doctrine of God, Eternal, Ingenerable, Incomprehensible, and in whom there is nothing neither to divide nor compound, nor any generation to be conceived.'

in Scripture a declaration of the rules of living which the Creator has appointed for us. If that is so, we have a knowledge of the law of right and wrong, though it is not a *reasoned* knowledge, but based on authority. This was pretty clearly the view of Francis Bacon, who seems to think that philosophers who attempt to construct a rational system of ethics, when they ought simply to appeal to the authority of the 'law and the testimony', are repeating in themselves the sin of Adam, hankering after the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.[1] I conceive it not impossible that Hobbes held a similar theory. With all his distrust of official divinity, there would be nothing inconsistent with the professed principles of his philosophy in the belief that the inscrutable Author of the universe has promulgated a code of conduct for us, and that this code can be discovered in the Scriptures. And at any rate, if we suppose this to have been Hobbes's thought, we get, what is otherwise lacking, an intelligible sense for the language in which he speaks of the 'laws of nature' as not merely indicating the means to an end we may be presumed to desire, peace and security, but as directly commanding us to pursue that end and forbidding conduct inconsistent with its attainment. It is very hard to reconstruct in imagination the outlook of a seventeenth-century 'free thinker', but to me it seems at least more probable that such a man should have been less 'atheistic' than his enemies called him than that Hobbes should have used this phraseology of commanding and forbidding without meaning what he said. We might, no doubt, suggest that all that his language about a natural law which prohibits iniquity in the 'sovereign' means is that an intelligent 'sovereign' will be alive to the fact that he derives his importance from the acquiescence

[1] *Advancement of Learning*, ii: 'Wherefore we conclude that sacred theology, (which in our idiom we call divinity) is grounded only upon the word and oracle of God, and not upon the light of nature: for it is written *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei*; but it is not written, *Coeli enarrant voluntatem Dei*: but of that it is said, *Ad legem et testimonium*. . . . This holdeth not only in those points of faith which concern the mysteries of the Deity, of the Creation, of the Redemption, but likewise those which concern the law moral truly interpreted.' Ibid. i: 'it was not the pure knowledge of nature and universality, a knowledge by the light whereof man did give names unto other creatures in Paradise, as they were brought before him, according unto their proprieties, which gave occasion to the fall; but it was the proud knowledge of good and evil, with an intent in man to give law unto himself and to depend no more on God's commandments, which was the form of the temptation.'

of the subjects in his government, and risks his position by any kind of tyranny likely to provoke rebellion; self-interest, properly understood, should therefore lead him to conduct himself with equity. This is an argument which Hobbes develops at length, and it is one of his main reasons for preferring monarchy to any other form of government that a monarch's affluence, power, and prestige depend so visibly on the well-being of his subjects that monarchy is, of all others, the form of government in which the 'sovereign' is least likely to be blind to his true interest. But, even were it not a patent fact that so many monarchs fail to understand their own interest, for my part I find it incredible of a precise writer like Hobbes that he should say 'all iniquity is prohibited to the "sovereign" ' when he means only that a wide-awake 'sovereign' will see it to be an unprofitable speculation. To make Hobbes's doctrine into an apparently coherent whole, it seems to me necessary both that the so-called 'law of nature' should have a legislator behind it, and that it should have its 'sanctions'. Both the legislator and the sanctions are provided, if we may suppose that God has a part to play in the scheme, and that Hobbes, like Bacon, was willing to admit that God's commandments can be collected out of the Scriptures, though they could not have been discovered without them.[1]

The theology which would result from taking Hobbes at his word is certainly not inspiring. The duty of man to obey God never receives from him any real moral justification. He was at pains to find some sort of moral justification for the absolutism of the 'sovereign' by appealing to the presumed covenant of each subject with his neighbours to follow a known common rule of conduct; the absolutism of God he justifies—if it can be called a justification—by appeal to sheer naked force; we must obey God simply because we are helplessly in God's power, utterly at His mercy if we offend Him.[2] The same nominalistic

[1] And the doctrine at once supplies grist to Hobbes's mill. Bacon had made the Scriptures the source of all serious 'knowledge of good and evil' without indicating to us in any way how we are to know what writings are 'Scripture'. Hobbes attacks this fundamental problem of the 'canon' of Scripture with the result that he believes himself to have proved that it is part of the 'sovereign's' prerogative to decide what is and what is not canonical.

[2] Though exactly the same criticism would be no less applicable to Bacon. (And when all is said, Bacon was morally much less of a true man than Hobbes.)

presuppositions which made it impossible for Hobbes to construct a scale of good equally made it impossible for him to argue, like the moralists of the great tradition, that God's commandments are to be obeyed because they are *good*. It is true that what God commands the earthly 'sovereign' is to 'seek and ensue' the peace and well-being of his subjects; but the argument from the 'inevitable power' of God would equally make it the 'sovereign's' duty to seek war and general misery if it could be made out that this is what has been enjoined in Scripture. It is, we might say, a fortunate accident for Hobbes that the line of conduct inculcated on a 'sovereign' in Scripture coincides with the course which makes for the subject's quiet and happiness. (This suggestion that in the last resort the 'natural law' is arbitrary is, we must remember, a legacy—like other things in Hobbes—from the philosophy of Ockham; the Minorite doctor had developed the thought much farther than the deist saw fit to follow.) And the motives for obedience—unlike those given for our obedience to the 'sovereign'—are wholly unethical, mere considerations of the personal risk involved in disobedience. (Though here, again, the appeal to unworthy motives is nothing specially characteristic of Hobbes; it was worked for all it was worth by the more commonplace representatives of 'orthodoxy', as it is still worked by some of them to-day.) To make virtue a means to the avoidance of discomfort *post mortem* is certainly to degrade morality, but the blame rests not primarily with Hobbes but with medieval Christianity with its lurid mythology of future torments. There could be little room left for 'disinterested goodness' in lives haunted by the visions which inspired representations such as we may still see in the Campo Santo of Pisa. And if we are to be strictly just, we must add that it is also not Hobbes but a long series of Christian divines who are really responsible for the conception of the 'commandment of God' as something arbitrary. It is, for example, Augustine himself who replies to the comments of the Manichaean Faustus on the morality of the old Hebrew patriarchs and judges by arguing that their sanguinary acts must be presupposed to have been done in obedience to a particular divine command, and the Author of the moral law is always at liberty to make an exception to His own legislation at His mere good pleasure. On this point the

real breach with established 'orthodox' tradition is made not by Hobbes, but by his antagonists, the Cambridge Platonists, when they contend that there is no real arbitrariness in the Divine will, and that acts expressly commanded by God—if there are any such acts—which appear on a first view to be contrary to the precepts of the 'natural law' will be found, when all the circumstances of the case are known, actually to fulfil it. Had Hobbes's nominalism permitted him to take a truer view of the work of 'practical reason' in revealing the moral ideal, and so to construct the 'scale of good', it would have been open to him both to take this line and to find a worthier ultimate motive for obedience to God than that of mere fear of 'irresistible power'. He might have attempted to provide obedience to a 'natural law' presumed to come from God with a *moral* basis, as he has tried to do the same thing for obedience to the civil law of the 'sovereign'. Unfortunately his theory of human nature has made the second attempt a failure and forbidden him to venture on the first.

Yet it remains true—though Cumberland is perhaps the only writer among his contemporary opponents who at all appreciates the fact—that the whole object of Hobbes's work in ethics and politics is not, as was so commonly supposed, to 'abolish a law, but to establish a law'. Strict fidelity to the principle—according to Hobbes a compendious summary of the whole moral law—'do not to another what thou wouldst not have done to thyself' is admittedly a precondition of the only kind of life worth having, and a law is, it is assumed, always the command laid down by a will. There must then be some will from which this principle emanates as a command. And as philosophy, according to Hobbes, can deal only with relations of cause and effect between things which are 'generable', the only will which philosophy can envisage as the source of the law must be the will of a 'creature'. But to what creature can we attribute this will, if not to the 'mortal god' the sovereign state, and what organ has the state for making its will known except the person, or persons, invested with the plenitude of political power? The visible 'snag' in the argument only comes in when it becomes necessary to add that, though the exercise of this plenitude of power must, from the nature of the case, be discretionary and permit of no appeal, it is morally subject to the

restriction that it must be directed in good faith to the maintenance of the general well-being. 'Iniquity' is forbidden by a law which is not of the 'leviathan's' making; if Hobbes is to be consistent with himself, this law also must emanate from a will which is independent of all the creatures; to find such a will, philosophy, as conceived by Hobbes, has to go outside itself; it must appeal to some non-rational authority, as Hobbes himself, in fact, appeals to Scripture.

Hobbes has thus landed himself in a quandary of which he is wise enough not to speak. He has explicitly maintained that, for the prevention of endless discord and anarchy, it is necessary that the 'sovereign's' plenitude of power should include the right to decide what writings are, or are not, Scripture (i.e. authoritative), and how those which are Scripture are to be interpreted. Now suppose that the 'sovereign' should declare that the proposition that he is debarred from all 'iniquity' is *not* contained in the canonical Scriptures, that, rightly interpreted, they never command a 'sovereign' to be guided by the supposed natural law. Suppose Charles II and the Privy Council had decided, in imitation of the counsellors of Cambyses, that Scripture authorizes the King of England to do whatever he pleases. Would not Hobbes have been forced to choose between being in intent a 'rebel' and abandoning his thesis that the king has been commanded by God, 'whose subject he is', to abstain from 'iniquity'? What line could Hobbes have taken with consistency? Outwardly, no doubt, he could have signified his assent to such a declaration while remaining at heart of his old mind, since it is his avowed doctrine that assent to 'articles of religion' put out by the 'sovereign' signifies not my belief in their truth but merely my intention not to disturb the public peace by challenging them. But in his heart he must then either have abandoned the whole conception of a natural law which it is 'iniquity' to transgress, or have recognized the authority of a law opposed to the pronouncements of his 'sovereign'. Fortunately for Hobbes, Charles II, though, in the phrase of Johnson, 'licentious in practice', was sane enough in moral theory. He was not the man to deny himself the enjoyment of pleasant vices, but also not the man to pretend for a moment that they were not vices.

It is a point, then, for which Hobbes deserves credit that he

in his way recognizes as fully as Kant does in a very different way, that it is a distinctive and irreducible character of moral law to present itself, in relation to the will of a man—a creature always at best only imperfectly moralized—as an *imperative*, and not merely as something *desirable*. But for Hobbes's nominalism, which prevents his doing justice to the conception of 'practical reason', this recognition would lead up directly to the question whether the very existence of the obligation to eschew 'iniquity' is not itself evidence of the further existence of an intrinsically righteous divine will and of the falsity of Hobbes's assumption that philosophy is precluded from all knowledge of God. If we can reason from the universal obligatoriness of the natural law (which Hobbes does not deny) to the existence of a universal will which imposes this obligation, the very validity of the moral law becomes itself proof of the existence of the universal moral Lawgiver, and the moral argument for theism no longer needs the *détour* in which Kant indulges when he brings in God merely to ensure that fidelity to the law shall ultimately be crowned by 'happiness'. On this point Hobbes's 'Platonizing' opponents, with their firm grasp of the implications of the notion of 'practical reason', are more truly representative of the great European tradition than either Hobbes or Kant. At the same time, it is, as I have repeatedly said, doing an unintelligent injustice to the memory of a great sober thinker not to see that Hobbes's whole concern, in his ethical theory, is not to undermine the foundations of a morality of duty, but to secure them as thoroughly as his nominalist metaphysics will allow him to do.

GEORGE HERBERT

By F. E. HUTCHINSON

THE seventeenth century saw no need to apologize for the poetry of George Herbert. *The Temple* received an immediate welcome, and it retained its place for three-quarters of a century after its author's death. Puritans like Peter Sterry and Baxter were as warm in its praise as churchmen. But after 1709 there were no more editions for ninety years, and Herbert was almost as completely ignored as the other religious poets of his age. Even the few in the eighteenth century who loved his poems thought it necessary to clear themselves of any imputation of their condoning his surrender to the metaphysical fashion of his day. John Wesley was a lifelong admirer of Herbert, but in printing for his followers no less than forty-seven of *The Temple* poems he so drastically purged them of conceits and colloquial turns of phrase as to give them almost an eighteenth-century dress; in his seventieth year, however, he printed twenty-three of Herbert's poems as the author wrote them. Cowper, in one of his severe visitations of melancholy, found Herbert to be the only author he had any delight in reading, and he 'pored over him all day long'; yet he must acknowledge that the poems were 'gothic and uncouth'. The first considerable critic to rediscover the true quality of Herbert's poetry was Coleridge, whose criticism was both just and appreciative, though he also regrets 'the too frequent quaintness of the thoughts'. Throughout the nineteenth century *The Temple* was repeatedly printed; but editors and critics were wont to temper their genuine appreciation with more or less gentle admonition of his fantastic imagery. The note of apology creeps even into the commentary of the latest and most devoted of Herbert's editors, the late Professor George Herbert Palmer of Harvard.

Such apology is less called for to-day. Sir Herbert Grierson, Mr. Williamson, and Mr. T. S. Eliot have done more than the scholars of the nineteenth century to interpret the aims and methods of the metaphysical poets. The conceits, which had once given offence or elicited a half-hearted defence, are now

again seen to be no idle exercise of perverse ingenuity, introduced for display or to win a reputation for 'wit', but the indispensable way of expressing that blend of thought and passion which characterized the poetry of these writers. The conceits give intellectual pleasure again, as they originally did, and more often than not aesthetic pleasure as well. If, indeed, a conceit is felt to be merely ingenious, and not illuminating or pleasing, it may be accounted a failure, at least for us, but ingenuity is not itself an indication of insincerity, for the emotion of these poets is as evident as their brain-work. The reader recognizes that poems of this kind do not yield their full significance at a first reading, but that he will be rewarded at each re-reading with fresh perception of the fitness and effectiveness of the imagery, and of its close connexion with the poet's thought. There are also other qualities, more strictly poetical, which entitle such poetry to renewed consideration, but these will be more conveniently considered later in this essay.

No scholar has done more notable service to the study of Herbert than Palmer, especially by his detailed interpretation of the poems. He also made a courageous attempt to arrange them in chronological order. The poems seldom give any reliable indication of the date of their composition, and the only trustworthy basis for dating them is a comparison of the two extant manuscripts, the earlier one in Dr. Williams's Library, London, and the copy of *The Temple* in the Bodleian Library with the autograph signatures of the Cambridge authorities licensing it for the press. The Williams MS. contains 69 of the 164 poems finally included, often after considerable revision, in the Bodleian MS. and the printed texts. It has six English poems which found no place in the final collection and two series of Latin poems. The Latin poems are in Herbert's hand, and the English poems, although in the hand of an amanuensis, have many corrections in the author's hand. The Bodleian MS., a large folio, is not likely to be the 'little book', which, according to Walton, Herbert sent from his death-bed to Nicholas Ferrar, not merely because of its size, about which Walton may have been mistaken, but because it is in the unmistakable Little Gidding handwriting; it contains no corrections in the author's hand, and was probably a fair copy

of the 'little book' made for the licencers after Herbert's death. Palmer was fully entitled, for his purpose of elucidating the growth of Herbert's mind and poetic mastery, to place the Williams poems first, although the reader will do well not to forget that in Palmer's edition he is reading those poems in their final form, which often differs considerably from the unrevised form in the Williams MS. Palmer took a more hazardous step when he placed between the Williams poems and those not found in that collection a group, consisting of eight Williams poems and ten from the later collection, under the title 'The Crisis', on the ground that he detected in these poems references to Herbert's hesitation about entering the priesthood. He was the first to notice that no Williams poem referred to Herbert's already being a priest, and that the collection was therefore completed before his institution to the rectory of Bemerton on 26 April 1630. But how much earlier? Palmer suggests[1] that the Williams MS. was compiled 'about 1629', but elsewhere[2] he says 'about 1628'. He calls 1627–9 the years of crisis, but he might have begun the period earlier. The loss of powerful friends, including King James I, which was said by Walton to have marred Herbert's chance of state employment, occurred in 1624 and 1625. His mother did not die till the summer of 1627, after which he resigned the Oratorship, but, again according to Walton, he had long since ceased to reside regularly at Cambridge, so that Palmer's title for the Williams poems, 'Cambridge Poems', is misleading. He also makes little of the fact that, as the Lincoln Chapter Acts establish, Herbert was already in deacon's orders when he was instituted by proxy, on 5 July 1626, to the prebend of Leighton Ecclesia in Lincoln Cathedral. Like his friend Ferrar, who was ordained deacon in that year, and 'durst not presume to step one Inche higher', Herbert may not have regarded the diaconate as committing him to pastoral life; but it would almost certainly have debarred him from employment in the service of the State, as is clear in Ferrar's case. Palmer also assigns to the period of crisis Herbert's serious illness, but the statement in Walton that this occurred 'about the year 1629 and the 34th of his Age' is inconsistent; his 34th year ran from 3 April 1625 to 2 April

[1] *The English Works of George Herbert*, i. 187.
[2] Ibid. iii. 3.

1626, and the dates would be harmonized, if, as Mr. J. E. Butt suggests, the last figure is misprinted in Walton, being a turned 6 which looks like a 9.

Palmer takes far more serious risks when he makes five subdivisions in each of his main divisions, 'Cambridge Poems' and 'Bemerton Poems' with the mixed group, 'The Crisis' as a bridge between. This further grouping is useful if it is regarded strictly as what he expressly calls it, 'a classification according to the subject-matter of the poems'. Thus, for example, the 'Bemerton Poems' are subdivided under the titles, 'The Happy Priest', 'Bemerton Study', 'Restlessness', 'Suffering', 'Death'. When, however, he goes on to speak of it as 'a classification which is also largely chronological', the greatest caution is needed before accepting a view which has very far-reaching consequences. By putting almost all the happier poems at the beginning of the Bemerton section, and then passing through poems of reflection and restlessness to poems of suffering and death, he inevitably produces a *decrescendo*, which leaves in many minds an impression of a Herbert increasingly disillusioned, and dispirited, waiting only for death to end a fruitless struggle. The present writer has read many dissertations and articles which present some such view on the strength of taking Palmer's order as chronological. Psychological probability and all the contemporary evidence are against this depressing view. Herbert, as he shows in the two poems named *The Temper* and in many other poems, is a man of moods, which succeed one another swiftly:

> Killing and quickning, bringing down to hell
> And up to heaven in an houre.

Mr. Aldous Huxley has exactly described Herbert's temperament when he says: 'The climate of the mind is positively English in its variableness and instability. Frost, sunshine, hopeless drought and refreshing rains succeed one another with bewildering rapidity. Herbert is the poet of this inner weather.' He is resilient and passes quickly from fits of depression to reassurance; the saddest poems either end with harmony restored or are followed in the original order by a poem in which he recovers peace of mind. This is quite unlike any idea of a prolonged period of happiness being succeeded by a long

spell of depression, with a series of poems called into existence by each of these periods. Herbert had experienced acute bodily and mental suffering long before his last illness. And as for death, it is too common a subject with the poets of that age for them to need its near approach to set them writing about it. A very few poems only among those which mention death can be confidently ascribed to the last months of his life: for example, *Home*, which was perhaps written in Advent, three months before his death, as the allusions to 'this holy season' and 'The last and lov'd, though dreadfull day' suggest:

> What have I left, that I should stay and grone?
> The most of me to heav'n is fled:
> My thoughts and joyes are all packt up and gone,
> And for their old acquaintance plead.

The testimony about the character which Herbert ultimately achieved is unusually strong and full. We have not to wait for Walton's *Life*, published thirty-seven years after Herbert's death; within a few months Ferrar had included in his preface to *The Temple* something of the report which had been brought to him by Edmund Duncon, who had visited Herbert twice in the last month of his sickness. When Walton wrote, Duncon was still alive, as he expressly states, to correct his account if it were needed. He had also another and even better source of information in Arthur Woodnoth, Ferrar's cousin, who was with Herbert when the offer of Bemerton came to him, spent some time with him at Bemerton in the following year, and was with him again throughout the last three weeks of his life. Lord Herbert of Cherbury wrote of his brother George that 'about Salisbury, where he lived . . . , he was little less than sainted'. Barnabas Oley, whether he knew Herbert at Cambridge personally or not, was residing there from 1618, and could not fail to know the reputation of one who took a leading place in the university, and he used that knowledge in writing 'A Prefatory View of the Life and Vertues of the Authour' for *Herbert's Remains*, 1652. All the contemporary evidence points to Herbert having reached before the end, and after however prolonged and difficult a struggle, a holiness which deeply impressed his generation, long before Walton wrote his idealizing *Life*. The best clue to the interpretation of Herbert's character

and his poetry is in the words which Walton ascribes to him when he gave his manuscript poems into Duncon's hands:

> Sir, I pray deliver this little Book to my dear brother *Farrer*, and tell him, he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master, in whose service I have now found perfect freedom.

Palmer fittingly quotes the first part of this saying in support of the view that struggle is of the very essence of *The Temple*, but he discontinues the quotation at the point where it tells of the resolution of that struggle. The victory is much clearer to see in the original order of the book, which is presumably the author's order, than in his editor's complete re-arrangement.

It is claimed by Palmer that his is the first attempt 'to set the poems in intelligible order'. For certain limited purposes it serves excellently, but as a substitute for the traditional order it brings loss as well as gain. The order in the Williams MS. was seen by the author and, no doubt, followed his instructions. In the first half of this collection the pattern is clearly recognizable; in the main, that order is preserved in the Bodleian MS., which, with one trifling exception, is adopted in the printed texts. Something of Herbert's orderly mind is lost when Palmer separates *The Thanksgiving* from *The Sacrifice*, *Redemption* from *Good Friday*, and *Church-musick* from *Church-lock and key*. In the later parts of the final revision the order may be largely accidental, as Palmer suggests, but he too rashly asserts that 'there is probably nothing expressive of Herbert's mind or wish'. In both manuscripts the second *Antiphon* follows *Man* with a significance that is likely to represent the author's intention. Still more regrettable results follow from the dispersion of the Bemerton poems in five groups: for instance, in the traditional order the last verse of *Longing* has the plaintive line: 'My love, my sweetnesse, heare!', and *The Bag*, which immediately follows, begins: 'Away despair; my gracious Lord doth heare'. To separate these poems by 120 pages is a grave disadvantage to the study of Herbert's mind.

There is advantage, however, in Palmer's stressing the note of conflict in Herbert's life and writings. Walton, indeed, had recorded it, but he had not underlined it. Palmer has given no excuse for the continuance of a common conception of Herbert

as having an equable and simple character, although no one who knew the whole of *The Temple* ought so to have misunderstood him. The poems are a safer guide than any biographer, and they reveal that his principal temptation, the 'one cunning bosome-sinne' which is apt to break through all his fences, is ambition. It was a temptation natural to one of his gifts and breeding:

> Then came brave Glorie puffing by
> In silks that whistled, who but he?

Although he had dedicated his powers to be a poet of Divine love, as he tells his mother in the new-year sonnets he sent to her in his first year at Cambridge, and had never since disavowed or retreated from this purpose, for many years he thought it not incompatible with 'great place':

> If thou dost give me honour; men shall see,
> The honour doth belong to thee.

Even the design of entering Holy Orders, which his mother had encouraged in him from early years, did not seem to him for some time inconsistent with playing a conspicuous part in the world. He brushed aside the hint of Sir Francis Nethersole, the retiring Orator, that his succession to the office would divert him too much from divinity, which was still his avowed aim. For a while he believed that he could enjoy the best of both worlds: the service of the Church would only augment his 'stock of naturall delights':

> Therefore my sudden soul caught at the place,
> And made her youth and fiercenesse seek thy face.

This estimate of himself exactly agrees with what Lord Herbert said of him: 'He was not exempt from passion and choler, being infirmities to which all our race [i.e. family] is subject, but that excepted, without reproach in his actions.' George Herbert was evidently both vacillating and precipitate. In many poems he charges himself with the habit of delay: 'My soul doth love thee, yet it loves delay.' But the longer he delayed, the more difficult he found it to quiet his conscience or to justify to himself his indecision. 'The world and I will quarrell'; he must make his choice between 'both Regiments, the world's and thine', but the choice was difficult for one who knew the world as well as Donne did, and who was only too conscious

of his capacity to shine in it. He had, also, in spite of his 'consuming agues' and 'slender compositions', remarkable vitality and zest for life, as is evident from *The Collar* and from the nervous strength of the lines in *The Pearl*:

> I know the wayes of pleasure, the sweet strains,
> The lullings and the relishes of it;
> The propositions of hot bloud and brains;
> What mirth and musick mean; what love and wit
> Have done these twentie hundred yeares, and more:
> I know the projects of unbridled store:
> My stuffe is flesh, not brasse; my senses live,
> And grumble oft, that they have more in me
> Then he that curbs them, being but one to five:
> Yet I love thee.

Oley was clearly right when he said that Herbert 'knew full well what he did when he received Holy Orders', and that 'sober men censure him as a man that did not manage his brave parts to his best advantage and preferment, but lost himself in an humble way'. The years of conflict were not wasted, for out of the struggle in his divided mind he made music, and nearly half his poems were written before he went to Bemerton. We notice without surprise that the conflict is not wholly past when 'the deare end' of the priesthood is reached, though he less often questions the rightness of his decision than its usefulness, when disabling sickness was so soon to frustrate his purpose. Oley quotes a remarkable saying of Herbert's, which is not reproduced by Walton: 'God has broken into my Study, and taken off my Chariot wheels, I have nothing worthy of God'. There are some poems, even in Bemerton days, of incipient rebellion, but they reach their foreseen end of loyal acquiescence. Other poems are wrung out of acute pain and weariness, with their natural accompaniment of depression, such as *Home*, and *Longing*, but a transparent loyalty is uppermost. Intermingled with these sadder poems in the traditional order are poems of faith and inward peace. A fine example of Herbert's power of recovery from depression is *The Flower*, a poem specially loved by Coleridge:

> And now in age I bud again,
> After so many deaths I live and write;
> I once more smell the dew and rain,

And relish versing: O my onely light,
It cannot be
That I am he
On whom thy tempests fell all night.

'The many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul' are exceptionally good material for a religious poet, and they are actually the staple element of the larger part of *The Temple*. If we place in a separate category, as Herbert did, *The Church-porch*, and *The Church Militant*, which begin and end both the manuscripts and the *editio princeps*, the poems of *The Church*—the title which the author gave to the rest of the collection—are not didactic. Herbert is not directly addressing the reader, but either God or himself. The poems are either colloquies of the soul with God or self-communings as he seeks to bring harmony and order into that complex personality of his which he analyses so unsparingly. The short lyric is the perfect medium for the portrayal of his delicately sensitive spirit.

Here, then, is rich material for poetry. It remains to consider whether Herbert made a poet's use of it. As a poet he must be judged, not by the interest and delicacy of his psychological analysis, but by more strictly poetical requirements. His command of imagery serves him well. The experiences of the soul are not communicable by bare statement; they can only be conveyed to other minds by a large use of comparison, metaphorical language, and pictorial imagery. Herbert goes less far afield for his analogies than Donne and finds most that will serve his purpose from common life, not disdaining to employ homely instances with no poetic associations. There is generally an aptness in relating the atmosphere and imagery of a poem to its subject. We may instance the winter tone of *Christmas* with the metaphors from hunting, the fresh spring morning air of *Easter*, the momentum of the hurrying lines of *The Collar*, the many suggestions of the street ('feet', 'trampled', 'steps', 'tread') in *Marie Magdalene*, and the repetition of 'dust' and 'dustie' in *Church-monuments*. The imagery grows naturally out of the idea of the poem and can therefore be developed without giving a sense of artificiality. Close attention will often reveal associations which are not perceived at a first reading; for example, in the lines in *The Holy Scriptures*:

thou art heav'ns Lidger
Working against the states of death and hell

our satisfaction is increased when we remember that an ambassador is concerned with states. Herbert often imports a liveliness into his verse by a resort to dramatic narrative with the use of personification and *oratio recta*; thus, in *Decay*, a poem in which he wistfully looks back to the Old Testament stories of God's intimate communication with men, he brings the theme alive with an almost playful lightness:

One might have sought and found thee presently
At some fair oak, or bush, or cave, or well:
Is my God this way? No, they would reply:
He is to Sinai gone, as we heard tell:
List, ye may heare great Aarons bell.

Herbert has an unusually strong sense of construction. A poem has its object well defined, and its leading idea is followed through without diversion and brought to an effective conclusion; sometimes the imagery running through the poem helps to knit it together. After the example of Donne, he often begins with an abrupt question or other provocative phrase, so that the problem gets stated at the outset: 'What is this strange and uncouth thing?', 'Who says that fictions onely and false hair Become a verse?', 'Kill me not ev'ry day', 'The harbingers are come. See, see their mark'. But this method of beginning is not adopted so often as to become a mannerism; other poems begin in a leisurely or conversational way: 'As I one ev'ning sat before my cell', 'I made a posie, while the day ran by'; one of his few long poems begins 'Deare Friend, sit down, the tale is long and sad'. Only rarely does he make a stately beginning, like 'Immortal Love, authour of this great frame'. With even more success he brings a poem to an end with a couplet or single line which clinches the matter firmly, and not infrequently at the close he makes a sudden unexpected turn, as in the wonderful climax of *The Collar* or the passionate paradox which ends the first *Affliction*: 'Let me not love thee, if I love thee not'. He takes great care to select a verse-form to match the subject, and though he seldom deserts iambic for trochaic, he keeps varying the incidence of the rhymes and the length of the lines. Examples of perfect adaptation of form to content are *Aaron*, *Sinnes Round*, the fourth *Affliction*, *Deniall*, and *The Collar*.

The frequent short line lends itself to unsuccessful imitation, as in Christopher Harvey's sad misuse of it, but Herbert's use of it, for example, in *Longing*, heightens the poignancy of the poem.

Few English poets have been able to use the plain words of ordinary speech with a greater effect of natural dignity than Herbert. Coleridge often expressed his admiration of the purity of Herbert's diction and its 'simple dignity'. Supreme examples of this happy gift are *Easter*, *Vertue*, and *Love bade me welcome*, but it is hardly less conspicuous in dozens of his poems. No doubt, it cost him something to say farewell to 'quaint words', and 'lovely enchanting language', but he generally resists the temptation and trusts the simpler language of the heart:

> There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd:
> Copie out onely that, and save expense.

In such a context even daringly mundane phrases like 'save expense' do not offend. His love of homely proverbs taught him the value of terse gnomic sentences, with which his poems abound. The uncertainty about his having any connexion with 'Outlandish Proverbs' has been reduced by Professor J. G. Wright's recent printing of a collection of some of those proverbs in the handwriting of Sir Henry Herbert. George Herbert also knew the poetic value of alliteration and assonance, but his use of them is the more effective because it is sparing. The general simplicity of the language greatly assists in giving the peculiarly tender and intimate character of Herbert's colloquies with God. In *Love bade me welcome* he is on the razor edge of over-familiarity, and only his fine sense and breeding save him from irreverence.

A single complete poem may be taken to illustrate Herbert's quality. *The Agonie*, which is not in the Williams MS., and is therefore a late poem, is more ambitious than most of Herbert's. Its theme is one of constant interest to him, the measuring of the forces of sin and love against one another in the Passion of Christ, and the destined victory of love:

> Philosophers have measur'd mountains,
> Fathom'd the depths of seas, of states, and kings,
> Walk'd with a staffe to heav'n, and traced fountains:
> But there are two vast, spacious things,
> The which to measure it doth more behove:
> Yet few there are that sound them; Sinne and Love.

Who would know Sinne, let him repair
Unto mount Olivet; there shall he see
A man so wrung with paine, that all his hair,
His skinne, his garments bloudie be.
Sinne is that presse and vice, which forceth pain
To hunt his cruell food through ev'ry vein.

Who knows not Love, let him assay
And taste that juice, which on the crosse a pike
Did set again abroach; then let him say
If ever he did taste the like.
Love is that liquor sweet and most divine,
Which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine.

Herbert, like Donne, though to a less degree, is interested in man's rapidly increasing knowledge of natural forces resulting from the recent advance in science; but he notes that the moral forces in human life, sin and love, are less easily understood, and yet are of more consequence to man's understanding of himself and the management of his life. For the principal metaphor, which he puts to considerable use, Herbert goes no further afield than to one of the liturgical epistles of Holy Week: 'Who is this that cometh from Eden, with dyed garments from Bozrah? . . . I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save . . . I have trodden the winepress alone.' The press is already foreshadowed in the word 'wrung' in Herbert's ninth line, with its effect in the 'bloudie garments', and it is explicitly introduced in the stark, monosyllabic eleventh and twelfth lines, the sense of its remorseless grip and power being heightened by his adding the word 'vice'. The winepress of Isaiah immediately suggests the eucharistic element, which is seldom far from Herbert's mind. The soldier's pike, which pierced the side of the Crucified and broached His blood afresh, balances the philosopher's staff of the first stanza. Herbert ends the poem, as he so often does, with a daring paradox; without being even remotely controversial, it is a kind of inversion of the doctrine of transubstantiation; the blood of the Divine Sufferer is to man who receives it 'as wine' that refreshes and revives, and the meaning of the gift is love. Thus, out of familiar material, as old as the Christian religion, Herbert builds up a closely knit poem and makes his points with a surprising freshness and force. And while we admire his

ingenuity, we are left in no doubt of his burning sincerity; all his deepest religious thought and feeling are there expressed.

Herbert does not always succeed. Sometimes he uses a conceit or a hyberbole which offends sober taste, sometimes he leaves his verse crabbed and obscure, but it is seldom flat. There is passion behind the subtle workings of his mind and imagination, and there is original thought which analyses and gives body to his religious feeling. In his hands the religious lyric has travelled far beyond the dreary Scriptural paraphrases and obvious moralizings of the Elizabethan versifiers. Robert Southwell, indeed, had begun to show a better way, and the frequent reprinting of his poems up to the time of the appearance of *The Temple* showed that there would be a welcome for good religious poetry. Donne had sent his *La Corona* sonnets to Herbert's mother when her son was fourteen years of age, but their 'intellectual, tormented, wire-drawn style' had less to teach Herbert than the *Divine Poems* which were to follow. Even these latter, powerful and often beautiful as they are, lacked the tenderness and grace which Herbert was to reveal. Herbert, then, was not the inventor of the English religious lyric, but he was not the mere imitator of his predecessors, and he made a garden to flower which had been tilled to little profit since the later Middle Ages.

CALDERÓN AND THE SPANISH RELIGIOUS THEATRE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

By J. B. TREND

IT is a curious fact, not always appreciated by historians of the drama, that, in Madrid, the rise of the public theatre took place at much the same time, and in much the same way, as it did in London. There is little question of 'influence'. Direct influence of the Spanish drama on the English was neither frequent nor extensive; while, as regards influence in the opposite direction, it is doubtful whether Lope de Vega or Calderón ever heard of Shakespeare, though the former wrote a play about Montagues and Capulets, and the latter used the subject of Henry VIII and the 'schism of England'. Robert Bridges, who knew Calderón's work and followed him in three of his own plays, had an attractive theory that Calderón must have read *The Tempest*; but few Hispanic scholars have read Robert Bridges, and the theory has not had justice done to it.

It is clear that when travelling companies of English players were wandering over Germany about the time of the Civil War, performing plays by Shakespeare and Marlowe, there were other companies performing plays from the Spanish;[1] while in 1666 a puppet showman was seen at Lüneburg with a *demonstratio actionum* (i.e. a 'motion') in which a *King Lear*, a *Titus Andronicus*, and a *Doctor Faustus* were shown along with *Sigismund the Tyrannical Prince of Poland*—probably derived from Calderón's *Life's a Dream*.[2] The authors of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* had heard of *Don Quixote* and other stories by Cervantes, but not of his plays; and the imitation of Spanish plays in Jacobean England does not amount to very much.[3] From Shirley onwards there is at least a family resemblance between English and Spanish plays. Shirley is a neglected dramatist, and it is not often realized that he wrote plays, e.g. *The Opportunity* (1634), directly inspired by Tirso de Molina, or that his

[1] A Dessoff, 'Über englische, italienische und spanische Dramen in den Spielverzeichnissen deutscher Wandertruppen', *Stud. z. vergl. Lit.-Gesch.*, 1901, i. 420 ff.

[2] Creizenach, *Schauspiele der englischen Komödianten*, p. xxx.

[3] Stiefel, 'Die Nachahmung spanischer Komödien in England unter den ersten Stuarts', *Rom. Forsch.*, 1890, v. 193 ff.

characters closely resembled those in the Spanish comedies of 'cloak and sword'; while an allegorical piece like *Cupid and Death* (1658), with its incidental music and symbolical dancing, has an extraordinary suggestion of Calderón's mythological pieces of the same period. The Spanish type survived. The characters of Restoration comedy, and even of Molière, seem like the children or grandchildren of characters in cloak-and-sword comedy. They are certainly descendants of the Spanish theatre; they have Spanish blood in their veins.

Spanish influence was felt in Italy, as well as in England and France. This statement has no reference to the stock comic type of the Spanish captain—the figure which, under the name of 'Matamoros' (Moor-killer) and a dozen other aliases, caused quite as much mirth in Spain as it did in Italy. The effect of the Spanish *comedia* was hardly felt in Italy until the seventeenth century, when there were numerous imitations of Calderón by Cicognini, *il falso Cicognini*, and others. The Spanish example affected the form of Italian plays as well as their subjects. Above all, it affected the opera;[1] the form of the average Italian opera-libretto of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is practically the form of the Spanish *comedia*. Those who are familiar with early Italian opera, hearing a play of Calderón's for the first time, find themselves in the familiar atmosphere of an opera-libretto. The resemblance is not only in the characters. The structure of a Spanish play suggests an Italian opera in the disposition of soliloquy and dialogue corresponding to recitative, solo, and concerted number, and in the rapid dialogue between the gentleman and his servant leading to a full-dress aria, followed by the gradual entry of all the other characters and ending in what Professor Dent has called an 'ensemble of perplexity'.[2]

Spanish comedy, as Meredith said, 'is generally in sharp outline, as of skeletons; in quick movement as of marionettes. The comedy might be performed by a troupe of the *corps de ballet*, and in the recollection of the reading it resolves to an animated shuffle of feet'. It was, he saw clearly, something other than the usual idea of comedy.

Yet the history of the theatre in Spain offers a curious

[1] A. Lorenz, *Alessandro Scarlattis Jugendoper*, pp. 66, 68, 92.
[2] E. J. Dent, *Mozart's Operas*, pp. 98 ff.

parallel with that of England. There were in both countries luxurious performances for the court, as well as popular playhouses which had to pay their way; while instead of the English masques, founded, as Miss Welsford has shown, mainly on Italian models, there were in Spain the plays given at the various religious festivals. The place and conditions of performance often determined the structure of the play.

The history of the public theatre in Spain—distinct, of course, from that of the private and palace theatres—shows that by the middle of the sixteenth century it was already the custom, in Madrid as in London, to fit out places for the public performance of stage plays. In 1565 one of the Madrid hospitals was granted the exclusive privilege of letting a certain open space at the backs of houses, for the use of companies of players; the profits went to charity, to the upkeep of the hospital. A place let in this way was called a *corral* (= yard); and there were soon three of them let for theatrical performances. One of these *corrales* eventually became the property of a certain Isabel de Pacheco. It was called 'El corral de la Pacheca', and the first performance was given there in 1568. That yard, fitted up for theatrical performances, gradually turned into the theatre on the same site, now called the 'Teatro Español', and still the chief classical theatre of Madrid. A *corral* was turned into a theatre by putting up a rough stage at one end; and in this condition it may be compared with the 'inn-yard theatres' of London, in which plays were performed down to 1576 and even later. The spectators stood in front of the stage or on each side of it, whilst others sat in the windows and balconies of the surrounding houses. The yard at first had no roof. Neither performers nor spectators had any protection except an awning sometimes stretched across the stage; and it often happened that the performance had to be stopped on account of a shower of rain.

One of the touring companies which performed in 'El corral de la Pacheca' was a famous Italian company of *Commedia dell'arte*, well known in France and also in England, 'I Gelosi'. The manager of that company, Ganassa, was also an Italian, that is to say a thorough man of business; and he was not prepared to put up with the losses caused by a shower of rain—loss of his audience and damage to his wardrobe. For that reason, it is

said, in 1574 or 1575 he had a roof built over the stage and part of the *corral* itself, while the rest was covered by an awning. This condition lasted until 1579, when the first permanent theatre was built in Madrid. Almost at the same time, it will be remembered, in 1576–7, the first permanent theatre was built in London, 'The Theatre' in Finsbury Fields. Then came 'The Curtain' theatre; and the materials of that were used in 1599 for the famous Shakespearian theatre, 'The Globe'.

The advantages—in other words, the profits—of a permanent theatre were at once apparent, and the owners of the site bought up a number of houses near the Corral de la Pacheca, and built another permanent theatre in 1582. As before, the walls were the outside walls of neighbouring houses, with their balconies and their windows with large handsome iron gratings (*rejas*); these windows and balconies became the boxes. The yard where the ordinary playgoers stood was open to the sky: those who in England were called 'groundlings' were known in Spain as *mosqueteros*. Immediately in front of the stage, however, were a few rows of benches; while in a room or rooms high up at the back of the yard were the places reserved for women—places which, as the theatre gradually developed, became a special women's gallery and were called, somewhat discourteously for Spain, the *cazuela* (= 'stew-pan'). The stage was a platform-stage of the Elizabethan type. The 'tiring house' (*vestuario*) was first of all on the same level as the stage, behind the back-cloth (*manta*). Later on, when theatres were roofed, the *vestuario* was often at a higher level than the stage, above it and behind; and there came to be a balcony in front of it, known as *lo alto del teatro*, often mentioned in stage directions.

Then came the last great change. The stage, from being a platform sticking out into the yard, was built into the back wall, enclosed in a frame; it was a stage with a proscenium opening. This change took place in the seventeenth century—before 1660, if a certain drawing of a Spanish public theatre in 1660 can be trusted. But the stage, in this drawing, still sticks out into the yard, into the auditorium; it is an apron-stage. (The illustration is taken from a nineteenth-century drawing, but it may have been based on a seventeenth-century original.[1])

[1] R. Sepulveda, *El Corral de la Pacheca*, Madrid, 1888.

Painted decorations were used in Spain comparatively early; they were planned and carried out by Italians. But perspective scenery, with its fabulous vistas of formal gardens and baroque fountains,[1] was confined to the theatres of the court; such things were not to be seen at the Corral de la Pacheca. Yet in the theatre in the gardens of Buen Retiro there were occasions on which the perspective led to a real lake (the lake in the gardens), and on that were performed 'piscatorial eclogues', with real boats and real water.

Calderón admired this enormously, as his letters show. But what distinguished Spain from the rest of Europe, and gave Calderón his great place in the history of the drama, were not the piscatorial eclogues nor yet the mythological operas of his later years; his greatest distinction is in his religious plays, especially those designed for performance on the feast of Corpus Christi.

The religious history of Spain, the dramatic quality of the language, and the plastic imagination of the people made Spain peculiarly susceptible to the religious drama; and these conditions were able to take their full effect, long after the public religious drama in other countries had come to an end, through the passion for public spectacles of the two Spanish kings whose faces have been made familiar by Velázquez, Philip III and Philip IV. They loved public acts, *autos*. All the world has heard of one kind of public act, through which Spain won an unenviable reputation in the past, and which still has its echoes in the present, the *auto de fé*. But there was another kind of *auto*, also a solemn public act but one which had no victims and no sacrifice beyond a symbolical representation of the Last Supper, the *auto sacramental*. An *auto sacramental* was a dramatic composition in one act, allegorical in treatment, and relating as a rule to the Eucharist. The characteristic feature was the use of allegory. Not all were eucharistic; indeed in some *autos sacramentales* the reference to transubstantiation was reduced to a transformation scene at the end, revealing a tableau with the Cup and Wafer. The subject was the Mystery of the Incarnation.

[1] A set of designs for a late play of Calderón's has been published by A. Valbuena in *Archivo español de Arte y Arqueología*, Jan.–April 1930, xvi. 1.

The origin of these eucharistic plays is to be looked for in the medieval mysteries. But there is a gap in the pedigree; for less is known about the medieval stage in Spain than in France or England.[1] By the sixteenth century, at any rate, two well-marked types of religious play had survived: the *auto de nacimiento* or Nativity play, and the *auto sacramental*. Nativity plays seem to disappear from notice soon after 1600. There is sufficient evidence, however, that they went on in a humble way for long after that, and their inconspicuousness may be due to the fact that learned writers, now as in the seventeenth century, seem to turn away from the more popular, pre-Tridentine forms of Spanish Christianity to concentrate their attention on the baroque religiosity of the Counter-Reformation. Juan del Enzina, who arranged plays and diversions for the Duke of Alba about 1500, and Gil Vicente, who did the same for a Spanish Queen of Portugal, both produced exquisite specimens of Nativity plays, and their works mark the coming of a new epoch in the Peninsular drama. With the shepherds who hammered on the door and burst into the room where the Duke or the Queen was sitting, the Renaissance entered the theatre, with that Renaissance manner which separates the medieval mysteries from the baroque *autos sacramentales*. Enzina's shepherds were not real shepherds or professional actors; they were courtiers in costume. But they acted with an amount of rustic humour comparable with that of the shepherds in the Chester, Coventry, and Towneley plays, using expressions peculiar to the country round Alba de Tormes and Salamanca, so that for many years that dialect (*sayagués*), or the stage-language founded on that dialect, became the conventional language for the shepherds in a Nativity play to use. Gil Vicente aimed higher. In his Spanish *Auto da Sebila Casandra* the villagers begin as unlettered rustics; but as the play proceeds they are inspired to become patriarchs, prophets, and sibyls. Only Casandra fails, through her presumption; for she believes that she is born to be the Virgin Mary, and can hardly bear to admit the evidence of her own eyes, when a curtain is drawn back to reveal 'the whole apparatus of the Nativity', and she realizes that another woman has been chosen instead.

Lope de Vega also wrote a few *autos de nacimiento*, or included

[1] W. H. Shoemaker, *The Multiple Stage in Spain*, 1935.

them in longer plays. But by that time Nativity plays were no longer acted by courtiers. They had come down in the world; or rather, like some folk-songs, they had left the court and town where they originated, and had taken root in the country. This, as a matter of fact, was the kind of thing that Lope adored, being by nature a townsman with a romantic passion for all country things; and he had lived in the country long enough to admire and understand the beauties of country speech. Yet Nativity plays had gone out of fashion, and were altogether too naïve and unsophisticated for an age of baroque art and the no less baroque theology of the Counter-Reformation. There is evidence, however, that performances of the kind lived on right down to the eighteenth century. A contemporary of Calderón, Valdivielso, a gifted poet and dramatist who devoted much of his time to the production of pious parodies of popular songs to be sung before the Holy Sacrament,[1] has described a popular performance given at night in the famous Corral de la Cruz, where so many of Calderón's plays had received their first public performance. It was called *El rey pobre* (The Poor-man King), and the description enables us to see what progress had been made with stage effects in the public theatre by the middle of the seventeenth century. There were lights and a curtain, and benches on which some, at least, of the spectators could sit. It was after midnight; the theatre was full; the candles were lighted and the curtains drawn back. The manager came forward to beg for silence. The orchestra consisted of a guitar played by a boy who stood on a bench in front of the stage; and the music was made up of popular songs of the day, many of which can be identified from other sources. There are numerous collections of *Villancicos* and 'songs to sing on Christmas night', both printed and manuscript; they show clearly that the Nativity was celebrated dramatically right down to the eighteenth century.

Then the living players gradually gave way to little clay figures in a set scene, returning, perhaps, to the condition from which the Nativity plays had originally started. A vast countryside was shown, with castles and ruins, windmills and streams. Along winding roads and over sugar-loaf mountains came the

[1] *Romancero espiritual* . . . , Madrid, 1659, ff. 166 et seq.

caravans of the Three Kings, guided by a portentous comet to a place where they were met by a multitude of shepherds and shepherdesses, all dressed in their best, playing on instruments and apparently singing at the tops of their voices. In the middle of enough oxen to have stocked a cattle-show was a cave, with singing angels fluttering in the air above it, while a vigorous old gentleman with a stick and a lantern led the visitors into the presence of a Virgin Mother, where, lying on a heap of straw, was a three-months-old Child. Such, at least, I have occasionally seen in out-of-the-way parts of the Peninsula; while a year or two ago little *nacimientos* could still be bought at Christmas-time in the streets of Madrid, with windmills that turned round and real water in the streams.

Besides the Nativity plays there were various local mysteries, such as *The Mystery of Elche*, a baroque version of a fourteenth-century Assumption play, which I myself witnessed in 1919;[1] and *The Prophecy of the Sibyl* on Christmas Eve, once widespread in Catalonia and the Balearic Isles—known, as we saw, to the Portuguese Gil Vicente, and also in Toledo, to judge by the music for it in the cathedral archives there, but now only performed in the Cathedral of Palma de Mallorca, or performed there as recently as 1928.[2]

Nacimientos, *The Mystery of Elche*, and *The Prophecy of the Sibyl* at Palma are genuine survivals of the medieval religious drama, living on into modern times because they had been let alone by the ecclesiastical authorities and not reformed out of existence. In the case of the *autos sacramentales* other influences appeared and profoundly modified the original conception. These influences include the growth of polychrome sculpture, the development of rhetorical pulpit eloquence, and the ideas of the Counter-Reformation—all three being characteristic expressions of the baroque period in Spain. They have recently formed the subject of a most interesting study by Dr. Jutta Wille, of the University of Zürich.[3]

Though the impulse came originally from Italy, Spain became noteworthy for its characteristic coloured sculpture—

[1] *Music and Letters*, I. ii, April 1920.

[2] Ibid., x, ii, April 1929; and H. Anglés, *La musica a Catalunya fins al segle XIII*, Barcelona, 1935, pp. 288 ff.

[3] *Calderons Spiel der Erlösung, eine spanische Bilderbibel des 17. Jh.*, Munich, 1932.

those grimly realistic figures, often larger than life, which adorned the altars in Spanish churches and were carried through the streets in religious processions. There is a wonderful museum at Valladolid specially devoted to this form of art; and it is a form which critics, examining its products in the cold light of a museum, have judged rather harshly. They forget that these figures were never intended to be museum pieces, but were designed for dramatic purposes, and particularly for a specially dramatic form of lighting, the yellow, smoky light of guttering candles seen through clouds of incense against a background of darkness. They are a genuine expression of Spanish baroque feeling, alone of their kind, like the Spanish *autos sacramentales*; living pictures in wood, illustrating Bible narrative and Church tradition, just as the Corpus Christi plays are living and dramatized pictures from the Bible and the Catechism.

Other countries suppressed their religious plays during the sixteenth century. Spain not only did not drive them out, but made them an expression of reformed Catholicism. The ideas peculiar to scholasticism once more became prominent; and the *autos* owed the treatment of their subject-matter to scholastic methods of thought. It was, as Dr. Wille says, as if Spain were making one last attempt to conquer the world, not through heroic warriors as in the time of the Reconquista, nor through power and wealth as under the first Hapsburgs, but only through the dramatic conviction of her Catholic faith. The *autos sacramentales*, therefore, are not on the same level as the medieval mysteries and moralities; they are not remains of these, or survivals, but a new form of dramatic art with an independent cultural basis, that of the Counter-Reformation; they have as little to do with the mysteries as the later coloured carved figures have with medieval sculpture.

Between the Middle Ages and the baroque lies, like a dividing line, the Renaissance. In the Spanish religious drama the Renaissance is represented by a period—from about 1460, and for a century or so after that—in which scholars and gentlemen appeared on the stage as shepherds, patriarchs, and prophets, while the great ladies, like Queen Isabella, before she came to the throne, took the parts of village maidens or muses. The Counter-Reformation stopped all that. Religion

was not a thing to be trifled with; it was, as a Spanish Catholic professor once explained to me, a 'business proposition'; one had to save one's own soul.

In the formation of *autos sacramentales* Renaissance and baroque both took part; but in their final form, as Calderón left them, these performances belong entirely to baroque, and are as typical an expression of baroque art as the polychrome sculpture of Montañés and those who made the older figures which appear in the processions at Seville during Holy Week.

The *autos sacramentales* were festival plays, intended solely for performance on the day of Corpus Christi, which falls at the end of May or the beginning of June. They were given in connexion with a grand procession, in which the Host, protected by a guard of honour with fixed bayonets, and accompanied by all the local dignitaries of church and state, was solemnly carried round the town. Yet there is evidence, overlooked by many writers on the subject, that some of these festival plays were occasionally performed on other dates and in other circumstances. During the eighteenth century they were performed by students or seminarists at the Escorial; new music was composed for the occasion and, unlike the music for the original performances, it has been preserved. In the consideration of what follows it should be remembered that the music played a definite and important part. The *autos sacramentales* were, in fact, a kind of religious opera; and though they were not sung throughout, as *The Mystery of Elche* was, they employed all the arts, while the texts, which are all that we have now to go upon, represented little more than the libretto and spoken dialogue of an opera. Calderón, however, was a far better poet than most opera-librettists.

Even more important than words or music was the visual effect, a predominance of sight over sound and sense, thoroughly in the spirit of the Catholic Church in the seventeenth century. It was as if Catholics in Spain still feared that strange power of a belief in things which it was not possible to visualize, that power shared by all their deadly enemies whom they had destroyed or expelled from their own country: the Jews, the Muslims, and the Protestants, all of whom worshipped an invisible God, not 'idols made with hands'. So, in a sacred representation like an *auto sacramental*, the stage-pictures were

the first consideration; words and music took the second and third places.

The stage-picture, and the manner of presenting it, was peculiar and characteristic. The principle was that a bare platform-stage (*tablado*), which had been put up in the open, in a public square, could be enlarged, and converted into a multiple stage, by the addition of two or more movable stages, constructed on wagons and known as *carros*. The nearest that a modern reader can get to the *carros* is to think of the triumphal cars of a travelling circus. Some people may remember what it was like, about forty years ago, to see the procession of Sanger's Circus parading round a provincial English town on the morning of the first performance. There were trumpeters and some sort of band, followed by the heavy, lumbering, gilded cars, decorated in a style which, if debased, was recognizably baroque, with buxom gilded mermaids and caryatides, living nymphs and tight-rope dancers, balanced awkwardly but symmetrically in prominent places; while from a golden chair at the top of the most baroque wagon of all, a fifteen-stone Britannia precariously ruled the waves with a trident. Then came the elephants, and the cages of lions, tigers, and other animals; while near the end of the procession, in about the same position as the Host in a procession in Spain, came Lord George Sanger's chariot, drawn by forty horses four abreast.

In the time of Lope de Vega, who died in 1635 when Calderón was thirty-five years old, two simple *carros* were considered to be enough for the performance of an *auto sacramental*. They were placed at the back or sides of a raised platform-stage. These *carros* could open on one side, and the open side formed a small scene which could be closed by a curtain; they served partly as dressing-rooms, partly to bring the players to the place of performance; and when joined to the platform-stage they provided the scenery, for each *carro* contained one set scene.

Under Philip IV the number of *carros* was increased to four. The author of an *auto* was asked to send in to the local authorities a *memoria de apariencias*, a description of the scenic arrangements required; and Calderón was no exception to the rule. The municipal library at Madrid has a collection of these

memorias written in the poet's own hand, and dated between 1659 and 1681, the year of his death; while at least one earlier *memoria* has been published, dating from 1644. All of them specifically mention four *carros* as being required for the performance. The description of the scenic arrangements for the *auto* called *The Sacred Parnassus*, produced in 1659, required a *carro* with special machinery, so that a mountain could rise from within it during the performance:

> The first *carro* for the *auto* entitled *The sacred Parnassus* is to be a mountain, painted with trees, fountains, and flowers. From this, when the moment comes, will rise, in elevation, another mountain, of pyramidal form; and on the heights of the peak, a sun among clouds and sunbeams, and within it a Chalice and Wafer. The rest of this second storey will show niches, or breaks in the mountain itself; places to be occupied by ten nymphs, five living and the other five painted and cut out, of the life-size of a woman. . . . All this, as already said, has to be raised to the highest elevation possible, and give one or more turns about the stage [when it is first brought in].

The *carros*, before they were opened, sometimes had the form of a globe; and from that were often referred to generically as *globos*. We get an idea of what happened from the stage-directions, of which the following are examples:

> Hautboys sound and the globe opens, and the PRINCE OF LIGHT is seen in it, in a triumphal car drawn by an angel, an eagle, a lion and an ox, as majestically as possible. (*Lo que va del hombre a Dios.*)
>
> A *carro* opens, and in it is seen, painted, a book shop; and in the middle a counter, at which PAGANISM (*Gentilidad*) is seated. (*El tesoro escondido.*)
>
> A trumpet sounds in the first *carro*, which is to be a black ship, with a black crew, black pennants at the mainmast, black spars and streamers, painted with serpents for heraldic devices; and pacing the poop, the PRINCE OF DARKNESS and ENVY, with sashes and feathers and costumes all of black. (*El divino Orfeo.*)
>
> There enters the square a Noah's Ark, imitated as closely as possible and painted on canvas. On reaching the stage, it opens; and in the upper part there is a practicable door with a window in it, from which is a way down on to the stage. By this door, enter NOAH. (*La torre de Babilonia.*)

Some of the most interesting stage-directions in the whole range of the *autos sacramentales* are to be found in 'Thy neighbour

as thyself' (*Tu próximo como a tí*), an *auto* written on the parable of the Good Samaritan.

To begin with the thieves. They are SIN, THE WORLD, THE FLESH, and THE DEVIL (*La Culpa*, *El Mundo*, *La Lascivia*, and *El Demonio*); and all are dressed as brigands, *de bandolero*, like the seventeenth-century highwaymen who infested the roads leading into Catalonia after the civil war of 1640. Four *carros* are brought up to the stage, to be opened one after the other, displaying wild, mountain scenery. In the upper part of the first *carro* is SIN, 'dressed as a brigand, with Gascon cape, hat, belt, and pistols'; while the other thieves appear in turn in the upper parts of their respective *carros*. MAN enters, as a traveller, but in rather smart clothes (*de galán*). He has a band or ribbon on his hat, adorned with gold and jewels, and about his neck a chain, from which hangs a heart set with precious stones. They were given him by a PRIEST and a LEVITE whom he had met on the road, while an unusually well-dressed SAMARITAN had given him a ring. MAN has evidently lost his way, or doubts which path to follow. In one of the two autograph manuscripts of this play Calderón had written: 'Enter as lost . . .'; but he drew a line through the last two words. Presently some one is heard singing in the distance. It is GRACE, warning MAN against DESIRE, his own worst enemy; and while MAN is still pondering the meaning of this warning, FLESH runs to meet him in the guise of a woman (*La Lascivia*). She seems to be fleeing from something in terror, or, as one manuscript has it, she enters half naked, with dishevelled hair. She faints in his arms; and while he is loosening her laces, he is overcome by her beauty. To his impatience, the laces seem ice, and the knot that they make, a fire.

> ¿como son hielos los lazos,
> y el nudo que dan es fuego?

She soon steals the heart which he wears like a decoration on his breast, for he is clothed as a gentleman of fashion of the mid-seventeenth century; and she slips away, to return presently with SIN, THE WORLD, and THE DEVIL, who station themselves in different parts of the stage, 'with pistols in their hands and masks on their faces'. It is a case of 'Your money or your life!' (*Rinde la hacienda y la vida.*) MAN, as it happens, is not

travelling alone. After the departure of *La Lascivia*, he has fallen in with DESIRE, who has led him into the trap and now goes over to the other side, drawing another pistol against him. *La Lascivia* unmasks and fires. MAN falls, but scrambles to his feet; the others fire too, 'and MAN continues falling and rising again until he is left for dead'.

Then, at the top of the mountain of the first *carro*, a strange piece of theatrical machinery appears; the *devanadera*, or 'reel'—a revolving piece of built-up scenery, with four niches and practicable descents to the stage. In the first niche is NIGHT, dressed in black, with stars; as she descends to the stage she sings verses modelled on the lamentation of Job. The LEVITE, who passes by just then, recognizes the quotation, but does nothing to help the wounded MAN. The *devanadera* is turned round, and in the second niche is seen the EVENING STAR, 'as St. John the Baptist is painted'; while the PRIEST comments on his song, but once again does nothing for the wounded. The *devanadera* is turned again, and in the third niche appears DAWN, in a white tunic and blue cloak; while GRACE comes to meet him from below, and both sing a duet based on the Magnificat. Presently the *devanadera* is turned once more, and in the fourth niche appears the SUN, 'acted by Him who at first entry played the SAMARITAN'; for the SUN symbolizes God, just as the SAMARITAN symbolized Jesus Christ.

The baroque manner, besides leading to this extraordinary development in festival plays, had also produced an increasing complexity in the form of the speeches. Church services and sermons had been evolving in the same direction. There was a heightening of everything that could affect the senses, particularly the sense of sight; and at the same time great emphasis was laid on the sermon, as a form of art. Sermons were raised to the category of show pieces; their form was exactly laid down, their construction followed the laws of rhetoric, while in their verbal expression nothing was omitted which by its force or realism might bring home to the expectant congregation the stench of corruption, the agonies of hell, or the unimagined sensation of the divine presence. Donne and the English preachers of the time are models of restraint compared with their contemporaries in Spain; and if the gentle Luis de

Granada can make us shudder with his descriptions of physical suffering as well as delight us with his love of simple, natural things, the more mystical preachers like Fray Juan de los Angeles did not shrink from comparing the souls of the righteous to men so intoxicated with divine ecstasy that they 'belch forth the fumes of the wine of God'.

The baroque sermon affected the speeches in the later *autos sacramentales*; but, in Calderón, at any rate, the influence was on the rhetorical form rather than the verbal imagery. In verbal expression the *autos sacramentales* stand midway between the baroque sermon and the baroque theatre. Yet it is unlikely that many of the spectators could have heard enough of the words to understand the beauties of Calderón's language. At the performance of *The Mystery of Elche* in 1919, though I had a privileged position in the mayor's box and had read the words and the music beforehand, I could scarcely hear a single word. It is unlikely that Spanish audiences would have been quieter in the seventeenth century than in the twentieth. That they enjoyed the verses, however, there can be little doubt, just as the goat-herds enjoyed Don Quixote's discourse on the Golden Age, for the sheer beauty of the sound of the words, without understanding in the least what they meant.

The spectators of an *auto sacramental* were also assisted by the beauty and novelty of the stage-pictures, by the large amount of vocal and instrumental music, and by the fact that the authors were apt to repeat themselves, to describe the same things in the same way, and to use the same kind of imagery year after year, for it should not be forgotten that *autos sacramentales* were intended for festivals, given only once a year. Calderón himself refers to this fact of annual performance, as an excuse for repetition. In the preface to the only edition of his *autos* published with his consent, that of 1677, he says that readers might find some passages the same; but even in nature some faces were found to be like one another, while it should not be forgotten that performances of this kind were given only once in twelve months. Some passages, again, might seem tepid; but the readers should have regard to the fact that the lines could not be appreciated without the sonorous strains of the music or the magnificence of the stage setting; and 'he that reads must make in his imagination a composition of the

scene, having due regard to the circumstances'. Many times, he adds, the author has cut away things which he originally wrote, for the convenience of the town, or the stage.

The baroque imagery of the verse requires special notice.

Editors and critics have been puzzled by the way in which Calderón, when he wishes to convey the idea of rapid movement, apparently treats horses, birds, and beasts as synonymous, or by his device when he is describing a beautiful woman, of calling all the elements, stars, beasts, and flowers in to complete the picture, so that single objects fade away into one another like the illusionist tricks of baroque architecture or pass into one another as in the *transparente* at the back of the high altar at Toledo. The horse becomes an arrow or a fire, the bird a flower or a gem. Professor Spitzer[1] has lately suggested that these Calderonian synonyms may be explained on the analogy of *kennings* in Old Norse or Anglo-Saxon poetry, in which the viking ship could be called an 'oar-steed' and a battle described as a 'storm of swords'. It will be remembered that something of the same kind was not unknown in England in the seventeenth century, e.g. when Donne or Jeremy Taylor refers to 'white and red' as the equivalent of 'the weaker beauties of the night'. A more fruitful avenue of approach is suggested by the 'Two-world images' of Mr. Walter de la Mare. It has been pointed out[2] that de la Mare is a visionary poet, concerned with two worlds; and that some of his images lead on from one world to another. The image of the wind as a 'great wave of the air' is turned from a simple this-world image into an image of this world and that. But with Calderón the problem is far more complicated, and the only inquirer to have grasped the system seems to be Dr. E. M. Wilson, of Cambridge.[3]

Calderón's imagery depends on the medieval doctrine of the four elements. In the mind of the medieval world—and most of Calderón's ideas were medieval—the four elements, fire, air, earth, and water were fundamental. It was only the equilibrium of the elements which differentiated the established world from chaos, and they were constituted with inde-

[1] L. Spitzer, '"Kenning" und Calderons Begriffspielerei' in *Zeitsch. f. rom. Phil.* lvi. 102, 1936.

[2] *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1 Aug. 1936, 'A Poet of Two Worlds'.

[3] 'The Four Elements in the Imagery of Calderón', *Mod. Language Review*, xxxi. 34, Jan. 1936; and *The Solitudes of Don Luis de Gongora*, Cambridge, 1931.

pendent existence and opposite qualities, sufficient for their co-existence within a great unity. These ideas formed the basis of Calderón's imagery, and are actually dramatized in some of his *autos sacramentales*, for example in *La Vida es sueño*:

Enter the FOUR ELEMENTS, held by a chain, which binds them all four, and the WORLD in the middle.

In the *auto* of *The Garden of Falerina* LUCIFER tells one of the characters how heavenly signs promise grace to MAN in all the four elements. 'The lily grows from stubborn ground, accompanied by the rose, cedar, palm, and cypress. The stream turns from a serpent to a clear mirror. The air grows calm, and an eagle flies past. Fire is reduced to a star, which steers the wandering ship to harbour.' Then Dr. Wilson distinguishes a further stage. There were four orders of creatures which could only dwell in their respective elements. Calderón might name the element, or a synonym for it; or he might name some inanimate creature which was native to that element; or again he might content himself with mentioning a specific quality or characteristic of the creature or object. Thus for the element AIR, Calderón would have as a synonym *wind*; as things native to the element, *birds*; as qualities or characteristics of the creature or objects, *colour*, *feather*, *beak*. For the element WATER, in the same way, there was the synonym *sea*; the creatures *fish*, *snake*; and for qualities, *glass*, *foam*, *pearls*. On the same principle, the element EARTH gave the series: *mountain*, *rock*; *beast*, *brute*; *flowers*, *fruit*, *skin*; while FIRE gave *salamander*, *volcano*; *light*, *beams*. Calderón demands of his modern readers, as he presumably demanded of his contemporary audiences, immediate understanding of these synonyms.

Complications came, however, when the metaphors began to be mixed. According to the medieval and scholastic beliefs which Calderón held, all the great convulsions of nature were caused by the violent confusion of the elements. So we find Calderón allowing the confusion of the elements to tell its own story. The method was to let the creature or attribute of one element become that of another. Then there were 'exchanges of element due to visual impressions'. A mountain, for instance, was so high that it reached up into the skies, in the region of the clouds, where it became indistinguishable from the clouds.

But to give an idea of a really high mountain it was necessary to say that it reached up to heaven. The mountain then became 'a pillar for the palace of the moon, or for the moon itself to rest upon, a support for the shafts of the firmament', and when the mountain itself reached the heavenly regions it did not need a very wide stretch of imagination to consider its flowers as stars. So flowers are the stars of earth, stars are the flowers of heaven. 'Flowers and stars are the equivalents, in their respective elements, of feathers and foam in theirs'. So Calderón could say:

> Sight doubts which is grass or water; for here in gulfs of flowers, and there in woods of emeralds, the same waves are made by foam and shrub.

Calderón, as Dr. Wilson shows, did not invent this metaphorical procedure, but he standardized it. He derived it from Góngora, and it has been urged against him that he reduced the discoveries of Góngora to five or six set patterns, and exhausted all their possibilities. 'He converted surprise into a commonplace, form into a stencil, the living classic into the dead academic.'[1] His justification must be that he was before all things a dramatist; that such flights of baroque rhetoric would carry his audience off their feet; and that as his plays were meant to be seen and heard, rather than read, it was natural that he should sometimes repeat himself if only for the sake of intelligibility.

There is another aspect of Calderón's use of mixed metaphor: its justification for sensuous effect. Suppose we take an illustration from an English poet of the seventeenth century, Richard Lovelace, in a poem which has haunted one reader, at least, since he was an undergraduate: *To Gratiana dancing and singing.*

> She beat the happy Pavement
> By such a Starre made Firmament,
> Which now no more the Roofe envies.

That might almost be translated from Calderón or Góngora, but

> Each step trod out a Lover's thought.

That is too direct to be a translation. It is the definite and

[1] Gerardo Diego, *Antología poética en honor de Góngora*, Madrid, 1927.

final expression of a state of mind, in the fewest possible words and the clearest possible imagery. But only think how the same thought would be expressed to-day in the language and imagery of psycho-analysis! So a direct sensuousness can save Calderón, too, from shipwreck in a sea of metaphor, and the Gongoristic method is not only justified but acquires a high poetic value. There are some stanzas spoken by APPETITE in the *auto*, *Lo que va del hombre a Dios*; the lines, already referred to, in *Thy neighbour as thyself*, in which MAN holds LA LASCIVIA fainting in his arms; and a still more striking passage in the third act of the play—a comedy of 'cloak and sword'—*Mejor está que estaba*, in which Don Carlos describes how he saw Flora undressing. It is one of the most exquisite passages in the whole of Calderón, and suggests Prince Genji watching a window from the garden, while one of the ladies of the court is preparing for bed.

The developments in staging and in the use of baroque poetical imagery for dramatic purposes were not followed by a corresponding development in ideas. It might almost be said that Calderón was not interested in ideas, but only in ways of presenting them on the stage; ideas only attracted him if at the same time they were dramatic, or capable of dramatic treatment by means of his peculiar methods. His much discussed sense of honour was the conventional view of the Spanish stage; and in his religious views no originality was permissible, though he seems sometimes to have preferred ideas which were ethical rather than strictly theological. One great dramatic idea, however, haunted him through the larger part of his life, the idea which in modern times haunted Pirandello, the interaction between dream and waking, between appearance and reality. We can see it in three different stages, in *The Fairy Lady*, in *Life's a Dream*, and in *The Great Theatre of the World.*

Calderón had, of course, been educated by the Jesuits. He often quotes Aristotle as an authority, and takes from him sentences which the scholastic philosophers had already taken. He also mentions the Stoics. But it is not difficult to recognize that Calderón brings forward all these quotations less as a thinker than as a dilettante. As a rule Calderón moves in the channels of scholasticism. He stands immediately under the influence of St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas was, for him, the perfection

of all philosophers; the one who stood fast like a breakwater against which the rising tide of the Renaissance beat in vain. Calderón was unaware how strong the tide was, and how far it had already risen. He was content to take ideas and phrases ready-made from Aquinas, together with his whole method of argument. With the works of the Church Fathers he was on equally familiar terms.[1]

Calderón's mind, or at least his early training, must have resembled Donne's. He was familiar with the definitions and distinctions of medieval scholasticism; he derived his metaphysical views from the Church in which both he and Donne had been brought up. Religious eloquence, as we saw, left traces on the speeches in his plays; his technique, his phrasing, and his conceits were derived largely from the metaphysics of medieval Christianity. Like Donne, he had a medieval mind; and as the Middle Ages were, above all, a period in which thought and theology were inextricably entangled, Calderón's ideas were fundamentally theological. Like his contemporaries, he attached great importance to his authorities; he was even expected to cite his authorities in the margins of his mystery-plays. But Calderón was not primarily a theologian; he was a practical man of the theatre, and he had no use for so fantastic a misapplication of learning:

> There will be some, he says in the edition of his *autos* published in 1677, who consider it a sign of weakness not to show the quotations in the margin. To such it may be answered that for the learned they are unnecessary and for the unlearned superfluous.

Yet it is true that some of the worst traits in his mind are brought out in his religious plays and *autos*. There are passages which seem a mere parade of useless scholastic erudition, while he shows an almost unlimited capacity for performing feats of ingenious deduction from traditional and accepted premisses. Sir Herbert Grierson has said the same of Donne, and compared these 'freakish deductions' with the 'luminous sense' of Spinoza—a comparison which is equally justified in the case of Calderón. It was not possible for him, or for any one else in Spain at that time, to realize how much rationalism was

[1] See G. Ortiz, 'Die Weltanschauung Calderons', in *Berner Studien z. Phil. u. ihrer Gesch.* v, 1897.

doing 'for the emancipation and healing of the human intellect'. He had to confine himself to the traditional topics of Catholic devotion.

One of the best-known plays of Calderón is *El mágico prodigioso* ('The Mighty Magician'), scenes from which were translated by Shelley. It presents the problem of *Faust*, considered from a Catholic standpoint; but fine though its situations are, modern critics find it strangely inadequate as a presentation of the strength of doubt. Setting out to paint a spirit which doubts and denies, Calderón gives only a feeble and ineffective caricature of either doubt or denial. He knows nothing of contemporary philosophy or freedom of thought, though he represents his own environment with marvellous fidelity. Within his own province of narrow ecclesiasticism, he is unapproachable; but, 'that doubt, suspense, inquiry of a much profounder kind than that of his hero were operative and effective influences in his own time was a truth which, if it occurred to him, exercised no real power over his works'. He represents the archangelic insurrection as if it were a contest for a professorial chair at Salamanca. His Demon is 'an amiable personage, with no intellectual power or controversial ability worth mentioning'; and if Cipriano is 'the embodiment of the extremist latitudinarianism and speculative irreligion conceivable', he only reveals the feeble powers and superficial mental character of Calderón himself. He remains on the threshold of inquiry, with no conception of the insoluble mysteries that lie within, or of Faust's intellectual hunger and passionate yearning for omniscience.[1]

Other plays which, to a modern mind, seem the quintessence of irony, such as *La Devoción de la cruz*, were meant to be taken with complete seriousness. Almost all Calderón's dramas end with the return and salvation of the soul which has been in danger; but in this play there seems to be no sin but salvation can come of it. It was far from the poet's intention to extenuate crime in the name of the Cross; but that is, in effect, what Calderón's has done. The point of the play is that the merit of the Cross is enough to excuse all crimes committed in its name, an attitude which is traditional in Spain, though only adopted nowadays in case of civil war. 'Mark him with a cross, and put him away', says Eusebio, the brigand chief, after one

[1] John Owen, *The Five Great Sceptical Dramas of History*, 1896.

of his men has shot a harmless traveller; and we know that the Recording Angel will take no notice. This play, which to some is 'a masterpiece of Catholic art', is to others 'a defiance of all reason and common sense'. It seems the *reductio ad absurdum* of Spanish religiosity. Even M. Ernest Mérimée, author of the clearest history of Spanish Literature in existence, finds *La Devoción de la cruz* incomprehensible. How can one reconcile so much piety with so many crimes? How explain in any rational manner such abrupt psychological revulsions? Julia's recital of the murders she has committed, instead of filling us with disgust and loathing, gives us something of the amused, detached thrill of the modern crime-story. And this is Julia, a woman who is often considered to be one of Calderón's most finished female portraits! M. Mérimée, like a good Frenchman and a scholar, falls back on the opinion of M. Jérôme Coignard concerning saints and sinners. Such ideas, however, were far from the mind of Calderón. His attitude was strictly in accordance with Catholic truth. He wished rather to glorify in the criminal the man who, in spite of all the forces tending to drag him down, manages in the end to grasp the reins of his own spiritual destiny. Calderón, in fact, 'awoke the teaching of the Jesuits to the magic life of the stage'.[1]

He surprised a French *abbé* by his reluctance to talk; and his reluctance was interpreted as ignorance:

> A sa conversation je vis bien qu'il ne sçavoit pas grand'chose, quoy qu'il soit déjà tout blanc. Nous disputasmes un peu sur les règles de la Dramatique, qu'ils ne connoissent point en ce Pays-là & dont ils se moquent.[2]

Calderón may have had little interest in the rules of dramatic art or the 'unities', but his view of life was essentially that of a a dramatist. He seems to have been less interested in ideas than in ways of presenting them on the stage; and, theologian though he was, even theological ideas only interested him if they could be dramatized. Yet his allegorical method is of considerable psychological interest. When he staged the struggle that goes on in a man's soul between the powers of good and evil, by

[1] Werner Krauss, 'Calderón als religiöser Dichter', *Der Kunstwart*, xl, 8 May 1931.

[2] L.-P. Thomas, 'François Bertaut et les conceptions dramatiques de Calderón', *Rev. lit. comp.* iv. 199, 1924.

personifying his impulses and letting the parts be acted by men and women, he was in a sense dramatizing psycho-analysis. Conflicts, as he knew, are 'not merely an accident of the moral life; they are its essence';[1] and he revived the medieval method of personification and allegory to show how, in a moral conflict, the will is divided and turned against itself. He does not give us character so much as the raw material of character: the passions and emotions which contend for mastery. The unitary 'soul' or 'personality' which interests the novelist is for him merely the arena in which the combatants meet: and the 'passions' and 'desires' of the psycho-analyst have become dramatic *personae* in the plays of Calderón.

[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, p. 60.

A NOTE ON MILTON'S IMAGERY AND RHYTHM

By LAURENCE BINYON

WHEN we talk of a poet's imagery we usually have in mind the comparisons he uses in simile and metaphor to make his meaning more vivid. I wish to use the term more generally, as denoting the world that his verse evokes in our minds and all that he intends us, through his verse, to see.

In pictorial art the instrument used conditions the kind of picture made. One who works with a broad brush and one who uses a pencil point are not only using a different instrument: they are dealing with, seeing, a different world. The visible world to Tintoretto is totally different from what it is to, say, Memling. Each artist is directed by his nature to use the instrument which is congenial to his vision. Something of the same kind occurs with poets; for though of course the instrument of language has other besides pictorial values, image and rhythm affect each other, and the rhythm tends to control the imagery, to give it a certain character.

Milton was an impassioned lover of the art of music. Both in *L'Allegro* and in *Il Penseroso* enjoyment of music crowns the day's delights; and it is not merely a vague emotional stimulation such as romantic poets write of, it is the delight of the trained ear:

> In notes, with many a winding bout
> Of linckèd sweetnes long drawn out,
> With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
> The melting voice through mazes running;
> Untwisting all the chains that ty
> The hidden soul of harmony.[1]

So, too, in the *Arcades*, when the Genius of the Wood has described his ministrations (and comparing for a moment this speech with the speech of Iris opening the masque in Act IV of *The Tempest*, one notes how little intimate it is), a far fuller note, a note of rich enjoyment, is released as soon as he goes on to speak of the music of the heavens:

[1] *L'Allegro*, ll. 139–44.

(then listen I
To the celestial *Syrens* harmony,)
That sit upon the nine enfolded Sphears,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the Adamantine spindle round,
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in musick ly,
To lull the daughters of *Necessity*,
And keep unsteddy *Nature* to her law,
And the low world in measur'd motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould with grosse unpurged ear.[1]

In his use of language Milton seems to be powerfully influenced by the art of music and to aim at producing an analogous pleasure: 'sweetnes long drawn out'; 'apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another'. His natural instrument was the paragraph or period; on this, rather than line or stanza, his verse is built. It is interesting to see how this inborn tendency of his affects his use of metres. Once, in a short piece, he wrote in Dante's *terza rima*. It is a translation of the second Psalm:

Why do the Gentiles tumult, and the Nations
Muse a vain thing, the Kings of th'earth upstand
With power, and Princes in their Congregations
Lay deep their plots together through each Land,
Against the Lord and his Messiah dear?
Let us break off, say they, by strength of hand
Their bonds, and cast from us, no more to wear,
Their twisted cords: he who in Heaven doth dwell
Shall laugh, the Lord shall scoff them, then severe
Speak to them in his wrath, and in his fell
And fierce ire trouble them.[2]

The special character of the metre is quite spoilt. In the *Divina Commedia* each tercet is a stanza complete in itself, and almost always closed by a full stop. It is the interwoven rhymes that give the necessary continuity to the metre and the narrative. Milton, with his instinct for moving on in a continuous motion and making his pauses without reference to the stanza, largely annuls the value of the rhymes, so that one feels a kind of dislocation in the verse.

[1] ll. 63–73. [2] ll. 1–11.

And the same thing occurs in his handling of the sonnet. Instead of recognizing the division between octet and sestet, Milton pours all out in one stream. I do not feel, however, that his treatment of the sonnet is to be condemned on that account. The treatment of the 'Terzetti' is almost a mangling: but Milton makes of the sonnet a new form, which I think justifies itself. (At any rate he allows none of the slovenliness of workmanship that disfigures many of Wordsworth's and other later poets' sonnets.) Robert Bridges maintained, indeed, that 'there can be no doubt that Milton was here deliberately using the sonnet form to do the work of Horace's tight stanzas'; and thought that 'his addresses to Vane, Fairfax, and Cromwell are properly odes and should be called odes, or at least odic sonnets'. In any case we find Milton's characteristic tendency in verse-composition asserting itself in the shorter rhymed forms, as it does with more natural and felicitous effect in his blank verse. Sustained and varied movement, like the movement of the sea, seems spontaneous with him—what Gerard Hopkins spoke of as 'one long strain', which would be a good description of the two odic pieces *To Time* and *Blest Pair of Syrens*.

Now this innate tendency affects not only the movement of the verse but the imagery, the pictorial as well as the musical side of Milton's poetry. It will conduce to a kind of imagery corresponding to that kind of pictorial design which sweeps over details and accidents to establish large relations, and in which the main lines, if their curves are prolonged, will fall outside and not within the picture. Mr. Eliot, in a paper recently published,[1] seems almost to deny to Milton any visual imagination. He quotes the lines from *L'Allegro*:

> While the Plowman neer at hand,
> Whistles ore the Furrow'd Land,
> And the Milkmaid singeth blithe,
> And the Mower whets his sithe,
> And every Shepherd tells his tale
> Under the Hawthorn in the dale.[2]

And he says: 'It is not a particular ploughman, milkmaid, and shepherd that Milton sees (as Wordsworth might see them);

[1] 'A Note on the Verse of John Milton', in *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, vol. xxi, 1936.

[2] ll. 63–8.

the sensuous effect of these verses is entirely on the ear, and is joined to the concepts of ploughman, milkmaid, and shepherd.' Wordsworth, no doubt, when his subject is a particular person, portrays an individual; though even his Leech-Gatherer, if we compare the poem with the picture of the old beggar who inspired it, as given in Dorothy's Journal, is, if not quite generalized, removed a degree from actuality. But the 'happy shepherd boy', the 'children culling fresh flowers', the babe leaping up on its mother's arm, in the *Immortality Ode*, where the figures are part of the setting of the scene, as in *L'Allegro*, are to me not more but less distinct than those figures of Milton's. Yet they are quite distinct enough for the purpose in hand. For after all these are but figures in a landscape; we should not in a landscape see them as individual persons. The landscape itself in *L'Allegro* has character, an English character; all the details of the poem are in keeping, distinct but none obtrusive. The language, Mr. Eliot says, is artificial and conventional. It has this element in it certainly, just as a seventeenth-century picture would have; but it seems to me that the poem shows a painter's eye, and I do not understand how it can be said to have a sensuous effect only on the ear.

I remember a painter telling me of the peculiar pleasure he got, as from a master's touch in a picture, from the stanza in the *Nativity Ode*:

> The lonely mountains o're,
> And the resounding shore,
> A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
> *From haunted spring, and dale*
> *Edg'd with poplar pale,*
> The parting Genius is with sighing sent,
> With flowre-inwov'n tresses torn
> The Nimphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.[1]

But to me the most moving pictured landscape in Milton is the incomparable close of *Lycidas*:

> Thus sang the uncouth Swain to th'Okes and rills,
> While the still morn went out with Sandals gray,
> He touch'd the tender stops of various Quills,
> With eager thought warbling his *Dorick* lay:
> *And now the Sun had stretch'd out all the hills,*

[1] ll. 181–8.

> And now was dropt into the Western bay;
> At last he rose, and twitch'd his Mantle blew:
> To morrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new.[1]

I find this moving, in some way that I can hardly analyse, as the last line of Virgil's first eclogue is moving:

> Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

I enjoy too the word *blew*; its blueness seems intensified by the absence of colour around it.

It is to be noted that in *Paradise Lost* what is presented to the mind's eye is almost always viewed from a certain distance; and this it seems to me is dictated by Milton's 'long drawn out' rhythms, which carry a vast or remote prospect so much more congenially than anything intimate or minute. Typical is such a simile as that in Book ii:

> As when farr off at Sea a Fleet descri'd
> Hangs in the Clouds, by *Æquinoctial* Winds
> Close sailing from *Bengala*, or the Iles
> Of *Ternate* and *Tidore*, whence Merchants bring
> Thir spicie Drugs: they on the trading Flood
> Through the wide *Ethiopian* to the Cape
> Ply stemming nightly toward the Pole. So seem'd
> Farr off the flying Fiend.[2]

Nor does it seem to me that even the sonorous names appeal only to the ear, though there are passages no doubt in which Milton abuses the effect of them as mere sound; but in passages like this the names confer a certain reality on remoteness; they enlarge the reader's vision to a world-wide range. Milton's visual imagination is happiest perhaps in those views from a high hill, those 'pageants' as Dr. Tillyard calls them, in the last two books of *Paradise Lost*, and in *Paradise Regain'd*.

It is when he comes to close quarters with the thing seen that Milton is least happy.

> Beyond his hope, *Eve* separate he spies,
> Veild in a Cloud of Fragrance, where she stood,
> Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round
> About her glowd, oft stooping to support
> Each Flour of tender stalk, whose head though gay
> Carnation, Purple, Azure, or spect with Gold,
> Hung drooping unsustaind.[3]

[1] ll. 186–93. [2] ll. 636–43. [3] *Paradise Lost*, Book ix, ll. 424–30.

I do not *see* these flowers. They seem to have no life. Nor can I at all share Tennyson's preference for the 'bowery loneliness, the brooks of Eden mazily murmuring', over the illimitable scenes in Hell; partly because there is a lack of conviction in the poet's painting of Paradise—it is rather like over-elaborated stage-scenery—partly because the emptiness and tedium of existence in that garden force themselves on us and infect us as we read.

But what of the figures, human or celestial or infernal, evoked in Milton's pages? For in reading any poet the words are able to call up an image which we recognize as having certain features and qualities corresponding to what a painter of the same order of imagination would present. Take an example from Milton's early work:

And Kings sate still with awfull eye.[1]

The appeal to the ear is certainly not the paramount appeal in this simple line; but when we call to memory certain figures in frescoes by Giotto and Lorenzetti, severe and tense, it presents an image of the like contained power.

In *Paradise Lost* and in *Samson Agonistes* it is a quite different type of form that is evoked, of ampler, even gigantic mould. There is a hint of the swelling style of the baroque (Bernini was Milton's slightly elder contemporary); but pre-eminently in the figure of Satan a tremendous presence imposes on the imagination, tremendous not only in externals but from a superhuman force and fire within. If we are reminded by this creation of any one in the realm of plastic and pictorial art, it is not of Bernini; it is of Michelangelo, of whom indeed it might truly be said that beyond the human form he saw nothing in the world.

Milton has had no adequate illustrator. The only one who commands attention is Blake, who drew illustrations for nearly the whole of Milton's poetry. Whatever he illustrated Blake translated into the terms of his own imaginative vision, from which the forms of classic art were quite absent; he was naturally 'Gothic', but clogged with unassimilated borrowings from Michelangelo and unconscious leavings of eighteenth-century mannerism, and few of the designs are fortunate; many

[1] *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, l. 59.

verge on the grotesque. Yet in Blake's imagination there is a flame-like spiritual intensity which we miss in Milton; and for all the obvious and disconcerting defects of presentation his angels and demons are conceived from within; he shares their ecstasies and despairs. Quite otherwise is it with Romney and Lawrence, who in illustrating Milton are merely ambitious and external.

There is one great artist contemporary with Milton, who shows in painting a special gift parallel to Milton's special gift in verse; and that is Rubens, who had an unrivalled mastery of continuous rhythmical movement in figure-design. But Milton's imagery does not evoke beings that could consort with Rubens's figures; Milton's beings have not the animal energy, the joy of living, the exuberance, but in inward force, in significance, they are far superior; they are more heroic.

In criticizing the rhetoric of speeches in *Paradise Lost*, Mr. Eliot says that 'the syntax is determined by the musical significance . . . rather than by the attempt to follow actual speech or thought.' Here we may agree with him; and we may admit that it is above all through the ear that Milton appeals to our imagination. Hopkins says of Milton: 'His verse as one reads it seems something necessary and eternal . . . his art is incomparable . . . and this is shown especially in his verse, his rhythm and metrical system.' Indeed, it is the continuity of sustained rhythm, sustained not only by the drawn-out harmonies of sound but by the momentum of intellectual energy within them, so that we seem as if borne onward over an ocean out of sight of land—it is this which above all is Milton's peculiar power among poets. His influence on later blank verse was disastrous, simply because no later poet had anything like that spontaneous urgent flood of music in him; and even a poet of Wordsworth's stature (who had so many gifts that Milton lacked) in attempting the sustained note is apt to fill out his verse with flat or pompous phrasing in emulation of a model not really congenial to his own nature. We may remember that Michelangelo was similarly disastrous as an example to later artists. It may be true that, as Mr. Eliot maintains, in Milton there is no such fusion of the aural sense with all the other senses as we find in Shakespeare. But I cannot help thinking that he goes altogether too far in quite detaching this

aural sense from the others, and especially in depreciating so strongly Milton's visualizing faculty. At any rate there are many passages in which it is my experience that there is a fusion of the aural with the visual imagination; and if apt to be weak in picturing the near and vivid, Milton's visual imagination is, in the large and distant, grand and powerful. I have tried to show that the character of his imagery is bound up with, in a sense commanded by, the character of his rhythm.

MILTON AND POUSSIN

By MARIO PRAZ

MR. T. S. ELIOT'S 'Note on the Verse of John Milton'[1] may supply a convenient starting point for the discussion of Milton's position in European literature. Mr. Eliot has stated in his usual clear and detailed way the grounds of aversion to Milton which are not his alone, for the generation which was to a greater or lesser degree influenced by Ezra Pound can be said to share a dislike of Milton's 'rhetoric' and 'melodrama'. If we may recapitulate Mr. Eliot's remarks thus: Milton's sensuousness was withered early by book-learning, his language is artificial and conventional, in fact he writes English like a dead language, all in him is sacrificed to a musical effect, with the occasional debasement of poetry into a solemn game—we may be struck by the similarity of these criticisms to those which are usually levelled at neo-classical art. The similarity is not accidental. Mr. Eliot's criticism helps to place Milton among those champions of the latest phase of humanism which actually anticipates the neo-classical vogue of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Several possibilities of development were open to the late Cinquecento art. One was preciosity, variously named *manierismo*, plateresque, euphuism: an exquisiteness of outline verging on mere calligraphy, an over-nicety of ornament as in the gems and articles of virtu of the silversmiths, a prose style, for such is euphuism, partaking of those two tendencies which are proper to the fine arts—a manneristic lilt of sentences bejewelled with emblems and quaint concetti. Another possibility was to transform the static monumentality of the Cinquecento art, the solemn cadence of its verse, the stately poise of its figures and buildings, by the introduction of a dramatic principle, by substituting counterpoint for harmony, and creating a synthesis of dynamically contrasted elements, instead of a unity of converging effects. This tendency was the baroque, and was destined to become the main current of the two following centuries chiefly

[1] In *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, xxi. (1935)

in the south and the centre of Europe. A third possibility remained, which was reserved to a comparatively few individuals and groups. This was to purify the overgrown classicism of the Cinquecento, to bring it back to its sources through study and closer imitation of that ideal type the Ancients had achieved. This stricter classicism, to a certain degree archaeological, was peculiar to the northern races, and it is easy to see why. Not possessing by nature those canons of harmony and order which a Mediterranean artist can be said to carry in his blood, the northerners have at all times been extremely self-conscious in their classicism. If the Aristotelian unities were a creation of Italian critics, it was reserved to the French tragedians to adhere strictly to them. The most faithful disciples of Palladio were English; English Palladianism actually bridged over the extreme classicism of the Cinquecento and the neo-classicism of the anti-baroque reaction in eighteenth-century Europe.

Now, it may be, as Mr. Eliot maintains, that Milton's blindness contributed to concentrate his art upon sound; but his evolution from the more complex sensuousness of his early poems to the aural exclusiveness of his mature inspiration finds a counterpart in the gradual predominance of design over colour in the French painting of his time, and particularly in Nicolas Poussin. This is, however, only one aspect of a parallelism which deserves to be looked into more closely. I know the fashion for parallels between artists has long been discredited, but I think that, while those parallels are mere *tours de force* of rhetorical skill when the artists belong to different schools (such, for instance, would be the hackneyed parallel between Dante and Milton), there is on the contrary much point in showing the same forces at work in artists belonging to the same phase of history. Aesthetic critics will maintain that every artist is a unique individuum, and that a parallel such as we intend to sketch in the next few pages may have some interest for the history of culture and fashion, but not for aesthetic appreciation; I think, however, that an aesthetic appreciation which does not take into account general factors is apt to be biased, and I suggest that Mr. Eliot's 'Note' is a case in point.

Italian influence on the early careers of both Milton and Poussin is a well-known fact. Of the Italian authors who

influenced Milton, Tasso deserves the first consideration, more for his theories than for his actual example. The precepts which Tasso partly laid aside when he came to write under inspiration—so that, while preaching a strict classicism, he was in fact transforming it by the mellow and tender colours of his own palette—were followed by Milton methodically, as we shall see. What Tasso was for Milton, the eclectic painters of Italy, chiefly the Carracci and Domenichino, were for Poussin.

Annibale Carracci, after trying to slough off the conventions of *manierismo* by copying Correggio and the Venetians, turned in Rome to the imitation of the plastic poses of the followers of Raphael and Michelangelo, and went beyond the Roman school in his research for sculptural effects after the antique models he saw in the many collections of the town. In his decoration of the white and gold gallery of the Farnese Palace he can be said to have initiated neo-classicism. There, the idea of the composition goes back to the frescoes of Raphael and his pupils in the Farnesina; but Annibale Carracci gives to his naked or veiled figures, arranged in classical postures, a polish and a clear-cut outline as of marble or glazed terra-cotta statues; he disposes them in balanced groups, as if they were clauses of a rhythmical sentence. Still, for all his attitudinizing in the antique manner, Annibale Carracci remained an Italian of the Cinquecento. One is but dimly aware of his classical sources; there is a flow in his compositions that prevents our attention from being fixed by any single detail; his is not a close translation, but a loose rendering, such as we may find of some classical poet in the lines of Tasso; he reflects antiquity through a medium conditioned by an age-long experience of original Italian painting. There was nothing essentially different between the Italian and the classical traditions; the two could easily coalesce. As there was no sharp contrast, the later artist was not too self-conscious, and could let his hand work freely. This is even truer of Domenichino, whose mild neo-classicism has nothing pedantic about it. Never in these Italian artists does one receive that impression which strikes one so powerfully before the paintings of Poussin, that, namely, of statues suddenly coming to life as if through a repetition of Pygmalion's miracle. As a matter of fact the frescoes of the Farnese Palace were so much in the Italian tradition that they could serve as a

model to the baroque age; Pietro da Cortona had only to invest Annibale Carracci's 'Triumph of Bacchus' with his own feeling for movement, to create an unmistakably baroque bacchanal.

One would find it difficult to illustrate Tasso's precepts, as expounded in his *Discorsi dell' arte poetica* and *Discorsi del poema eroico*, by his own practice. One may find that the length of the clauses and the rhythm of the hendecasyllabic in that late poem, the *Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato*, give it, occasionally, a neo-classical ring which seems to anticipate Foscolo; but how much nearer Tasso's ideas of *magnificenza* and *musica* is Milton's epic verse!

La composizione . . . avrà del magnifico, se saranno lunghi i periodi, e lunghi i membri, de' quali il periodo è composto. . . . Il trasportare alcuna volta i verbi contro l'uso comune, benché di rado, porta nobiltà a l'orazione.[1]

La lunghezza de' membri e de' periodi, o delle clausole che vogliam dirle, fanno il parlar grande e magnifico non solo nella prosa, ma nel verso ancora.[2]

I versi spezzati, i quali entrano l'uno nell' altro . . . fanno il parlar magnifico e sublime.[3]

[Il poeta eroico] elegga fra le cose belle le bellissime; fra le grandi, le grandissime; fra le meravigliose, le meravigliosissime; ed alle meravigliosissime ancora cerchi d'accrescere novità e grandezza.[4]

Of all forms of poetry, the heroic poem bore the palm according to Tasso; and if Milton gave up his one time idea of writing a tragedy, and wrote instead an epos, this change may be due to the influence of Tasso's arguments:

Non posso già negare che la tragedia in minor tempo non conduca la sua favola a fine, e che quel piacere non sia più ristretto; ma avviene del diletto, il quale è nella tragedia e nella comedia, come della virtù de' corpi piccioli e de' grandi; perché niuno è ch'eleggesse d'esser picciolo, quantunque la virtù sia più unita, e più dispersa quella de' grandi: ma a l'incontro, è maggior virtù quella d'un corpo grande; così anco è maggiore il piacere dell' epopeia, anzi è vero piacere; là dove quello della tragedia è mescolato co'l pianto e con le lagrime, e pieno tutto d'amaritudine. . . . Ma non

[1] Tasso, *Prose diverse*, ed. Guasti, 1875, vol. i, p. 54.

[2] Ibid., p. 217.

[3] Ibid., p. 219.

[4] Ibid., p. 125. The same principle was enforced by Tasso in his dialogue *Il conte, o vero De l'imprese*: the body of the *impresa* had to be *nobile*. Cf. Praz, *Studi sul concettismo*, Milan, 1934, p. 49.

voglio già concedere che la tragedia meglio conseguisca il fine; anzi si muove a quello per obliqua e distorta strada: ma l'epopeia per diritta: perciò che, essendo duo modi del giovar con l'esempio, l'uno d'incitarci a le buone operazioni mostrandoci il premio dell'eccellentissima virtù e del valor quasi divino, l'altro di spaventarci da le ree con la pena, il primo è proprio dell' epopeia, l'altro della tragedia.[1]

Lo stile eroico . . . non è lontano da la gravità del tragico, né da la vaghezza del lirico; ma avanza l'uno e l'altro nello splendore d'una meravigliosa maestà.[2]

The very defects Mr. Eliot finds in Milton, that his 'images do not give the sense of particularity', such as Shakespeare's give, and that the complication of his syntax is 'dictated by a demand of verbal music', can be traced to Tasso. In comparing Homer with Virgil, one may doubt whose virtues are greater:

perché l'uno mette più le cose innanzi a gli occhi e le particolareggia, come disse il Castelvetro; l'altro, cioè Virgilio, sta più su l'universale: e, come pare al Castelvetro, per difetto d'arte; ma, come io stimo, per dir le cose più magnificamente, o più gravemente: perché il discriverle minutissimamente non porta seco l'una né l'altra virtù.[3]

Nel poema eroico si richiede principalmente la musica, la qual conservi il decoro de' costumi, e la maestà, come faceva la dorica. . . .[4]

Tasso, in theory at least, advocates a close imitation of the classics:

Niuna cosa si dee considerare senza l'esempio de' principi della poesia greca e latina; però che il ricercar nuove strade porta seco maggior riprensione che lode.[5]

Lodiamo quelle orazioni e que' poemi i quali sono esattissimi ed insieme magnificentissimi, e somigliano le statue di Fidia, ch' erano fatte con politissima arte, ed aveano insieme dell' esquisito e del grande.[6]

The ideal beauty of a Greek statue seems to have haunted both painters and poets in that late phase of humanism. It hovered before the eyes of Carracci and Tasso, who, however, were inoculated against the spell by the centuries of classicism they carried in their blood. But Poussin and Milton, once they had espoused the ideal of classical beauty, were bewitched by it, like the young man who, according to the

[1] Tasso, op. cit., pp. 272–3. [2] Ibid., p. 213. [3] Ibid., p. 262.
[4] Ibid., p. 267. [5] Ibid., p. 162. [6] Ibid., p. 253.

legend, put his ring on the finger of the marble statue of Venus.

Magnificence and gravity were the constant rules for Milton; he achieved them not only in his epos, with its sentences 'variously drawn out from one verse into another' (cf. Tasso: 'i versi spezzati, i quali entrano l'uno nell' altro . . . fanno il parlar magnifico e sublime'), but also in his sonnets, modelled, as Mr. Smart has shown, on those of Giovanni della Casa. Now, on Casa's sonnet *Questa vita mortal* Tasso had remarked in his youth:[1]

Le parole di questo sonetto sono in modo congiunte, che non v'è quasi verso che non passi l'uno nell' altro; il qual rompimento de' versi, come da tutti gli maestri è insegnato, apporta grandissima gravità: e la ragione è, che 'l rompimento de' versi ritiene il corso dell' orazione, ed è cagione di tardità, e la tardità è propria della gravità: però s'attribuisce a i magnanimi, che son gravissimi, la tardità così de' moti come delle parole.

The same principles which Milton could find in Tasso were followed by Poussin. For the French artist, too, everything in a picture must aim at showing a superior emotion. Hence unity is necessary; attention must be confined only to the 'choses grandes et magnifiques' which further that aim, whereas the 'détails vulgaires et de peu de poids' must be neglected.[2]

The old distinction between the Phrygian and the Dorian mode was adopted by Tasso,[3] who explained that

'la musica frigia, e la lidia, e quella che di queste è mescolata, sono più ricercate nelle tragedie e nelle canzoni, sì come in quelle che posson commover gli animi e quasi trarli di se stessi, ma non sono atte ad ammaestrarli'; [but] 'potrà la musica grave e stabile e simile a la dorica servire meglio d'alcun' altra al poema eroico'.

Poussin also expounds the distinction: the Greeks, in order to awaken the idea of 'choses plaisantes et joyeuses', utilized the 'mode phrygien', and reserved the 'mode dorique' to rouse the idea of things 'stables, graves et sévères'.[4] For Poussin

[1] 'Lezione sopra un sonetto di Monsignor della Casa', in *Prose diverse*, vol. ii, p. 125. This lecture delivered at the Academy of Ferrara was inserted into the second part of Tasso's *Rime e prose* from the earliest impressions. It was reprinted with Casa's works.

[2] E. Magne, *Nicolas Poussin*, Paris–Bruxelles, 1914, p. 186. The passages in French are quoted from Poussin's letters.

[3] *Prose diverse*, vol. i, p. 266 f.

[4] E. Magne, op. cit., p. 187.

the reverse of the Horatian precept was true, not *ut pictura poesis*, but *ut poesis pictura*; and poetry, for him as well as for Milton, was above all music.

Bearing in mind what Aristotle had said in the third book of the *Rhetoric*, that words, being imitations of ideas, must imitate their lowness as well as their elevation, and Demetrius Phalereus's theories on style,[1] Poussin says that good poets 'ont usé d'une grande diligence et d'un merveilleux artifice pour accommoder aux vers les paroles'. Virgil best of all:

> Il semble qu'il mette devant les yeux avec le son des paroles les choses desquelles il traite, de sorte que, où il parle d'amour, l'on voit qu'il a artificieusement choisi aucunes paroles douces, plaisantes et grandement gracieuses à ouïr; de là où il a chanté un fait d'armes, ou décrit une bataille navale, ou une fortune de mer, il a choisi des paroles dures, âpres et déplaisantes, de manière qu'en les oyant ou prononçant, elles donnent de l'épouvantement.

For Poussin painting, like music, is a transposition of states of mind. His career may be described as a progression from the Phrygian mode to the Dorian, increasingly solemn and severe. Milton went through the same stages. Both brought to its extreme development the neo-classical lesson of the Italians, but they had a first period of freer eclecticism. I do not think I am forcing the parallel in putting the poet of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, *Lycidas*, *Epitaphium Damonis* side by side with the painter of the Bacchanals. Both start in a mood of baroque exuberance. Milton's *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* is suffused with 'warm colours that suggest Italy'. The remark is Mr. Tillyard's,[2] who finds something distinctly baroque about the ornate figure of Peace in the third stanza of the hymn. Milton's 'meek-eyd Peace',

> With Turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing,
> And waving wide her mirtle wand,[3]

has, in fact, all the *morbidezza* of a female figure of Correggio.[4] If there is something classical in the ode, it reminds us of bold images in Æschylus and Pindar:

[1] Cf. Tasso, *Prose diverse*, vol. ii, pp. 120–1.

[2] *Milton*, p. 35.

[3] ll. 46, 50–1.

[4] Of course, Mr. Tillyard is quite off the mark when he says, on p. 37, that 'a *fifteenth*-century Italian picture of the Nativity gives the simplest comparison'.

Th'old Dragon under ground. . . .
Swindges the scaly Horrour of his foulded tail.[1]

But already in this hymn one sees clearly the tendency of the poet to convey his feeling in sound rather than in visual imagery:

The Nimphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.[2]

The adjectives are conventional, so far as the sense is considered; for 'twilight' goes unavoidably with 'shade', and 'tangled' with 'thickets', just as in *Comus* we find 'rugged bark', 'broad elm', 'verdant leaf', &c.; but the combined sounds strike a plangent tune which overflows the meaning.

Colour is not absent from young Milton's poetry; it is mostly employed to describe effects of a Virgilian melancholy:

Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err, there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted Grove.[3]

And, with more emphasis on sound:

And when the Sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me Goddes bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that *Sylvan* loves
Of Pine, or monumental Oake.[4]

Such elegiac mood in Milton finds a counterpart in Poussin's backgrounds, twilight skies veiled with silken clouds, shot with the soft colours of the Venetians. Against such backgrounds Poussin displays his nymphs and satyrs, reminiscent of those of Annibale Carracci and Pietro da Cortona, but even more of those in classical bas-reliefs and mural paintings. Poussin's nudes breathe a pagan sensuality, but the rhythm of his composition gives a serene, almost sacred, character to the boldest frolics. Milton too, in Mr. Tillyard's words, 'strove to hide' the exuberance of his nature 'beneath the severity of his versification'.[5] The pageant of beauties in *Elegia Prima Ad Carolum Diodatum*, those choirs of virgins, those gem-surpassing eyes, those necks whiter that Pelops's ivory shoulder or the Milky Way, those bright locks, Love's golden snare,

[1] ll. 168, 172. [2] l. 188. [3] *Comus*, ll. 221–5.
[4] *Il Penseroso*, ll. 131–5. [5] Op. cit., p. 21.

Pellacesque genas, ad quas hyacinthina sordet
Purpura, et ipse tui floris, Adoni, rubor,[1]

are the same as Poussin painted in his scenes conceived in the Phrygian mode. In both artists the dream of the senses took the shape of a bacchanal. For could not these lines of *Lycidas* be written under Poussin's 'Bacchanalian Festival'?[2]

Mean while the Rural ditties were not mute,
Temper'd to th'Oaten Flute,
Rough *Satyrs* danc'd, and *Fauns* with clov'n heel: . . .[3]

And do not the Latin lines of the *Elegia Quinta, In Adventum Veris*, form the best commentary on Poussin's 'Bacchanalian Dance'?[4]

Nunc etiam Satyri, cum sera crepuscula surgunt,
Pervolitant celeri florea rura choro,
Sylvanusque suâ Cyparissi fronde revinctus,
Semicaperque Deus, semideusque caper.
Quæque sub arboribus Dryades latuere vetustis
Per iuga, per solos expatiantur agros.
Per sata luxuriat fruticetaque Mænalius Pan,
Vix Cybele mater, vix sibi tuta Ceres,
Atque aliquam cupidus prædatur Oreada Faunus,
Consulit in trepidos dum sibi Nympha pedes,
Iamque latet, latitansque cupit male tecta videri,
Et fugit, et fugiens pervelit ipsa capi.[5]

The proportion of the bacchanal mood is comparatively diminutive in Milton's work considered as a whole, whereas it looms large in Poussin's; but it is enough for us to recognize that such was the accent of Milton's sensuality whenever it found expression:

Were it not better don as others use,
To sport with *Amaryllis* in the shade,
Or with the tangles of *Neæra's* hair?[6]

However, 'naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret'. The very joys of Paradise were conceived by Milton as a sublimated bacchanal:

Æternum perages immortales hymenæos;
Cantus ubi, choreisque furit lyra mista beatis,
Festa Sionæo bacchantur et Orgia thyrso.[7]

[1] ll. 61–2.
[2] National Gallery, No. 42.
[3] ll. 32–4.
[4] National Gallery, No. 62.
[5] ll. 119–30.
[6] *Lycidas*, ll. 67–9.
[7] *Epitaphium Damonis*, ll. 217–19.

POUSSIN. *THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE PLANTS, OR THE REALM OF FLORA*
Dresden, Gemaldegalerie

Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
Us happie, and without Love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
(And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
In eminence, and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joynt, or limb, exclusive barrs:
Easier then Air with Air, if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, Union of Pure with Pure
Desiring; nor restrain'd conveyance need
As Flesh to mix with Flesh, or Soul with Soul.[1]

Dante said, after comparing his own metamorphosis to Glaucus', who tasted the herb, 'che 'l fè consorto in mar de li altri Dei':

Trasumanar significar per verba
Non si poria . . .[2]

But Milton and Poussin have succeeded in conveying in words and contours respectively that kind of 'sensualità rapita fuori del senso', to use a phrase of D'Annunzio, which is common to both. See how in Poussin's 'Metamorphosis of the Plants' (Plate 1) the sensuous bloom of the Venetians is refined and spiritualized through the influence of the ideal forms of the classics; there is an Alexandrine exquisiteness in the pergola (surely taken from some Roman mural painting), and in the flowers blossoming by the side of the handsome adolescent figures of the metamorphosed mortals, flowers which breathe an eternal spring, and at the same time have a trim formality as of emblematical devices. It is the same kind of chastened sensuality you find in Milton's *In Obitum Procancellarii Medici*:

membra precor tua
Molli quiescant cespite, et ex tuo
Crescant rosæ calthæque busto,
Purpureoque hyacinthus ore—[3]

or in that list of flowers, fresh notwithstanding their formal adjectives, in *Lycidas*:

Ye valleys . . .
Throw hither all your quaint enameld eyes,
That on the green terf suck the honied showres,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowres,
Bring the rathe Primrose that forsaken dies,

[1] *Paradise Lost*, viii, ll. 620–9. [2] *Paradiso*, i, ll. 70–1. [3] ll. 41–4.

The tufted Crow-toe, and pale Gessamine,
The white Pink, and the Pansie freakt with jeat,
The glowing Violet,
The Musk-rose, and the well-attir'd Woodbine,
With Cowslips wan that hang the pensive hed,
. . . . . .
Bid *Amaranthus* all his beauty shed,
And Daffadillies fill their cups with tears. . . .[1]

What happened to Venetian influence in the 'Metamorphosis of the Plants', happened to the Italian model of *Comus*. One has heard much about the Spenserian character of *Comus*, but nobody seems to have been aware that Tasso's *Aminta* is the real model. Comus's arguments to persuade the Lady to forsake her virginity are a development of those Dafne uses with Silvia at the beginning of Tasso's pastoral drama; Comus himself acts the part of Tasso's Satyr. *Comus* is a spiritualized *Aminta*; the Satyr binds Silvia naked to a tree and tries to violate her, but Comus's fetters are the invisible work of a spell. Thus sensuality has been carried away from the senses. Tasso's pastoral, with its tender atmosphere, its passions, and its despairs gushing out so easily, so melodiously, its discreetly introduced mythological background (only Love's Prologue has a distinct Hellenistic ring), has been transformed almost beyond recognition into a morality in antique garb. Milton scatters mythological allusions with no sparing hand; just as Poussin, sometimes (for instance in 'Echo and Narcissus', in the Louvre, or in 'The Parnassus', in the Prado) transferred bodily into his painted scenes, without endowing them with a new life, the marble statues which adorned the green shades of the Roman villas. Here is a neo-classical pageant of deities, each with his conventional attribute:

Listen and appear to us
In name of great *Oceanus*,
By the earth-shaking *Neptune's* mace,
And *Tethys* grave majestick pace,
By hoary *Nereus* wrincled look,
And the *Carpathian* wisards hook,
By scaly *Tritons* winding shell,
. . . . . .
By *Leucothea's* lovely hands
. . . . . .

[1] *Lycidas*, ll. 136, 139–47, 149–50.

By *Thetis* tinsel-slipper'd feet

. . . . .

And fair *Ligea's* golden comb.[1] . . .

However, it is not so much in these copies from the antique that Milton can be called neo-classical. Mythological adornments, after all, were the stock-in-trade of the Renaissance. But Milton 'forgets himself to marble', to use a phrase from *Il Penseroso*, chiefly in his language and syntax; in this he finds no equal in the literatures of the Europe of his day, but only in art, in Poussin.

The study of the ancient frescoes, such as the 'Nozze Aldobrandine', of which Poussin has left an admirable copy, the statues, and the mosaics, did not lead him only to utilize their elements in his work. Such utilization had been practised in Italy since the day of Nicola Pisano. But Poussin was a contemporary of Descartes; as the philosopher maintained that a truth achieves its full value only when it is portion of a general scheme, where the whole explains the parts, so the artist was possessed by the same thirst for the absolute. Every element in a picture had to conspire to a final impression, and be justified by it, in the same way as a truth finds its proof when it is part of a well-designed system. We have seen above a passage from Poussin's letter where he derives a lesson from Greek music. Pictures had to be like music; the dominant mode had to make itself felt in every detail. So Poussin soon went beyond the practice of the eclectic Italian painters who had been his first models. If the making of a picture was a science akin to music and mathematics, there could be no gleaning of elements from one style and another; one could not in one portion of a picture be a follower of Titian, in the other under the spell of Raphael. The ancients had set the tune; everything must follow. Now the lesson to be derived from ancient models emphasized the outline, the drawing; colour seemed only an accessory allurement. Poussin accordingly declared: 'Les couleurs sont comme des leurres qui persuadent les yeux, comme la beauté des vers dans la poésie.' Poussin more and more laid stress on drawing at the expense of colour. Haunted by his thirst for the absolute, for unity of effect, he was not content to gather details for his pictures from several experiences and studies, and to weld them

[1] *Comus*, ll. 867–80.

together in the process of painting, and trust to the unifying power of inspiration. He resorted to a most surprising method.

He first made a pencil and bistre sketch of the intended picture, then he modelled in wax all the figures of it, placing them exactly in their attitudes, first in the nude, then dressed as they had to appear, by help of coloured cambric, paper, or taffeta; he likewise modelled in wax the buildings and other paraphernalia; finally, he built round this kind of *presepio* a box with such openings to let in the light as there would be in the place for which the painting was designed. This method left nothing to chance. But it served not only the practical purpose of securing unity and coherence to the picture; through it Poussin satisfied his strong tactile instincts while actually moulding his figures, and at the same time, in contemplating them at once so distinct and so remote, as happens with miniature models of the *presepio* kind, he treasured in his eyes an impression which translated itself into the spell-bound, entranced appearance of the finished picture. The charm of Poussin's pictures lies in their being imbued with the memory of a tactile experience, and in bathing for ever in the strange, almost aquarium light of a *presepio*. Poussin had actually seen with his bodily eyes, not only with those of his mind, the Roman, Greek, or Biblical scene he was painting; he had seen all the details of it, as they were at the time the historical event took place, he had in a way touched the bodies and the dresses of the personages. This method was almost that of an archaeological reconstruction; but the mind which devised it, while believing it satisfied only requirements of an erudite and scientific nature, was in fact indulging in the strangest of metaphysical yearnings: it drugged itself with method and technique in order to dream better.

Some have said that Poussin spoke a dead language, just as Mr. Eliot has said of Milton. 'La force de la conception, la correction poussée au dernier terme, jamais de ces oublis ou de ces sacrifices faits au liant, à la douceur de l'effet ou à l'entraînement de la composition' (Delacroix). Milton also modelled his verse in wax before working it in English. The wax pattern of Milton was the Latin construction; he handled so to say the classical flesh of the words before dressing it in English attire. His English nobles remembered having been Roman senators

once; his sentences marched at the pace of Roman legions; there was an enchanted air about it all, as in Poussin's pictures. This was, as Mr. Eliot would say, Milton's solemn game.

Like Poussin, Milton never worked in the open air. Even *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, which were once thought inspired by his Horton days (cf. 'Now, under the elms on his father's lawn, he listens to the rural tune . . .', and the curious piece of Victorian criticism which follows in Masson's *Life*), have been shown[1] to be nothing more than academic exercises. Not that Milton, any more than Poussin, was incapable of enjoying nature; far from it, but, for the purposes of composition, they both felt at home only in the studio. Poussin was obliged to collect stones from buildings, pieces of rock, bark of trees, swathes of grass and moss, in order to copy their tonalities; Milton, even farther removed from reality by his book-learning first, his blindness afterwards, had to rely on his memory and the classics. Doubtless he enjoyed walking through the woods in Vallombrosa, but when the image came back to his mind, it was in the mould of a classical simile. Virgil and Tasso guided his hand, and behind them, Homer; indeed, the whole of *Paradise Lost* is so full of the spirit of Homer that the poem might be called a Christian *Μῆνις*, the Wrath of God for the sin of Man.

In their imitation of classical epos the Italian poets had been, as usual, eclectic; a blend of Homer and Virgil was their rule; only a pedant, like Trissino, set himself the task of being Homeric through and through. A foreigner could be uncompromisingly Homeric, without ceasing to be a poet; a foreigner could adhere strictly to the Aristotelian idea of a tragedy, and avoid the bathos of Giraldi Cinthio and the other Italian literary men who had only theories and no poetical intuition; a foreigner, again, could find in archaeology his chief source of inspiration, and be a great painter. Milton, Corneille, Poussin are the founders of that neo-classicism which, sprung in the Italian soil, found only abroad a favourable climate.

The parallel between Milton and Poussin becomes even closer in their treatment of Biblical subjects in the spirit of classical antiquity. It may be that Poussin, for whom the Bible had been the favourite book since his youth, received a strong

[1] E. M. W. Tillyard, 'Milton, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*', *English Association Pamphlets*, No. 82 (1932).

impulse in that direction from the study of the mosaic of Santa Pudenziana,[1] but Raphael had already led the way, and the influence of the cartoons and the 'Transfiguration' is evident in such of Poussin's paintings as 'The Passage of the Red Sea', 'The Worship of the Golden Calf',[2] 'The Triumph of David',[3] and 'Eleazar and Rebecca'[4]. Thus Poussin was the first to start a practice which was to become the rule of the Empire period, the placing of Raphael on the same level with the classical artists for Biblical subjects. Such subjects were treated by Poussin in the same spirit as his ancient Roman and Greek scenes. The aim he seems to have kept constantly in mind is the same as Tasso had put before a heroic poet:

> Lo stile eroico . . . non è lontano da la gravità del tragico, né da la vaghezza del lirico; ma avanza l'uno e l'altro nello splendore d'una meravigliosa maestà.

Every point of this definition could be illustrated in Poussin's 'heroic' pictures; for instance, the group of dancers in 'The Worship of the Golden Calf' has 'la vaghezza dello stile lirico', something of the gracefulness of the Phrygian mode of the Bacchanals, but the whole composition breathes stateliness and magnificence. Whether the subject is the plague of Athens or the blind men of Jericho, the rape of the Sabines, or the triumph of David, the background is the same classical city of majestic temples, of massive buildings, and harmonious spaces, which formed the background of the mosaic of Santa Pudenziana and of the cartoons of 'The Sacrifice in Lystra', 'The Preaching of Saint Paul', &c., but on a much grander scale; a pyramidal building with a columnar entrance, in the landscape of 'The Ordination' (in the series of the 'Seven Sacraments') actually anticipates the monumental severity of such a neo-classical architect as Friedrich Gilly. In a closed space, be the subject the death of Germanicus, or the will of Eudamidas, or the Lord's Supper, or the sacrament of the Extreme Unction,[5] the background is a low curtain beyond which rises a stately row of columns, or a massive Roman wall. No less typical is the furniture. The bed whereon lies the person healed by the saint, in 'The Miracle of Saint Francis Xavier', is the same Roman bed

[1] G. Berger, quoted by Magne, op. cit., p. 76.
[2] Collection of the Earl of Radnor, Longford Castle.
[3] Dulwich Gallery. [4] The Louvre. [5] *v.* Plate 2.

POUSSIN, *THE EXTREME UNCTION*. Ellesmere Collection

POUSSIN, *THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE*. Ellesmere Collection

of the 'Nozze Aldobrandine', although the episode is taking place in Japan. Such details as furniture show in fact how much Poussin anticipated David in his archaeological inspiration. Take, for instance, Poussin's 'Judgement of Solomon':[1] it is obviously derived from Raphael's cartoon of 'The Punishment of Elymas'. But whereas in the cartoon the deputy sits on an inconspicuous X-framed seat, Poussin's Solomon sits on a throne which can be mistaken for Napoleon's throne designed by Percier and Fontaine. The personage on the right in Poussin's picture is a copy of a Roman portrait. In 'The Extreme Unction' the figure whose head is muffled in a cloak is derived from a classical model of the type of the cloaked figure in the painting of Iphigeneia's sacrifice from Pompeii in the Naples Museum. You would vainly search in Raphael's cartoons for such archaeological minutiae. One has to wait until David or Pierre Narcisse Guérin for a similar accuracy. Mengs, who, for instance, in 'Augustus and Cleopatra'[2] has the curtain behind the bed, and classical furniture, is still too free in the handling of such details. Perhaps in the 'Lord's Supper' and the 'Penance' (in the Ellesmere series of the 'Sacraments') occur the most curious instances of Poussin's translating Biblical episodes into the language of ancient Rome. In the former the apostles sit at a triclinium; the triclinium is more developed in the latter picture,[3] where Ionic columns form the background and a Roman table on three lion's legs appears in the foreground.

The juxtaposition of the Biblical and the classical worlds thus effected by Poussin was going to be further emphasized in France at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Madame Dacier expounded her ideas about Homer and the Bible: the customs of Homer's heroes were the same as those of the patriarchs of the Bible, both represented Nature in its full *dignité et noblesse*, and were characterized by a *véritable et solide grandeur.*

But before such ideas were developed in France, and Pope, learning from Madame Dacier to observe 'the similitudes which many of Homer's expressions bear with the Holy Scriptures, and that the oldest writer in the world, except Moses, often speaks in the idiom of Moses', attempted to recast the *Iliad* in the uniform grandeur of a heroic mould, Milton had rewritten the Bible in the style of Homer. What Théophile

[1] *v.* Plate 4. [2] Vienna, Czernin Collection. [3] Plate 3.

Gautier said of Poussin's pictures, that they give an impression

> toute religieuse et, j'oserai dire religieusement païenne, car Poussin peint l'homme à cet état d'enthousiasme et de grandeur morale où il va se transfigurer en héros, la nature à ce point d'épanouissement et de grandeur silencieuse où elle peut être foulée par le pas des dieux . . . ses saints ne sont que des héros:[1]

could be repeated word for word of Milton. Poussin's Christ, in 'The Miracle of Saint Francis Xavier', has the figure of Jupiter. When Milton's God speaks—

> ambrosial fragrance fill'd
> All Heav'n.[2]

In such a world Satan could not but be a hero. 'La noblesse de la matière'—an axiom derived from the Italian expounders of Aristotle—was the first requirement for both Poussin and Milton. Once aware of this, one may begin to doubt the soundness of the modern psychologists, who have taken Satan's heroic stature in Milton as a proof of the poet's repression.

Pageantry, which forms such a prominent feature of Milton's sacred poems, has the same function that the background of classical buildings has in Poussin's pictures—walls of stately sound, friezes and bas-reliefs, above the rhetorical flow of the speeches, as in Poussin the columns, pediments, and statuary rise above the eloquent gestures and postures of the personages.

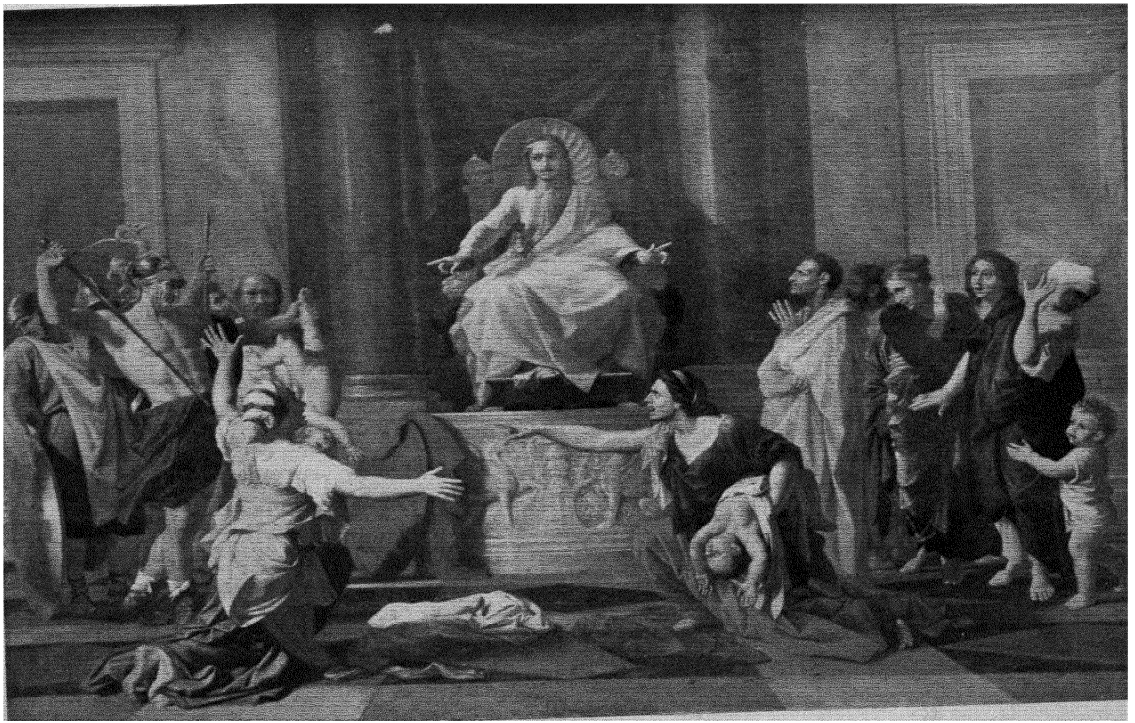
> Anon out of the earth a Fabrick huge
> Rose like an Exhalation, with the sound
> Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet,
> Built like a Temple, where *Pilasters* round
> Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
> With Golden Architrave; nor did there want
> Cornice or Freeze, with bossy Sculptures grav'n,
> The Roof was fretted Gold.[3]

The music, the Dorian mode, is present in every composition of Milton and Poussin; it is—

> the heavenly tune, which none can hear
> Of human mould with grosse unpurged ear.[4]

It is a Platonic harmony of contours in Poussin, of clause deftly interwoven with stately clause in Milton's Latin syntax. Both

[1] T. Gautier, A. Houssaye, and P. de Saint-Victor, *Les Dieux et les demi-dieux de la peinture*, Paris, 1864, p. 309.
[2] *Paradise Lost*, iii, ll. 135–6.
[3] Ibid., i, ll. 710–17.
[4] *Arcades*, ll. 72–3.



POUSSIN, *THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON*. Musée du Louvre

'forget themselves to marble' and to music, a musicians' painter and a musicians' poet, with no less right than Spenser has to be called a poets' poet. Rationalism led them both to concentrate more and more upon the elements which appealed to the intellect, at the expense of those which appealed to the visual faculty. They eliminate whatever is curious, picturesque, particular, not universal. A bareness of pure and austere lines becomes their ideal. Poussin subdues his colours, makes his decoration more spare, almost indigent, 'pour ne conserver que le "musicien" des attitudes et des groupes';[1] still, his mature pictures arrest us with their lofty eloquence, an eloquence which David was to inherit. 'Il n'avait ignoré aucune des sensualités de la peinture et aujourd'hui son ambition était de rendre visible la vie de la pensée.'[2]

Milton, through the Homeric phase of *Paradise Lost*, reached the austere nakedness of an oratorio in *Paradise Regain'd*. Long specches rise in the solitude of the desert, attitudes of thought rendered in pure outlines, thought following thought with such a slight resilience that the general impression is of monotony, shade within shade—the solemn spirals of sound of an organ. Decoration is left almost solely to the suggestion of exotic names. Such are the famous last two lines of the passage I am going to quote; what precedes them illustrates the statuesque side of Milton's classicism, and reads, again, like a description of a painting by Poussin:[3]

> And at a stately side-board by the wine
> That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
> Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hew
> Then *Ganymed* or *Hylas*, distant more
> Under the Trees now trip'd, now solemn stood
> Nymphs of *Diana's* train, and *Naiades*
> With fruits and flowers from *Amalthea*'s horn,
> And Ladies of th'*Hesperides*, that seem'd
> Fairer then feign'd of old, or fabl'd since
> Of Fairy Damsels met in Forest wide
> By Knights of *Logres*, or of *Lyones*,
> *Lancelot* or *Pelleas*, or *Pellenore*.[4]

[1] L. Hourticq, *De Poussin à Watteau*, Paris, 1921, p. 10. [2] Ibid., p. 16.

[3] A striking contrast between a classical and a romantic treatment of the same subject, a temptation, could be obtained by reading, side by side, *Paradise Regain'd* and Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint Antoine*.

[4] *Paradise Regain'd*, ii, ll. 350–61.

Milton had begun, like Poussin, with Venetian colours:

> Right against the Eastern gate,
> Wher the great Sun begins his state,
> Rob'd in flames, and Amber light,
> The clouds in thousand Liveries dight.[1]

He ended in the chastened mood of a serene classical landscape by Poussin:

> morning fair
> Came forth with Pilgrim steps in amice gray;
> Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
> Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds.[2]

That radiant finger waved in a harmonious gesture which spreads serenity all around, is it not an ultimate symbol of the art of these two austere Northern humanists, who brought to ripeness the neo-classical ideal of the Italians?

[1] *L'Allegro*, ll. 59–62.
[2] *Paradise Regain'd*, iv, ll. 426–9.

MILTON AND THE ENGLISH EPIC TRADITION

By E. M. W. TILLYARD

TILL recent years Milton was habitually regarded as a proud, isolated man, who planned his poems according to his own ideas of classical precedent without deigning to heed what his English colleagues thought or did. His evolution as an epic poet was private and simple. From early years he meant to be a great poet. He educated himself to that end. As his period of education drew to a close, he planned an epic on Arthur. This plan he discarded in favour of a tragedy, the subject of which, after various castings round, was to be that of the Fall of Man. He got so far with it as to write a few lines of the prologue. Then politics got the better of poetry for a spell; and when, in middle age, Milton was able to complete his life-work, he returned to the epic, retained the subject of his projected play, and wrote *Paradise Lost*.

The notion of isolation has been responsible for putting Milton on an eminence, good or bad, that has made him different from other poets. It certainly colours Mr. Belloc's recent book; for it was Milton's supposed isolation, his personal arbitrary daring in making decisions, combined with his overwhelming poetic power, which led Mr. Belloc to concentrate in Milton the responsibility for giving the last fatal blow to the Catholic tradition in England. And when Mr. Eliot makes Milton responsible for breaking up the Elizabethan synthesis of thought and feeling and for damaging the English language, he may be arguing on similar premisses.

But the movement the other way, the movement both to resurrect the social Milton of his first biographers and to set him as a poet firmly in his own age, has grown so strong that it is bound before many years to oust the traditional notion, which, it must be granted, still generally prevails. And the gain for Milton will be great. He will be spared a kind of idolatry that cannot but be punctuated with suppressed giggles; and his unique poetic gifts, instead of suffering the embarrassment of being pedestalled and smitten with a very dubious

brand of limelight, will show up healthy but not the less striking in a normal seventeenth-century setting. Take, for instance, the battle in heaven from the sixth book of *Paradise Lost.* Readers have bowed to its sublimity, yet the profane have tended to groan at Satan's puns and the whole notion of introducing cannon into heaven. Sir Herbert Grierson has reminded us that nothing is more normal to the fantasy of the age than such a notion. No reminder could be more salutary. Reading the sixth book we should be able to accept the cannon as we accept the peculiarities of any age, and to be impressed by the culminating emergence of the Son, without any suppressed sense that the whole episode inclines to the ridiculous.

As to the narrower question of Milton's evolution as an epic poet, I shall now try to show how little isolated Milton was from contemporary theory and practice.

Milton, according to what remains of his writings, first broke silence concerning his poetic ambitions in July 1628, when at the age of nineteen he delivered the annual Vacation Exercise for the entertainment of the Cambridge undergraduates. That he should have thus used this public occasion argues something very different from the instinct of isolation; and the actual lines show him acutely sensitive to contemporary poetry. He begins by attacking, even while partly practising, a contemporary mode of extravagance. He deprecates

> those new fangled toys, and triming slight
> Which takes our late fantasticks with delight,[1]

and he goes on to set forth the kind of poetry he is ambitious of writing. He aspires after some graver subject:

> Such where the deep transported mind may soare
> Above the wheeling poles, and at Heav'ns dore
> Look in, and see each blissful Deitie
> How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
> Listening to what unshorn *Apollo* sings
> To th' touch of golden wires, while *Hebe* brings
> Immortal Nectar to her Kingly Sire:
> Then passing through the Spheres of watchful fire,
> And mistie Regions of wide air next under,
> And hills of Snow and lofts of piled Thunder,
> May tell at length how green-ey'd *Neptune* raves,

[1] ll. 19–20.

In Heav'ns defiance mustering all his waves;
Then sing of secret things that came to pass
When Beldam Nature in her cradle was;
And last of Kings and Queens and *Hero's* old,
Such as the wise *Demodocus* once told
In solemn Songs at King *Alcinous* feast.[1]

Milton is in the habit of meaning what he says, and we shall not do this passage any evidential violence if we scrutinize it closely. He enumerates three types of poetry to which he would like to turn his chief talents. The first concerns the gods and Apollo's hymns in heaven, and refers, perhaps, to some kind of exalted lyric; in fact to a poetical kind which, many years later, he still thought of practising, 'those magnific odes and hymns, wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy'.[2] Callimachus' first hymn, to Zeus, would indeed be a perfectly appropriate song for Apollo to sing on Olympus. The second type, dealing with natural philosophy and the creation of the world, suggests the first book of the *Metamorphoses*, and more particularly the *First Week* of Du Bartas. The last type is the straightforward heroic, for Demodocus sang of the dispute between Achilles and Odysseus over strategy after the death of Hector, and of the actual capture of Troy.

Now it is remarkable that at the early age of nineteen Milton should already have been weighing in his mind two kinds of epic, according to contemporary notions so different from each other as Du Bartas's scientifically inquisitive account of the Creation and the classical heroic. And the inference is that Milton, as revealed for the first time, was normally sensitive to his age. He was no isolated neo-classic, bent on nothing but a Virgilian rigidity, but open to those multifarious notions that make the Renaissance epic so Protean a literary kind. The type of epic the Renaissance *per se* stood for was indeed the heroic, the kind that exhibited a hero who, by doing great deeds, was a pattern of behaviour to the contemporary prince or gentleman.[3] But the Middle Ages died hard, and more than one medieval narrative form prolonged a hardy vitality into the seventeenth

[1] ll. 33–49.

[2] In *The Reason of Church Government*, Bohn edition of prose works, ii. 479; F. A. Patterson, *The Student's Milton*, New York, 1933, p. 525, col. 2.

[3] For a fuller statement see my Warton Lecture on English Poetry for 1936, *The English Epic Tradition*.

century. Du Bartas's poem on the Creation and on a part of subsequent Jewish mythology unites, as Mr. George Coffin Taylor[1] points out, the medieval strain of Biblical narrative (exemplified in *Cursor Mundi*) with the encyclopaedic content of the medieval 'Mirror' literature. Sylvester published his translation in 1605, which, as the successive editions showed, continued popular well past the date of Milton's *Vacation Exercise*. True to contemporary taste, Milton allows his ambitions to project themselves less into the remoter academic strictness of Vida's *Christiad* or Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* than into the immensely popular scientific and Protestant didacticism of Sylvester's huge translation.

But there is yet another connexion in Milton's poem with the contemporary epic. One of the characters (*Relation*) in the masque of scholastic terms to which his lines refer was named Rivers, and Milton uses his name for a digression on the rivers of England:

> Rivers arise; whether thou be the Son,
> Of utmost *Tweed*, or *Oose*, or gulphie *Dun*,
> Or *Trent*, who like some earth-born Giant spreads
> His thirty Armes along the indented Meads,
> Or sullen *Mole* that runneth underneath,
> Or *Severn* swift, guilty of Maidens death,
> Or Rockie *Avon*, or of Sedgie *Lee*,
> Or Coaly *Tine*, or antient hallowed *Dee*,
> Or *Humber* loud that keeps the *Scythians* Name,
> Or *Medway* smooth, or Royal Towred *Thame*.[2]

As poetry these lines are the most masterly in the whole poem, being free from the slight sense of strain that pervades those already quoted. And they are entirely Miltonic, uttering a music from the very core of Milton's being and yet fastidiously precise, full, and appropriate in thought. Further, they suggest big tracts of poetry, then popular, and they look forward to more than one of Milton's later ventures. These smooth-running couplets, dealing with English geography, derive immediately from Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*,[3] whose first two parts were published in 1613 and 1616, the second part, therefore, but

[1] In *Milton's Use of Du Bartas* (1934), pp. 9–12. [2] ll. 91–100.

[3] It is certain that Milton knew this poem well at some period of his life, as a copy exists with his annotations.

twelve years before Milton's poem. But the references to early British mythology suggest that Milton, like Browne's seniors Spenser and Drayton, connected a geographical scene with a complete framework of Tudor patriotism. The cumulative force of the references is undoubted. The maiden of whose death the Severn was guilty is Sabrina, daughter of Locrine, himself son of Brutus, founder of the British nation; while the previous reference to the 'earth-born Giant' suggests the inhabitants found by Brutus and Corineus in Albion. The Dee is 'hallowed' because frequented by the Druids. Humber received its 'Scythian' name from the invader in the time of Brutus' sons. Finally, the Thames is called 'Royal Towred' not only to recall Windsor and Hampton but also, probably, to connect the royal houses of Tudor and Stuart with the early British kings.

The full story, but recently recovered, of how British myth and its Tudor connexions affected Elizabethan literature is one of the quaintest and most fascinating in literary history. As far as I know, the chief credit of recovering it belongs to the late Professor Edwin Greenlaw of Johns Hopkins University. Most of it can be found in this author's *Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory*.[1] But his discoveries have been amplified by several other authors. In particular I must mention Miss Roberta F. Brinkley's *Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century*,[1] a book enthralling in its content though, to my thinking, not correct in all its conclusions about Milton's proposed Arthuriad.

To put the matter with all possible brevity, Henry Tudor, of illustrious Welsh descent, when he landed in Wales before the battle of Bosworth was acclaimed by some of his countrymen as the fulfiller of the old prophecy of Merlin that Arthur would return, having never died, and re-unite Britain. Coming to the throne as Henry VII, he fostered the myth by causing the heralds to trace his ancestry back to the British kings, and by naming his eldest son Arthur. Nor did the other Tudors let the matter drop. The return of Arthur was, in the legends, to bring with it an age of gold. 'It was the prophecy of the return of the golden age with Arthur that Elizabeth turned successfully to her own use to win the confidence of the people in her claims to the throne after the period of war and confusion following the death of Henry VIII.'[2] It would have been quite against the

[1] Baltimore, 1932.

[2] Brinkley, op. cit., p. 3.

course of nature for the poets to have missed using this topical turn given to an already extant mythological material. Spenser used it to the full. Professor Greenlaw has shown that Arthur's pursuit of the Fairy Queen symbolizes (among other things of course) the notion that only in Elizabeth could the reincarnation of Arthur find its full issue. Warner in *Albion's England* and Drayton in *Polyolbion* also exploit British myth and Tudor pretensions.

Drayton's *Polyolbion* suggests a further type of poetry and brings us back to Milton's lines. However varied in form the Renaissance epic may have been, it was usually patriotic in intention. Mr. Lewis F. Ball has shown that the geographical poem with a patriotic intent goes back to early Tudor times.[1] Spenser, who strove to include every possible variety within his vast epic, perpetuates the type in his procession of the rivers which came to celebrate the marriage of the Thames and Medway.[2] But it was Drayton who made geography the basis of his English epic, *Polyolbion*, grafting on to his main theme the whole history of his country from Troy till modern times, including, of course, the British legends from Brutus to Arthur and Cadwallader. Mr. Ball has proved that *Polyolbion* ranked as an epic, Drummond in particular considering the poem as the only epic England had to boast of. Now the publication of *Polyolbion* was not completed till 1622, only six years before Milton's *Vacation Exercise*. Milton can hardly have escaped reading it, and it must have been fresh to him. Though the metre in his description of the rivers is Browne's, and though Spenser furnished him with a quite sufficient model, yet the union of geography with British myth and with the touch of royalism was so specifically Drayton's, that Milton probably had him also in mind. Be that as it may, by hinting at the geographical poem, yet excluding it from the passage where he talks seriously of his epic ambitions, Milton tells us that he is aware of this literary kind but does not take it seriously as epic.

To sum up so far, Milton's *Vacation Exercise* shows him vividly aware of contemporary English poetry: of the 'fantastics' of his age, of Sylvester's Du Bartas, of the heroic poem,

[1] 'The Background of the Minor English Renaissance Epics' in *English Literary History*, i, pp. 63–89.

[2] *Faerie Queene*, IV, ii.

of Browne the pastoral romancer, of Drayton ambitious of epic fame through geography and myth. And he indicates his own opinions and preferences.

The next reference to Milton's literary ambitions comes a year and a half later. Writing to Diodati in the Latin elegiacs of *Elegia Sexta* in the Christmas season of 1629, and immediately after his own coming of age, Milton speaks simultaneously of his own spare living and of the epic poet's need to live sparely. Wine may have helped Anacreon and Horace, but Homer had to be Pythagorean in his diet. And all his specific references to the heroic poem are to the *Odyssey*, as if he were now dreaming of writing his epic on this model rather than on that of Du Bartas.

Professor J. H. Hanford[1] has shown that Milton's account of his own poetical interests in the *Apology for Smectymnuus* can be accurately applied to his extant works up to the time of his return from Italy. Milton there tells us that after his youthful absorption in the Latin elegiac poets and in the sonnets of Dante and Petrarch, and after a solemn self-dedication to heroic poetry, 'I betook me among those lofty fables and romances, which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious Kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom.' Milton's own Latin elegies with their abundant Ovidian imitations illustrate the first phase, his early sonnets, including the Italian, the second. The neophytic and ascetic tone of *Elegia Sexta* fits well enough with his self-dedication to heroic poetry. So it may be conjectured that he began to be seriously taken up with the writers of romance after *Elegia Sexta*, that is towards the end of his university career and in the Horton period. Anyhow, in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, when he mentions narrative poetry, his old favourite the *Odyssey* has dropped out; he is silent about any classical epic and speaks of the romancers alone. The 'throngs of Knights and Barons bold' and the rest in *L'Allegro* suggest Boiardo and Ariosto—Milton's commonplace book proves he knew Boiardo. In *Il Penseroso* his romance reading is probably English. Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* is definitely referred to, while the lines that follow the reference point to Spenser:

> And if ought els, great *Bards* beside,
> In sage and solemn tunes have sung,

[1] In *The Youth of Milton* and, more shortly, in the Appendix to *A Milton Handbook*.

Of Turneys and of Trophies hung;
Of Forests, and inchantments drear,
Where more is meant then meets the ear.[1]

At this point the reader may easily object that Milton knew Spenser from an early age and that a reference to him in *Il Penseroso* has no significance. To which I reply that my experience is that the more Milton's poems are studied, the more apt one finds them to reflect his interests and studies at the time. There is, in truth, more danger of paying too little heed to his hints than of reading into them too much. For myself I am pretty confident that with *Il Penseroso* begins a long period when Milton sees himself the third in succession to Chaucer and Spenser, and when his epic ambitions centre in romantic matter. Both Du Bartas and the *Odyssey*, the chosen models for imitation in the *Vacation Exercise*, now recede, and from now till the time of the Civil War Milton's thoughts turn to 'the deeds of Knighthood founded by our victorious Kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom': to Arthur, Charlemagne, or Godfrey. And the period culminates in the attempt at an Arthuriad.

Nor was there anything archaistic in those thoughts in the years 1631 to 1639. For one thing, the British legend and Tudor patriotism which Spenser exploited in the *Faerie Queene* had not ceased with the Stuarts. On the contrary, James I was hailed alternatively as second Arthur or second Brutus, not only because of his Tudor descent but because his ancestor Fleance, son of Banquo, married the daughter of Griffith Llewelin, last of the native Welsh kings.[2] Charles I on his accession was similarly honoured. In 1633 Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* and in 1636 Davenant's *Britannia Triumphans* (both masques) contained much British material. In 1634 Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* was republished (for the first and last time in the century). Thus Milton was entirely in harmony with contemporary practice when in *Comus* (1634) he introduced the legend of Sabrina, as found in Geoffrey of Monmouth, Spenser, and Drayton. All the same Milton cannot by this time have been ignorant of a serious drawback in this romantic material.

[1] ll. 116–20.

[2] Brinkley, op. cit., p. 16. I make free use of this book in the rest of this paragraph.

Not long after Milton's birth, when James I began offending many Englishmen by claiming his Divine right as king, the more democratic scholars sought in Saxon law and custom a counterpoise to the royal claims. It was this political motive that initiated the beginnings of Anglo-Saxon research in the early seventeenth century, and which tended to degrade the authority of Geoffrey of Monmouth, chief sponsor of early British myth. There arose the growing tendency for British myth to be associated with the king and his supporters, and for Anglo-Saxon history to be associated with Parliament and its rights. Arthur, however, was discredited more gradually than the other British kings. His story could be held, even by the more scientifically minded, to be part fact and part fiction. As Bacon said of Arthur in his *History of Henry VII*, 'there is truth enough to make him famous, besides that which is fabulous'. Milton then was quite sufficiently in the fashion if he gave attention to Spenserian material, but he risked running counter to the political party he favoured.

It is worth noting that even just before the time when Milton most earnestly contemplated an Arthuriad, there is a reference to the epic which is closer to the *Vacation Exercise* than to *Il Penseroso* or *Mansus*. In the Latin poem to his father, which I date 1637, after mentioning the hieratic function of poetry and the songs of heaven, Milton mentions just one kind of earthly poem, the heroic:

> Tum de more sedens festa ad convivia vates,
> Aesculea intonsos redimitus ab arbore crines,
> Heroumque actus imitandaque gesta canebat,
> Et Chaos, et positi lati fundamina mundi,
> Reptantesque deos, et alentes numina glandes,
> Et nondum Aetnaeo quaesitum fulmen ab antro.[1]

The acts of heroes and their function as 'examples' fit in perfectly with Renaissance theory and Spenserian practice and a

[1] *Ad Patrem*, ll. 44–8. The penultimate line has not, to my knowledge, been adequately explained. Who were the gods who crawled and ate acorns? I had thought vaguely of snake-gods such as Typho and Asclepius. Cowper translates, 'gods that crept in search of acorns fallen.' Professor A. B. Cook, to whom I referred the matter, has kindly supplied a solution. The passage refers not to snake-gods but to the infancy of the Olympians as described in Hesiod. Professor Cook paraphrases, 'when the gods were mere crawlers, and the powers that be were nurtured on acorn-mash.'

possible Arthuriad. But chaos and the creation show that Milton continued to be haunted by the theme of Du Bartas.

Nor could the recollection of Du Bartas have been the only inducement away from strict Renaissance doctrine to the Middle Ages. Milton, it is acknowledged, was deeply read in Spenser. Now, however orthodox Spenser professed to be in his preface to the *Faerie Queene*, and however conscientiously he strove to imitate the Ancients in practice, it yet remains true that his poem is far more medieval than the *Orlando*, not to speak of *Jerusalem Delivered*. He may outdo Virgil in the thoroughness in which he plunges *in medias res*, yet he perpetuates the one medieval theme that in seriousness outgoes all others. I have tried elsewhere[1] to show that the one possible epic theme of the Middle Ages was the pilgrimage of the human soul. *Piers Plowman* is an imperfect or shadowy rendering of it, but the best the English Middle Ages produced, and *The Pilgrim's Progress* a belated one. I do not know how far it is realized that the *Faerie Queene*, though given a semblance of unity by its metre, contains within itself renderings of more than one epic kind, including the medieval.

You can never give any one meaning to any part of the *Faerie Queene*, but the preponderating theme of the first book, of far greater weight than the patriotic identification of the Red Cross Knight with St. George, is the pilgrimage of the soul. The Knight is more than Holiness; he is Everyman. Endowed with the native virtue of the ordinary decent man, he prospers for a little, overthrowing the grosser forms of error. But he cannot survive the pressure of the world, the flesh, and the devil from his own resources. His abode in the House of Pride weakens him, and through weakness, though not active vice, he is captured by Orgoglio. Prince Arthur, who rescues him, can stand for different ideas in different parts of the poem, or for more than one at the same time. As the knight's rescuer he stands beyond doubt for heavenly Grace.[2] I can cite Sir Herbert Grierson in support, who calls Arthur in this context, 'the Protestant conception of that prevenient grace of God without which no human virtue can achieve anything'.[3] After his

[1] *The English Epic Tradition*, pp. 6–8.

[2] See *Faerie Queene*, I. viii. 1 and 19.

[3] *Cross Currents in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, p. 51.

rescue the Red Cross Knight is put through a course of penance and religious instruction and is led by Faith, Hope, and Charity to the realm of contemplation, where he has a vision of the New Jerusalem. Fortified and regenerate he descends to kill the dragon. In sum, the first book of the *Faerie Queene* is a Divine Comedy in miniature.

The adventures of Guyon in Book II are cast in somewhat the same mould; but a fuller opulence has entered it, the colours are more gorgeous, and the tone is more ethical and less religious. The Middle Ages are less obvious.

With the third and fourth books comes a great change. Mr. C. S. Lewis has written so well on Spenser[1] that I dislike differing from him in any way. But when he makes a general claim for an overwhelming dominance of Ariosto over the form of the whole poem, I cannot entirely agree. There may be plenty of indebtedness of detail to Ariosto throughout; but it is not till Books III and IV that Spenser is truly Ariostan. Here he makes a quite fresh start and gives us poetry imitating the mazy plot and the clear-cut characterization of Ariosto. With what success is here irrelevant. I omit the fifth and sixth books of the *Faerie Queene* as they add nothing to my present purpose.

Now Milton was so alien in temperament from Ariosto that he was unlikely to be much affected by the specifically Ariostan qualities in Spenser, and anyhow he could draw direct on Ariosto; but I cannot see how he could have escaped being profoundly influenced all through his life by Spenser's version of the medieval theme of the soul's pilgrimage. It must have been permanently present in his mind, even in periods like the one under consideration when his poetic plans were being laid on other lines; and when we find it emerging in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd* we need feel no surprise, but recognize its emergence as the fulfilment of something long ago existing and demanding scope.

As to Milton's immediate plans for a heroic poem, now in process of formation, he must have found in Spenser anything but a definite lead. Spenser's shadowy Arthur could never do for the pattern of Milton's hero, with Aeneas or Rinaldo to choose from. Nor could Spenser's clumsy reachings after classical form have satisfied the stricter neo-classic theories now

[1] In *The Allegory of Love*, chap. vii.

growing powerful among the more academic in Milton's day. We must believe that Milton read Spenser more for his matter than for his style. Spenser's religious sense, his revival of the old British myths, which Milton clearly adored, and his patriotism must all have lain very near his heart. How he intended to use the Spenserian matter will be conjectured later.

I do not know if any one has connected *Lycidas* with Milton's epic plans, but I fancy that this poem, along with the almost contemporary letter to Diodati (23 Sept. 1637), anticipates the clear references to an Arthuriad contained in *Mansus* a year later. In the letter Milton writes:

> What am I thinking about? you ask. So help me God, of immortality. What am I doing? Growing wings and learning to fly; but my Pegasus can only rise on tender pinions as yet, so let my new wisdom be humble.[1]

Standing alone, this passage need not mean anything at all definite. Coming before *Lycidas* and *Mansus*, it refers, I believe, to a specific Arthuriad. That the old British legends were running in Milton's head is shown by two passages in *Lycidas*, while the second of them suggests his treating them very seriously indeed. First, Milton locates the haunts of the nymphs who might have protected Lycidas in Denbighshire, Anglesey, and by the Dee. Appropriately enough, since King sailed from Chester; yet, had not Druidical lore been actively present in Milton's mind, he need not have used it. No one would have marked its absence. The second passage is—

> The fable of *Bellerus* old,
> Where the great vision of the guarded Mount
> Looks toward *Namancos* and *Bayona's* hold.[2]

That Milton first wrote *Corineus* for *Bellerus* makes this passage the richer in mythological content. Corineus was Brutus' companion in the original settlement of Britain. He was an efficient giant-killer and received Cornwall for his pains. But Milton had a geographical meaning to convey, and Land's End, which he had reason to describe, was known as Bellerium. So he substituted Bellerus for Corineus, suggesting, I take it, that as Misenum was so called in Virgil after Misenus buried there,

[1] P. B. and E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton: Private Correspondence and Academic Exercises*, Cambridge, 1932, p. 14.

[2] ll. 160–2.

Bellerium took its name from the tomb of a local giant. It was an anonymous 'literary friend' of the Rev. Henry J. Todd who first identified Namancos T. (T. = *tierra*) in the map of Galicia in Mercator's Atlas of the editions between 1623 and 1636. It is marked there as the district of the extreme north-west of Spain, her Land's End. Bayona, farther south, is marked as an important fortress. Several Elizabethan authors mention the unimpeded sea-view between Land's End and Finisterre. We owe a great debt to Mr. Todd's literary friend. He has made more precise and more effective one of Milton's most successful imaginings, his picture of the great archangel on the mount named after him, looking across the sea to Spain. That picture needs no comment here. But the connexion of British myth with Spain and with embattled Spain is another matter. British myth was connected with Tudor patriotism. Tudor patriotism rose to its height at the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Picturing the guardian archangel's protective gaze towards the Spanish stronghold, we should be wrong not to let our minds glance at that event. And we should probably be wrong if we did not infer that at the time Milton wrote *Lycidas*, British myth, culminating in the rout of Spain, was the chosen subject of his epic.

Such a definite pronouncement about *Lycidas* would be rash but for the tone and contents of *Mansus*, written during Milton's Italian journey. *Mansus* is above all a patriotic poem, and it strengthens the hints of patriotism in *Lycidas* I have sought above to draw out. Moreover, besides containing the well-known explicit statement of the projected Arthuriad, it continues the Druidical and other mythological references introduced into the earlier poem. Milton salutes Manso as the patron of Tasso, strives at great length to establish a poetic vindication of his own country, and enlarges on his own poetic plans, closing with the wish that he might be as lucky as Tasso in acquiring a patron. The gist of his defence of English poetry is that there have been English poets, especially Chaucer and Spenser (already hinted at in *Il Penseroso*), and that in Druid times the British lays were not unknown in Greece. It is worth quoting the lines concerning the latter theme, to compare with *Lycidas*:

> Nos etiam colimus Phœbum, nos munera Phœbo,
> Flaventes spicas, et lutea mala canistris,

Halantemque crocum, perhibet nisi vana vetustas,
Misimus, et lectas Druidum de gente choreas.
Gens Druides antiqua sacris operata deorum,
Heroum laudes imitandaque gesta canebant.
Hinc quoties festo cingunt altaria cantu
Delo in herbosâ Graiæ de more puellæ
Carminibus lætis memorant Corineïda Loxo,
Fatidicamque Upin, cum flavicomâ Hecaërge,
Nuda Caledonio variatas pectora fuco.[1]

Here Milton, taking from Callimachus the names of the nymphs, Loxo, Upis, and Hecaërge, daughter of the North Wind, creates the elegant fiction that they were early Britons. Loxo was the daughter of Corineus, sent with her comrades from the band of Druidical singers to a Delian festival, and still remembered in Delian tradition. The Druids and their poetry, Corineus: these were the early British elements in the first version of *Lycidas*.

Not only is the poem patriotic: it is animated with an intense admiration for Italy. Milton was almost obsessed with the notion that the cold Hyperborean climate of England might damp his intended wing; and the very emphasis with which he urges that it *can* produce poets argues a sense of inferiority. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Milton would, at this time, have liked to model his epic on some Italian pattern.

Milton's pronouncement in *Mansus* about his Arthuriad had better be taken along with his similar one in *Epitaphium Damonis*. They are complementary: taken together and considered in the light of what has been said already, they tell us pretty plainly the kind of poem Milton had projected. In *Mansus* he wishes fate would give him a patron like Manso:

Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem;
Aut dicam invictae sociali fœdere mensæ
Magnanimos Heroas, et—O modo spiritus adsit—
Frangam Saxonicas Britonum sub Marte phalanges.[2]

Here the suggestion is that the main theme will be Arthur defeating the Saxons; but to whom does *indigenas reges* refer? Certainly to the British kings of legend other than Arthur. But if only to them, what point in referring to the prophecy of

[1] ll. 38–48. [2] ll. 80–4.

Merlin that Arthur was still alive below ground? I can only think that Milton meant to reiterate the legend that Arthur was re-embodied in the house of Tudor. These are the relevant lines from *Epitaphium Damonis*:

> Ipse ego Dardanias Rutupina per æquora puppes
> Dicam, et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniæ,
> Brennumque Arviragumque duces, priscumque Belinum,
> Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos;
> Tum gravidam Arturo fatali fraude Iogernen,
> Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlois arma,
> Merlini dolus.[1]

The references here are many and out of their time order. There is the landing of Brutus with his wife Imogen, daughter of Pandrasus, at Richborough to found the British Kingdom; Brennus and Belinus, sons of Dunwallo, six hundred years later; Arviragus from the time of the first Roman landing; the colonization of Armorica at the time of the Saxon invasions; and finally, the birth of Arthur and the wiles of Merlin. Nothing specific here about Arthur's future; but it was Merlin to whom the prophecies about it were attributed.

Taking *Lycidas*, *Mansus*, and *Epitaphium Damonis* together, I conclude that Milton's long-projected Arthuriad was to be a patriotic poem of vast range, beginning with the Trojans in Britain, dealing with British history up to the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and having Arthur as the hero. We need not be surprised at the bulk, seeing that when Milton did come to write an epic, the time-scheme began with the creation of the angels and ended with Doomsday. Further, such vastness had been included in *The Faerie Queene* and could be paralleled in Warner's *Albion's England* and Thomas Heywood's *Troia Britanica*. Can we conjecture into what form the poem would have been cast? I think we can, in the light of what Milton said in *The Reason of Church Government*. It is not always possible to know, when he airs his poetical ambitions in this pamphlet, how far he refers to the past and how far to a conjectural future.[2]

[1] ll. 162–6.

[2] Mr. William R. Parker (*Modern Philology*, xxxiii, pp. 49–53) gives reasons for robbing the passage of all specific reference and reducing it to a defence, for the benefit of his pious readers, of three literary forms. It may well have been such in part, but that Milton should not have been closer to his own plans than Mr. Parker allows seems to me, in view of other literary passages, extremely unlikely.

But he certainly refers back a great deal. Now when he speaks of the epic form he names only one modern writer of epic, Tasso; and he names him twice. There was every reason why Milton should have looked to Tasso for guidance. He must have heard his praises from Manso's lips. He must have recognized him as the poet who reduced the exuberant form of Ariosto to neo-classic proportions. Moreover, in *Jerusalem Delivered* there was just that mixture of history and magic that was inherent in the story of Arthur in the England of 1639. As Tasso had Ariosto as his predecessor, so Milton had Spenser, whose form was predominantly Ariostan. I conclude that Milton meant to use Spenser as Tasso had used Ariosto. He would adopt the total historical and patriotic material of Spenser and recast it in the neo-classic form of Tasso. One difference there was bound to be. Milton obviously could not feel towards Charles I as Spenser felt towards Elizabeth. His Arthur reincarnate could be no king. He must, instead, be the genius of the English people, of which notion a famous passage in *Areopagitica* gives the general sense, though it might almost be a specific reminiscence as well:

> Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks.

As to the writing of the epic, Milton tells us in *Epitaphium Damonis*[1] that he had tried to make a start a few days before—very soon, that is, after his return to England—but that he found the task too great for the poetic instrument at present at his command. Does this mean that he at once dropped the notion of an Arthuriad altogether? It is hard to say, but to do so would have been in accord with certain trends of contemporary opinion.

That Milton continued for several years to contemplate a patriotic epic is certain; but that Arthur would have remained the subject is doubtful. Miss Brinkley has shown that the legend of Arthur reincarnate had the fate of becoming associated with party politics. It became a Royalist affair. On the other hand, the Parliament men set up the Anglo-Saxons against the early British, whom they derided as unhistorical. Once the Civil War began and Milton had entered party politics,

[1] ll. 155–9.

it would have been difficult for him to retain as his hero the idol of his opponents.

Whether or not the Civil War expelled Arthur from the epic, it is certain that it influenced Milton's plan in one way. Believing that some great blessing of God was in the act of being granted to his country, Milton would have no need to go back to the Armada for his final issue; he could fittingly end in the present day. And in the leaders of the Parliament he can find the embodiment of the heroic virtues he means to celebrate. He therefore elects himself the panegyrist of the revolution. In his first pamphlet, written some year and a half after *Epitaphium Damonis*, he makes this pronouncement about himself:

> Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains in new and lofty measures to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages; whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her old vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when thou, the eternal and shortly expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of the world, and distributing national honours and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth.[1]

In this land throughout all ages: Milton's patriotic poem is still to cover a great field of English history.

In *Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence*, written a few months later, Milton is less confident; God's work has not yet been accomplished. 'Oh perfect and accomplish thy glorious acts!' he prays, and then (but only then)—

> he that now for haste snatches up a plain ungarnished present as a thank-offering to thee, which could not be deferred in regard of thy so many late deliverances wrought for us one upon another, may then perhaps take up a harp, and sing thee an elaborate song to generations.[2]

Then perhaps: this vagueness is remote from the present enthusiasms of *Mansus* and *Epitaphium Damonis*.

[1] *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England*, The Second Book, Bohn, ii. 418; *The Student's Milton*, p. 469, col. 1.

[2] Bohn, iii. 72; *The Student's Milton*, p. 493, col. 2.

What was now passing in Milton's mind can be guessed from the dramatic themes noted in the Trinity MS., roughly contemporary with the *Animadversions*. The entries in the manuscript consist of a few detailed, serious plans for a play and of lists of subjects jotted down casually from Milton's reading. There are many points of interest in both types of entry. First, we see that, though Milton never dropped the notion of an epic and still favoured a patriotic heroic subject, he was at this moment more concerned with a play. Second, the detailed plans for *Paradise Lost*, the favourite subject among those seriously expounded, show in the list of characters decided affinities with the medieval drama. Personifications like Conscience, Justice, Mercy, Faith appear in all the drafts. It looks as if Milton's hankering after the greater abstraction of medieval forms had been active underground all the time he was meditating the heroic poem and, when the urgency of the latter form slackened, had at once taken the opportunity to make itself felt. Next, the sources from which all the plots are taken are either the Bible or early English and Scottish history. Finally, there is a queer entry. Among the many notes of subjects for plays occurs a single suggestion for an epic:

> A heroical poem may be founded somewhere in Alfred's reign, especially at his issuing out of Edelingsey on the Danes; whose actions are well like those of Ulysses.

A passage from Milton's *History of Britain* gives his proposed subject in some detail:

> Meanwhile the king about Easter, not despairing of his affairs, built a fortress at a place called Athelney [= Edelingsey] in Somersetshire, therein valiantly defending himself and his followers, frequently sallying forth. The seventh week after he rode out to a place called Ecbrytstone in the east part of Selwood: thither resorted to him with much gratulation the Somerset and Wiltshire men, with many out of Hampshire, some of whom a little before had fled their country; with these marching to Ethandune, now Edindon in Wiltshire, he gave battle to the whole Danish power and put them to flight. Malmsbury writes that in this time of his recess, to go a spy into the Danish camp, he took upon him with one servant the habit of a fiddler; by this means, gaining access to the king's table and sometimes to his bed-chamber, got knowledge of their secrets, their careless encamping, and thereby this opportunity of assailing

them on a sudden. The Danes, by this misfortune broken, gave him more hostages, and renewed their oaths to depart out of the kingdom. Their king Gytro or Gothrun offered willingly to receive baptism and accordingly came with thirty of his friends to a place called Aldra or Aulre near to Athelney and were baptised at Wedmore; where Alfred received him out of the font and named him Athelstan. After which they abode with him twelve days and were dismissed with rich presents. Whereupon the Danes removed next year to Cirencester, thence peaceably to the East-Angles, which Alfred, as some write, had bestowed on Gothrun to hold of him; the bounds whereof may be read among the laws of Alfred.[1]

Here is proof that even if Milton still contemplated an Arthuriad, Arthur was not the only possible heroic subject. But I fancy we can go further. One interesting feature of the proposed themes in the manuscript is that they are, in the view of Milton and his contemporaries, *true*, coming from Holy Writ or well attested history. Legend, other than scriptural, has disappeared. I think it probable that Milton, now definitely under the influence of Parliamentarian thought, has abandoned the legendary and royalist Arthur for the historical and constitutional Alfred, and that more generally he has yielded to that demand for scientific truth, whose growth in the century Mr. Willey has described with such learning and charm.[2] It is interesting, too, that Milton should compare Alfred to Ulysses, recalling his early ambitions in the *Vacation Exercise* and his account of epic poetry in *Elegia Sexta*. It is possible, not only that he has now turned from Arthur as a subject, but that he is beginning to dislike the whole romantic matter of the Renaissance epic and to seek a stricter imitation of the classics.

The great autobiographical passage in *The Reason of Church Government* confirms the hesitancy visible in the two previous prose pamphlets and in the Trinity MS. I mean hesitancy as to an immediate policy. General policy is clear enough. The epic comes first and it is to be national. Milton has been considering

what king or knight, before the conquest, might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero. And as Tasso gave to a prince of Italy his choice whether he would command him to write of

[1] *Prose Works*, ed. Bohn, v. 320–1.

[2] B. Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background*, 1934. For Milton and his choice of a 'true' epic subject see pp. 219 ff.

Godfrey's expedition against the Infidels, or Belisarius against the Goths, or Charlemain against the Lombards . . . it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our own ancient stories.

That Milton's epic is still to be patriotic and contemporary is clear from the *Apology for Smectymnuus*. Here, speaking of the ruling majority of the Long Parliament, he hopes he may some day commemorate their deeds more worthily.

With this last pamphlet, written about March 1642, direct evidence for Milton's epic plans ceases till the beginnings of *Paradise Lost*. We leave Milton resolved on a patriotic poem; we find him actually writing something totally different. How did he come to change?

Miss Brinkley sees in the Roundhead hostility to British myth the reason why Milton dropped Arthur and assumed the Fall as his subject. It may be a sufficient reason for dropping Arthur, but not for dropping the orthodox heroic poem. For Milton had considered Alfred, who was peculiarly appropriate as a hero at the time of the Commonwealth. I agree with Mr. Willey that the trend of the time was strongly towards a sacred subject, for among mythologies only that of the Bible retained the kind of credence likely to support a poet in a scientific age. But there are plenty of heroic stories in the Bible; and if Milton had truly wanted to write a heroic poem he could have used the theme of Samson without difficulty. Some more fundamental reason is necessary. I see no need to change the opinion expressed in my *Milton*, namely, that Milton could not write an epic in praise of his country after he believed that his country had failed in its crisis. When he came to believe this is pretty clear. *Areopagitica* is transitional. It contains some of the patriotic enthusiasm that would have gone to his historical epic; but it also looks forward in dogma to *Paradise Lost*. Soon after, beginning with his sonnet, 'I did but prompt the age', Milton grows disillusioned with his country. The *History of Britain* contains passages bitterly censuring the Parliamentary government between the first and second Civil Wars and coldly criticizing the national character:

For Britain, to speak a truth not often spoken, as it is a land fruitful enough of men stout and courageous in war, so it is naturally not over-fertile of men able to govern justly and prudently in peace,

trusting only to their mother-wit; who consider not justly, that civility, prudence, love of the public good more than of money and vain honour, are to this soil in a manner outlandish. . . . Valiant indeed and prosperous to win a field; but to know the end and reason of winning unjudicious and unwise; in good and bad success alike unteachable. For the sun, which we want, ripens wits as well as fruits; and as wine and oil are imported to us from abroad, so must ripe understanding and many civil virtues be imported into our minds from foreign writings and examples of best ages: we shall else miscarry still and come short in the attempts of any great enterprise.[1]

How, feeling thus, could Milton possibly write a patriotic epic, 'recall the British kings and crush the Saxon bands beneath the valour of the Britons'? Milton was for years after to *act* the patriot, but the sentiments of the passage quoted are moving towards his last words on the subject. Writing to Peter Heimbach in 1666 he said:

For the virtue you call statesmanship (but which I would rather have you call loyalty to my country), after captivating me with her fair-sounding name, has, so to speak, almost left me without a country. . . . One's country is wherever it is well with one.[2]

What confirms my opinion that the passage quoted from the *History of Britain* explains why Milton abandoned the heroic poem, is that it resembles in tone the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, where Milton explicitly repudiates the traditional martial theme of the epic. Oblivious of the bellicose pronouncements of his earlier years, he now calls himself

> Not sedulous by Nature to indite
> Warrs, hitherto the onely Argument
> Heroic deem'd, chief maistrie to dissect
> With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights
> In Battels feign'd; the better fortitude
> Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom
> Unsung; or to describe Races and Games,
> Or tilting Furniture, emblazon'd Shields,
> Impreses quaint, Caparisons and Steeds;
> Bases and tinsel Trappings, gorgious Knights
> At Joust and Tourneament; then marshal'd Feast
> Serv'd up in Hall with Sewers, and Seneshals;
> The skill of Artifice or Office mean,

[1] Bohn, v. 240.

[2] Tillyard, *Milton: Private Correspondence*, p. 51.

> Nor that which justly gives Heroic name
> To Person or to Poem. Mee of these
> Nor skilld nor studious, higher Argument
> Remaines sufficient of it self to raise
> That name, unless an age too late, or cold
> Climat, or Years damp my intended wing.[1]

When a man tells unprovoked lies about himself, you may reasonably infer that his emotions are seriously involved. Milton was not unskilled or unstudious of the literary artifice of the romances. By saying that he was, he betrays the deep feelings that made him turn against them. And the cause is that they are associated in his mind with his countrymen who have come so short of his standards. In both the prose and the verse passages quoted Milton blames the cold climate of England; in both occurs the scorn for mere toughness in war without balancing gifts of mind. Bitterly disillusioned in his patriotic fervour, Milton visits the sins of his countrymen on the whole tradition of the heroic poem.

Such is the reason I assign to Milton's dropping his historical poem. Why did he write *Paradise Lost*? If there is any one fact that should have emerged from this discussion it is that Milton had many literary projects in his mind. When he abandoned one, it was inevitable that the others should come to the fore. Let me recapitulate the literary themes or types, other than the heroic, already mentioned as having been considered by Milton, and add another not actually referred to by him but which he must have known and esteemed. First, there were the themes of Du Bartas, the Creation amplified with long scientific homilies, and Jewish history treated in a manner suggesting the writers of encyclopaedic world history. Second, there was the allegorical strain inherited from the Middle Ages. Of this there were clear signs in the plans for a tragedy in the Trinity MS. With the narrative allegory of man's pilgrimage Milton must have been familiar from the first two books of *The Faerie Queene*. There is yet another form of medieval allegory that Milton must have known: the warfare for the human soul. This theme can be close to that of the soul's pilgrimage, the difference being that of keeping or breaking the unity of place. Milton's chief authority for the Holy War would have been

[1] *Paradise Lost*, ix. 27–45.

Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island*. He does not mention the Fletchers, but there is sufficient evidence and an overwhelming *a priori* probability that he was very familiar with them. *The Purple Island* spends ten books on an elaborate allegory of the body and mind of man, and the last two on the warfare waged between the virtues and the vices for possession of them. The battle follows the scheme of the pilgrimage of man as narrated in the first book of *The Faerie Queene*. At the beginning the Intellect, governor of man, is able to resist the onslaught of evil by the forces at his disposal. But when Satan brings up all his powers, he is threatened with destruction. He is only saved by the intervention of Christ.

We shall never know by what reasoning, conscious or unconscious, Milton decided on the Fall as the subject of his epic. But we do know that he was able, in using that subject, to bring in all the themes or types mentioned above. He describes the Creation and includes the whole scope of world history. In Adam and Eve he could present Everyman and Everywoman, free from all suspicion of a now odious nationalism. And he can present them fought over by Satan and Christ in the manner of Phineas Fletcher, and, at the end of the poem, setting out on their earthly quest for a mental paradise, in the manner of Spenser. Finally, he can now include what he had discarded. Having broken so completely from the heroic poem of the Renaissance in his main theme, he is free to include heroic matter in subordination. It is Satan who embodies some of the heroic qualities and who, in his voyagings, satisfies Milton's repeated allusions to the *Odyssey* of Homer. Thus it is that in the end Milton succeeded in uniting both his own multifarious projects and most of the epical strains, medieval and Renaissance alike, that were alive in his own generation.

In one respect he went against his age. Near the time when *Paradise Lost* was forming in Milton's mind, two heroic poems were published, to which he was bound to pay attention, Davenant's *Gondibert* in 1651 and Cowley's *Davideis* in 1656. Though Milton probably agreed with almost the whole of the critical matter given in Davenant's admirable preface, he had no need to worry about the rhymed quatrains of *Gondibert* itself. He could see they were not destined to be the heroic measure of the future. But the couplets of the *Davideis* must have affected

him otherwise. Here was a poem, the first original poem in English to affect the growingly fashionable neo-classic form in all its strictness and using the couplet in a new and vital way. Milton cannot have escaped the conviction that the couplet was the destined metre for the orthodox epic. I have no doubt that far from being serenely indifferent he was perturbed. Quite rightly he stuck to his own convictions, but I am certain he disliked going against the best contemporary practice. And both his perturbation and his dislike show themselves in the acrid tone of his note on the verse prefixed to *Paradise Lost.* Thus it was that even when he differed from his age, he was of it, in that he allowed full consideration to that very thing from which he was constrained to differ. *Paradise Lost* is remote from the *Lines at a Vacation Exercise*; yet both poems are alike in that they show not only the unique Milton but the Milton who lived and moved and had his being in the seventeenth century.

A NOTE ON TWO ODES OF COWLEY

By T. S. ELIOT

THE meaning of the term 'metaphysical poetry' is stretched to its utmost to include Cowley; and in considering Cowley as a metaphysical poet, our interest in that subject is stretched to its utmost too. It is quite right that specimens by Cowley should be included in a volume of selections from the metaphysical poets; but if we were making a selection from Cowley we might be justified in omitting all of those poems which show direct indebtedness to Donne. Cowley's relation to Donne, in *The Mistress* (e.g. *My Diet*), is that of an imitator; unlike Cleveland or Benlowes, he has no grain of originality, however perverse, to provide an interesting derivative. The poems included in Sir Herbert Grierson's anthology exhibit Cowley at his mild best and most readable; and apart from these, he is perhaps best remembered by the few lines which provided Dryden with a magnificent parody in *MacFlecknoe*. But in Cowley's poetry there is another interest, which belongs rather to the history of thought and sensibility than to the pleasures of art.

Cowley is, I think, to be appreciated as an early Augustan as well as a late metaphysical. It has fallen to many small poets to be late followers of a distinguished school, and to be the authors of a few verses meriting a place in anthologies; and it has fallen to some to be interesting precursors. It cannot have fallen to many to occupy both positions, and in such a way as to provide the literary expression of a state of mind different from either. Cowley's moderate talent placed him in this unusual position; with a more original, or a more adaptable fancy, he might have been more completely assimilated to an earlier or a later generation. He is neither Caroline nor Restoration: his state of mind would appear rather to be that of the Exile. In our historical reading of poetry we are apt to skip from type to type; we are influenced, because of natural inertia, by the classifications of the history books. We can place ourselves in a position to accept Donne and his immediate followers; or we can pass to the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.

Cowley is at a disadvantage compared with either those who preceded or those who followed him. I do not make pretensions for him by the standards of his greater precursors. But I think that there is a good case to be made out for him in a form in which he was preceded by Ben Jonson, and was followed by Dryden and by Collins and Gray, the so-called Pindaric ode.

Whether the Pindaric ode is in itself a form of verse unsuited to the English language is an idle speculation, because everything is impossible until some one has done it. We can only say that this is a form which no one has yet practised successfully in English. To have made something of it would have strained the powers of a Milton. No one with less mastery could succeed with it, and only poets of less mastery have attempted it. But of those who did attempt it, I claim that it was Cowley who practised it most successfully. To have practised an alien and unassimilated form of verse better than any one else may seem a negligible distinction; yet to assert that Cowley's odes are more interesting than those of Dryden, and much better than those of Gray and Collins, gives that distinction greater interest.

My familiarity with the Greek language has never been adequate to the appreciation of Pindar's odes in the original; and in translation they are very dull reading. I am therefore not in a position to affirm that those who profess to enjoy these odes are in reality mistaking their enjoyment of their own proficiency in Greek verse for enjoyment of poetry. But of English imitations, one may say that only a poet to whom sublimity came naturally, such as Milton, is qualified for such a task; and that to aim at sublimity and fail is one of the worst sins that a poet can commit. The odes of Dryden surprise and excite, and sustain a kind of interest to the end by the brilliance of *tours de force*; but content is sacrificed to magniloquence, and the music is harsh and metallic. The most admired odes of Gray, *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poesy*, have not even this virtue to recommend them; their laboured progress is very different from the powerful easy movement of Dryden. The wit of Dryden is replaced by romantic imprecision, and the language deteriorates, as for example in the use of the words 'ruin' and 'confusion' at the beginning of *The Bard*.

I do not pretend, however, that the odes of Cowley are *better* than those of Dryden, but only that in the ode we get Cowley at his best, and Dryden at his worst; and that it is more satisfactory to watch a small man making a good job than a great man wasting his talent. Cowley, in the best of his odes, such as the ode *To Mr. Hobbes*, the ode *Of Wit*, and the ode *Upon Dr. Harvey*, had something to say, was setting down something about his own age that was worth recording. There is no straining, as with Gray, after a false sublime; and a quality of wit, carried over from the earlier period, gives these odes an intellectual value absent from later productions in the same form. Cowley wrote, in these odes, of matters of intellectual importance.

While Cowley as a poet is derivative from the metaphysicals, as a mind he has very little in common with them. His use of the language is still Caroline: his mind is of the Restoration. He had considerable intellectual curiosity; but, in comparison with Donne, this curiosity is reduced and dissipated. Cowley knew Hobbes; he probably met men of science in Paris; and the science which he studied with the most attention was botany. He loved gardening. He was enthusiastic: he liked to formulate schemes for founding institutions and promoting scientific research. He belonged to a new world; a world which the metaphysicals could have made little of, a world which has lasted to our time; a world in which men lived in the expectation of perpetual, happy, and marvellous surprises of discovery and invention, surprises which were to have brought about a newer and happier world. The world of Cowley, indeed, is partly the world of Mr. H. G. Wells. When, therefore, he says in the ode *To Mr. Hobbes*:

> Long did the mighty Stagirite retain
> The universal intellectual reign. . . .
> But as in time each great imperial race
> Degenerates, and gives some new one place:
> So did this noble empire waste,
> Sunk by degrees from glories past,
> And in the schoolmen's hands it perisht quite at last. . . .

he is speaking, and speaking well, for the spirit of his time.

When, therefore, we admit that Cowley is inferior to his predecessors of the school of Donne, we cannot be contented to

explain his inferiority simply by saying that he happened to be less of a poet. Nor is it sufficient to gibe, as did Johnson, at the apparent tepidity of Cowley's love affairs. The transference of attention from theology to science, or to sciences—the beginning of that slow disease which was to separate and then confuse thought and feeling—was a character of Cowley's time from which he could not escape. It is because he is so representative a man of his time—as a poet, the victim of his time—that he is interesting. We can say, I think, that belief is not a simple act of the mind, of such a kind that to 'believe' in the world of the schoolmen, and to 'believe' in a mechanistic universe, are as acts of believing identical. We might even suggest that 'believing' changes from age to age, although no age will possess the terms in which to define the difference between its believing and that of any previous age. In the age of Cowley the traditional form of belief was broken, and of this breach his ode *To Mr. Hobbes* is a monument. The romantic form of belief, belief in one's individual feelings, or in collective feeling, had not yet been evolved. There was, in Cowley's world, no object of belief capable of eliciting from him a response of the highest poetic intensity. There is therefore an *adequacy* in the ode to Hobbes, absent from *The Mistress*, which makes it satisfying.

Cowley's importance as a man who had some things to say about his own time, and who said them better than any one else, can be illustrated in a different way from his ode *Of Wit*. This ode is of course not Pindaric, and in form is much closer to Donne. In this ode Cowley gives an account of wit as it was just before Dryden. To appreciate the definition of Cowley we need to compare it with the attempts made later by Dryden and by Johnson; from which it should appear that wit meant something a little different to each of these three men. In the *Life of Cowley* Johnson observes:

> If, by a more noble and adequate conception, that be considered as wit, which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just; if it be that which he that never found it, wonders how he missed; to wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen. Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that

he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.

It will be observed, I think, that for Johnson wit is still something serious, and not associated with 'humour'; but that wit for him appears to be less a spirit animating the whole of a serious composition, than the occasional dignifying and embellishment of it. In the loosest of Donne's compositions there is a kind of continuity in change, and we can perceive an effect of wit throughout the whole which is not merely the sum of the wit of the parts. In *The Vanity of Human Wishes* there is neatness and decorum, but these qualities do not constitute order. In that poem there are plenty of intellectual variations on a main theme; but the effect is on the whole monotonous. We do not find the exceptional power of creating a unity of feeling out of the most disparate elements.

With Dryden we find a larger conception of wit than Johnson's. He says:

> The composition of all poems is, or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the poet, or *Wit writing* (if you will give me leave to use a school distinction) is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory, till it springs the quarry it hunted after; or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or ideas of those things which it deigns to represent. . . . The first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding, of that thought, as the judgement represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression.

It would appear that wit has for Dryden a greater extension than for Johnson; but even Dryden's meaning is a contraction from what the word meant for Cowley. Even Cowley defines wit in contrast to what we should call cheapness; but it is probable that he is protecting wit against those who would mistake cheapness for wit, rather than against any who might identify wit and cheapness.

Tell me, O tell, what kind of thing is Wit,
  Thou who master art of it.
For the first matter loves variety less;
Less women love 't, either in love or dress.
  A thousand different shapes it bears,
  Comely in thousand shapes appears.
Yonder we saw it plain; and here 'tis now,
Like spirits in a place, we know not how.
. . . . . .

'Tis not to force some lifeless verses meet
  With their five gouty feet.
All ev'ry where, like mans, must be the soul,
And reason the inferior parts control. . . .

Yet 'tis not to adorn, and gild each part;
  That shows more cost, than art.
Jewels at nose and lips but ill appear;
Rather than all things wit, let none be there. . . .

'Tis not such lines as almost crack the stage
  When Bajazet begins to rage. . . .

In a true piece of Wit all things must be,
  Yet all things there agree.
As in the ark, join'd without force or strife,
All creatures dwelt; all creatures that had life.
  Or as the primitive forms of all
  (If we compare great things with small)
Which without discord or confusion lie,
In that strange mirror of the deity.

This is not only good poetry, Cowley at his best, but it is better criticism of Donne than either Dryden or Johnson has made, while as a poem it was probably more congenial to either Dryden or Johnson than anything of Donne's.

M. Jean Loiseau, in his exhaustive work on Cowley, observes that the imagination of Cowley

n'est pas inspirée par un enthousiasme visionnaire, mais elle est alimentée par ce que le XVIIe siècle appelait l'esprit, 'wit', c'est-à-dire la faculté d'analyse qui découvre les rapports cachés des choses.

While I am ready to admit that Cowley himself never rises to a 'visionary enthusiasm' (by which I take M. Loiseau to mean a kind of hallucinatory intensity), I question whether Cowley, who may also have thought his own odes, as he thought

Pindar's, more tumultuous than they are, means by wit a mere analytical faculty—even if it be conceded that a faculty for discovering the hidden relations of things is merely 'analytical'. Cowley seems to me to mean something much more profound, something which can only be observed at its best in poets of the first rank, though not in all of them.

To find out what a critic of a long-past age meant by a term, we have not only to examine carefully the literal contexts of that term in his statements, but also, as far as we can, the unspoken context. We have to try to discover, not only what that critic's mental furniture was, not only what authors he had read and admired, but the way in which he admired them. And we have to make the difficult and never wholly successful effort of erasing from our minds the ways in which they have been modified, in what they expect poetry to be, by everything that has been written *since* that critic wrote. And what we get, so far as we get it, will be something that we cannot adequately express in words. We cannot assume, in attempting to fix the earlier meaning of a word which has changed its meaning, that the words in which we define it will not have changed their meaning too. The *N.E.D.* mentions the word 'wit' as having acquired the 'reference to the utterance of brilliant or sparkling things in an amusing way'. Of course the term 'amuse' has changed its meaning too; and what right have we to assume that that constellation of references to contexts, which is what we *mean* by 'amuse', existed for a person of our level of education and sensibility in the middle of the seventeenth century? We must conclude that we cannot arrive at a full understanding of what either Cowley or Dryden or Johnson meant by wit. We can only be fairly confident that they did not mean quite the same thing, though there is of course a relation between their various meanings, and a relation of them all to our own; and that, to the extent of the general changes taking place—for we need not assume that every word changes its meaning at a uniform rate—they did not understand each other, just as we fail to understand them.

I am therefore driven back to a kind of personal confession instead of a definition of wit. It seems to me, however, the best that I can contribute, to a volume designed to honour a scholar who has done more than any other in our time towards

removing the obstacles between ourselves and the poetry of the seventeenth century. My frequentation—unscholarly, I admit, and perhaps capricious and haphazard—of the poetry of that century has led me to feel that the word 'wit' represents far more for me than anything that I could enclose within a definition. It has come to represent for me the essence of that strange period of poetry which ends with the Martyrdom and the Exile, and is as much a part of that period's religious intensity as of its levity. The age of Donne, and of Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan seems to me the most 'civilized' age of English poetry; in consequence the age of Gray, Collins, and Johnson even, and *a fortiori* the nineteenth century, decadent. 'Wit' stands for a kind of balance and proportion of intellectual and emotional values, in which the poetry of the nineteenth century is lamentably deficient. Yet what I mean by wit is related to other meanings of the word, and even to that which connotes mirth—though there especially, perhaps, to what is most alien to our age, a holy mirth. But I am quite aware that when I employ the terms 'civilized' and 'decadent' I am employing them in a private and arbitrary sense—until some one else employs them in the same way.

HENRY VAUGHAN AND THE THEME OF INFANCY

By L. C. MARTIN

AS the poetry of Henry Vaughan gained standing in the nineteenth century its correspondences with that of Wordsworth were frequently pointed out. Both, it was noticed, were poets of nature in the sense that they not only admired its phenomena but recommended a communing with it which would have beneficial effects of a moral or spiritual order; and both were poets of childhood, which they represent as a time when the soul, fresh from its Source and unspotted by the world, has at least some clearer spiritual perceptions than the grown man can compass or comprehend. There is the important difference that whereas Vaughan longs

> to travell back
> And tread again that ancient track,

Wordsworth would make the most of the capacities and appreciations proper to the years which bring the philosophic mind; but they agree that with the passing of childhood a paradise is lost that can never be wholly found again.

When, therefore, it was alleged that Wordsworth owned a copy of *Silex Scintillans* it could easily seem to follow that he had been influenced by its writer and even that the existence of the *Immortality Ode* had depended upon the example of *The Retreate.* The evidence was supplied by Archbishop Trench in a note in *A Household Book of English Poetry*[1]: 'A correspondent, with date July 13, 1869, has written to me, "I have a copy of the first edition of the *Silex,* incomplete and very much damp-stained, which I bought in a lot with several other books at the poet Wordsworth's sale"'; to which Grosart[2] added a statement, not founded on fact, that *Silex Scintillans* is entered in the sale-catalogue of Wordsworth's books. The volume may, of course, have been one of a group listed without titles or other description.

[1] Second edition, 1870.

[2] *Vaughan's Complete Works,* 1871, ii, p. lxiv.

It has recently been observed[1] that the grounds for associating the two poets in this way are not very satisfactory, that there is no mention of Vaughan in the whole body of Wordsworth's writings, and that even if the volume in question was in Wordsworth's library it has yet to be proved that he took any influence from it. So far as the *Immortality Ode* is concerned there were other channels through which its main doctrine could have reached him, if indeed any definite 'sources' are to be alleged. Wordsworth himself remarked that 'a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy'. And although it is quite possible that *The Retreate* and other poems by Vaughan may have consciously or unconsciously affected Wordsworth's imagination, the question of origins still deserves further investigation with a view to showing in what conditions of thought and sentiment Vaughan himself may have been moved towards the speculative attitude which *The Retreate* implies. It is indeed a question of conditions rather than of 'influences', although these are categories which cannot always be kept distinct. The theories of pre-existence which had often been held since the time of Plato are part of these conditions. We have, however, to consider, not a simple expression of the Platonic theory or myth, but a fusion of it with the widespread sentiment which attributes a special innocency and insight to children. The occurrence in literature of this fusion is relatively rare, and when it occurs it is not to be accounted for merely by showing that it has occurred before, but by considering also what factors in the writer's nature and experience might cause any antecedent or contemporary thought of a similar kind to appeal to him.

A study of Henry Vaughan's works reveals him as one who, for reasons which a modern psychologist might try to discover, was particularly interested in images of freshness, purity, and primal vigour, and his attitude to infancy may be seen as one more instance of the tendency which attracted him to the primrose and the lily, to whiteness among the colours, and to spring and the dawn among times and seasons. Or it may be regarded

[1] By Miss Helen N. McMaster in an article on 'Vaughan and Wordsworth', *Review of English Studies*, July 1935.

as the transference to the individual plane of thoughts concerning the childhood of the race and the degeneration of 'civilized' man from a Golden Age typified otherwise in Vaughan's poetry by the original sinlessness of Adam, by the artless fidelities of the Jewish patriarchs, or by the uncorrupted condition of the early Christian community.

In what degree his numerous reflections of this kind were brought about or intensified in him by the political events of the mid-century and by personal troubles partly connected with those events it would be hard to estimate; but from his references it is clear that the Civil War and especially the harsh measures adopted by the Puritan revolutionaries did much to induce in him a state of depression favourable, as Wordsworth was to show in circumstances partly analogous, to nostalgic exaltations of nature and childhood. 'We could not', Vaughan writes in *The Mount of Olives* (1652),

> have lived in an age of more instruction, had we been left to our own choice. We have seen such vicissitudes and examples of humane frailty, as the former world (had they happened in those ages) would have judged prodigies. We have seen Princes brought to their graves by a new way, and the highest order of humane honours trampled upon by the lowest. We have seene Judgement beginning at Gods Church, and (what hath beene never heard of, since it was redeem'd and established by his blessed Son,) we have seen his Ministers cast out of the Sanctuary,[1] & barbarous persons without *light* or *perfection*, usurping holy offices. . . . Suddenly do the high things of this world come to an end, and their delectable things passe away. . . . And surely the ruine of the most goodly peeces seems to tell, that the dissolution of the whole is not far off.

A quarter of a century had passed since George Hakewill had in 1627 first published his *Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World*, maintaining that the world had still as many potentialities for good as at any time in the past and attacking 'the weake grounds which the contrary opinion of the Worlds decay is founded vpon'. Henry Vaughan, however, was evidently still of those who in spite of Hakewill accepted the doctrine of world or universal degeneration. This doctrine and the melancholy attending it[2]

[1] As was Thomas Vaughan, Henry's twin brother.

[2] See George Williamson, 'Mutability, Decay, and Seventeenth-Century Melancholy', *Journal of English Literary History*, Sept. 1935.

had gained force from recent astronomical discoveries in the light of which the most ancient heavens could no longer seem so fresh and strong, so pure and incorruptible, as the traditions would have them seem to be. The stellar system was now, it appeared, demonstrably unexempt from processes of change and decay. Vaughan apparently never accepted this subversive astronomy; he needed the stars as an image of orderliness and willing obedience to law contrasting with the instability and frowardness of man. With his deep sense of human decadence he needed also, for his imaginative solace, the concept of human nature in earlier unspoilt phases; and could easily pass from this to the idealization of childhood. It is not a far cry from the beginning of Boethius's *Metrum 5* as translated by Vaughan in *Olor Iscanus*:

> Happy that first white age! when wee
> Lived by the Earths meere Charitie,

to the beginning of *The Retreate*:

> Happy those early dayes! when I
> Shin'd in my Angell-infancy.

'Those early days' had been spent in the impressive mountainous regions of South Wales; and after studying at Oxford and having some experience of London and the Civil War Vaughan went to live again, and to practise as a doctor, in his native place. This he did at about the age at which after the French Revolution Wordsworth went to settle in the Lake District, and with a mind similarly disillusioned regarding the ways of sophisticated man. In each case the poet's 'retreat' to childhood appears to be bound up with his return, in fact and in imagination, to the nature by which his childhood had been surrounded.

These are circumstances which may well have affected the poet's attitude towards the theme of infancy, but they do not explain his development of it, the terms and images which he employs; in particular they do not explain the doctrine hinted in *The Retreate*, of a sinless pre-existent state, which the child in some sort remembers and in some degree inherits. It may be said that it was an easy step for the poet thus to rationalize his sentiment, but the answer to this might be that Wordsworth has

made it easy for us to think so. In point of fact it was a step that apparently had not been taken before by an English poet. Correspondences, however, may be found for the doctrine, not only in the literature of past ages but in that of Vaughan's own time; and since they appear in works of which some at least were readily accessible and likely to be attractive to him on general grounds, it is of some moment to take account of them as aids to the recognition of the background, the intellectual atmosphere, in which his poetry took its shape.

The inquiry leads into the by-ways rather than the main tracks of speculative literature. Vaughan's attitude in *The Retreate* may seem to be related to the Platonic ἀνάμνησις and so in some degree it is, but the relationship is not very close; indeed Vaughan, who respects the child's emotional and quasi-sensuous intuitions, who had *felt*

> through all this fleshly dress
> Bright shootes of everlastingnesse,

contradicts the Platonic teaching that ἀνάμνησις is the hard-won result of processes, ratiocinative in essence, whose higher functions are possible only to an adult intelligence; and Vaughan's conception of the grown man's descent from a childhood more closely in touch with divine things does not merely repeat the notion of the soul's descent into its fleshly tenement. What it adds to that notion is something which Hellenic thought, untouched by alien speculation, was perhaps not very likely to add or to encourage.

There is, however, one striking anticipation in the Neo-Platonic writings attributed to 'Hermes Trismegistus', still in seventeenth-century England a name for some to conjure by; it occurs in Libellus X of the *Hermetica*, where the sage adjures his disciple thus:

> Look at the soul of a child, my son, a soul that has not yet come to accept its separation from its source; for its body is still small, and has not yet grown to its full bulk. How beautiful throughout is such a soul as that! It is not yet fouled by the bodily passions; it is still hardly detached from the soul of the Kosmos. But when the body has increased in bulk, and has drawn the soul down into its material mass, it generates oblivion; and so the soul separates itself

from the Beautiful and Good, and no longer partakes of that; and through this oblivion the soul becomes evil.[1]

Mr. Walter Scott, the recent editor of *Hermetica*, whose translation is here adopted, holds that Libellus X is entirely Hellenistic in origin; in a note on this passage, however, he quotes from Abelson's *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* the remark that 'The Rabbins emphasize untiringly the spotless purity of the new-born babe'.[2] Here again it seems necessary to qualify, for Rabbinical teaching is not consistent in this respect. According to Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, 'the general notion seems to be the one accepted by R. Judah, which is that the Evil Yezer accompanies man from his earliest childhood to his old age, by reason of which he enjoys a priority of not less than thirteen years over the Good Yezer, who only makes his appearance at the age of puberty'.[3] It nevertheless appears to be true that the innocence of earliest childhood was a Jewish doctrine enjoying no little respect; and this is a point of some significance in view of the greatly increased vogue of Hebrew studies in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the Talmud, Joma, 22*b*, reference is made to 'a child aged one year who has not tasted sin'; Berachoth P., 4*d*, on Eccles. iii. 2, has 'Happy the man whose hour of death is like the hour of his birth; as at his birth he is free of sin, so at his death may he be free of sin'; and Shabbath, 152*b*, comments on Eccles. xii. 7 ('the spirit shall return unto God who gave it'): 'Give it back to Him as He gave it to you, in a condition of purity.'[4]

There are, moreover, other places in which the childish state is connected with a still more excellent pre-natal condition. Schechter[5] refers to legends based upon the Talmud tending to the view of the newly born child 'as a higher being, which, but a few seconds before, had been conversing with angels and saints, and had now condescended into our profane world to make two ordinary mortals happy'. Thus according to Niddah, 30*b*,[6] 'it is said that before the birth of man he is shown and taught all the things which he will experience in life; but, as soon as he enters the world, all is forgotten by him'. The

[1] Cited by Q. Iredale, *Thomas Traherne*, 1935, p. 48.
[2] Op. cit., p. 281.
[3] Op. cit., p. 254.
[4] These passages are cited by A. Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud*, p. 102.
[5] *Studies in Judaism*, First Series, p. 347.
[6] See Gollancz, *Paedagogics of the Talmud*, p. 38.

Midrash Tanchuma gives an expanded account of the same myth:

> While the child is still in its mother's womb . . . a light illumines round about its head, whereby it looks and sees from one end of the world to the other. . . . During this interval, too, it gains an insight into all the knowledge that is available, all the rules of life whereby, if a man observe them, he will live,—the veritable secrets of Almighty Wisdom. Once, however, arrived in the world of phenomena, an angel comes forward, and closes its mouth; the knowledge it has acquired is all but forgotten. . . . Yet, on the strength of these dim recollections, the new-born is adjured thus: 'Be thou righteous, be not wicked.'. . . Understand that the Almighty is pure, His messengers are pure; and the soul which He has placed within thee is pure. If thou preservest thy soul in purity, well and good; but if not, I will take it from thee.[1]

It may appear strange that the concept of a Golden Age in the life of the individual, before or after birth, should not have attracted the poets who preceded Vaughan more often than it appears to have done. It represents certainly a somewhat precarious idealization of the childish state, but it is neither unintelligible nor baseless, in spite of the rude refutations which children themselves can so readily seem to supply. There are traces of it in Roman culture and literature,[2] and Christian poets in particular might have been expected to make much of the symbolism in which the child becomes a type of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of which Luther makes some interesting applications.[3] It may be supposed that what chiefly stood in the way was the doctrine of original sin. Christians who harboured ideas resembling the Jewish notions alluded to above would risk the charge that they were straying from the paths of orthodox belief in the direction of the Pelagian heresy. But Pelagianism was one of the many heretical tendencies, new and old, which enliven the history of religious thought in the seventeenth century. It was an essential part of 'Anabaptist' teaching that children who die unbaptized would nevertheless be saved, and a similar heterodoxy was recommended by Jeremy

[1] See Gollancz, *Paedagogics of the Talmud*, pp. 93–4.

[2] See W. Warde Fowler, 'On the toga praetexta of Roman children', *Classical Review*, Oct. 1896, p. 317. I am indebted to Professor J. F. Mountford for this reference.

[3] Mr. John Purves kindly refers me also to Dante, *Paradiso*, xxvii, ll. 127–9.

Taylor in his *Unum Necessarium* (1655), where the doctrine of original sin loses some of its harshness and is interpreted in its bearings upon childhood in a way that Henry Vaughan was likely to find agreeable:

> But it is hard upon such mean accounts to reckon all children to be born enemies of God . . . full of sin and vile corruption, when the Holy Scriptures propound children as imitable for their pretty innocence and sweetness, and declare them rather heirs of heaven than hell. 'In malice be children': and, 'unless we become like to children, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven'; and 'their angels behold the face of their Father which is in heaven'. . . . These are better words than are usually given them; and signify, that they are beloved of God, not hated, designed for heaven, and born to it, though brought thither by Christ, and by the Spirit of Christ, not born for hell: that was 'prepared for the devil and his angels', not for innocent babes. This does not call them naturally wicked, but rather naturally innocent, and is a better account than is commonly given them by imputation of Adam's sin.[1]

It is indeed a better account than was commonly given them. Milton is nearer to orthodoxy when he writes in *Areopagitica*:

> Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary. That vertue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evill, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank vertue, not a pure.

There are, however, other signs that the 'climate of thought' in the seventeenth century was becoming favourable to the inspiration of *The Retreate* and the poems of similar drift in *Silex Scintillans* and *Thalia Rediviva*. Probably Henry Vaughan was not himself aware of all the precedents which the literature of his time had furnished; but the sort of imaginative fuel which lay to his hand and which in those poems he kindled into life is represented in any allusions and adherences to the Platonic theory of pre-existence, any contrastings of childish innocence with adult depravity, and, above all, any suggestions that the youthful superiority is connected with a pre-existent state.

Henry More's poem, *The Prae-existency of the Soul* (1647), no doubt extended the currency of the Plotinian doctrine which it

[1] Ch. IV, sect. 51.

develops but is not of first importance in the present connexion. The soul descends to its embodiment and is

> A spark or ray of the Divinity
> Clouded in earthly fogs, yclad in clay,
> A precious drop sunk from Aeternitie,

but for aught that More says the fogs are as dense in childhood as at any later stage of life.

Nearly twenty years before this John Earle in his 'character' of a child in *Microcosmographie* (1628) had made much of the contrast between the child and the grown man, without, however, committing himself to a theory of pre-existency:

> A *Child* is a Man in a small letter, yet the best Copie of *Adam* before he tasted of *Eue*, or the Apple; and hee is happy whose small practice in the World can only write his Character. Hee is natures fresh picture newly drawne in Oyle, which time and much handling dimmes and defaces. . . . His father hath writ him as his owne little story, wherein he reades those dayes of his life that he cannot remember; and sighes to see what innocence he has out-liu'd. The elder he growes, he is a stayre lower from God; and like his first father, much worse in his breeches. He is the Christians example, and the old man's relapse: The one imitates his purenesse, and the other falls into his simplicitie. . . .

Earlier still Bacon, in his essay *Of Youth and Age*, had quoted Jewish authority for the view that youth has stronger powers of spiritual insight depending upon a closer walk with God:

> A certain rabbin, upon the text, *Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams*, inferreth that young men are admitted nearer to God than old, because vision is a clearer revelation than a dream; and certainly, the more a man drinketh of the world the more it intoxicateth.

Owen Felltham's *Resolves* (*c.* 1623) have the special importance that they were well known to Henry Vaughan, who often quoted from them although never with acknowledgement. Vaughan derived from Felltham one of the most striking phrases in *The Retreate*, 'Bright shootes of everlastingnesse', Felltham having written of the soul that 'The *Conscience*, the *Caracter* of a *God* stampt in it, and the apprehension of *Eternitie*, doe all proue it a shoot of everlastingnesse'.[1] Vaughan may well also have

[1] Edition of 1631, p. 197.

dwelt upon the following passages, the first of which testifies to the prevalence of Neo-Platonic theory:

'Tis the *bodies contagion*, which makes the *Soule* leprous. In the opinion that we all hold, at the first infusing 'tis *spotlesse* and *immaculate*.[1]

And

How blacke a *heart* is that, which can giue a *stabbe*, for the *innocent smiles* of an *Infant*? Surely *Innocence* is of that purity, that it hath more of the *God* in it, than any other *qualitie*; it intimates a freedom from *generall Vice*.[2]

The intellectual relations between Henry Vaughan and his twin brother Thomas,[3] minister and 'chymist', were closer still. Their writings show that they explored some of the same imaginative fields, although Thomas was less controlled in his thought and more obscure in his utterance. In the turbid stream of his speculations many currents met, themselves already of diverse origins, Neo-Platonic and Jewish, Hermetic and Kabalistic, western theosophy and oriental magic. But he clearly belonged to the class of mystical investigator represented before him by Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa, the type which is drawn to the study of 'Nature', *naturans* and *naturata*, its essence and its processes, with a view to the mastery of its physical secrets but ultimately to establishing contact with a super-sensible Reality and acquiring some of its spiritual power, to an alchemy of the soul rather than of metals. 'Nature', moreover, is to be studied at first hand, without the contaminating influence of bookish theory, and in this respect Thomas Vaughan shares the attitude of those mystics who favour the negative way, suspecting calculation and relying more exclusively upon perceptions and intimations of a more intuitive order. How in this frame of mind bookish ignorance

[1] Ed. cit., p. 65. This perhaps suggested some of the imagery in Vaughan's *St. Mary Magdalen*, ll. 68 ff. The address is to the 'self-boasting Pharisee':

Go Leper, go; wash till thy flesh
Comes like a childes, spotless and fresh;
He is still leprous, that still paints:
Who Saint themselves, they are no *Saints*.

[2] Ed. cit., p. 206.

[3] What is said here on this subject was substantially written before I had seen the article in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, Dec. 1936, by Mr. Ralph M. Wardle: 'Thomas Vaughan's Influence upon the Poetry of Henry Vaughan.'

and learned insensibility can be contrasted with the instinctive wisdom or insight not only of humble men but of untutored children may be illustrated from a passage in Valentine Weigel's treatise *Of the Life of Christ* (translated 1648):

Hence the way to Faith is close shut up to wicked proud men, although they read the Bible in many Tongues. And on the contrary, the way to Faith and Christ, stands open for all hungry and humble hearts, which cannot so much as reade one letter, as all your Infants which hear and learne only of God; for he that hath within him the inward School-master, looseth nothing of his Salvation, although all Preachers should be dead, and all Bookes burned.[1]

And Thomas Vaughan, observing in his *Euphrates, or the Waters of the East* (1655) how even in his early youth he had been Nature's pupil, proceeds in a still more Wordsworthian vein:

This *Consideration* of my self, when I was a Child, hath made me since examine Children, namely, what thoughts they had of these *Elements*, we see about us, and I found thus much by them, that *Nature* in her simplicity, is much more wise, than some men are with their acquired parts, and *Sophistrie*; . . . A Child I suppose, *in puris Naturalibus*, Before education alters, and ferments him, is a Subject hath not been much consider'd, for men respect him not, till he is companie for them, and then indeed they spoile him. Notwithstanding I should think, by what I have read, that the naturall disposition of Children, before it is *Corrupted* with *Customes* and *Manners*, is one of those things, about which the *Ancient Philosophers* have busied themselves even to some *curiosity*.[2]

Thomas Vaughan refers in one place[3] to 'Jacob Behmen *his most excellent and profound* Discourse of the Three Principles', and it is very likely that his indebtedness to the mystic of Görlitz went farther than this single reference would suggest. Boehme, whose works were much translated into English during the fifth and sixth decades of the seventeenth century, is another who recommends seekers after divine truth to cultivate the childlike spirit:

Our whole Religion is but a child-like worke; namely, that we wholly forsake and disclaime our owne knowing, willing, running, disputing . . . and persevere in the way which bringeth us againe to our owne native Countrey.[4]

Loving Sir, it is a simple *childlike way* that leadeth to the highest wisedome, the World knowes it *not*.[5]

[1] Op. cit., pp. 111–12. [2] Op. cit., pp. 20–1. [3] *Coelum Terrae*, p. 110.
[4] *Epistles*, translated 1649, p. 12. [5] Ibid., p. 200.

Moreover, Boehme in his *XL Questions* (translated 1647) introduces a doctrine of reminiscency in connexion with the theme of childish innocence:

> Little Children are our Schoolmasters[1] till evill stirre in them, and so they embrace the *Turba Magna*, but they bring their sport from the Mothers wombe, which [sc. the sport] is a Remnant of Paradise: but all the rest is gone till we receive it againe.[2]

When we receive it again 'we shall lead a life like children, who rejoyce and are very merry in their Sports'.[3] And if Henry Vaughan had needed any authority for the phrase 'Angell-infancy' he could have found it in Boehme's *Aurora* (translated 1656), where the question 'To whom now shall I liken the Angels?' is answered:

> I will liken them to *little* children, which walk in the fields in *May*, among the *flowers*, and pluck them, and make curious Garlands, and Poseys, carrying them in their hands rejoycing. . . .[4]

During the century which separates Vaughan and Traherne from William Blake English poets showed little interest in the theories concerning childhood which attracted these predecessors. Even Blake, who recognized the visionary powers of children, attaches to those powers no definite lore of pre-existency and reminiscence. Mr. Garrod has argued that although 'the ultimate source of the doctrine of reminiscence is, of course, Plato and the Neo-Platonists', the immediate source upon which Wordsworth drew in the *Immortality Ode* was 'not Plato, but Coleridge'. It then becomes tempting to ask what near or remote authority, if any, Coleridge himself may have found for a doctrine which, in Wordsworth's presentation of it, is not very much like Plato's.

> Oft o'er my brain does that strong fancy roll
> Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)
> Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
> Mixed with such feelings, as perplex the soul
> Self-questioned in her sleep; and some have said
> We lived, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore.

[1] Cf. *The Threefold Life of Man* (translated 1650), p. 191: 'Children are our Schoolmasters (in all our witt and cunning wee are but fooles to them)'. Quoted by R. M. Wardle, op. cit. Cf. also Thomas Vaughan, *Coelum Terrae*, pp. 91–2.

[2] Op. cit., p. 130.

[3] Op. cit., p. 129.

[4] Op. cit., p. 239. Cited by Elizabeth Holmes, *Henry Vaughan and the Hermetic Philosophy*, p. 55.

Thus Coleridge began the sonnet written in 1796 on hearing of the birth of his son, Hartley; and in connexion with it he referred to Plato and to Fénelon. 'Almost all the followers of Fénelon', he wrote to Poole, 'believe that men are degraded intelligences, who had all once lived together in a paradisiacal or perhaps heavenly state.' It will be noticed that although there may be significance in the fact that the occasion for this sonnet was the birth of a child, Coleridge does not here or elsewhere claim that the reminiscent faculty is stronger in childhood than in later life. Coleridge was, however, widely versed in mystical literature. In the *Biographia* (ch. ix), besides acknowledging a great debt to Plato and his followers, he alludes with special reverence to Boehme and other Christian illuminati; and whether Wordsworth knew Vaughan's poetry or not it seems possible that the *Immortality Ode* derives in part, and chiefly through Coleridge, from the same traditions of thought and sentiment which lay behind the conception of *The Retreate*.[1]

[1] See also *Biographia Literaria*, ed. Shawcross, vol. ii, pp. 242–3.

PASCAL IN DEBATE [1]

By H. F. STEWART

'LES meilleurs comédies de Molière n'ont pas plus de sel que les premières *Provinciales*; Bossuet n'a rien de plus sublime que les dernières.' The words are Voltaire's. He had no love for Pascal; he projected a refutation of the Letters, a series of *Anti-provinciales*; but he could not refuse this homage to his genius. Nor can we. Racine was a judge of comedy if ever there was one, and his summary is this: 'Il a introduit sur la scène tantôt des Jacobins, tantôt des docteurs, et toujours des Jésuites. Combien de rôles leur fait-il jouer! Tantôt il amène un Jésuite bonhomme, tantôt un Jésuite méchant, et toujours un Jésuite ridicule.' For the 'sublime' read, re-read the great passages in which this ardent pilgrim of the Narrow Way pours forth his indignation at the lax morality of those whose teaching led their penitents down smooth and easy paths to destruction. The *Provincial Letters* are indeed immortal through their wit and their eloquence. But Attic salt is not the sole preservative against the decay that threatens human writings; nor is eloquence the only flame that can rekindle the ashes of a dead controversy. These letters are alive to-day by reason of their marvellous dialectic, their sheer force of thought.

That dialectic gathers strength as the debate proceeds. The weakness of his adversary's defence gives Pascal occasion, of which he does not fail to profit, to crush them with unanswerable logic and to inflict wounds from which the Society of Jesus has never recovered; or rather he taught them a lesson which unconsciously, against their will, they turned to good account. Pascal's logical technique reaches its climax in the last three letters, but he was already in possession of it and needed only to polish it. We find it in the *Art de persuader* of 1658; but we find it already in germ as early as 1647, when as a young man of twenty-five he was engaged in controversy with Père Noël.

[1] In writing this essay I have borrowed freely from a pamphlet by M. Paul Desjardins entitled, *Les Règles de l'honnête discussion selon Pascal*, published in the time of the 'affaire Dreyfus' and republished in 1904 in a volume, *La Méthode des classiques français: Corneille, Poussin, Pascal.*

Now in the development of Pascal's method of conducting a debate, which finds its perfect expression in Letters XVI, XVII, and XVIII, I note two preliminary stages. Let us go back to the first letter of 22 January 1656; or rather let us slip into the parlour at Port-Royal where 'ces messieurs' are assembled, an anxious company, one afternoon of December 1655, to consider what to do in the matter of Antoine Arnauld's examination by the Sorbonne on a charge of 'temerity', if not of heresy. He had openly defended Jansen, denied that the five propositions were contained in his book, the *Augustinus*, and had actually repeated the first of them by asserting that Grace had once failed a Saint, to wit, St. Peter. The case was shamefully handled in the Sorbonne and Arnauld was in grave danger of censure, degradation, and loss of his fellowship. But let Pierre Nicole, who was present at the conference of Arnauld's friends, tell the story:

> On examinait en Sorbonne la seconde lettre de M. Arnauld; et ces disputes y faisaient l'éclat que tout le monde sait. Ceux qui ne connaissaient pas quel en était le sujet, s'imaginaient qu'il s'y agissait des fondements de la foi. Un jour que Montalte [i.e. Pascal] s'entretenait à son ordinaire avec quelques amis particuliers, on parla par hasard de la peine que ces personnes avaient de ce qu'on imposait ainsi à ceux qui n'étaient pas capables de juger de ces disputes, et qui les auraient meprisées, s'ils en avaient pu juger. Tous ceux de la compagnie trouvèrent qu'il y eût à souhaiter qu'on eût pu désabuser le monde. Sur cela un d'eux dit que le meilleur moyen pour y réussir était de répandre dans le public une espèce de factum, où l'on fît voir que dans ces disputes il ne s'agissait de rien d'important et de sérieux, mais seulement d'une question de mots et d'une pure chicane qui ne roulait que sur des termes équivoques.

Pascal, at their request, undertook the task. He knew little or no theology, but he knew an equivocation when he saw it; he also knew the world and how to deal with it, which he proceeded to do with his *Letters to a Provincial*. The first two of these are an exhibition of the way to treat equivocal terms. The good scholastic term of *proxima potestas*, 'pouvoir prochain', which Dominicans and Jesuits agree to use, although they are not at one about its meaning; 'Sufficient Grace', which on investigation proves to be insufficient; 'Actual Grace', which is a mere shibboleth—how are these ambiguities to be cleared up?

Pascal knew, and had long known, at least since 1647, the date of his skirmish with the Père Noël. Noël was an amiable old gentleman, an ornament of the Society of Jesus, rector of their Collège de Clermont, a friend of Descartes, courteous and full of praise for his young opponent, fond of science, but destitute of scientific knowledge and of logic. Pascal reads him a lesson in both. Here is Noël's definition of light: 'La lumière est un mouvement luminaire de corps composé de rayons lucides, c'est-à-dire lumineux.' Pascal makes short work of this:

> Il me semble qu'il faudrait avoir premièrement défini ce que c'est que *luminaire* [he underlines] et ce que c'est que *corps lucide* ou *lumineux*; car jusque-là je ne puis entendre ce que c'est que lumière. Et comme nous n'employons jamais dans les définitions le terme du *défini*, j'aurais peine à m'accommoder à la vôtre qui dit que la *lumière* est un mouvement *luminaire* des corps lumineux.

Pascal kept this grotesque definition in mind. He quotes it *literatim* in his *Réflexions sur l'esprit géométrique* of 1658, and in the *Art de persuader*, which forms a pendant to that treatise, he provides a formal answer: 'Voilà en quoi consiste cet art de persuader qui se renferme dans ces deux principes: définir tous les noms qu'on impose; prouver tout, en substituant mentalement les définitions à la place des définis.' If he failed to induce the living Jesuit to accept this maxim, he had no difficulty with the imaginary Jesuit of the fourth letter, who says, 'Vous voulez que je substitue la définition au défini; cela ne change jamais le sens du discours; je le veux bien'. As for Father Noël, it must be confessed that Pascal's first contact with his Society was not calculated to give him a high opinion of the science or logic of its members.

The *Provinciales*, upon which we now concentrate attention, caused no small flutter among the Jesuits. Chancellor Séguier, their friend and protector, was threatened with apoplexy on reading the first letter and was bled seven times by way of safeguard. The Society itself kept quiet. Willing to defend doctrine when attacked, they were for the moment content to suffer slander in silence. So they said; but that did not prevent them from making desperate efforts to stop the flow of these anonymous, unprivileged pamphlets by means of the civil arm. All in vain. The letters followed each other in more or less

rapid succession till they had mounted up to nine by July, 1656, and still the Jesuits held their fire, apart from a few *écrits volants* and attempts at suppression. Then in August, simultaneously with the tenth, 'finding their patience and modest silence being used against them, they felt that the public must have an antidote to these infamous letters'. The antidote took the form of a *Première Réponse aux Lettres que les Jansénistes publient contre les pères de la Compagnie de Jésus, par un père de la même compagnie*, followed by a *Seconde Réponse* consisting of twenty-nine *Impostures*, together with separate replies to letters XI to XVIII as they came out. The chief author was Jacques Nouet, S.J., who thought apparently that he had to do with Arnauld himself, a former subject of his attack over the *Fréquente Communion*. To Nouet was joined anon the famous preacher Brisacier, and finally the redoutable Père Annat, keeper of the king's conscience.

Pascal meets their accusations with counter-charges and each stroke draws blood. I think of Alan Breck driving the crew of the *Covenant* before him along the deck: 'The sword in his hand flashed like quicksilver into the huddle of our fleeing enemies; and at every flash there came the scream of a man hurt.' Two years later the *Réponses* were honoured by a translation into English in which the translator tried to put them into somewhat better order than the original.[1] But whether in French or English, they are poor stuff. Pascal has little difficulty in demolishing them, and he was flushed with victory when he let the pen or the sword fall from his hands in April or May 1657.

The Jesuits in their replies commit every possible sin against logic.

I propose a 'travail de contre-parties', tabulating, in good scholastic manner, the Jesuit logic at the top, and below it the logic of Pascal.

The head and front of the Jesuit's offending is the *petitio principii* to which they have constant resort, assuming as certain what is not certain and requires proof. For example, addressing 'the Provincial' they say: 'Vous êtes hérétique, personne ne vous croira pas, tandis que nous avons du crédit auprès de tout le monde à la réserve des hérétiques et de leurs complices.' A gratuitous assumption.

[1] *An answer to the Provinciall Letters*, &c. (Paris, 1659).

'On sait de bonne part que les Jansénistes ont voulu corrompre par argent les savants docteurs de Sorbonne pour enseigner leurs erreurs dans l'école.' A gratuitous assumption accompanied by a gratuitous slander.

'Celui qui écrit les Lettres est de Port-Royal; le Port-Royal est déclaré hérétique; donc celui qui écrit les Lettres est déclaré hérétique.' Another assumption; Nouet was convinced that Arnauld, who was certainly 'de Port-Royal', was the author.

Before passing to Pascal's logic a word must be said about his stout denial that he was 'of Port-Royal', which is commonly regarded as an equivocation, if not a downright lie. The fact is that 'de Port-Royal' was almost a technical term. The Solitaries were generally said and understood to be 'of Port-Royal', having renounced the world in favour of the convent to which they attached themselves. Now Pascal, when he wrote the *Provinciales*, had by no means renounced the world; he was still an *honnête homme* in the seventeenth-century sense of the term. The Solitaries did not regard him as one of themselves, of the inner circle. Fontaine, their historian, expressly distinguishes him from 'ces messieurs'.[1] He was devoted to them and he was fighting for them, but he was no more 'of them' than, say, the Duc de Luynes, the good friend and protector of Port-Royal.

Now for his logic. He very rarely falls into the snare of a *petitio principii*. 'Prove what you assert; I prove what I assert' is his constant cry. There was, however, one occasion when he slipped, and let himself be dragged into a gratuitous assumption; and that was at the point in the fifth letter where he describes the motives by which the Society was actuated:

> Sachez [he says] que leur objet n'est pas de corrompre les mœurs: ce n'est pas leur dessein. Mais ils n'ont pas aussi pour unique but celui de les reformer. . . . Ils ont assez bonne opinion d'eux-mêmes pour croire qu'il est utile et comme nécessaire au bien de la religion que leur crédit s'étende et qu'ils gouvernent toutes les consciences.

This accusation of personal ambition is not justified. The Jesuits were ambitious, but not for themselves. Let us be more

[1] Cf. *Mémoires sur MM. de Port-Royal*, where, in describing the effect of the miracle of the Holy Thorn, Fontaine speaks first of 'tout Paris', then of Pascal, and then of 'ces messieurs'.

just to them than Pascal, who blamed them for deserting the lofty standard set by St. Ignatius; their policy in fact never varied; their motto was *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, and they tried, according to their lights, to live up to it. According to their lights: these were sometimes wrong; they let themselves be caught by the world; endeavouring to bring religion within the reach of all, they lowered it, and in Bossuet's phrase put cushions under the elbows of their penitents; but their intentions were not selfish. Pascal and the Jansenists saw only the weak side; his prejudice led him to a false conclusion. Such is the power of that queen of errors, the *petitio principii*.

Another form of begging the question is the red herring, a trick which the Jesuits constantly practised. Hampered at one point they made a rapid diversion and went off on a side-issue. In the seventeenth letter Pascal presses them to state whether or no it is true that they 'permettent de tuer pour une pomme'. A question of fact, which they answer with the cry, 'the writer of these letters is a heretic and deserves no credence', and the evidence of his heresy and untrustworthiness is an alms-box broken open in the church of St. Merri by, it is alleged, one of his friends. To which Pascal blandly replies, 'You might open all the alms-boxes in Paris without affecting my orthodoxy'. Note that this cry of heresy is the refrain, furnished by Père Annat, of all the *Première Réponse*: 'L'on pouvait ne donner autre réponse à ces mauvaises lettres que ces trois mots—les Jansénistes sont hérétiques.' But it may be said, when Pascal suddenly dropped his defence of Arnauld, and from the fourth letter onward[1] turned to pillory the moral teaching of the casuists, was he not shirking the issue, drawing a red herring across the track, creating a captious diversion? I do not think so. Having failed, for all his eloquence and cunning fence, to save his friend, he begins to look close at the ethics of those who had undone him, and as he reads the books of casuistry which contain those ethics, he finds that after all what is at stake is not the reputation of a human being, but Christian morality itself imperilled by this poisonous teaching. And he rises to defend it. The task, he feels, is laid upon him by Heaven. The force, the very violence of his attack, is explained by his conviction that God was on his side, approving. What

[1] He takes up the cause of Arnauld again in the last two letters.

induced this conviction? The miracle of the Holy Thorn on 24 March 1656 when he was in the thick of the fight, between the fifth and sixth letters. His little niece, Margot Périer, aged ten, *en pension* at Port-Royal, was suddenly relieved of a loathsome lachrymal ulcer by application of a relic, a thorn from Christ's crown. The cure, attested by medical evidence, was hailed as a miracle by Port-Royal, denounced as devilry by the Jesuits, while for Pascal it was the formal and divine sanction of his warfare. He had a new seal engraved, a crown of thorns with the motto, *scio cui credidi*. The wording is significant: hitherto he had believed, henceforth he knew; he would not sheath his blade till he had slain the dragon and vindicated the cause of truth and of God. As a good logician and man of science he refused to mix orders. 'Laissons là leurs différends', he cried at the close of his third letter, 'Ce sont des disputes de théologiens et non pas de théologie. Nous, qui ne sommes point docteurs, n'avons que faire à leurs démêlés.' And with that he quits the quarrel of the Jacobins, Jesuits, and Jansenists and concentrates attack upon the Jesuits alone, responsible for the stream of poison. This diversion, this change of subject, was perfectly legitimate.

Another sin against reason, logic, and clear thought is ambiguity[1] in the use of terms taking a word in two different senses. It is a branch of equivocation. It is so extravagant that it is easy to detect, e.g.

> Loss of liberty makes men slaves.
> I have lost the liberty of buying beer at will (under D.O.R.A.).
> Therefore I am a slave.

The conclusion is faulty because liberty in the major is not the same as liberty in the minor. Childish as this sophistry seems, the Jesuits did not hesitate to use it. Saint-Cyran, patron of Port-Royal, having said in a letter of condolence on a domestic loss, 'que le plus agréable sacrifice qu'on puisse offrir à Dieu dans ces rencontres est celui de la patience', Father

[1] I cannot resist quoting a paragraph from a recent letter, in other respects admirable, by Lord Cecil of Chelwood, in *The Times* of 16 April: 'Ambiguity in international affairs is very dangerous. . . . In domestic politics it may, possibly, be excusable to construct a formula in which men of very different opinions may agree because they interpret such a formula in very different senses. In international affairs such a procedure is indefensible.' Shade of Pascal!

Meynier, S.J., took him to task and accused him of Calvinism. Why? 'Because he does not believe in the Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the most agreeable of all to God.' This is nothing more or less than a pun, and a poor one at that. Pascal once allows himself this licence. He closes his first letter thus: 'Je vous laisse cependant dans la liberté de tenir pour le mot de *prochain*, ou non, car j'aime trop mon prochain pour le persécuter sous ce prétexte.' It is a pun and a good one, but it shocked his Port-Royal friends who cut it out of the second edition.

No, the Jesuits were not good logicians. Blinded by anger and fear, they fall into another gross inconsequence. When arguments fail them they appeal to authority, to the doctrine of probable opinions. What is this? 'Je vois bien', says the good Father of the fifth letter, 'que vous ne savez pas ce que c'est que la doctrine des opinions probables. Vous parleriez autrement si vous saviez. Ah! vraiment il faut que je vous en instruise. Vous n'aurez pas perdu votre temps d'être venu ici; sans cela vous ne pouviez bien entendre. C'est le fondement et l'A B C de toute notre morale.' Now Probabilism (i.e. the doctrine which teaches that in case of doubt whether a thing is right or wrong, whether you are free to do it or barred by a restrictive law, you may safely follow the opinion of authorities, and even of a single authority, provided it be grave, even though your conscience tells you otherwise) was not the invention of the Jesuits. It was the gift of a Dominican, Bartolomé de Medina (1528–81), but the Jesuits adopted it and practised it eagerly. It suited their object, viz. the glory of God through a great cloud of witnesses. They would lead all men by all means to worship Him. Now there has never been a lack of authorities, of grave doctors. The Jesuits had an ample choice, and made appeal to them rather than engage in the arduous task of finding proofs. Thus, in order to prove that calumny of a calumniator is not a mortal sin Father Dicastillus presents, not proofs, but a long list of other Jesuits of repute, university professors and imperial and ducal confessors, blinding the inquirer with a shower of golden dust.

Pascal will have none of it. The Jesuit's authorities do not in the least impress him. 'Est-ce que le P. Bauny et Bazile Ponce ne peuvent pas rendre leur opinion probable?' asks the Father. 'Je ne me contente pas du probable', he answers, 'je

cherche le sûr.' He knew but one way of salvation, and that a narrow one, and this multiplication of divergent and accommodating paths perplexed and angered him. And of course the substitution of authority for proof is a betrayal of logic. At the same time it must be admitted that while probabilism opens the door to soft decisions on the part of the confessor and therefore to lax morality on the part of the penitent, there are many cases in which its use is necessary and a help in forming conscience and directing conduct. Probabilism cannot harm the soul which seeks help in determining what is right or wrong in the utterance of wise teachers, hearkens to conscience in selecting guidance, and submits all decisions to the higher, the supreme, law of God. It does harm when the variety of opinion is used not to solve honest doubt but to excuse continuance in sin. It was for those who thus abused it that Pascal was fearful, and it cannot be denied that his sharp rebuke of methods which ministered to sin was necessary and beneficial.

These moral considerations have led us away from logic and want of logic, to which we must now return.

When they were short of proofs and short even of authorities the Jesuits fell back upon abuse. Controversy in the seventeenth century was not mealy-mouthed, but the defence against the Little Letters is vituperative to the point of Billingsgate. The method is, indeed, 'No case; blacken plaintiff's attorney'.

At the beginning of the twelfth letter Pascal culls a bouquet of epithets and titles, and there were more to follow: 'Impie, bouffon, ignorant, farceur, imposteur, calomniateur, fourbe, hérétique, calviniste déguisé, disciple de Du Moulin, possédé d'une légion de diables.' He might have added the ugliest of all, 'esprit lascif', which the English translator renders 'lascivious beast'. Even the Abbé Maynard, their nineteenth-century champion, allows that the first replies of the Jesuits, 'though substantially solid, were feeble in form and especially marred by invective'. Pascal, on the other hand, never offends against good taste. He behaves as a gentleman; irritable and violent by nature, he keeps himself under control. The manners and style of his opponents disgust him: 'Je vous plains, mes pères, d'avoir recours à de tels remèdes.' His replies, for all their fierceness, never break the rules of decency. True he is wroth,

his irony breaks into indignation, but it is the indignation of the man of the world whose common sense is outraged by futile sophistry, of the man of feeling who is moved by the persecution of the innocent, of the Christian who desires to preserve from stain the pure morality of the Gospel.

His attack is no doubt open to criticism at more than one point. Probabilism, as we have seen, is not the noxious weed he thought it. It is the necessary consequence of a system of obligatory and universal confession, for the confessor, perplexed by the multitude and variety of the sins he has to hear, is bound to consult opinion for the solution of cases which lie outside his personal experience. Close scrutiny of the quotations which Pascal makes from the casuists discloses a few, surprisingly few, slips. He never gives his foe the benefit of the doubt, he makes the most of every advantage, he writes as an advocate and with an advocate's bias; but there can be no question, I think, that the effect of his bitter campaign was to raise the moral tone of his time, to fortify the conscience against misuse of casuistry and set an example of honest debate. In a word, he won a great spiritual and moral victory.

He had to wait a whole generation, more than thirty years after his death, for the appearance of a foeman at all worthy of his steel. It was not till 1694 that Père Daniel, the historian, took up the glove, a glove stained with the blood of his Order. His *Entretiens de Cléandre et d'Eudoxe*, written by way of answer to Perrault's *Parallèles des anciens et des modernes* with their eulogy of the *Provinciales*, are indeed much superior to Jesuit efforts during Pascal's life-time and contain some sound remarks on the question of Probabilism, but their chief result was to set men reading Pascal and to procure a French translation of Wendrock's (i.e. Nicole's) Latin commentary! Daniel was ill-advised enough to venture on a criticism of Pascal's style and grammar. His blunderbuss missed fire. Pascal remains the uncontested master of French prose, and of the very work against which pedantry spent itself Voltaire asserts, 'Il faut rapporter à cet ouvrage l'époque de la fixation de la langue'.

What is the secret of this unassailable and triumphant style? If we discover it we shall have mastered the art of honest debate.

It is the style of a man who, with all his faults, was devoted to the cause of truth and the pursuit of truth. Not indeed of truth in and for itself, but as the expression of God's will and a means of union with Him through love. 'On se fait une idole de la vérité même; car la vérité hors de la charité n'est pas Dieu'.. Yet to refuse to love the truth is to refuse to love God. To lie, to prevaricate and equivocate is to commit a mortal sin against reason,[1] which in matters of fact, outside revelation, is as the word of God, which is truth.[2]

This love of truth brought him one day into a clash with his friends. In 1661 Port-Royal was faced with a hideous dilemma. A formulary had been put out by authority to which signature was required confessing that the propositions condemned by Rome were present in Jansen's *Augustinus*. If they signed they betrayed their teachers; if they declined to sign, they were open to excommunication. The 'Messieurs' had to find a way round. First they tried a preamble, declaring submission on the point of doctrine (*question de droit*) and respectful silence on the point of fact, the existence of the propositions in the book (*question de fait*). The preamble being forbidden, they tried a postscript, to the same effect. Pascal would have none of it. There must be no paltering with the truth. The suggested reservation was abominable in the sight of God, contemptible in the eyes of men, and of no avail with enemies bent on their undoing. So he wrote in a pamphlet (*Écrit sur la signature*). The 'Messieurs' met in his chamber, hoping to bring him to reason. In the thick of the discussion Pascal fainted and the company broke up. When he came to himself, his sister asked him what was the matter. To her he replied: 'When I saw these men give way whom I regarded as the trustees of truth and its proper champions, I was so distressed that I could not hold out.' His sister, Jacqueline the nun, had set him an example. Confronted with the choice of schism or heresy, she rejected the proposed compromise disdainfully: 'Il n'y a que la vérité qui délivre véritablement et il est sans doute qu'elle ne délivre que ceux qui la mettent en liberté en la confessant avec

[1] Cf. 'Mais voici une insigne extravagance et un gros péché mortel contre la raison' (*Lettre Prov.* xvi).

[2] Cf. 'La parole de Dieu étant infallible dans les faits mêmes, et le rapport des gens et de la raison agissant dans leur étendue étant certains aussi, il faut que ces deux vérités s'accordent' (*Lettre Prov.* xviii).

fidélité.' She had not the courage of her conviction and she signed at last; but she died of it. The brother's swoon, the sister's death are a twofold sacrifice to truth; and it is to be noted that Blaise quotes the same text as Jacqueline, John viii. 32, in proclaiming the emancipating power of truth.[1]

Of course the Jesuits too loved God, but they did not love truth to this point of heroism. When occasion required they did not hesitate to depart from truth, inviting the exclamation of the Capuchin Valeriano Magni, *Mentiris impudentissime.* This did not seriously damage their sacerdotal character; for it must be confessed that strict veracity, though a Christian, has not always been an ecclesiastical virtue. The Fathers of the fourth century show what is to us a strange indifference to exactitude in their citations and allegations, no doubt due to the rhetoric which formed the basis of their education. And the Jesuits of the seventeenth century were tarred with the same brush. We cannot really trust their word. The fact is that the world shrinks from truth which is often distasteful, and the Jesuits, endeavouring to win the world, came to terms with it, and, like it, winked at truth. They lacked the courage to face it, and courage is needed for that. Pascal did not love those who did not love and seek the truth, whether they were friends or foes. He could love a foe who loved truth and embraced it bravely, but one of his *Pensées* runs: 'Les gens manquent du cœur: on n'en ferait pas son ami'. He had the rare courage to correct the errors of fact, the slips of logic into which he chanced to fall. The postscript to the sixteenth letter shows him asking pardon. He had mistakenly attributed the Jesuit answers to their ally and associate, Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin. He apologizes, retracts, and invites his adversaries to follow his example.[2]

The incident of the formulary which I have already described gave rise to another palinode. Much of the quarrel between Jansenist and Jesuit turned on the distinction between *fait* and *droit.* Was it true, yes or no, that Jansen was author of the five condemned propositions? This was a question of fact. Supposing it proved that he was their author, was he

[1] 'Si la vérité était pour vous, elle combattrait pour vous, elle vaincrait pour vous; et quelques ennemis que vous eussiez *la vérité* vous *en délivrerait*, selon sa promesse' (*Lettre Prov.* xvi).

[2] Cf. *Lettre Prov.* xv.

wrong to have written them; *aliter* were the propositions orthodox or heretical? This was a question of right. The Jesuits declined to draw the distinction. Pascal insists upon it at length in the eighteenth letter. But the day came when the distinction he there claimed seemed to him illicit, the day when the formulary required signature condemning the propositions as the authentic utterance of Jansen. He was now convinced that the distinction between *fait* and *droit* was impossible under the circumstances, and he rejected it vehemently in his *Écrit sur la signature* which, as we saw, nearly brought him to a breach with his friends. He pours scorn upon himself and his fly-sheets. 'Un très petit nombre de personnes, qui font à toute heure de petits écrits volants, disent que le fait est de sa nature séparé du droit.' Such a confession needed great courage.

His controversy throughout is marked by bold love of truth and close reasoning. Taken apart these qualities do not suffice for the conduct of honest debate. You may love the truth, but lack the power to give effect to your love; you may reason close upon false premisses. Combine them, and you enter upon possession of a mighty instrument which falsehood and false logic cannot withstand.

CORNEILLE AND DRYDEN AS DRAMATIC CRITICS

By PIERRE LEGOUIS

'The rigid enforcement of the rules . . . was possible only because in the *Cid* and its successors Corneille had evolved a type of tragic action to which a rapid evolution is essential.'

SIR HERBERT GRIERSON, *The First Half of the Seventeenth Century*, p. 301.

'In no drama is there really so little idle declamation as in the French. . . . Every word from the beginning to the "Hélas!" at the close helps the action forward a step. And to the end the issue of the action remains uncertain.'

Ibid., p. 318.

'The third [classical] age was the age of Louis XIV, in France, and that which was inaugurated by Dryden in this country, running closely parallel to one another and yet interestingly divergent; . . . with this difference . . . that our classical writers were conscious that there had been giants in the age which preceded their own.' *The Background of English Literature and Other Essays*, p. 268.

THE relation between Corneille and Dryden as dramatic critics, their likenesses and differences, have been summed up by W. P. Ker with his usual competence and terseness. Indeed, one can now do little more than develop the points made by him in a few pages of his introduction to the *Essays* of Dryden. As, however, Corneille's critical works are now seldom read even in France, it may be no waste of time to analyse and illustrate their main characteristics at some length, in order to bring out more clearly Dryden's essential originality in this line.

Corneille's three *Discours* were first published, in the collected edition of his plays down to *Édipe*, in 1660, and so were the *Examens* of each of the twenty-five plays he had at that time given to the world. It seems that the poet had been stung by some censures of his work (and no less by the faint praise that accompanied them) in *La Pratique du théâtre*, of the Abbé d'Aubignac, which had come out in 1657. But the playwright's sensitiveness in this matter dates back to the famous quarrel occasioned by the success of *Le Cid*, to the insulting *Observations* of his former friend Scudéry, and to the pedantic and cautiously unfair *Sentiments de l'Académie*, written mostly

by Chapelain, not without interference on Richelieu's part. Therefore, when Corneille set out to compose his *Discours* and *Examens*, he had felt some rankling sores and nurtured some old grievances for twenty years. Yet his tone is remarkably free from bitterness. He speaks a good deal of himself with legitimate pride, but very little of his opponents. He never names them, and when he contradicts them, he states their opinions impersonally. The nearest approach to a taunting retort in the three *Discours* is quoted by Dryden in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*:

> 'Tis easy for speculative persons to judge severely; but if they would produce to public view ten or twelve pieces of this nature, they would perhaps give more latitude to the rules than I have done, when, by experience, they had known how much we are bound up and constrained by them, and how many beauties of the stage they banished from it.[1]

This is a very moderate, not to say a mild, rebuke to such a self-appointed legislator of the drama as the Abbé d'Aubignac, with his so-called 'practice of the stage'. Yet its place at the end of the last discourse makes it important, the more so as it repeats, with only verbal modifications, a statement made at the beginning of the first: to the effect that those who have so far written on the rules of dramatic art 'had more learning and speculation than experience of the stage; so that reading them can make us more erudite, but not give us very sure lights in order to succeed there'. Corneille, on the contrary, 'will venture something in consideration of his thirty years' work for the stage'. This, indeed, is his great innovation, and his chief superiority over his predecessors.

But this independent attitude is disguised to our modern eyes by the cloak of reverence for Aristotle. Not that Corneille is insincere when he protests his loyalty to the Stagyrite. But in this loyalty he is at one with his age and country, while in his more or less conscious departures from the sacred texts he is in advance of his age. Aristotle's authority had been shaken in physiology by Harvey at the beginning of the century, in metaphysics by Descartes in the very year when *Le Cid* was produced; but it remained undisturbed in criticism, especially

[1] *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker, vol. i, pp. 75–6.

dramatic criticism. Surely it would have been bolder of Corneille to discard that very obscure and probably mutilated treatise, the *Poetics*, altogether, and adopt the Cartesian method of going direct to reality. Or else, if he intended a commentary of Aristotle, he should have submitted to the Greek writer entirely, and given up every personal preoccupation. So at least it seems to the modern historical mind. A scholar like Professor Verrall saw nothing in all the seventeenth-century controversy about the unities but 'a specimen of the strange working of the human mind—the obstinate persistence of errors once made, and the extreme difficulty of retracing steps',—or again: 'a mere piece of confusion, arising from a false attempt to justify supposed ancient practices which, so far as they existed, had a totally different origin'.[1] And Verrall proceeds to explain what the Athenian practice really was, how Aristotle interpreted it, how the Renaissance critics and their followers down to, and including, Dryden, ran into 'extravagant nonsense'[2] because they had misunderstood authorities, without daring to rebel against them.

Such a sweeping condemnation would of course include Corneille's theoretical writings, and if we choose to look at them from Verrall's point of view, it cannot be avoided. But if I may make so bold as to say so, Verrall gave either too much or too little attention to history. If we leave it aside altogether, Corneille's misunderstanding of Aristotle becomes unimportant; the origin of the unities no longer concerns us and we are interested only in their value *sub specie aeternitatis*. Copernicus is said to have conceived his hypothesis of the movement of the earth round the sun as a mere inference from the doctrine of the Trinity; yet to-day not the most downright unitarian or atheist will question the Copernican system, at any rate not for this reason. Why not do the same with the unities? Indeed, Verrall somewhere grants that 'the general question of what should be the length of the action covered by a play, and how far a change of scene should be permitted, can of course be separated from the fictions and fallacies of Renaissance critics',[3] but we cannot make much of this concession, since he tells us elsewhere that 'no one,

[1] *Lectures on Dryden*, p. 118.
[2] Ibid., p. 130. [3] Ibid., p. 140.

by natural unprejudiced thinking could have evolved'[1] this theory of the unities. I am willing to take him at his word and rejoice that a misunderstanding has arisen without which the world would have been the poorer by one form of dramatic art. Suppose that Corneille had combined the perfect understanding of Aristotle reached by Verrall with the awe felt for the Greek philosopher in the seventeenth century. His plays would then have been accurate but lifeless copies of the Greek models from which Aristotelian theory had been constructed. Matthew Arnold found himself in a similar predicament when he answered Swinburne's *Atalanta* with his *Merope*. Suppose, on the other hand, Corneille with the afore-mentioned understanding of the *Poetics*, and only just so much reverence as that text deserves. He would then have breasted the contemporary current of criticism and learned opinion, and gone on writing plays little distinguishable, except for style, verse, and characterization, from those of Alexandre Hardy, the purveyor to the Hotel de Bourgogne in the first thirty years of the seventeenth century. In brief, there would have been no French tragedy as we understand the term. Here, as elsewhere, error has played a useful part, even a necessary part, in the development of the human mind, or at least in its regeneration from time to time. The lamp of Psyche, as Sir James Frazer would say, has lighted Corneille to his great invention.

This way of reasoning may seem paradoxical and oversubtle. Yet it is very nearly that of such a sober and scientific critic as Gustave Lanson. While the reverse opinion, that which emphasizes Corneille's slavery to Aristotle, commended itself to a sceptical dilettante like Jules Lemaître, for whom Corneille's attempts at explaining away the supposed imperfections of his plays by overreaching the shrewd Greek lawgiver are merely comic.[2] With more wit and less rhetoric, this is only a refurbishing of the romantic notion of Corneille, a lion encaged by pedants, an eagle whose wings have been clipped by boors. The truth is that Corneille managed to do and say pretty much what he wanted. He paid much attention to the taste of the playgoers and very little to the advice of the professional critics, except to resent it when it did not agree with

[1] Op. cit., p. 133.
[2] *Corneille et la poétique d'Aristote* (1888), p. 1.

his own preferences. And, to use Lanson's words, 'he perhaps invented more rules by himself than were forced upon him by others'.[1]

Yet comedy, of an esoteric kind, there undoubtedly is in Corneille's *Discours*. See, for instance, in the second how he disposes of the mysterious purgation of the passions, the still-vexed *κάθαρσις τῶν παθημάτων*, or else how he loosens the Aristotelian restriction upon the poet's freedom to alter historical events. Aristotle held that this alteration must be made in accordance with verisimilitude or necessity, *κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον*. Probably the Greek word *ἤ* is here equivalent to the Latin *vel*, and implies that verisimilitude and necessity are two names for one thing; to put it more clearly, necessity is but a stronger word for verisimilitude; *το ἀναγκαῖον* is what must needs happen, out of logical or psychological necessity, and is therefore consonant with the laws of the human mind. But Corneille, taking advantage of the lack of definition of these two words in Aristotle, 'will try to supply this want so far as he is able', and asks forgiveness in advance for possible mistakes.[2] One could not well be more humble, it seems; but Corneille at once proceeds to explain that Aristotle does not at all forbid us to deviate from verisimilitude in case of need (*dans le besoin*). We must observe either *τὸ εἰκὸς* or *τὸ ἀναγκαῖον*. The trick is obvious (though quite unconscious, I dare say); instead of Latin *vel* for Greek *ἤ*, let us understand Latin *aut*, the disjunctive *or*, which introduces a second possibility exclusive of the first. So, Corneille concludes, it lies in us to choose whichever we shall deem the more convenient. Here we cannot help remembering the breach-of-promise suit in Beaumarchais's *Mariage de Figaro*; the note, says the plaintiff, states that the defendant will pay her back the money *and* marry her. No, answers the defendant, he only promised to pay back the money *or* marry her. (There is a blot on the contested word.) Counsel for plaintiff: 'I assert that it is the copulative conjunction *and*, which joins the correlative clauses of the sentence.' Defendant (Figaro himself): 'I assert that it is the alternative conjunction *or*, which separates the said clauses. . . . *à pédant, pédant et demi; qu'il s'avise de parler latin, j'y suis grec; je l'extermine.*'

[1] *Corneille* (1898), p. 61.

[2] *Œuvres de Corneille*, ed. M. Ch. Marty-Laveaux, vol. i, p. 81.

In his argument, indeed, though without Figaro's matchless impudence, Corneille looks very much like the 'pedant and a half', who gets the better of the simple pedant by outplaying him at his own game, and we almost think he is laughing in his sleeve. But such slyness hardly agrees with his character. He quibbles, so to say, ingenuously because he is a Norman and bred to the law. A little farther on he notices that sometimes Aristotle puts τὸ εἰκὸς first, and sometimes τὸ ἀναγκαῖον. He infers that now the one and now the other is preferable, and with the help of some distinctions without differences so confuses the problem that he succeeds in passing successively upon the bewildered reader two widely different definitions of the necessary; the one makes it the relation of cause to effect in the circumstances of the plot (and that fairly agrees with Aristotle's real meaning); but the other implies the makeshifts to which the playwright is put in his attempt to observe, or seem to observe, the unities and the limitations of the stage. The two definitions coalesce in Corneille's final pronouncement: that τὸ ἀναγκαῖον is 'what the poet requires to reach his purpose or to make his characters reach it.'[1] Necessity thus comes to be, if not the tyrant's plea, at least the playwright's convenience.

Not only can Corneille draw practically any conclusion from what Aristotle says, but he even modestly ventures to guess what Aristotle would have said (or rather should have said) in the parts of his treatise which are missing, for instance about the prologue, a term which Corneille, in his first discourse, rationally rather than historically, translates as the first act of the play:

> In order to supply what Aristotle has not told us, or time has deprived us of, I shall say that the prologue must contain the germs of all that is to happen, as well for the main action as for the episodic ones, so that no characters should arrive in the next acts who were not known from the first, or at least called in by somebody who has been introduced in the first.[2]

Here we are reminded of the clergyman who, according to some seventeenth-century Nonconformists, answered their demand for the Scripture texts on which the thirty-nine Articles were grounded, by quoting 2 Tim. iv. 13: 'The cloak I left at Troas,

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 94. [2] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 42.

. . . bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments'. Were it not for Timothy's remissness in executing St. Paul's command the parchments would no doubt have provided the missing authority.

Such methods, however honest in their day, strike us as thinly veiled usurpations of human reason upon a text professedly held sacred. Indeed, if we have a quarrel to-day with Corneille in his commentary upon Aristotle, it is on account of his excessive rationalism, too *terre à terre*. He does not allow enough to faith and imagination, the faith and the imagination of the spectator. And it is in the name of 'natural reason' that he vindicates, in his third discourse, the unity of time: 'Many inveigh against this rule, which they call tyrannical, and they would be right if it were founded only on Aristotle's authority; but what must cause it to be accepted, is natural reason which supports it.'[1] Upon examination this support amounts only to the truism that the performance lasts but two hours and that complete coincidence of the acting and the action could be achieved only if the latter required no longer time. It is easy to ridicule such a platitude, and the romantics have done it over and over again. But what perhaps deserves more consideration, and yet has received less, is that Corneille's *reductio ad absurdum* of the unity of time is largely conscious, deliberate, tactical. Having stated a stricter rule than any one of the dogmatists, he at once proceeds to claim allowances for the dramatic themes that cannot fit into that narrow compass. Since extending the action to twelve hours, or twenty-four hours, is already taking a liberty, why stop at that, and not allow thirty? If, indeed, Corneille's daring went no farther, the romantics might be acquitted of the charge of unfairness. His rule would be little better than a prudential warning against intemperance: 'You had best take no whisky at all; but if you do, you may as well have three glasses as one or two. Yet never exceed three.'

But Corneille does not stop there, except numerically. He wisely, one might say cunningly, advises the dramatist not to mention any length of time and leave it to the spectator to reckon how much of it elapses between the acts. So that, after all, he leaves something to the imagination; but he does it

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 113.

indirectly and implicitly, which is perhaps not such a bad way. Shakespeare's method is not essentially different, though a great deal more perplexing, at least to the reader, when he uses short and long time at pleasure, in *Othello* for instance, his nearest approach to classical tragedy. What is long time but τὸ εἰκὸς, Corneille's verisimilitude, and short time but τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, Corneille's necessity, that which is exacted not indeed by the rules but by their informing principle, tragic tension? Returning to Corneille, we see that he inclines to make time an abstraction, something negligible in the development of the action, though he never states this view explicitly. And this no doubt is the sanest and deepest interpretation of the unity of time.

As regards the unity of place he leaves us in no doubt, and formulates the theory that exactly corresponds with that of abstract time, the theory of abstract place, or, as he styles it, *le lieu théâtral*[1]—a sort of neutral ground where all the characters may come and meet, or succeed one another, a vague antechamber on which the apartments of the divers characters open when they are inmates of the same palace, even though at bitter feud as in *Rodogune*; indeed, a place about which no question need be asked. Here again the imagination of the spectator plays a part, but a negative one; it dismisses any particularity in the place which would make it unfit for the successive conversations held in it. This is just the reverse of Shakespeare's prayer to his audience that a bare or very inadequately equipped stage may represent to them historical places with tremendous associations:

> Can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?[2]

We feel glad that Shakespeare overcame his dislike for such 'mockeries' and 'brawls ridiculous', and it does not seem that his audience resented them in the least. But for the fastidious and hypercritical audience of Corneille's tragedies, whose taste is echoed by Lisideius, in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and even by Neander in this respect, the *lieu théâtral* was certainly

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 121. [2] *Henry V.*, Prol., ll. 11–14.

the best general interpretation of the unity of place; and now that we have shaken off the nineteenth-century technique of stage-decoration, invented by the romantics in accordance with their notions of realism and local colour, we feel quite at ease listening to a play which takes place nowhere in particular. Corneille here is truly original, since Aristotle, as we know, does not even mention the second of the three unities that pass under his name. But Corneille, as always, has combined daring and timidity most delightfully in his progress to this result: one place, he says, is sufficient so long as you have only male characters and one female; or else when two women have such united interests that they can, without a breach of decorum, be together at any time (this identity of interests is evidently found but seldom); or else when the 'natural curiosity' of the one may account for her presence in the other's apartment, or the 'natural curiosity' of both may draw them from their apartments into some common room, even against the rules of etiquette.[1] Who will fix a limit to the 'natural curiosity' of Eve's daughters? However, Corneille admits it to be incredible that Rodogune and her prospective mother-in-law should come and plot each other's death in one and the same room. No amount of natural curiosity will account for it. Hence his theory of *le lieu théâtral*.

I shall give one more instance of Corneille's dealings with Aristotle, because Dryden will follow the Frenchman here more unreservedly than anywhere else. 'Scenes' in the French sense of the word are divisions of the dramatic dialogue beginning with the entrance of one or more characters and terminating with the exit of the same or any other characters. No change of place is implied as in the English use of the word, for which the French equivalent would be the word *tableau*, did not this savour of the melodrama. Now, the scenes being mere divisions of the dialogue, Corneille draws the inference that they must not break up the act. When one or more characters withdraw, there must remain at least one on the stage who soliloquizes until some other character comes to speak with him. In other words, the stage must never remain empty. The first mention of *liaison des scènes* ('The scenes unbroken', as Dryden styles it in the prologue to the *Maiden Queen*) occurs in Corneille's epistle

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 118.

dedicatory of *La Suivante* in 1634, in one brief sentence: 'it is an embellishment, not a precept'. The advice to the reader of the collected edition of 1648 repeats the same statement in more words; the *liaison* is not a rule because not found in Aristotle and Horace, because not always observed by the Ancients, and quite disregarded by *Il Pastor fido*, 'the miracle of Italy'. Yet though not a rule it is a very effective ornament.[1]

In 1660 the third discourse copies almost verbatim the preceding documents and adds more instances of modern disregard of that ornament which is not a precept: the still formidable names of Buchanan, Grotius, and Heinsius seem to settle the matter once for all. But mark the conclusion:

> We [largely the regal, or the editorial, *we*] have so much accustomed our audiences to this *liaison*, that they no longer can see a detached scene without marking it for a fault; the very eye and ear are shocked at it before the mind has been able to think of it. The fourth act of *Cinna* stands lower than the others because of this fault (*ce manquement*); and what formerly was no rule, is now become one because of the constancy of the practice. ('Ce qui n'était point une règle autrefois l'est devenu maintenant par l'assiduité de la pratique.')[2]

This finally disposes of the romantic legend of an Aristotle-ridden Corneille, and shows that in the history of the French stage of the seventeenth century we have no *coup d'état*, but

> Freedom *quickly narrowing in*
> From precedent to precedent.

The French playgoers were not enslaved by the playwrights, nor these by Aristotle and his commentators, but both playgoers and playwrights submitted to reason and taste, as they found them in their own souls. Yet to the free-born Briton this may seem a form of slavery little better than blind obedience to Aristotle. Corneille, ignorant of English opinion, never troubled to answer this charge, which nobody in France since the romantic champion who wrote the preface to *Tyr et Sidon* in 1628 thought of preferring. It was therefore left for Dryden to examine a question more fundamental than any one

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, pp. 3–4.

[2] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 102. See also ibid., p. 103: 'ce nouvel usage qui passe en précepte.'

of those treated by Corneille, Is it good, meaning profitable, to conform to the rules, whether grounded on Aristotle or on reason? A very English question. And one, I repeat, that Corneille had not answered, except by his tragedies.

But first let us contrast Dryden's method with Corneille's. When I say his method, I mean the one he adopts in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, which is his nearest equivalent to the three *Discours*. The difference in method is much smaller between Dryden's other critical essays, his prefaces, and Corneille's *Examens*. At the same time it is in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* that most of Dryden's allusions to, and quotations from, Corneille are found. This, of course, adds to the interest of the comparison.

Dryden's method is Socratic, or, as he himself defines it, 'sceptical, according to that way of reasoning which was used by Socrates, Plato, and all the academics of old, which Tully and the best of the ancients followed, and which is imitated by the modest inquisitions of the Royal Society'.[1] The only resemblance a layman can descry between the Royal Society's 'inquisitions' and Dryden's essay is negative, namely the renunciation of authority, of deductive scholasticism. The note sounds modern, in a sense that perhaps will not admit of strict definition. Much more evident is the relation to Socrates. However, Dryden's dialogue differs from most of Plato's in that there is no such crushing superiority of the protagonist over his interlocutors; Dryden, thinly disguised under the name of Neander, could not without arrogance and rudeness assume the leading part quite openly. There is some sort of intellectual equality between the four speakers; three of them are noblemen whose interest in letters does not smack of professionalism, even if like Crites (Sir Robert Howard) they have written for the stage. Thus pedantry is avoided as much as possible. Reading the essay we remember Rochefoucauld's definition of the *honnête homme*, the polished gentleman, who prides himself upon no particular achievement, *qui ne se pique de rien*; an aristocratic but worldly ideal which Corneille transcends in his plays and decidedly falls below in his *bourgeois* life and his prose works. In comparison with *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, the three *Discours* seem pedantic, heavy, stodgy. The more French of the

[1] *Essays*, ed. Ker, vol. i, p. 124.

two writers, if we go by the conventional type of Frenchman, is Dryden. Of course there were those in France a little earlier than Dryden who could write with the same ease and elegance as he. Leaving aside Pascal and his *Provinciales*, there are second-rate writers who, as Ker tells us, may have influenced Dryden in his choice of the dialogue form and his treatment of it. But Corneille, on account perhaps of his provincial upbringing and life, certainly of his temperament, lacked those amenities, that polish and refinement. In their stead he had seriousness and a single-minded and lifelong devotion to the stage. Even religion (and his faith, sincere from the first, became very exacting in his old age) could not disturb him in this secular pursuit. There is nothing of the cavalier about him. From the heroic he passes straight to the technical. Dryden *is* a cavalier, and even when the suspicion of pedantry attaches to him, he may be styled, like Montaigne, *un pédant à la cavalière*.

From the use of dialogue in the *Essay*, more results than a lightness of manner that entices the reader into supposedly forbidding topics. The beauty of the opening sentences, the gradual approach through current talk to a debate on the principles of art, have been praised over and over again. But of equal importance is the conclusion, or rather the graceful avoidance of such an ungracious thing. Dryden cuts Neander short, with a smile, and the whole argument remains incomplete, as a well-bred conversation should do. If this were only a matter of tact, it would not signify much. But it goes deeper. Dryden has chosen to leave his essay inconclusive because he feels that the truth is complex, many-sided. Not Neander himself has been able to embrace it all; some of it at least remains to the last with Lisideius and Crites. To each man his own share of truth. The essay is tentative, and though Dryden lets us see pretty clearly to which side his present mood inclines him, yet we feel that he may shift his ground later. And he will shift it indeed, not once but several times; witness his vacillations on the use of rhyme, the unities, the relative value of Shakespeare, Jonson, Fletcher, the ancients, the French. The epithet 'sceptical', which he applies to his essay in a peculiar meaning, may be used of it in the broader sense of destructive rather than constructive, refusing to commit itself to one view unreservedly and exclusively. Throughout

the *Essay* Dryden enjoys not being upon oath, saying and unsaying, exploring ground rather than surveying it with minute care. This open-mindedness, verging at times upon irresponsibility, has done as much as style itself to keep the *Essay* fresh to our day. Right or wrong, his ideas are never cut-and-dried.

Thanks to dialogue, Dryden has avoided not only dogmatism, which bans and forbids, but syncretism, which combines irreconcilable doctrines and destroys the virtue of each, so that nothing remains but a tasteless and spiritless mixture. And at the same time he has availed himself to the full of his chief advantage over Corneille, a wider outlook. He knew practically all that the Frenchman knew of their common predecessors, and he was acquainted with the Elizabethan drama besides. He seems, indeed, to have pondered somewhat less than Corneille over the Greek tragedies, and often to have quoted them at second-hand from Corneille or some other French critic; but his knowledge, or lack of knowledge of them, is much on a par with Corneille's; witness their adaptations of *Œdipus Tyrannus*. As regards the Latin tragedies of Seneca they both do more creditably. Concerning the Italians, who mostly stand for regularity, and the Spaniards, certainly the most widely-known champions of the irregular stage at that time, there is not much to choose between the two critics. But Corneille had probably never heard the names of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and barely the name of Ben Jonson. How Dryden dealt with these playwrights, how far he did justice to each of them and especially to the greatest of the three, is a subject of great interest, probably of supreme interest to the modern English reader of his essays. But only this need be said about it here: that there is nothing like it in Corneille's critical works. Therefore, in spite of his acquaintance with Spanish plays, Corneille's view of tragedy could hardly avoid one-sidedness, since no irregular plays within his ken stood comparison with his own masterpieces. As a playwright he had been able to innovate much more freely than Dryden because there was no national tradition to clog him. For irregularity may be as much of a clog as regularity; the compulsory blending of tragedy and comedy, the necessity of underplots, are no less handicaps than the exclusion of the comic from tragedy or

the unity of action. As a theorist of the drama, Corneille, I have tried to show, also enjoyed appreciable freedom. But he could not well become a dramatic critic in the full sense of the word. The critic, as the etymology of the word implies, comes when the works he is to judge already exist. The more various the works he knows, the freer and more comprehensive his criticism. Corneille gives us the theory of his own plays; Dryden not seldom rises to an appreciation of the works of other and greater playwrights than himself, including Corneille. Though he cannot be expected to satisfy a Frenchman of to-day in this respect, yet his detachment and his broader knowledge of the European stage enable him at times to see better than Corneille the deeper characteristics of French tragedy.

However, before we illustrate this praise, we must except from it Dryden's views on rhyme. Nowhere does he evince any understanding of the differences between French and English versification. Neander looks upon rhyme as of 'Teutonic' origin, in England as well as in France, and applies to 'modern poesy' in general this remark that 'no man . . . is tied to observe any farther rule in the feet of his verse, but that they be dissyllables; whether spondee, trochee or iambic, it matters not'.[1] Did not his practice run counter to such an inference, one might believe Dryden to have been unconscious of the importance of stress in English poetry; of its comparative insignificance in French poetry, he had not the least inkling. And yet there lies the explanation of the fitness of rhymed verse for the stage in France, of its unfitness in England. Rhyme without stress may go on for two hours; rhyme plus stress becomes wearisome in ten minutes. And while Dryden, in the prologue to *Secret Love or the Maiden Queen*, published in the same year as *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, promises his audience to give them 'a mingled chime Of Jonson's humours and Corneille's rhyme', in the *Essay* itself none of the speakers either praises or attacks dramatic rhymed verse on account of its foreign origin. Lisideius mentions it very briefly in his commendation of French tragedy. Neander traces the English pedigree of rhymed plays much farther back than Corneille. And Crites cavalierly dismisses the inquiry into the origin of this practice: it is 'of as little benefit as theirs who, in the midst of the great

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 97.

plague, were not so solicitous to provide against it as to know whether we had it from the malignity of our own air, or by transportation from Holland'.[1] This resolutely non-historical, non-comparative attitude certainly suited Dryden's ignorance on this point best.

But his wide sympathies and catholicity of taste appear in his treatment of the unities. The French case for them is given its full strength, for instance when Lisideius denies Shakespeare's histories the name of plays: 'They are rather so many chronicles of Kings, or the business many times of thirty or forty years, cramped into a representation of two hours and a half; which is not to imitate or paint Nature, but rather to draw her in miniature, to take her in little; to look upon her through the wrong end of a perspective [i.e. telescope] and receive her images not only much less, but infinitely more imperfect than the life.'[2] Here, indeed, Dryden takes up, and improves upon, a simile of Corneille's in his third discourse: 'The dramatic poem is . . . a portrait of men's actions. . . . Then let us not exceed the twenty-four hours by much, lest we . . . reduce the portrait to such a small scale that it should no longer have proportionate dimensions, and be nothing but imperfection.'[3] We need not endorse the condemnation passed by Dryden on Shakespeare's histories in order to admire the critic's quickness at applying Corneille's generalities. But what follows is better still; Lisideius praises the French for simplicity of plot: 'They only represent so much of a story as will constitute one whole and great action sufficient for a play.' This is the restrictive aspect of the rule; many have seen in it no more than that. But Lisideius realizes that there is no gain in eliminating certain quantitative elements unless you are ready with others, especially qualitative ones, to fill their place: 'By pursuing close one argument which is not cloyed with many turns, the French have . . . leisure to dwell on a subject which deserves it; and to represent the passions (which we have acknowledged to be the poet's work) without being hurried from one thing to another.'[4] This is perhaps more positive, less negative, than any corresponding statement in Corneille, who

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 90. [2] Ibid., vol. i, p. 59.
[3] Ed. Marty-Laveaux, vol. i, p. 113. Ker, who points out most of Dryden's borrowings from Corneille, has missed this one. [4] Ed. Ker, vol. i, p. 60.

indeed confesses in his *Discours* and *Examens* a preference for the more complicated plots of *Rodogune* and *Héraclius*, over the simpler ones of *Cinna* and *Polyeucte*. To his favourites he applies with apparent relish the pedantic epithet of *implexes*. It was left for Racine to restore and perfect the simpler plot, from which Corneille had deviated. *Bérénice* may be summed up in six words: 'Titus reginam Berenicen invitus invitam dimisit.' This is the limit of simplicity in French tragedy, and Lisideius's apprehension reaches nearer to it than Corneille's in the *Discours*.

The strongest remarks, however, on simplicity of action to be found in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* refer not to French, but to Greek tragedy. Crites, approaching the subject by the unity of time, remarks:

> You see the ancients, from the very beginning of their plays, falling close into that part of the story which they intend for the action or principal object of it. . . . So that they set the audience, as it were, at the post where the race is to be concluded; and saving them the tedious expectation of seeing the poet set out and ride the beginning of the course, you behold him not till he is in sight of the goal, and just upon you.[1]

Now this magnificent image, than which there is nothing more illuminating in the whole *Essay*, applies as well to French as to Greek tragedy, though the two are as different from each other as they are from Shakespearian tragedy. Though each pair of the three forms have often been contrasted, I do not remember ever to have seen the three of them contrasted at once as regards the delimitation of the plot. Elizabethan tragedy, it is well known, tells a whole story. Take even *Othello*, the most closely knit of Shakespeare's greater plays. The first act shows us how Othello won Desdemona, and at most how Brabantio's parting curse sowed the seed of jealousy in the bridegroom's breast. Only in the second act does the real tragedy begin; it ends with the tragical event, the death of Othello. Greek tragedy, on the other hand, shows the passion of a hero; therefore the tragical event is close upon him when the play opens, and it takes place not at the end but in the middle of the play. The perfect example is, of course, *Œdipus Tyrannus*, where the hero's sufferings last for nearly four hundred lines after the truth has

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 39.

been fully revealed to him. The French type stands midway between the English and the Greek. Like the English it ends with the catastrophe. In his first discourse Corneille gives it as a rule (though he finds no authority for this in Aristotle) that the catastrophe must take place in the last act, if possible in the last scene of the last act: 'The longer you defer it, the longer the minds of the hearers remain in suspense, and the impatience which they feel to know on what side it will turn, makes them receive it with the greater pleasure.'[1] But unlike English tragedy, French tragedy begins the action 'near the goal', quite as near to it as Greek tragedy. So that it is, in this respect, the narrowest of the three, and consequently can dispose of all its means to study the crisis immediately preceding the event, without dwelling on its remote preparation or its consequences.

Such a scheme implies that in the protasis, as Corneille (and Dryden after him) calls it, or introductory part of the play, some things must be made known to the audience by way of relations that in the English scheme would be acted on the stage. But Lisideius, the upholder of French tragedy, is aware that the audience will not listen patiently to those relations if they are too protracted and intricate, and will forget points of information without which they cannot understand the subsequent course of the action. So he warns the playwright against the choice 'of such subjects for the stage as will force us on that rock'. But, he adds:

there is another sort of relations, that is, of things happening in the action of the play, and supposed to be done behind the scenes; and this is many times both convenient and beautiful. . . . They who imagine these relations would make no concernment in the audience, are deceived, by confounding them with the other, which are of things antecedent to the play: those are made often in cold blood, as I may say, to the audience; but these are warmed with our concernments, which were before awakened in the play.[2]

So far Lisideius has done little more than translate a passage in Corneille's third discourse.[3] But the comparisons with

[1] Ed. Marty-Laveaux, vol. i, p. 48. [2] Ed. Ker, vol. i, pp. 62–3.

[3] Ed. Marty-Laveaux, vol. i, pp. 104–5: '. . . j'ajoute un conseil, de s'embarrasser le moins qu'il lui est possible de choses arrivées avant l'action qui se représente. Ces narrations importunent d'ordinaire, parce qu'elles ne sont pas attendues, et qu'elles gênent l'esprit de l'auditeur, qui est obligé de charger sa mémoire de ce qui s'est fait il y a dix ou douze ans, pour comprendre ce qu'il voit représenter;

which he adorns the theory are distinctly his own, or rather Dryden's:

What the philosophers say of motion, that, when it is once begun, it continues of itself, and will do so to eternity, without some stop put to it, is clearly true on this occasion: the soul, being already moved with the characters and fortunes of those imaginary persons, continues going of its own accord; and we are no more weary to hear what becomes of them when they are not on the stage than we are to listen to the news of an absent mistress.[1]

But there is more than that. Corneille is content with freeing the 'relations of the second type' from the exceptions that are justly taken to those of the first type. Lisidcius states a positive advantage that they possess; the relation 'of things happening in the action of the play and supposed to be done behind the scenes . . . is many times both convenient and beautiful; for by it the French avoid the tumult which we are subject to in England, by representing duels, battles and the like; which renders our stage too like the theatres where they fight prizes'.[2] Here is seen the difference between Corneille who writes after the French stage has conformed, in this respect at least, to the classical precepts, and Lisideius who sees the current practice of the English stage violating the same precepts. However, the objection to having an army represented by 'a drum and five men behind it' is sufficiently obvious; nor was it new in England, since Sidney and Shakespeare himself had raised it. But Lisideius goes very deep indeed when he disposes of the English counter-objection that the relations banish action from tragedy:

'Tis a great mistake in us to believe the French present no part of the action on the stage; every alteration or crossing of a design, every new-sprung passion, and turn of it, is a part of the action, and

mais celles qui se font des choses qui arrivent et se passent derrière le théâtre, depuis l'action commencée, font toujours un meilleur effet, parce qu'elles sont attendues avec quelque curiosité, et font partie de cette action qui se représente.' Ker does not mention this borrowing; he also neglects to give the reference for the avowed quotation on the managing of exits, *Essays of J. Dryden*, vol. i, p. 67: 'there is nothing so absurd, says Corneille, as for an actor to leave the stage, only because he has no more to say.' It is from the third discourse, ed. cit., vol. i, p. 108: 'il n'y a rien de si mauvaise grâce qu'un acteur qui se retire du théâtre seulement parce qu'il n'a plus de vers à dire.' In fact Dryden's borrowing—of the ideas if not of the actual words—extends to the whole of his paragraph, including entrances as well as exits. [1] *Essays*, ed. cit., vol. i, pp. 63–4. [2] Ibid., vol. i, p. 62.

much the noblest, except we conceive nothing to be action till they come to blows; as if the painting of the hero's mind were not more properly the poet's work than the strength of his body.[1]

This is Corneille's own doctrine, but formulated more clearly than he himself had ever done; he was too full of it to state it explicitly; only in a chance remark like this: 'No one acts upon the stage unless he speaks',[2] do we see to what logical extremes he ran. French tragedy, indeed, is action first, again action, and ever action . . . until it degenerates and adopts for its motto this sophistical perversion of Corneille's maxim: 'Every one acts upon the stage provided he speak.' Then Stendhal will not unfairly call it 'speeches under a chandelier', *des discours sous un lustre.*

Comparison with his fellow countrymen and contemporaries, all but a very few of them, would still further enhance the value of Dryden's appreciation of French tragedy. Historians of literature have hardly yet realized how impenetrable the overwhelming majority of the English were, in that supposedly Frenchified age, to the higher French art. Perhaps Samuel Pepys has as good a right as anybody else to stand for the average educated Englishman of the Restoration, and his opinions are at least candid. *Le Cid* he indeed admits having read with delight, 'but [it] is a most dull thing acted' even 'done by Betterton, and by Ianthe, and another fine wench'. But the most self-revealing judgement is that on *Horace*: 'A silly tragedy; but Lacy hath made a farce of several dances, between each act one; . . . [and] some Dutchmen came out of the mouth and tail of a Hamburgh sow'.[3]

Dryden, however, after having shown himself able to sympathize with the French, when using Lisideius as his mouthpiece, proceeds, under the character of Neander, to refute most of the arguments advanced in favour of the foreign types of plays. Of course we must not take too seriously such

[1] *Essays*, ed. cit., vol. i, p. 64.

[2] Ed. Marty-Laveaux, vol. iv, p. 286, *Examen de La Suite du Menteur*: 'Il ne faut jamais laisser le théâtre sans qu'on y agisse, et l'on n'y agit qu'en parlant.'

[3] *Pepys' Diary*, ed. Wheatley, vol. ii, pp. 406–7 (1 Dec. 1662) and vol. viii, p. 205 (19 Jan. 1668/9). Pepys enjoyed *Héraclius* far more than *Le Cid* and *Horace*; apart from favourable circumstances on two of the three times he saw it, this preference may be accounted for by the more intricate and even somewhat melodramatic plot, producing terrible suspense in one great scene (see *Diary*, 8 March 1663/4, 4 Feb. 1666/7, and 5 Sept. 1667).

pieces of bragging as this: 'Our present poets . . . have far surpassed all the ancients, and the modern writers of other countries.'[1] Since Dryden, out of modesty, could hardly mean himself, this statement, taken literally, would imply that Sir William Davenant, Lord Orrery, Sir Robert Howard, Killigrew, and Wilson surpassed not only Corneille and Molière, but Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes as well. Dryden cannot be charged with believing such an absurdity. As Professor Allardyce Nicoll remarks, 'he preserves a stout patriotic front to the foreigner'.[2] I should add that the more his practice agrees, or seems to agree, with foreign models, the louder his denunciation of foreign vices and absurdities, literary and otherwise. John Dennis, half a century later, was to address Steele, who had 'conveyed' Corneille's *Lying Lover* (*Le Menteur*) without acknowledgement, in these stinging terms: 'You . . . will go on to borrow from the French, and continue to rail at them. It is not enough for some people to rob unless they likewise murder.'[3] Leaving Dennis the responsibility for his comparison, we may note that, in the preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, written after he had given up rhymed tragedy and reverted to the national tradition, Dryden avoids any attack on the French and even speaks of such wearisome critics or theorists as Rapin and Bossu with more reverence than they deserve. This contrast may seem paradoxical at first, but on second thoughts it will appear quite human. Let us therefore neglect what is merely tactical and occasional, and examine briefly Dryden's permanent objections to the French form.

Neander's vindication of English tragi-comedy, the Elizabethan mixture of the tragical and the comical, from the French charge that it is impossible to pass from compassion to mirth and vice versa, will not be questioned to-day. But when it ceases to be positive criticism, in defence of one form of art, and becomes negative criticism, levelled at another form of art, modern eclecticism will probably think Dryden just as dogmatic as his French opponents. Contrast is a great thing, but unity of feeling may be just as great. To say of *Polyeucte* that it is 'as

[1] *Essays*, ed. cit., vol. i, p. 89.

[2] *A History of Restoration Drama* (2nd ed.), p. 88.

[3] Quoted in Dorothea F. Canfield, *Corneille and Racine in England* (N.Y., 1904), p. 172.

solemn as the long stops upon our organs',[1] even if it were strictly accurate, would not discredit that tragedy with us, nor reconcile us to the more lively method of treating 'matters of religion' as it is exemplified in Dryden's *Tyrannick Love or the Royal Martyr*.

We may dispose in the same way of Neander's comparison between 'the barrenness of the French plots' and 'the variety and copiousness of the English'.[2] We shall agree with him most willingly when he says variety is not exclusive of unity:

> If . . . the parts are managed so regularly that the beauty of the whole is kept entire, and that the variety become not a perplexed and confused mass of accidents, you will find it infinitely pleasing to be led in a labyrinth of design, where you see some of your way before you, yet discern not the end till you arrive at it.[3]

This statement, by the way, might almost have been endorsed by Corneille, though not by Racine. The former in his third discourse explicitly recommends a plurality of actions, provided they are close-knit and the several 'actions particulières' combine into a unity.[4] True, there would have been much difference of opinion between Corneille and Dryden as regards the latter's success in 'keeping entire the beauty of the whole' in a play like *The Spanish Friar*, which to this day some English critics of standing praise for its skilful blending of plot and sub-plot. But to return to Neander's theory; it will justify Elizabethan tragedy, or at least the best of it; but it will fail to discredit the rival form. To-day 'barrenness of plot', of itself, is no more a damning feature than 'copiousness' is a redeeming one.

And now we come to what may be called Dryden's final judgement, in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* at least, on the French stage of his time. The occasion of it is the unity of place and the *liaison des scènes*, and the way in which the French playwrights pretend to observe both. Corneille's theory of the *lieu théâtral* is ignored, and the analysis of one comedy by his younger and minor brother Thomas, taken as a specimen, ends thus: 'In this ridiculous manner the play goes on, the stage being never empty all the while: so that the street, the window, the houses, and the closet are made to walk about, and the persons to stand still.'[5] This is witty common sense pitted against metaphysics,

[1] *Essays*, ed., Ker, vol. i, p. 71. [2] Ibid., vol. i, p. 70. [3] Ibid., vol. i, p. 73.
[4] Ed. Marty-Laveaux, vol. i, pp. 100–1. [5] Ed. Ker, vol. i, p. 77.

and everybody knows that these two enemies have been fighting since the world began, and can never fight it out. Neander, however, is so sure of having crushed the upholders of absolute regularity that he draws a conclusion much more general, not to say sweeping, than his premisses seem to warrant: 'Now what, I beseech you, is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than to write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher, or of Shakespeare?'[1]

This might be treated as a mere sally, but Ker evidently does not think so. He quotes this sentence as an instance of Dryden at his best, 'when he has set himself to try the value of dogmatic rules and principles; cautious, respectful, seeming to comply with them, till the time comes for the stroke that ends the encounter'.[2] On the other hand, Neander's remark was calculated to touch the French school to the quick. If there was one thing on which they prided themselves, it was following the narrow way. The other dramatic forms they looked upon as within the scope of mother wit, but their own as learned and elaborate. Even to-day, many Frenchmen who would not claim superior beauty or power for *Polyeucte* or *Phèdre* over *Hamlet* or *King Lear*, would still contend that the difficulty is greater to write a good classical tragedy than a good Elizabethan drama. With only so much national prejudice as cannot be dispensed with, I submit that this claim is valid, and that Neander's reasoning is sophistical. Not only does he ground his decision upon the analysis of an unrepresentative French play, but in the decision itself he introduces a most disturbing factor, genius, through the means of the ambiguous adjective 'like'. Corneille, had he known any English, would have asked whether 'like those of Shakespeare' meant 'similar in all respects, or similar only in respect of their irregularity'. In the former acceptation we grant the point, but it proves nothing. In the latter acceptation we deny the truth of Neander's statement altogether. *King Cambyses* is 'like' *Julius Caesar* in being an irregular play. It is most unlike it in any other respect. But after this scholastic victory over Dryden in which all Frenchmen would probably rejoice, the broader-minded of them would admit that difficulty, even when successfully overcome, *la difficulté vaincue*, is no sure test of great art. And if all but a few dozen

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. 77.

[2] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. xiv.

French classical tragedies among the many hundreds that were written discourage the most energetic reader of to-day, while scarcely one of the most faulty plays of the English Renaissance fails to amuse us, then the more the pity that men of moderate gifts should have attempted too much, and achieved only dullness and dreariness.

However, 'Dryden's power as a writer of criticism', Ker warns us, 'does not depend upon his definite judgements' but upon his freedom from formulas.[1] Is that freedom greater than Corneille's? Not perhaps so much at bottom, but certainly on the surface. And for a critic it is more important to look free than to be free. Dryden owes his unquestionable superiority largely to his manner. The difference between his essays and Corneille's discourses is very much the same as that between Horace's *Ars Poetica* and Aristotle's *Poetics*. Dryden's prose is almost as charming as Horace's verse; Corneille's prose is almost as heavy as Aristotle's. The Frenchman's critical works are mere adjuncts to his dramatic works; the Englishman's prefaces survive the plays for which they were written; and, as Ker says, 'their fault is that they make one disappointed with his plays when one comes to them after his criticisms'.[2] So that it would not be quite unfair to reverse his own epigram: 'The French are as much better critics than the English, as they are worse poets',[3] and say: 'Dryden is as much more living a dramatic critic than Corneille, as he is a less living dramatic poet.'

[1] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. xv.

[2] Ed. cit., vol. i, p. xx.

[3] Ed. cit., vol. ii, p. 178, *Dedication of the Æneis*.

THE LIMITS OF LOCKE'S RATIONALISM

By R. I. AARON

I

THAT the philosophy of John Locke contains rationalist elements is now universally admitted. Locke is a rationalist at least in this sense that he thinks reason a completely reliable source of knowledge and an infallible guide in the quest for certainty. Whether he also believes that reason is the only source of knowledge and the only infallible guide remains to be seen. But he is certainly a rationalist in the first sense.

Historians of philosophy were slow to acknowledge this fact. They were misled by an over-facile division of seventeenth-century philosophy into two schools, the rationalist, of which Descartes was the founder, and the empiricist. It was assumed, quite wrongly, that these two schools were entirely distinct from each other, and that consequently since Locke, for instance, was an empiricist he could not also be a rationalist. But from the middle of the last century onwards a saner view, based on a better understanding of Locke's works, has prevailed, and it has become clear that rationalism is as essential an element of Locke's philosophy as it is of Descartes's.

The present article deals with the limits of Locke's rationalism and takes the rationalism itself for granted. Surely only a rationalist could have written *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, a book which aims at proving that the tenets of the Christian faith are in accordance with reason, and which assumes as something not open to question that such tenets become more worthy of our acceptance once their rationality has been demonstrated. Only a rationalist again could have chosen the method Locke adopts in his *Two Treatises on Civil Government*. In that book his final purpose was to show that a democratic constitutional monarchy was the form of government best suited to a free people. His immediate purpose, as he himself explains, was 'to establish the throne of our great restorer, our present King William . . . and to justify to the world the people of England'. But the *Civil Government* is more than a piece of

special pleading for the Revolution of 1688. It is more also than a Whig tract. That Locke was the prophet of the Whigs is true, and that his somewhat ingenious defence of property, and even his plea for the liberty of the individual, helped the Whigs to establish their supremacy in the eighteenth century is beyond all doubt. Nevertheless, it is surely wrong to regard the *Civil Government* as a mere party document. It is Locke's political testament, the fruit of a lifetime's observation and reflection. He was well placed for observing the political life of his country. His experience of political affairs was extensive, and he had learnt also from the experience of others. He had come to the conclusion that the only form of constitution which could secure the people's freedom and yet provide strong government was a democracy of the type which he sketched in the *Civil Government.* Whether this conclusion was sound or not need not here be considered; the interesting point is that when he attempted to state his case he made no appeal to experience, either to his own or to that of others, nor again to public utility. Instead he adopted the rationalist method. He attempted to prove his thesis rationally, just as one proves a theorem in geometry. Beginning with the premiss that society is such and such in its origin and nature, he attempted to prove apodictically that democracy is the eternally true form of government. For he knew that the appeal to experience and to utility, however successful, would convince neither himself nor his contemporaries. A rationalist apology for democracy was necessary and it was this which he offered his readers.

The rationalism of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is still more obvious. That work consists of four books, the first three of which are preparatory to the fourth. Book IV deals with the nature and extent of human knowledge. Locke took almost twenty years to write the *Essay*, and during this period he considered many possible theories of knowledge. It is significant that the one which he finally adopted was the rationalist theory of Descartes. Knowledge which is certain is intuition or demonstration, the *intuitus* and *deductio* of Descartes, the very core of the Cartesian rationalism. Locke was opposed to the Cartesians on most other points, and it is all the more significant that on this essential and central point he openly accepted

the rationalist position, and set it out almost in the Cartesian terminology. At the same time it is well to observe that the rationalism which he did accept was not the peculiar property of the Cartesians. For the identification of knowing with intuiting has been common to many rationalists. But Descartes had restated it and Locke was clearly influenced by this re-statement. Knowing is intuiting which is infallible. And each step in mediate knowing is intuited, for thus alone can certainty be gained. 'Certainty depends so wholly on this intuition, that in the next degree of knowledge, which I call demonstrative, this intuition is necessary in all the connexions of the intermediate ideas, without which we cannot attain knowledge and certainty.'[1] The theory of knowledge set forward in the opening chapters of Book IV is entirely rationalist in tone.

One might discover many other illustrations of Locke's rationalism in his works, but these will suffice to show that if Descartes had a right to the title of rationalist so also had Locke. Indeed, from one point of view Locke's rationalism is more thorough-going than that of Descartes. Descartes stipulated that the free use of reason was to be permitted only in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, and that its use in politics and religion was to be carefully superintended. There is no such stipulation in Locke. He would give reason free play in the political and in the religious realm, as well as in the scientific. This difference between the two philosophers may be accounted for, in part at least, by a change in public opinion. Even if Descartes had believed what Locke believed, he would have found it dangerous to say so in the middle of the seventeenth century. But at the end of that century Locke's rationalism was welcomed by all. And by the beginning of the eighteenth century the triumph of rationalism was complete. Reason had come into its own; its authority was recognized everywhere and in every sphere. It is not untrue to say that Locke belongs more closely to the Age of Reason than Descartes —not only in time but also in spirit.

That this is so is confirmed by another important fact. The book which most influenced the rationalist eighteenth century was not the *Discourse* of Descartes, or any of his other works, but the *Essay* of Locke. The eighteenth century treated Descartes

[1] IV. ii. 1.

with considerable respect, but was none the less suspicious of him. Voltaire, for instance, in his *Lettres philosophiques*, holds that Descartes was too speculative, and contrasts him in this respect with Locke. (Incidentally, Voltaire saw the differences between Locke and Descartes more clearly than he saw the resemblances between them, and he, more than any one else, perhaps, is responsible for the false tradition according to which the two thinkers have nothing in common. Professor Kemp Smith has pointed out that Locke gave back to the France of the eighteenth century what he himself had received from the France of the seventeenth. This is true, but what he gave back differed in many important respects from what he himself received, and it is not altogether strange that Voltaire should have failed to realize the measure of Locke's debt to France.) Locke, it is clear, and not Descartes is the supreme formative influence on the France of the eighteenth century, on Voltaire, Buffier, Montesquieu, Condillac, and Rousseau. Locke also influenced eighteenth-century rationalist England in its literature, as the works of Pope, Addison, and Sterne in particular show, and in its philosophy.

That Locke should have influenced the rationalist eighteenth century so deeply has always been something of a paradox to those historians of philosophy who rank him with the empiricists. But once the true position is understood there is no paradox. It is not at all strange that the *Essay*, the *Civil Government*, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* should have led men to put their trust in reason. For they were written by a rationalist whose aim was to increase men's faith in reason.

But this was not Locke's only aim. For the most significant fact about Locke is that he found it necessary to modify his rationalism. He was a rationalist, but he was the critic of rationalism as well. He restricted it, and in this very restriction is to be found his most important contribution to philosophy. Locke was the executor of the seventeenth century in a philosophical sense. He gathered together all that was living and vital in the thought of that brilliant age and handed it forward as a heritage to the eighteenth century. The chief bequest was rationalism, and it is not surprising that the new age was the Age of Reason. Yet the rationalism which Locke thus passed

on to the next generation was tempered by non-rationalist elements. Locke had faith in reason, but it was never a blind faith. He knew its limitations. And the eighteenth century, however much it extolled reason, never entirely forgot the criticism latent in Locke's works. The scepticism which flowered in Hume and which destroyed the Age of Reason's faith in itself is already present in Locke. The rationalist spirit of a classical age pervades his writings, but the seeds of revolt against rationalism are present as well.

In what follows I propose to examine the limits of Locke's rationalism, and to show that rationalism is restricted by him in two important respects. In the first place, the materials upon which reason works are provided, according to Locke's view, not in a rational intuition, which penetrates into real being, but in sensation and introspection. Man is a rational animal, but he is also sensitive, and his sensitive experiences are basic both in life and in knowledge. Secondly, certain truths which, in Locke's opinion, are the proper and urgent concern of mankind none the less lie beyond the scope of man's reason, and in this respect also his reason is limited. In dealing with these limitations upon reason it will be necessary to touch upon two problems, first, that of the relations between experience and reason, and, secondly, that of the relations between revelation and reason.

II

To understand properly the nature of this first restriction upon reason it is necessary to consider the character of Locke's rationalism in greater detail. From Descartes Locke has borrowed the conception of knowledge as essentially intuitive, an intuition which pervades mediate knowledge also. This faith in intuition is a faith in reason, whether the words 'intuition' and 'reason' be used synonymously or not. Actually, Locke was wont to use the word 'reason' as equivalent to 'reasoning'. In I. ii. 11 of the *Essay*, for instance, he even contrasts reason with intuition, in denying that such principles as identity are known 'through the use of reason'. And in the chapter on 'Reason'[1] he is obviously thinking of reason as equivalent to reasoning, including inductive reasoning which does not give certainty; although even here he talks of reason as that which perceives

[1] IV. xvii.

the 'necessary and indubitable connexion of all ideas or proofs one to another in each step of any demonstration that produces knowledge'.[1] But it is not his theory of *reasoning* which makes him a rationalist, it is rather this insistence on the possibility of a knowledge which is necessary, infallible, and indubitable, and the further insistence that where demonstration is certain it is so only because it contains an intuitive element. 'In every step reason makes in demonstrative knowledge, there is an intuitive knowledge of that agreement or disagreement it seeks with the next intermediate idea.'[2]

In respect to this central point there is no difference then between the positions of Descartes and Locke. For both an infallible intuition is possible; man can know with complete certainty. But when we turn from the consideration of the knowing to that which it knows, from the subjective side to the objective, profound differences in theory emerge. In Descartes's view *intuitus* must have its own object, and its certainty is as much due to the character of the object as it is to the purity of the faculty. The object of true knowledge is a 'simple nature', wholly clear and wholly distinct. It is clear in the sense that it is transparent through and through, so that nothing is hidden; and it is distinct in the sense that it is completely isolated, so that the mind can comprehend it in its full totality. Now of no objects revealed in sensation can we say that they are clear and distinct in this sense. It is part of Descartes's theory that the 'simple nature' must be a purely intellectual object.

But the object of Locke's intuition is neither simple in this sense nor purely intellectual. He would perhaps agree with Descartes that such an object would be the ideal for intuition if it were possible, and that knowledge would then be a sheer intuition of a sheer intellectual simple. But the sheer simple is not a possible object of knowledge. Descartes himself in the *Regulae* soon finds it necessary to introduce 'simple propositions'. And Locke defines knowledge as 'the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy, of any of our ideas'.[3] Knowledge is of relations, not of simple entities. Gaining a simple idea, on Locke's theory, is not knowing. To know is to perceive a relation, although the relation may very well hold between simple ideas.

[1] IV. xvii. 2. [2] IV. ii. 7. [3] IV. i. 2.

In the second place, the object cannot, in Locke's opinion, be purely intellectual. The relation apprehended must be between ideas, and every idea is empirically derived. It need not be immediately given in experience for it may be that which the mind makes of the immediately given. And it need not be an idea of sensation, for Locke also recognizes reflection (or introspection) as a source of material for knowledge. But all ideas are either themselves given in sensation or reflection, or they are in some way derived from the given of sensation or reflection. Consequently, any relation between ideas is a relation between empirically derived entities. The pure intellectual object of human knowledge is a figment of a false rationalism.

This, then, is the first restriction upon reason. It has to concern itself with materials not known by rational intuition, but given to the mind in sensory or reflective experience. And the extent and significance of this limitation will only be understood if Locke's theory of ideas is recalled. If the ideas were real physical objects, our knowledge, although not of pure intellectual objects, would at least be of relations between real physical things. But Locke does not identify ideas with physical objects. He accepts the theory of representative perception. What we see immediately is a representation 'in the mind' which may or may not copy exactly the external physical object. Locke believes that for the most part the representation, or idea, is not an adequate and exact copy of the external, physical object. For instance, colours, sounds, tastes, and so on, are not in the things themselves. It thus happens that reason works on materials of which we cannot be sure that they do adequately represent the real. It is no certain and indubitable intuition of the real world; it does not even work with adequate representations of the real physical objects in that world. It works with ideas either given to the mind (although the fact that they are given is no guarantee that they truly represent the real) or created through the mind's activity on the ideas given.

The thesis that all ideas are empirically derived is defended energetically in Book II of the *Essay*. Locke shows what ideas we gain in sensation and reflection. Ideas of memory are clearly derived from these first experiences. So also are images, although in imagination we are free to change the order of the

experience and can, for instance, imagine horses with wings. All abstract ideas, again, are abstracted from sense-data and ideas of reflection. However abstract our thought becomes it is never so abstract as to be underived from sensory and reflective experience. Locke gives much attention to the idea of infinity, which seems to be so remote from experience as to owe nothing to it. Yet this conception also, he thinks, is empirically derived. For our conception of infinity is clear only in so far as it means a never-ending progression, whether in space, in time, or in number. And Locke attempts to show that as much positive content as the idea contains is derived from the sensory experience of space, the reflective experience of time, and that experience of unity or oneness which is both sensory and reflective, and which lies at the base of our idea of number. Even our idea of God is derived empirically and can be analysed ultimately into experienced elements. Not that our idea of God is adequate, for God is incomprehensible to mortal minds, but we can only frame an idea of God in terms of sensory and reflective experience.

> All those sublime thoughts which tower above the clouds, and reach as high as heaven itself, take their rise and footing here: in all that great extent wherein the mind wanders in those remote speculations it may seem to be elevated with, it stirs not one jot beyond those ideas which sense or reflection have offered for its contemplation.[1]

No one would claim for Locke that he has proved his empiricist thesis outright in Book II. There are stubborn facts such as the existence in our minds of ideas of substance, of causality, and the like, which he cannot explain entirely in empiricist terms. And it is doubtful whether he does truly answer the objection that the idea of infinity is non-empirical. Yet there is no doubt about Locke's purpose. Again and again he asserts that no idea can be wholly independent of experience. What is not given in, or derived from, experience is not significant. Book II puts forward a theory of meaning. That has meaning which is either immediately experienced in sensation or reflection, or is derived from such an experience.

Now reason, if it is to function at all, has to deal with ideas of this kind, for such ideas alone, in Locke's opinion, form the

[1] II. i. 24.

object of human thought and knowledge. It has been said that Locke forgets this theory in Book IV and reverts to a rationalism which is identical with the Cartesian, not only on the subjective but also on the objective side. And, certainly, if Locke holds in Book IV that the object in knowing is purely intellectual, and is not derived from experience, then that book contradicts Book II. At the same time, the argument that Book IV is rationalist whereas Book II is empiricist, and that, therefore, Book IV contradicts Book II, cannot be admitted to be sound. It is one further illustration of the false view that there is nothing in common between rationalism and empiricism. Locke's rationalism contradicts his empiricism only if it follows Descartes on the objective as well as on the subjective side. But he can assert that knowing is intuiting, and yet also hold that the object of knowledge is a relation between empirically derived ideas. And this is what Locke does assert. He believes that knowing is intuition and demonstration, but he also thinks that all significant objective content is empirically derived. It may follow from this that we shall find few instances of knowing with certainty. And Locke's theory might then be criticized as leading to scepticism, but it cannot be said to be inconsistent.

'But is not his theory of mathematics and morals', it will be asked, 'wholly inconsistent with the empiricism of Book II? Are not the objects of these sciences purely intellectual in his view? Does he not hold that here we are completely independent of experience, and so may have certain, necessary, and universal knowledge? Does he not base the certainty of mathematics and morals on the fact that these sciences are independent of experience?'

We need not here consider Locke's claim that morals can be a science since he nowhere attempts to substantiate it. But it is clear that throughout the opening chapters of Book IV he has mathematics in mind. Most of the instances of certain knowledge which he gives are mathematical. Now in one place he says definitely: 'Mathematical demonstration depends not upon sense'.[1] Certainty is possible in mathematics, because the ideas in this case are, as Locke explains, 'ideas which are their own archetypes', that is to say, they have no reference to anything beyond themselves, they are not representations of

[1] IV. xi. 6.

the external physical objects. Here the mind is concerned solely with the ideas and it intuits relations holding necessarily between them, which relations follow from the nature of the ideas. Surely, it will be said, mathematical ideas are purely intellectual. They are universals, fixed meanings, logical contents, i.e. wholly intellectual objects. To some extent Locke would, of course, agree, but if the objection means that we have in this instance an idea not derived from experience, he would disagree. In Book II he is at great pains to show that mathematical ideas are empirically derived, and nowhere in Book IV does he say that mathematical ideas are purely intellectual. He must have meant that they are what he explains them to be in Book II. It would be easier to understand his position if he had given a satisfactory account of universals, particularly of mathematical universals. But he does not do so. None the less, nothing that he says necessitates the view that mathematical objects as conceived by him are purely intellectual objects. For although mathematical truths are not discovered in sensing, and although they hold true whether the real world outside confirms their truth or not, yet here, as everywhere else, the content of the idea is derived empirically. The mathematical universal is an abstraction from the given of experience. This, it seems to me, is what Locke wishes to say, and Books II and IV may be quite consistent. It should be added, however, that Locke has not shown how precisely the mathematical idea is related to those experiences upon which it is ultimately based.

Thus, in spite of this first restriction upon reason, certainty is still possible on Locke's theory, whenever we can know necessary relations between ideas, either directly in intuition or indirectly through demonstration. But the spheres in which certainty is possible are indeed very limited. In particular, certain knowledge becomes impossible, if Locke's empiricism is sound, where perhaps we most need it, namely, in our attempt to know the world of real entities around us, both physical and mental. A *science* of nature becomes impossible. The only object for intuition is the ideal. Therefore, we never intuit the real: it is forever hidden from us. We cannot know the internal constitution of real physical objects, for these are not represented adequately in our ideas. And as a consequence we cannot

know (*a*) any necessary relations within things. We do not know *how* qualities cohere in a thing (if this is a proper description of what occurs) nor what qualities do necessarily cohere in a particular case. In Locke's language, the coexistences of qualities cannot be known by us. Nor (*b*) can we know necessary relations between things, for instance, the causal relation, if there be such. Our inquiries in these realms never reach certainty. We do not here rationally intuit the truth, but we follow (as best we may) the guidance of experience. In our experience certain ideas always come together and this guides us in our framing of complex ideas of substances. Again, particular groups of qualities are frequently repeated in our experience, and we are led to think of physical objects as divided according to fixed natural types. In the same way, as the consequence of our experience, we generalize on the probable interactions which occur between things, although we do not know the inner nature of these things to account for these interactions, nor do we clearly understand the nature of the interactions themselves. It has not been sufficiently noticed in the past how very guarded are Locke's statements in connexion with causality. But his language in the *Essay* when he discusses causality suggests that its nature was a complete mystery to him. When we say we know causal laws, all we mean is that we have 'constantly observed' some new substances or new qualities of substances to begin to exist after 'the due application' of some other being. But of the true relation here we know nothing. And our causal law is merely an empirical generalization.

In the same way we are ignorant of the true inner nature of that immaterial substance—if it is an immaterial substance—which we call our minds. Psychology can never be a science in the strict sense; all its laws will be empirical generalizations. Probability in this realm also is the most we can expect. Thus the knowledge which is intuition, the true knowledge of the rationalist, is possible only in a very limited sphere. We enjoy no certain knowledge of real existences whether material or mental. We are confined to probabilities.

One reservation, however, must be made, although it does not change our general conclusion. The discussion up to this point is based on the theory of knowledge set forward in the

opening chapters of Book IV. But that book contains another theory (in chapters ix and xi), according to which we have an intuitive knowledge of the existence of various entities. Every man intuits—Locke actually uses this word—the existence of his own self. Whether this intuition is precisely of the same kind as the intuition, for instance, in mathematics is not clear. If it is, it is so on the subjective side only; for the object now is not an idea but a real entity existing in nature. Locke also holds that we know the existence of physical things in 'sensitive knowledge'. This type of knowledge, again, is not clearly described. We are sure that the sun exists now when we see it, but we do not possess this assurance when we only imagine it. Hume says that the difference is entirely in the ideas, the one coming with greater force and vivacity than the other. But Locke seems to think that here we break out beyond ideas and know the real existence of real things. It is the realist in him overcoming the representationalist. Yet even if we do enjoy in this case an intuition of the real, this intuitive (and so rational) knowledge of the *existence* of things is not an intuitive knowledge of the *nature* of these things. To make natural science and psychology possible we should need knowledge of the essential and universal nature of things. This the intuition of existence in chapters ix and xi would not provide. The main restriction upon rationalism remains.

Thus we conclude that Locke is both a rationalist and an empiricist at one and the same time, and it is possible to argue that he is both without being inconsistent. But his empiricism limits his rationalism radically. Man's reason can and does gain certain knowledge. Mathematics is an instance of this. But in our knowledge of the external world and of minds, reason is hampered by the fact that the materials of knowledge are ideas, and that no intuition into the nature of real existences is possible. We must wait upon experience and learn from it. It may be possible that Locke thought we intuited the *existence* of particular objects in the real world; even so the knowledge we have of the nature of these objects, of their inner relations and of their inter-relations is probable only, the outcome of careful and systematic observation. By no intuition and by no pure *a priori* demonstration can we determine with certainty the character of the real world. This is the first respect in which

reason is restricted, and it cannot be denied that this restriction is most serious in its consequences.

III

The second restriction is that which Locke found to be necessary in the sphere of religion. To-day the debate between natural and revealed religion is no longer of general concern to philosophers, but in Locke's age it was felt to be crucial. And the position which Locke adopted in this debate illustrates excellently his views on the limitations of human reason. For while in general he sided with the rationalists, he yet could not believe that reason of itself was an adequate mentor in the religious life. For just as the mind in its dealings with the world of material objects has to wait on sensory experience and cannot by reason alone know the truth, so in religion also reason must be supported and supplemented by a non-rational source of information, namely, revelation.

There are certain truths, essential for the religious life, which we should never know were they not revealed. The writings of Locke nowhere contain an explicit analysis of the concept of revelation. But his use of the term shows that he meant by it a direct imparting of information by God to man. It is only rarely that God chooses to reveal a truth to mankind in this way, and what he does then reveal is of the very greatest importance. 'It cannot be expected that God should send one into the world on purpose to inform men of things indifferent and of small moment, or that are knowable by the use of their natural faculties'.[1] But Locke does not inform us as to the way in which God imparts this information. The one point that is clear is that it does not come through the ordinary channels. Actually all man's faculties are given to him by God, so that any knowledge through them is, from this point of view, revealed knowledge, but revelation itself is none the less a distinct and peculiar source of information. As Locke explains in the *Essay*[2]: 'When we find out an idea, by whose intervention we discover the connexion of two others, this is a revelation from God to us by the voice of reason. For we then come to know a truth that we did not know before. When God declares any truth to us, this is a revelation to us by the voice of his

[1] *A Discourse on Miracles*, *Works*, iii. 472.

[2] IV. vii. 11.

Spirit and we are advanced in our knowledge.' Both may be said to be instances of divine revelation, but the second is revelation in a very special sense, 'by the voice of his Spirit'. Locke himself claims no special revelations in this sense, although he does claim in the *Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity* to know something of the guidance of the Spirit in his effort to discover the true meaning of the Scriptures.[1] But revelation itself is a mystery to Locke, which he cannot explain. His own experiences in the religious life, and his conviction of the worth of the revelations which have been made from time to time in history, make it impossible for him to doubt that God does occasionally speak directly to man. None the less he does not attempt to explain how this occurs. But he adds that when knowledge is thus gained no more certain knowledge can be conceived. It carries with it 'assurance beyond doubt, evidence beyond exception'. Thus Locke recognizes a source of full assurance amounting to indubitable certainty in a non-natural faculty, the power of receiving a message directly from God.

But this knowledge is vouchsafed to few men. The mass of men learn from the few and accept the information which they give. This acceptance of revelation on the word of another is what Locke calls *faith*. He defines it as 'the assent to any proposition not made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God in some extraordinary way of communication'.[2] Now, while no knowledge can be more certain than revelation, if it is truly revelation (for then it is the word of God), faith is not so certain. It is believing that this is the word of God. And, as Locke explains to Stillingfleet: 'with what assurance soever of believing I assent to any article of faith, so that I steadfastly venture my all upon it, it is still but believing. Bring it to certainty and it ceases to be faith'.[3] Thus faith is never complete certainty.

In the religious realm we believe certain things, then, not because reason proves them to be true, but because they are either directly revealed to us or, more usually, to some other inspired person whose word we accept. But this does not mean that reason has no place in the religious life. On the contrary, in no realm is reason more valuable, both as a source of

[1] *Works*, ii. 691. [2] IV. xviii. 2. [3] *Second Letter*, *Works*, i. 430.

information, and as the critic of information alleged to have been gained by means of revelation.

As has been explained, it is only rarely that truth is gained through revelation. For the rest, man depends upon reason. And Locke believed that reason could lead us to many truths even in the religious realm. Morality, which was, in Locke's opinion, closely bound up with religion, could be demonstrated rationally, and demonstrated in such a way that all men would be compelled to admit its truth. Similarly, the central conceptions of theology, for instance, that God exists, that he is an omniscient and omnipotent Spirit, that he is just and yet merciful, can all be proved rationally. Where rational knowledge of this sort is possible it is to be preferred to revelation. Not that we can doubt true revelation if we are sure of its truth, but it is difficult to be sure; whereas if a thing is proved rationally there can be no room for doubt. For this reason Locke prefers natural religion to revealed—in so far as a natural religion is possible. The point is made plain in Locke's discussion in the *Essay* of the difficulty men have in interpreting the Scriptures because of the inevitable imperfections of words.

> We ought to magnify his goodness [he remarks, in concluding the passage] that he hath spread before all the world, such legible characters of his works and providence, and given all mankind so sufficient a light of reason, that they to whom the written word never came, could not (whenever they set themselves to search) either doubt of the being of a God or of the obedience due to Him. Since, then, the precepts of natural religion are plain, and very intelligible to all mankind, and seldom seem to be controverted; and other revealed truths which are conveyed to us by books and languages, are liable to the common and natural obscurities and difficulties incident to words: methinks it would become us to be more careful and diligent in observing the former, and less magisterial, positive, and imperious in imposing our own sense and interpretations on the latter.[1]

It is not at all strange, in view of such passages as these, that Toland, Collins, and those Deists who, after Locke's day, defended a natural religion as the only religion worthy of the respect of men, should have claimed an ally in Locke. His desire to establish a rational and natural religion was as great

[1] III. ix. 23.

as theirs. He cannot, however, be classed with the Deists, for he did not believe that all the truths necessary for a religious life could be gained rationally. Yet he is sure that many such truths can be so gained, and where a rational knowledge is possible he prefers it to any other.

Reason is also useful in the religious life as the critic of revelation. In his youth Locke had come into contact with 'enthusiasts' who claimed a divine origin for any mad fancies that chanced to enter their heads. Reason can reject such claims outright. But it also tests the more serious claims to revelation. It is able to test these because all revelation must be conformable to reason. This is a fundamental principle on which Locke never wavers. Reason and revelation, since they both reveal the truth, cannot contradict each other. Consequently, if an alleged revelation is found to be inconsistent with reason, it can be denied. It is no true revelation. Locke will not accept the principle: *Credo quia impossibile est.* If reason teaches him that a thing is impossible, by no act of faith can he then believe it. If a tenet is rationally impossible then belief in it is equally impossible. In this sense, also, Locke is a thoroughgoing rationalist.

But Locke does not agree with those who hold that the tenets of religion, particularly of the Christian religion, are irrational, that is to say, opposed to reason. The whole aim of *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, as its title suggests, is to show that there is nothing in that religion contrary to reason. Of course, much therein is revealed. Some truths which reason could have discovered were as a matter of fact revealed, simply because men would have remained so long in ignorance had not God chosen to reveal these truths to them directly. The history of mankind shows

> by the little that has hitherto been done in it, that 'tis too hard a task for unassisted reason to establish morality in all its parts upon its true foundation, with a clear and convincing light. And 'tis at least a surer and a shorter way to the apprehensions of the vulgar and mass of mankind, that one manifestly sent from God . . . should . . . tell them their duties and require their obedience, than leave it to the long and sometimes intricate deductions of reason to be made out to them.[1]

[1] *Works*, ii. 575.

But there are also other truths which are 'above reason', and these can only be known by revelation. Reason unguided by 'some light from above' would never know them. None the less, since they are true they do not contradict reason, and, so far as reason goes, it confirms them.

We may thus conclude that Locke is a rationalist even in the realm of religious experience. He trusts reason in this realm as in every other. Whenever possible he uses it (and it alone) to discover truths. He uses it again to test and check information which comes through revelation. Nothing that contradicts reason is true. Nevertheless, he also adds that reason of itself is not enough. Revelation is essential since some truths lie beyond the grasp of human reason. They do not contradict it. It would be best if they could be rationally known by us, as higher intelligences no doubt do know them. But this in our case is impossible. Here then is another restriction; some truths which must be known by us are 'beyond reason'.

IV

In these two respects, therefore, Locke's rationalism is limited. The real world is not known directly by rational intuition. What we intuit are relations between empirically derived ideas. Secondly, in the religious sphere, the mind seems to possess a source of information other than reason, and in this way knows—if 'knows' is the right word—what lies beyond sensory and reflective experience.

In spite of these limitations, however, Locke's rationalism remains. For, in the first place, his empiricism does not rule out rationalism. There are two possibilities in this connexion. Even if we considered that the opening chapters of Book IV of the *Essay* contradicted the rest of that work, the presence of a rationalist element in Locke's philosophy would still have to be affirmed. But the rationalist element would then be incompatible with the empiricism also present, and Locke's philosophy would be finally inconsistent. His rationalism would in this case presumably be identical in all respects with that of Descartes, not only as to the knowing but also as to the objects of knowing. On the other hand, if we interpret the *Essay* in a more consistent fashion, and suppose that Locke views knowledge as an intuition, but an intuition of relations between

empirically derived ideas, his theory of knowledge would still be rationalist. Only in this case Book IV would be an attempt —although not a very thorough or successful one—to synthesize rationalism and empiricism. But in either case, whether the opening chapters of Book IV are inconsistent with the rest of the *Essay* or not, rationalism remains as a part of Locke's philosophy. His empiricism is either bluntly inconsistent with his rationalism or it is a limitation of it. In neither case does it deny it.

Nor again does the second limitation rule out rationalism. Rational knowledge is a fact according to Locke's theory, even though on occasion we also know through revelation. The assertion of revelation in no way contradicts a rationalism which affirms that we know with certainty by reason. At the same time, if we do admit that revelation is a source of certain knowledge, Locke's rationalism is affected in one respect. At the commencement of this article a distinction was made between two kinds of rationalism. On one theory reason is the *only* source of knowledge and the *only* infallible guide in the quest for certainty. Now if Locke affirms—as he does affirm—that revelation gives certain knowledge, then he cannot be a rationalist in this sense. The Deists, who denied that any knowledge other than the rational was possible, that is to say, denied revelation, might have been rationalists in both of the senses mentioned above. But Locke admitted revelation, and so admits another source of knowledge. Nevertheless, he would have regarded knowledge through revelation as of a most exceptional kind, and one which occurred very rarely in human experience. And though it is wholly certain, yet it is doubtful whether it can rightly be termed 'knowledge'.

Thus in spite of the groupings of historians of philosophy we must regard Locke as a rationalist. And his rationalism is fundamental, empiricism being but a modification of it. To those who are acquainted only with the *Essay* (and, perhaps, only with Book II of the *Essay*) this fact is not obvious. But it will become wholly clear if the rest of his work is taken into account. Moreover, rationalism was more than an abstract theory for him; it was a way of life. His biographers tell us that he tried to live his life in accordance with the dictates of reason, and this in spite of the fact that his own emotional life

was strong. His love of good company, his generosity, his affections, were powerful forces in his life. Yet he distrusted the emotions, as did most of his contemporaries, and feared the appeal to the emotions in poetry, in rhetoric, or in religion. If it is true that the thought of the eighteenth century rests more on Locke's philosophy than on any other, then its foundation is most assuredly a rationalism. And yet one must always return to the point I wish to make in this paper, that it was a rationalism slowly becoming aware of its own limitations. I do not mean that Locke was the herald of the Romantic Movement. Such language in the circumstances would be far too strong. And certainly there is nothing of the romantic in Locke himself. But from the first Locke's rationalism goes hand in hand with a serious (although, no doubt, uncertain) criticism of rationalism. If he does not herald romanticism he certainly heralds the scepticism of Hume and the criticism of Kant.

ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

By H. S. GOODHART-RENDEL

THE history of architecture after the Renaissance has commonly been written as the history of architects, and if ever this method could be proper it would be when writing of seventeenth-century buildings in England. With Inigo Jones at the beginning of that century and Sir Christopher Wren at its end the work of all others seems dwarfed. John Webb and Roger Pratt may stand up bravely, making the most of their size, but the Gerbiers, the Talmans, the Mays, and their many nameless rivals, are forgotten without any injustice that is readily apparent.

Nevertheless, the biographical method is false. In a true history of architecture lesser men like these will be seen to have made Jones and Wren as much as Jones and Wren made them. Smaller and greater they all followed the same star, and in its light were little conscious of following each other. That star was Vitruvius, not the pedantic little engineer that was the real Vitruvius, but the idealized god of the great Vitruvians, the Italian scholar-artists who read into his rules the authority of ancient Rome. To them the Renaissance seemed to bring back not ancient architecture but architecture itself; and here must be the key to architecture's mysteries. Here was what has since been well called an *architecture chiffrée*, an art with elements numerically proportionable one to the other, an art in which by rule and formula all suitable notions could be elegantly and infallibly expressed. The possibility of such an art did not then seem unlikely, nor even now can that possibility be denied. It appeared reasonable that an original notion should often be as well incubated by rules and formulae as directly by its originator; the notion in some kinds of art is everything. Experience shows, however, that art so produced is generally sickly; that rules chill as often as they warm, congest as often as they liberate.

Without that experience John Evelyn could conceive an intellectual architecture compared with which our Gothic cathedrals

were 'not worthy the name'. If we disagree with him in this we disagree with all his contemporaries. 'Architecture' is a word that, like the word 'gentleman', has lately suffered a sentimental blur in definition. 'Let me see if Philip can be a little gentleman. . . .' Let us see if buildings can be little works of architecture. It is too late to insist that Philip either is or is not a little gentleman and that the Heralds' College should decide this rather than the Archbishop of Canterbury. It may also be too late to insist that buildings either are or are not works of architecture. Yet our customary inclusion in architecture of all honest building that has pictorial value would have surprised and disgusted the educated man of the seventeenth century. To him honest building was a preparation for, and pictorial effect an accident of, an autonomous art in which columns and entablatures, arches, and imposts, each with its fixed proportions and its proper emotional and historical associations, were composed in regular arrangements of more or less complexity. In a work of architecture nothing might be fortuitous, nor could any appearance be justified by a necessity that did not itself appear. Columns and entablatures, arches and imposts, might themselves be absent if all was proportioned and spaced as their presence would have dictated. If, however, the proportion and spacing of a building were decided by chance, by mere utility, or by constructional necessity, no elegance of detail, no picturesqueness of contour, could make that building a work of architecture.

From holding that rank, therefore, all Gothic buildings were debarred. The early buildings of the Renaissance had a claim to it that was grudgingly admitted. Their façades might be barbarous, their classicism incorrect, but their plans were regularly disposed, their parts combined in symmetrical wholes. The Gothic principle in complex structures—and every structure is complex that contains more than one compartment—had been to design by aggregation. Each compartment was normally symmetrical in itself, but the result of their combination was left almost entirely to chance. The Roman principle, revived at the Renaissance, was to design by subdivision. A symmetrical whole was partitioned to serve various uses, or to those uses buildings in a symmetrical group were severally allotted. Thus, at Wadham College, Oxford, although

the façades are little affected by Roman revivalism, the hall and the antechapel are exactly alike outside, losing all their separate individuality in the twin roles they play as parts of the general design. Nothing could be more radically different from this than the Gothic combination of hall and chapel at New College, where in a design otherwise uniform the hall has small windows and the chapel large. To William of Wykeham's architect the two buildings were separate entities brought into line: to the designer of Wadham College the two buildings were merely pieces of an entity preconceived.

The nature of Renaissance planning, therefore, with its rejection of all loose aggregation, entitled its buildings to be considered as works of architecture in a sense that Evelyn would possibly have denied to the Erechtheum or the Propylaea at Athens. Yet all the manor houses, the market halls, the hospitals, the colleges with which the Renaissance swelled our architectural treasury must have seemed barbarous enough to the scholars of their time. Regularly unified their plans might be; but in the forms of their masses, the piercings of their walls, the disposition of their ornament, Gothic freedom was still untamed.

Recent research has reduced the number of actual buildings designed by Inigo Jones to a very few; but the Queen's House at Greenwich justifies by itself his repute as the man who brought the new art to England. In Italy it would have been ordinary enough, but in England it was phenomenal. Its architecture is Vitruvian, Italian, and—which should be particularly remarked—Palladian. Nothing in the least like it had been seen in this country before, and it was long before it ceased to be in strong contrast with the general manner of our building. The Banqueting House in Whitehall also is Palladian; and it is the purity of its Palladian flavour that supports the evidence, documentarily imperfect, of Jones, not Webb, having designed the garden front at Wilton.

Palladio has been the Vitruvian evangelist chosen most frequently by Englishmen, and has been responsible for much of the particular character of our post-Renaissance architecture compared with the French architecture inspired more largely by Vignola. Palladio in general was a purist, inventing rather by making new combinations of Roman elements than by any audacious variation of those elements themselves. His are the

Italian formulae least difficult for a foreigner to master, the architectural virtues most easy to understand in a design upon paper, the ingenuities that delight particularly the curious and scientific mind. His also is the best and clearest of the treatises in which Vitruvian regulation was extended and adapted to the practice of his age.

To the people of its time the Queen's House cannot have seemed very cheerful. Late Elizabethans and Early Jacobeans had exaggerated more and more the size of the windows they put into grand houses, the houses of people who could have as many fires as they needed. In those parts of France where the climate is not very different from ours large windows also had come to be designed by everybody. Italians neither needed nor procured them, and the windows of the Queen's House do not greatly exceed in area the proportions customary in Italy. The roof of the house also was neither an affair of gables nor a flat terrace, the two customary alternatives in Jacobean architecture, but was low pitched in the true Palladian manner. In France, on the other hand, daylight was always put before architectural modishness, and the great roofs of national tradition were hardly ever sacrificed, whatever the changes of style that fashion might bring.

Inigo Jones was always more a designer of stage scenery than an architect. In his backgrounds for masques he may have made Bibiena-like perspectives, but all that we know of his built architecture is very little an affair of mass and grouping and very much an affair of façades and decoration. The Covent Garden church was a theoretic Tuscan temple with a portico and sham door at the end opposite the real entrance. The Banqueting House is one great room veneered with a two-storeyed façade that implies a non-existent vertical division of each storey into three. The portico and other additions that he made to old St. Paul's were but superficial adornments, and the water-gate of York House is a monument essentially scenic and, as it were, considerably below life-size. The garden front of Wilton, though actual enough, suggests the neighbourhood less of Salisbury than of Vicenza. Stoke Bruerne was no less Palladian; and it is only in the Covent Garden piazza with the houses that surmount it that Jones has given us a design in which use and situation seem to have been fully taken into account.

If we wish to find English parallels for the French architecture which while assuming the formal livery of Vitruvius remains convenient architecture and remains essentially French, we must look beyond the works of Jones, at such houses as Coleshill, Chevening, and Kingston Lacy. These, and others like them, would probably not have come into being had not the researches of Jones led their architects out of the maze of medieval tradition and Elizabethan conceits in which our building was involved at the opening of the seventeenth century. Yet they differ from his work in being essentially English and not at all Palladian. For many years most of them have been supposed to be designed by him on the false authority of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, the book compiled by Colin Campbell, a protégé of the great Lord Burlington. Repelled by the licence of Wren and the romanticism of Vanbrugh, Burlington and his disciples tried to establish Jones as an English Palladio by the simple device of attributing to him all the best anonymous buildings raised during his lifetime. Many of these modern inquiry has made anonymous no longer, and there is now no reason to suppose that Jones ever built a house of the Coleshill kind in his life. Yet this kind of house, with its ample windows regularly spaced round its simple rectangular mass, its single roof hipped and steeply pitched, its prominent chimneys symmetrically arranged, and its small crowning cupola, is what most lovers of architecture have come to regard wrongly as characteristic of Inigo Jones and rightly as the most important English contribution to the domestic architecture of the seventeenth century.

In saying this, the palatial mansions of that century's close have not been forgotten. The works of Vanbrugh and of Hawksmoor belong in date to the eighteenth century rather than to the seventeenth, but their nature puts them more properly in the age of Jones and Wren than in that of Lord Burlington and Robert Adam. Yet these works are representative of nothing but themselves, they sprang from the painters' conception of the picturesque and they found hardly any imitators. Other great houses, notably Chatsworth, are not far enough from the Coleshill type to make it untrue that the normal English house of the seventeenth century consisted of one large block, much greater in depth than French houses

were wont to be, and unaccompanied by wings or subordinate pavilions.

Smaller houses were like the greater ones, although their designers were frequently apt to show by their unsophistication in proportion and detail that the radical departure they had made from pre-Renaissance building ways had not yet permeated the whole of their art. Vitruvian elements, such as pilasters and entablatures, appeared sporadically round doorways and elsewhere, without any exact relation with the design as a whole. That design was simple rather than complex, was in other words one unit subdivided rather than a collection of several; but in other respects might not greatly differ from the more regular among the houses of the preceding age.

From the naïveté of much of this rustic classicism a particular charm emanates; but this quality is involuntary, and in consequence has eluded utterly those imitators who have consciously tried to recapture it. The pleasure we take in it is sentimental rather than aesthetic and one that in the seventeenth century would have seemed nonsensical. What strike us as quaint variations of normal forms struck contemporary critics as what they actually are—mistakes, which the perpetrator would have avoided had he known how. When buildings came to be drawn and engraved such mistakes were usually minimized by the draughtsman, who performed without question the kind office of the retoucher in the photographic studio. *Vitruvius Britannicus* is a publication of the early eighteenth century, but its flattering falsifications of several seventeenth-century buildings would almost certainly have been approved by those buildings' original designers. To us they have destroyed charm, but to them they would have disguised regrettable deformities.

The greatest English public building of the early seventeenth century would have been Whitehall Palace had John Webb's design for it ever been translated from paper into stone. The greatest actually achieved was the King Charles block of Greenwich Hospital, also due to John Webb. It is tempting, in view of the long-held belief that both of these were designed by Inigo Jones, to find in them evidence of that master's inspiration, more especially since Webb was Jones's pupil and connexion by marriage; but there is no need to do so. Webb seems in these to have become as convinced a Palladian as his master,

and there is little in either that could not find a precedent in Vicenza. The Greenwich block was a *tour de force* for an Englishman at its time, and it is surprising how little it falls short of the excellence that Italian proficiency would have given it as a matter of course. Its great Corinthian order has too little to stand upon, and in the wings too much to carry, but for such architectural defects it atones pictorially by its beautiful colour and its agreeable decoration. Nevertheless, however great its importance in our national art-history, neither it nor the design for Whitehall Palace can be expected to attract the foreigner whose interest is centred upon art rather than upon nationality.

In our smaller public buildings of approximately the same date we produced values that are more nearly universal. The old Ashmolean Museum at Oxford is typical of a modest architecture, widespread over the country, in which the informality is no more than is appropriate to use and situation, and in which the lack of subtlety may be accounted a positive merit. All through the seventeenth century, market-houses, school-houses, alms-houses, colleges were built in which the new science of architecture went little further than to arrange traditional elements in an urbane and orderly manner; and we are justified in feeling that nothing more was required of it. Underneath the accidental and pictorial beauties of these buildings there is architecture *quant. suff.* More might have made the mixture less palatable.

Church-building in any but the last quarter of the seventeenth century could only consist of necessary rebuilding except in rare and special circumstances. Inigo Jones's church at Covent Garden[1] had no immediate imitators, even among the very few churches that can have been put upon new sites. Rebuildings, however, were numerous; more numerous than is now commonly supposed, most of them having themselves succumbed to vindictive rebuilding by indignant Victorians. Among the few churches originally founded at this time that of St. John at Leeds is the most widely known. The mixture of

[1] The present church (of St. Paul) reproduces very closely the forms of the original church, but in different materials. The new church has red brick walls with stone dressings and a slated roof. The old church, 'the handsomest barn in England', appears to have been plastered outside, and to have had a roof of pantiles.

Gothic and Renaissance styles in its form and details is curious, but not productive of any particular aesthetic value. What in this building is of great significance and interest is its plan, which has the form of a large simple rectangle bisected longitudinally by a row of pillars and arches. These pillars and arches exist only in order to enable the church to be covered by two parallel roofs, it being too broad for country carpentry to cover easily in one span. Perhaps if a single roof had been possible a double one might still have been preferred, as a means of preserving the customary proportion between breadth of roof and height of wall without making the walls actually very high. This we cannot tell. Soon after the building of St. John's, church roofs were to become single, and walls high enough to support spacious side galleries; but at St. John's no side galleries were wanted. All English churches of any size had been more or less obstructed by pillars, so that if the pillars at St. John's were not welcomed they were easily tolerated. Nothing need be observed in them here beyond the fact that they divide the building into two undifferentiated halves, and that for this division there is no reason whatever beyond convenience of structure.

The common and foolish description of churches like St. John's, Leeds, as having 'two parallel naves' or, worse still, as having 'a nave with a single aisle as large as itself', shows how easily stupidity can overlook an essential point of principle. 'A nave with a single aisle as large as itself'—and such naves do exist—must inevitably be two units in aggregation; a nave with a row of pillars down its middle is one unit bisected. Although this difference between planning by aggregation and planning by subdivision is the essential work of the Renaissance, yet bisected naves existed in Gothic times in churches built by the Order of Jacobins. The Jacobins like the English Protestants were great preachers and wished, as the English did also, that their churches should excel as auditories. The bisected plan has the remarkable advantage that if the altar and the pulpit each be stood across the bisector, half in one half of the building and half in the other, they can be seen by everybody in the building without exception, provided the passage between the seats be made where it naturally would be made—down the middle of the building, with the pillars standing in it. The

little church at Compton Winyates, built during the Commonwealth, is also of this plan; with the seats arranged otherwise but with the communion-table placed centrally as it should be, against the east wall. The plan remained common in England even as late as the eighteenth century (for example, in Burton Church in the Wirral of Cheshire) and seems to occur very rarely anywhere else.

In churches such as that of St. Catherine Cree, and the old parish church at Hammersmith (now destroyed), as well as in certain of the Oxford chapels, some architectural reflection may be found of the conservatism of Laudian churchmanship; but in the main the churches of the seventeenth century were intended primarily as preaching-houses in which the sacraments would be administered infrequently and entirely without ceremony. The form represented in different varieties by St. Anne's, Soho, and by the parish church at Northampton, will serve to typify them all. Not many of Wren's London churches can be taken as expressions of their builder's ideals; most of them are the best that their extremely ingenious designer could make of some cramped old site, little suited to the kind of building required of him. Where they are something more positive than this they do not depart far from the central type of a large room surrounded on three sides by galleries and having a small recess at the east end for the altar. The purely architectural interest of all but a few of them is slight.

To write of St. Paul's Cathedral is to write of Wren's character and peculiarities; and obviously some mention of them is inescapable in any architectural résumé of our seventeenth century. Wren can either be represented as an architect of transcendent genius whose every building was a lapse from grace, or as a man of all-round greatness who managed to put a wonderful amount of that greatness into an art whose nature he mistook and whose principles he misinterpreted. In St. Paul's that greatness is extremely impressive: the conception of the whole building may be illogical and unduly complicated, the internal design of the central space an unsuccessful attempt to do an undesirable impossibility, but the external contour of the dome and the massing of the choir and transepts are superb.

If the *architecture chiffrée* of the neo-Vitruvians tended to

reduce architecture to arithmetic, Wren's love of ingenuity for ingenuity's sake made him often less an architect than a conjurer. The notion that every building has its natural shape never seems to have occurred to him; or if it did occur to him it inspired him generally with an impish wish to change every natural shape for another. In the 'model' design for St. Paul's, screen walls in the shape of concave quadrants concealed all the articulation of chapels and vestibules between the arms of the cross, and gave to the exterior the one shape from which nobody would ever have supposed that a circular dome could rise. In St. Paul's, as it is built, the exterior is everywhere at variance with the interior, windows are simulated that could not exist, windows that must exist are dissimulated as far as may be, and a sham storey with no roof to it is built over the greater part of the aisles. Now the post-Renaissance architectural method at its best will sometimes demand the simulation or the dissimulation of particulars in the interest of general truth, and will also tolerate the complete suppression of truth in a fantasy that is self-sufficient and capable of imposing its own laws. It cannot, however, justify the displayed ingenuity of the impossibility made almost credible, the incompatibles nearly reconciled, the constructional necessity apparently flouted and secretly provided against. Yet this sort of ingenuity was Wren's especial joy and the most constant characteristic in all his designing. His pleasure in it seems to have been purely intellectual, akin to that found by many of his contemporaries in elaborate verbal conceits; and to those who like puzzles it has proved highly communicable. It is not, however, a pleasure properly aesthetic.

Wren's work has been catalogued and illustrated and criticized so exhaustively that particular buildings need hardly be mentioned here. He was no Palladian student like Jones, choosing apparently to learn rather from buildings than from books, and he never went to Italy at all. He designed few if any private houses, and, as far as is known, no church outside London and Westminster. At St. Paul's and in his great works for the King he collected, employed, and in some measure educated, a host of skilled artist-workmen whose admirable traditions both sobered and enriched our way of building for many years. His astonishing personality stimulated other men

to surpass themselves in his service, and no man has ever been a better judge than he of the work done for him by others.

The work of Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor already referred to forms an episode by itself, which, although belonging by nature to the seventeenth rather than to the eighteenth century, can nevertheless be disregarded in any general account. Without their work the seventeenth century appears as a time when through great political upheavals methods of architecture did not change very much. The Renaissance principles of design by subdivision and of bilateral symmetry were accepted at the beginning of the century and unchallenged at its close. Subject to these principles, architects and builders were on the whole conservative, keeping Palladianism on tap for great occasions, but ordinarily going easy with the Orders and providing an area of window glass suitable not to Italy but to our own dark winters. The reign of the great amateurs was not yet.

Jones, the scene-painter, and Wren, the scientist; these in the seventeenth century were the two external forces that burst into an art hitherto unaccustomed to invasion from outside. In Italy the mason-architects of the Middle Ages had long been deposed by painters, sculptors, theoretic engineers, and classical savants, but in France mostly and in England almost altogether, building was still in the charge of men who built. Their work, by the infusion of Renaissance doctrine, had become consciously architecture, but the conception of the architect as one whose art was purely formal, as is that of the sculptor, was far from their minds. Yet these were the men who made our tradition, and although there might be an Inigo Jones or a Wren to lead them these were the men who immediately moulded our style. The architectural history of the seventeenth century in our country is not to be read at Greenwich, at Kensington, at Hampton Court, but in every town and village where simple regular buildings, houses perhaps, or schools, or market-halls, reveal to us their date by an orderliness not possessed by similar buildings of an earlier age.

LEIBNIZ AND THE FITNESS OF THINGS

By L. J. RUSSELL

I

ANY undergraduate will tell you that Leibniz started to build the world out of entirely self-contained and independent monads, and that then, realizing that such a disconnected plurality of substances would not constitute a world, he was compelled to bring in God by a kind of afterthought to pre-establish a harmony between them.

Put in this crude way as if it referred to the mental history of Leibniz, the statement is grotesque, for in fact Leibniz was convinced of the harmony of the universe and of its pre-establishment by God long before he was clear about the independence of individual substances.

The statement may reflect the more sober contention that if at any point in the process of system-building you make too sharp a separation between any of your materials you will find yourself sooner or later forced to link them together by some kind of arbitrary process. Even this contention, however, is out of place as a reflection on the thought of Leibniz. There is a logically possible type of philosophy which could be called a monadology, and which illustrates the contention; but in the actual thought of Leibniz it is precisely the opposite difficulty which has to be met, viz. that if you start in your system-building by linking your materials too closely together you find yourself sooner or later compelled to separate them by a process which is likely to turn out too drastic. Historically the Monadology is an attempt, within the bounds of rationalism, to preserve some measure of independence for created substances.

This has of course been recognized by the commentators. The statement of Leibniz, 'Spinoza would be right if it were not for my monads',[1] has been given due prominence. What Leibniz was trying to avoid, however, was not merely a malady which he supposed to afflict Spinoza. It was a danger which

[1] To Bourguet, Dec. 1714 (Gerhardt, *L.'s Phil. Werke*, iii. 575). Henceforward referred to as G.

threatened any thinker in the seventeenth century who sympathized with the new science.

The new science was based on the principle that to understand the nature of any particular thing you must look not only within the thing to its constituents, but beyond it to the universal stream of forces in which those constituents are bathed. The physics of Descartes brought into a single system the stars and the dust of earth, and its effect was to dissolve away the independence of material things and make them mere eddies in the cosmic whirlpool. Although Descartes tried to secure the mind of man against a similar dissolution, yet the growing interest in psychology and the progress of the idea of universal law led naturally to the suggestion that individual minds were immersed in an ocean of mind, perhaps even parts of it. The text 'In Him we live and move and have our being' took on a new and more literal significance. The tendency is shown in Malebranche as clearly as in Spinoza. It is expressed in Locke's statement that all things are retainers to the rest of nature[1]; and while from this point of view particular things gain significance through the light playing round and upon them, their individuality is in danger of dissolving under near scrutiny into a mere interplay of cross lights.

The tendency to interpret particular things in terms of processes and characteristics belonging to the system as a whole was felt very strongly by Leibniz. His pictures of the universe in the period 1666–76 (age 20–30) are almost entirely dominated by it. He never went so far as to treat the individuality of the mind as a mere appearance, or to take away from individual minds all capacity for contributing to the changes in the universe; but at times he came perilously close to an account of the activity of God which left nothing over for particular individuals to do.

2. Consider some of his statements in those early years. In a letter to his old Leipzig professor Thomasius[2] defending the 'moderns' against the scholastics, he mentions as one of the advantages of the new view that it opens the way to a more immediate and direct proof of the existence of God. The scholastics gave to things an inner activity or capacity for

[1] *Essay*, iv. 6, 11. See also Gibson, *Locke*, 198.

[2] Sept.–Oct. 1668 (G. i. 11).

producing changes without need of assistance from outside. The moderns, denying things these productive capacities, leave only an inert stuff which, although it moves, is incapable of moving itself. The entire system of motions must then depend on some Being outside the system, who is easily proved to be God.

This line of approach is not without interest. It shortens the path to God by emptying material things of whatever would tend to make them independent of God; an old method not yet abandoned, but not wholly safe, for to empty material things of independence is to endanger the independence of individual persons.

A few months later[1] Leibniz carries his reductive analysis further with the same end in view. He now concludes that even if a body were supposed to be given motion it could not retain it if left to itself. For motion has no real existence. To say that a body moves is to say no more than that it occupies different positions at different times. Losing himself in the 'labyrinth of the continuum' and deciding that continuous motion is impossible, Leibniz found no way out but to conclude that it is God who alters the positions of bodies, letting bodies go out of existence momentarily after they have been in one position and then recreating them in a slightly different position. 'Properly speaking motion is not an entity really existing in bodies. I have proved that whatever moves is continually created, and that bodies have existence at any instant which can be assigned in the motion, but at any time which can be assigned between the instants in the motion, are nothing'—'a thing', he adds naïvely, 'hitherto unheard of, but which is clearly necessary, and will stop the mouths of the atheists'.[2]

He seems aware of the danger into which such an analysis would lead individual minds, for he prepares to meet it by distinguishing them sharply from matter.[3] Liberty and spontaneity are found in minds alone, and they are immortal. His theory here is a very awkward one, since he regards every mind as being located in a body. This puts mind in rather a difficult position. For body changes its situation, and can do so without

[1] April 1669 (G. i. 26).

[2] G. i. 26. This view Leibniz abandoned towards the end of the next year, though he returns to a somewhat similar view (without, however, any intervals of empty time) in 1676.

[3] G. i. 22, foot, and *Confessio Naturae*, Part II.

being defeated by the impossibility of continuous motion because it flickers out of existence at one point and into existence at the adjoining point. Mind, however, can neither break out of existence, being immortal, nor move continuously in space, since that is impossible; and yet it must somehow keep in touch with its body.

At the end of 1670 matter is both given a little more independence and bound more closely to God. Once the world clock has been put in motion, it runs by itself without any need for God to set it right at intervals. It is, however, well controlled, and makes towards the divine harmony by a kind of necessity.[1] The divine harmony is here uppermost, and it seems to lay its constraint on individual minds as well as on the world clock. Apart from motion in space, the sole efficient cause is the mind of God, *mens prima*, Leibniz adds ominously, 'a qua ipsae secundae habent, quod cogitant'. If individual minds receive the entire content of their thought from God it is difficult to see how they could have any of the 'liberty and spontaneity' which Leibniz was anxious to preserve for them.

3. A few months later he goes a long way towards making God the absolute author of all things, stressing the necessity with which the whole process moves once it has begun.[2] His argument is as follows. If anything happens which God cannot foresee, then God is not omniscient. But nothing happens for which a reason could not be given why it happens as it does and not otherwise. Hence God being omniscient can give a reason for everything which happens at any time in the universe. All happenings, however, depend on God's will, i.e. on God's decree that out of the realm of possibles only a particular set shall be admitted to existence. The realm of possibles consists of pure essences, which make up the intellect of God, and among these essences there is one set which forms the best and most harmonious of all possible worlds. All this God's intellect

[1] G. i. 33.

[2] May (?) 1671 to Wedderkopf, then Professor of Jurisprudence at Kiel (Prussian Academy Edition of L.'s works, Series II, vol. i, p. 117). This letter crystallizes his views on 'fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute', which resulted from a long study of the writings of divines, scholastic, Lutheran, and Calvinist. See G. iii. 143 and 481. See also Schrecker, *Leibniz, Lettres et Fragments inédits* (1934), for two letters in 1669 to his half-brother. Leibniz shocked his relatives by what they thought his leanings towards the Calvinist position. Schrecker's book appeared originally as an article in the *Revue philosophique*, July 1934.

apprehends. Being Himself perfectly wise and good, God, in willing, is necessitated to admit to existence just this best world. The property of being the best and most harmonious world is determined by the eternal nature of the essences themselves, and has no dependence on God's will. Indeed God's will is dependent on His intellect; but this dependence does not involve any restriction on His freedom, for the most perfect freedom consists in being determined in one's actions by the most complete reasons. It follows from all this that the whole course of the universe is foreseen by God, before He decrees to create any world, to belong necessarily to the best possible world, and that God's decree in creating is a decree which covers the whole of existence, throughout all time, down to the smallest detail.

It follows that everything in the world happens necessarily. If Pilate is damned it is because he lacks faith. If he lacks faith it is because he lacked the will to attend when he might have heard the true doctrine. If he lacked the will to attend it was because he did not understand the usefulness of attending. And so on. A reason can always be given for each new condition. The damnation of Pilate must form a part of the best and most harmonious world. Similarly with all sins; taken along with their punishment they contribute to the goodness and harmony of the world, however bad they may be for the sinner.[1] The only thing for which a reason cannot be given is harmony, which is ultimate.

If men can be said to be free, it is not in the sense that they are free to will what they choose, but only in the sense that they are sometimes free to do what they will.

The views expressed in this letter make it difficult to see how there could be any genuine freedom and spontaneity in 'secondary minds', but I think that in spite of this he still hoped to give them activity and responsibility.

[1] Cf.

> O Thou wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
> And wha, as pleases best thysel',
> Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell
> A' for thy glory—

but not the rest of the stanza. Leibniz, it is true, would have reversed the proportion. And he would have said that it was pleasing to God because it was best, and not best because it pleased God. It takes a philosopher to appreciate these subtleties.

Critics may draw what conclusion they will from the sentence at the end of the letter, 'Sed haec ad te; nolim enim eliminari, nam nec rectissima a quovis intelliguntur'; I am inclined to give at least equal importance to the note put by Leibniz afterwards on his own copy of the letter, 'Haec postea correxi, aliud enim infallibiliter eventura esse peccata, aliud necessariò'. It is one thing to say that sins will certainly happen, another to say that they happen necessarily. The distinction between the certainty and the necessity of future events was for Leibniz an important one later on in his attempt to distinguish between the activity of created individuals and the activity of God.

4. These quotations should be sufficient to show that long before he formulated the doctrine of individual substance which is the determining characteristic of the Monadology, Leibniz had blocked out the general framework of his universe in terms of harmony, the principle of sufficient reason, and the all-embracing activity of God, who by His decree admits the best out of all the antecedently possible worlds to actual existence. It is not until 1686 that the doctrine of individual substance is explicitly formulated, in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*; and an analysis of the writings of Leibniz shows that every principle in the *Discourse* is to be found in his work between 1670 and 1684, with the single exception of that of individual substance.

I conclude that it is important that the Monadology should be studied in the light of the principle of harmony; and I shall try to bring out some of the consequences of this principle in Leibniz's thought, by an analysis of some of his writings of 1676, while he was in Paris.[1]

The concepts of harmony, order, intelligibility, and perfection are very closely related in the thought of Leibniz. They all involve what he expresses in his later writings by the word *convenientia*, which I have translated by the word fitness. The principle of *convenientia* is the principle which was instilled into Coleridge by his master at school in relation to literature:

[1] Those with which I shall deal were published for the first time by Jagodinsky in 1913, with the title *Leibnitiana. Elementa Philosophiae Arcanae de Summa Rerum*, with a Russian translation. There is a review of it by Rivaud in the *Revue de métaphysique* of Jan. 1914. The manuscripts were difficult to decipher and Jagodinsky seems to have done the work extremely well, but there are a number of places where his text seems faulty. I shall refer to this book as J.

In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word; and I well remember that, availing himself of the synonymes to the Homer of Didymus, he made us attempt to show, with regard to each, why it would not have answered the same purpose; and wherein consisted the peculiar fitness of the word in the original text.[1]

In a world of change, harmony involves responsiveness everywhere to what is happening everywhere else. The greater the variety which is found within the unity of a completely inter-related system, the greater the harmony and order. The divine economy involves the utmost possible simplicity of means for the producing of the maximum possible variety[2]; and it is in accordance with this that space is as far as possible occupied by matter. Any space left empty would mean an opportunity missed for introducing some significant variety into the universe. For the same reason particular minds exist. God judges it harmonic that there should be some intellectual mirror, or replication of the world,[3] and minds have no volume, and so do not take up any of the room which can be occupied by varieties of physical event.[4] Minds picture the universe from many points of view.[5]

II

5. The universe is a harmony, and every individual mirrors the universe from a particular point of view. These statements give the two fundamental ideas from which the philosophy of Leibniz developed. In the early part of 1676 he uses them in the solution of detailed problems while at the same time preparing the way for an attempt to show how particular representations arise in the universe, and what is the relation between them and the universe they represent. The notes published by Jagodinsky culminate in this attempt. I do not suggest that Leibniz had this final purpose clearly in view throughout. The truth is rather that he moved on from point to point, following his immediate interest. But it gives a kind of unity to his wanderings to consider them in the light of their outcome, and I do not think that there is any sacrifice of truth in doing this. He always hankered after long views and wide surveys.

[1] *Biog. Lit.*, ch. i.
[2] Dec. 1675 (J. 16).
[3] Feb. 1676 (J. 28, 32).
[4] Couturat, *Op. et Fragm. inédits de L.* 529–30: Dec. 1676.
[5] Couturat, 10, 1676.

Mirrors increase harmony. In 1670–1 each mind was located by Leibniz in a point of space, and attached to a body, which received impressions from all the varied motions in the world of matter. These impressions were concentrated and unified in the mind. A mind represents whatever goes on in the world of matter in the sense that every change in matter produces some change in it. The point of view from which a mind mirrors the world is literally a spatial one.

In 1676 an important general principle is added[1]. Any effect represents its cause in the sense that in the effect it is theoretically possible to discern its cause. Any particular thing in the world must then bear traces of its past history; and Leibniz concludes that there cannot be two things which are perfectly alike in all respects, for if there were they would have had exactly the same history. He concludes further that, as the past causes of the present state of anything are infinitely detailed, and as it is beyond the capacity of matter to contain traces of all this detail, mind must be present in all things. What weighs with him I think is the view he had held for some time, viz. that matter has only momentary existence, while mind bears traces of the past.

Minds are here still located in a body, and reflect the history of their own body and through it of other bodies. Bodies, however, have a history at all only through the constant operation of God. We saw this in his early work; he has now a new reason for it. In the collisions of bodies a heavy body moving slowly can be stopped by a light body moving more rapidly. Speed compensates size; and he is unable to see how this exact adjustment of size and speed could take place if bodies were left to produce it of themselves. He concludes that matter as well as motion must be resolved into *intellectionem quandam generalem*,[2] that is to say into an intellectual activity whose purpose is to maintain the law of adjustment over the whole realm of matter. Thus all the changes in the world of matter are direct effects of the action of God.

6. This brings minds and the content of minds directly into relation with God. Minds become mirrors not merely of the world of matter, but of God; and the next step which Leibniz

[1] 1 April 1676 (J. 44–6).
[2] J. 50.

makes is to think out more clearly what is involved in the nature of God.

In doing so he uses and develops his youthful views on truth, and on the true method of investigating the nature of things.[1] To understand anything is to understand its nature. The nature of anything is either simple, so as to be understood by a single (and simple) act of the mind, or complex, in which case it can only be understood in the light of other natures. These other natures, Leibniz decided, (*a*) were less complex natures, and (*b*) were contained in some way in the more complex nature understood through them: two assumptions for which there is no ultimate justification, but which guided and embarrassed him, as a partially similar view embarrassed Locke. It is easy to see how such a theory led Leibniz to the conclusion that any effect must contain a representation of its cause. For an effect, he holds, cannot be understood without reference to its cause, and therefore, on this theory of 'natures', an effect must be a complex nature containing within it, in some way, the simpler natures which make up its cause.

Salvation lies in the qualification 'in some way', and it proved a useful ally in the subsequent meditations of Leibniz. For if God is the ultimate cause of all things, then everything, as an effect of God, must 'somehow' contain in it the nature of God.

What, then, is the nature of God, and 'how' does any finite thing contain this nature in it?

Before we can deal with the nature of God, a preliminary point must be noted. We have seen that to know a complex nature is to know the simpler natures of which it is composed. If, then, complete knowledge of anything is to be possible, there must be perfectly simple natures, each of which is just what it is, contains no reference to anything else, and therefore cannot have been caused by or be dependent on anything else. No simple nature can contain any negation or any limiting qualification. It must therefore be described as perfect in its own kind. All this is a direct logical consequence of the theory.[2]

We are now ready to answer our first question. God, if there

[1] J. 4–6, 72–4, 94 ff., 106 ff., 122 ff.

[2] My statements here are more explicit and systematic than those of Leibniz. He is hesitant about negation, and safeguards himself by speaking about simple *affirmative* natures in his account of God. But his theory does not permit any negation to enter into a simple nature.

is such a being, is the completely perfect being, Ens Perfectissimum; that is to say the being who contains absolutely in His nature all possible perfections. Since existence is a perfection in its own kind (a belief widely held) it has been held to follow that God who contains all perfections contains existence and therefore exists. This proof, however, is incomplete, Leibniz thinks, until it can be shown that the idea of God is possible,[1] i.e. contains no mutually contradictory components; and in another manuscript in the same year he gives an explicit proof of this.[2] For every perfection is an absolutely simple, completely affirmative nature, containing no reference to anything else. All perfections can therefore be conjoined without any internal conflict. The idea of God then is possible, and therefore God exists. *Quod erat demonstrandum.* The basis of this proof is the view that every affirmative simple nature is an attribute of God, and conversely every attribute of God is a simple nature.

7. If we ask 'how' any finite creature can have a complex nature involving and therefore containing all the attributes of God, we see that some new factor must be taken into account. If I had literally all the attributes of God I should be God. If I had literally some but not all God's attributes, my nature would involve no reference to the attributes I lacked.

Here, then, enters (as a kind of *Deus ex machina*, but from below rather than from above) the notion of a 'modification'.[3] Finite creatures contain, not the attributes of God in their perfection, but modifications of these attributes. God, for instance, is everywhere, creatures are only somewhere. God knows all things, creatures know only some things. God enjoys His own perfection completely and eternally, creatures derive enjoyment only through the progress from one limited grade of perfection to a higher but still limited grade of perfection. God is eternal, creatures change and endure in time. God is pure activity, creatures have an activity limited by passivity. The contrast in each of these pairs is between a pure perfection and a modification of the same perfection.

In order to make this idea of modification fruitful, a further notion has to be added—that of a subject. Leibniz notes that

[1] 15 April 1676 (J. 112): Cf. to Oldenburg, 28 Dec. 1675 (*Op. Ed. Pruss. Acad.* II. i. 250).

[2] G. vii. 261. Cf. J. 96, 122–6.

[3] J. 98, 116, 120 ff.

nothing can be said of simple natures or forms[1] just because of their simplicity. Forms must be attributed to a subject if propositions are to be possible. The simple forms attain complete unity in God, who is pure subject (*subjectum ipsum*). In being attributed to other subjects, the simple forms receive modification.

We are not yet, however, ready to see how this surprising result comes about, nor whence arise the other subjects which bring about modification of the forms. The entire situation with which Leibniz is dealing has to be at once simplified and generalized; and he proceeds to do this.

8. Matter, we have seen, has for some time been in rather a dubious position. The first step is to clear up this position, and to ask whether we are justified in saying that matter exists outside the mind, and if so in what sense. What evidence have we on this point?[2]

We are certain that we have perceptions, with some degree of coherence, so that we can often predict what perceptions we shall have in new circumstances. It is only this coherence which distinguishes waking life from the world of dreams. Leibniz takes it for granted that there are other persons with whom we can communicate, and between whose perceptions and ours there is some degree of congruence. There is no need for us to suppose, he proceeds, that we perceive exactly the same things as they do, or that there is any interaction between ourselves and them. It is sufficient that there is correspondence between their experiences and ours. We can, by reasoning, conclude that there must be a single cause of the coherence and congruence of the experiences of all of us, but beyond this we cannot go. This is all we mean by saying that many minds are in a single world. If there were a set of minds having no communication with ours, but having perceptions congruent with those of one another, they would live in a world different from ours.

This conception of a plurality of worlds making up the created universe underlies the remainder of the notes printed by Jagodinsky.[3]

[1] April 1676 (J. 96). Leibniz here uses the Platonic word. He made a summary of the *Phaedo* in March. See Bodemann, *Leibniz-Handschriften*, 72.

[2] J. 112 ff.

[3] Dated April 1676. He seems to decide against it in Dec. 1676. See Couturat, op. cit. 529.

If we consider our world, and ask whether it is necessary to suppose that it contains any matter existing outside minds, we see that it is not. We refer to matter in order to explain the congruence of our perceptions, but that is its sole function. God could produce this coherence without creating matter.

Our world, as perceived, has, however, one very important character, namely its spatiality.[1] Here again there is no need to suppose that space actually exists outside minds. We perceive matter variously shaped and occupying various positions, with apparently empty spaces between, so that the whole of space as experienced at any moment is an aggregate made up of the particular places marked out by bodies and of the empty places between bodies. This aggregate of places is continually changing as bodies move, but there is a set of unvarying conditions which limit our experiences and enable us to make exact calculations relating our experiences to one another—conditions explored by the geometry of our world.[2]

Leibniz goes on to suggest that precisely the same would be true of any world which contained a number of minds. Their world would contain matter, places whose aggregate was a space, and a set of invariant 'spatial' conditions, regulating the relations between their experiences.

All the different worlds would have the common characteristic of containing percipients who perceived objects situated in a space of some kind. The matter and the kind of space would differ in the different worlds.[3] Underlying all the variations in space in any one world there would be something constant and unvarying; and Leibniz suggests that this constant underlying element would be identical in all the worlds.[4] He identifies it with the attribute of God in virtue of which God is 'everywhere', which he calls the 'immense', a modification of which is attributed to anything in any particular world in virtue of which the thing is said to be 'somewhere'.[5]

As a result the situation with which Leibniz is dealing is both generalized and simplified. Generalized, in that certain features of our world are pointed to as characterizing any

[1] J. 112–16. [2] J. 114–16. See also 130–2. [3] J. 120.

[4] J. 116 and 132. Distinct I think from and more fundamental than the invariant conditions making up the 'geometries' of the various worlds, which to judge from a hint on p. 120 would differ from each other.

[5] J. 122–4, 132. The Immensum is that which is prior to all measure.

world, and consequently as essential and fundamental to a world. Simplified, in that each individual mind is shown to have experience of its own world without interaction with anything outside it. The problem how a mind can mirror or represent the world is thus a problem which if solved for a single mind is thereby solved for all minds, a problem, further, for the solution of which it is necessary to take account only of the relations between the single mind and God.[1] I am a mirror, not only in the sense that I mirror my own past, but in the sense that without interaction with other finite beings I mirror all the changes in my world.

9. Leibniz is now ready to frame a general account of the way in which variety arises in any world. He uses two principles: (i) that the variety in any world has always the same character, viz. it is the representation of the infinite attributes of God from a particular point of view, (ii) that in this representation every attribute is modified by being attributed to a finite subject.[2]

The first principle Leibniz illustrates by the way in which a town varies when seen from different points, or in which the properties of a number arise from the nature of the number itself.[3] The latter example is extremely simple, and we are liable to miss some of its significance unless we bear in mind that for Leibniz every number is just as individual and differs as greatly in its properties from every other number as a circle from a square or as one of our friends does from another. Every number has an essence which constitutes its entire nature, and is the basis of the various properties which it can be discovered to have. Each property expresses the number, but does so in a particular way and from a particular point of view. Six for example is 3×2, or $4\times\frac{3}{2}$, &c. From any one of these expressions any other can be derived; but the essence of six is more than any single property, and more than the aggregate of them.

In a similar way, Leibniz suggests, the nature of any finite individual is an expression of the entire nature of God. There is a great difference between the two cases, and it is a pity that

[1] Cf. the suggestion, J. 122, that when any change occurs in the world, there is some corresponding change in me, 'cum mutata sit denominatio de me', and that thus 'all things are somehow contained in all things'.

[2] J. 122.

[3] J. 122, and more fully J. 130–2.

Leibniz did not work out his comparison more fully. The properties of six arise when six is considered from the standpoint of three, or of four, &c. The entire number system arises from the addition of homogeneous unities. In this case, then, there is no problem of how the point of view arises. In the other case, however, the situation is not so simple. For God is unique, and not one among many beings of the same kind. Nor will it do to say, as Leibniz does in a later passage,[1] that modifications arise from the conjunction of simple forms; that is to forget the need for subjects.[2]

It must be confessed frankly that Leibniz gives no satisfactory account of the way in which finite subjects arise. He helps himself out by a discussion of the way in which modifications arise in the immense as a result of the presence of matter;[3] but having done this he can only add that, once there are finite minds, modifications arise in their thought in a somewhat similar manner, though he obscures the situation by suggesting that if there were no matter in the immense there would be no modifications in thought.[4] Matter after having been doubted here comes into its own as that on which all modification depends; and he describes it as *moles* and *massa*, i.e. in physical terms. But how there is matter, and how there are minds, he does not indicate. Matter retains this function in his later thought, but becomes generalized and connected more closely with the concept of limitation or negation—a concept so general as to put a stop to the question how it arises by making it impossible to conceive any answer.

10. If we look back on this discussion and on the steps leading to the final conclusion, we see a double process taking place. On the one hand, the harmony of the universe is made more and more thoroughgoing. Not only is the nature of any finite individual a modification of the entire nature of God, but this modification is continually changing so as to correspond with the modifications in all the other finite individuals in the same

[1] J. 126.

[2] Cf. with all this Tschirnhaus to Spinoza, 23 June 1676, Letter LXXXII in modern editions of Spinoza's works. On Tschirnhaus see § 11 below.

[3] J. 124 ff. He establishes a parallelism between (*a*) Mens, Intelligentia prima, Anima, Respublica universalis, Idea, Cogitatio, and (*b*) Extensum, Immensum, Locus, Spatium universale, Figura, Motus. The lists should be written in columns side by side to bring out the correspondences.

[4] J. 128–30.

world; and all these modifications are knit together in a single spatio-temporal order. On the other hand, each individual tends to crystallize out more and more into a self-contained entity, representing the other individuals in its world without any interaction with them; and this segregation of the individual within its own boundaries was an essential part of the simplification of the situation, if Leibniz was to get a clear notion of the way in which the harmony of the universe is brought about, and of the way in which its variety arises out of the nature of God.

The more, however, the harmony is stressed, the less room there seems to be for liberty and spontaneity in individual minds. There is no way of safeguarding this spontaneity by reversing the process of segregation, for to do this would be to let the flood-waters from the immense flow over the individual, completely breaking down his individuality. The only way out is to build the dykes higher round him; and this in his subsequent thinking Leibniz proceeds to do.

III

11. One naturally thinks of Spinoza in reading these notes. Leibniz had good opportunities of hearing about Spinoza's views in Paris. He was in close touch with Huygens, and perhaps in still closer touch with Tschirnhaus after the arrival of the latter in Paris in the autumn of 1675. Leibniz and Tschirnhaus worked very closely together on mathematical problems, often indeed writing on the same sheet of paper.[1] And although Tschirnhaus, who had a manuscript copy of the unpublished *Ethics* (either in whole or in parts), found Spinoza reluctant to permit him to show it to Leibniz,[2] I think that it may be presumed that the two young men (Tschirnhaus was five years younger than Leibniz) discussed very freely the problems which I have outlined. The letters of Tschirnhaus to Spinoza in 1676 seem to show traces of such discussions. There is no doubt that Leibniz was greatly interested in Spinoza.

[1] Gerhardt, *Briefwechsel von Leibniz mit Mathematikern* (1899), i. 312. (No further volumes of this series appeared.)

[2] Spinoza to Schuller, Nov. 1675, Letter LXXII in modern editions. We do not know whether permission was ultimately given.

He is not, however, to be regarded as a disciple. His doctrine of concepts was his own, and prevented him when he did study the *Ethics* from appreciating Spinoza's meaning fully. In opposition to Spinoza he attributed to God both intellect and will, and gave an important place to final causes. He disagreed with the view of Spinoza that the human mind is the idea of the human body, commenting 'The whole world is really the object of each mind. The whole world is in some way perceived by each mind. The world is one and yet minds are diverse. The mind therefore arises not through the idea of the body, but because God intuits the world in various ways, as I do a town.'[1]

Again to *Eth.* i. 25, cor., where Spinoza states that particular things are nothing but affections or modes of attributes of God, Leibniz adds the comment that it would be better to say not that things are such modes, but that the modes of conceiving particular things are determinate modes of conceiving the divine attributes;[2] a distinction which brings out the importance for him of the role played by subjects.

IV

12. I have devoted attention to the writings of 1676 because it is in this year that the tendency to stress the dependence of finite individuals on God is at its greatest. In the next few years this tendency, strong though it remains, is balanced by an equally strong insistence on the spontaneity and independence of the individual. When through his logical researches Leibniz finally hit upon a convincing ground on which to base this independence, this ground of cold logic had a wider emotional background. He was naturally inclined to stress individuality at the start, but not to an undue extent. If in the end he goes too far with it, it is just because of the strength of the tendencies operating in his own mind which would have destroyed it. He

[1] On *Eth.* ii. 12, 1678. G. i. 150–1. Cf. 1676, J. 128. Cf. also G. vii. 191 note, 1677: 'When God calculates and exercises thoughts the world comes into being.' This is a marginal note to an argument to the effect that human beings cannot think without the aid of symbols or characters of some kind. The classic expression of all this is found in § 14 of the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, which should be read in the fine text edited by H. Lestienne, who gives all the corrections and modifications made by Leibniz (*Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques*, Vrin, Paris, 1929).

[2] G. i. 148.

was forced by his application of the notion of harmony into giving so large a place to the activity of God as to endanger the activity of the finite individual; and his final immuring of the monad within its own territory was his way of escape from this danger. It is the harmony of all things with all things which is the villain of the piece, and which in the end leads all things to be cut off from all things in the interest of their independence. The doctrine of fitness is to blame for the excesses of the Monadology.

13. There is a passage in a fragment dated November 1677 which points at once back to the letter to Wedderkopf of 1671 and forward to the *Discourse on Metaphysics* of 1686.[1] It is headed *Scientia Media*; in it Leibniz passes judgement on the account given by Fonseca and Molina of God's awareness of what the future course of events would be if present events had been different. These thinkers (according to Leibniz) regarded God's knowledge of such 'conditional futures' as having a character intermediate between his intellectual knowledge of the nature of eternal essences (*scientia simplicis intelligentiae*) and his knowledge by direct vision of actual future events (*scientia visionis*).[2] In his criticism Leibniz contends that all God's knowledge alike must be completely rational, with no dependence on pure vision. God must in other words be able to give a reason for it so complete as to satisfy any rational being. Leibniz quotes *veros Philosophos et St. Augustinum* as holding that 'God's knowledge of the actions of things, necessary or free, absolute or conditioned, rests on a perfect understanding of the nature of the things themselves'. Mathematics tells us not only what does occur under certain actual circumstances in geometry or mechanics, but what would occur if certain circumstances were given. Now let us suppose Peter and Paul placed in exactly the same circumstances, and offered in precisely the same manner the help of the divine grace. Suppose, further, that I am permitted to ask God what each would do, and that God replies that Peter would reject and Paul would accept the offered grace.

Then there must of necessity be some reason for this difference; which can be found only in Petrinity and Paulinity, that is to say in the nature of the will of Paul, and the nature of the will of Peter.

[1] Couturat, op. cit. 25–6.

[2] Cf. *Theodicy*, part i, §§ 39 ff.

It is the difference of these two free wills which makes the one choose this, the other that; and just this difference, which gives rise to the difference of choice, must necessarily be known to God, and I should understand it if He deigned to explain it to me, and in this way I should acquire full knowledge *a priori* of the conditional future event.

Petrinitas the complete essence of Peter, and Paulinitas the complete essence of Paul: the step is not very great from this of 1677 to the notion of individual substance of 1686. *Nonum prematur in annum* is a tag quoted by Leibniz in relation to his own later writings. I do not think that we can say that his final conception of 1686 was actually present during these nine years from 1677, but at any rate, like the conception of justice in the early books of the *Republic*, it was rolling at his feet all the time.

14. If we look back to the letter to Wedderkopf with this in mind, we see how great a distance Leibniz has gone towards making precise an account of what is contained in the eternal realm of essences which God apprehends before He decrees to create the actual world. There his conception was merely general. God sees all possible worlds. Here more detail is entering. The world contains individual minds, each of which is somehow in the fullest possible harmony with every other. In each mind can be read traces of all that will happen to it. These minds are all dependent on God's activity and on His willingness to admit them to existence, but their 'natures' belong to the eternal realm of essences in the sense that they are thought by God in His perpetual activity of considering essences from all possible points of view. The relations of actual individuals to one another in the world are not yet made precise. Walls have not yet been built round each individual. But if Peter and Paul are to be described as free wills, they must be given individuality and responsibility, even though their liberty is no liberty of indifference, but is grounded on their natures in such a way that whatever they do can be foretold. The use of the terms Petrinity and Paulinity marks a step in this direction.

Peter and Paul are stock instances used by Spinoza in the *Ethics*; and if any one cares to seek in the *Ethics* a passage which if read by Leibniz in November 1677[1] would give rise to the idea of Petrinitas, he will find it in the Scholium to *Eth.* ii. 48:

[1] The *Ethics* was published in November. Letters 159 and 160 in II. i. 382 of the Pruss. Acad. Edition of L.'s works seem to suggest that Leibniz had one of the

Eodem hoc modo demonstratur, in Mente nullam dari facultatem absolutam intelligendi, cupiendi, amandi, etc. Unde sequitur, has et similes facultates vel prorsus fictitias, vel nihil esse praeter entia Metaphysica, sive universalia, quae ex particularibus formare solemus. Adeo ut intellectus et voluntas ad hanc et illam ideam, vel ad hanc et illam volitionem eodem modo sese habeant, ac lapideitas ad hunc et illum lapidem, vel ut homo ad Petrum et Paulum.

Any one reading this passage with a mind as active and as ready to go off at a tangent as that of Leibniz might naturally say to himself, *lapideitas* does not belong literally to this or that stone, nor *humanitas* to Peter or Paul, but *Petrinitas* belongs to Peter, *Paulinitas* to Paul. I lay no stress on this possibility, but it is amusing, after one has tried to keep out conjecture and to hold by ascertainable facts, to play with the idea that it was in Spinoza's own writings that Leibniz found the clue to his antidote.

earliest copies, which were distributed privately. He saw the *Ethics* on his visit to Spinoza in Nov. 1676, according to Schuller (Letter 136, p. 304 of the volume just mentioned).

WORDS AND MUSIC: SOME OBITER DICTA

By SIR DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY

THE principles which govern the musical setting of words, whether prose or poetry, are dangerously easy to formulate on an *a priori* basis of common sense; and in recent times musicians have sinned more deeply than men of letters in laying down facile generalizations that not only ignore the nature of music, but reduce poetry to prose. It is interesting to see Parry, one of the greatest recent masters of English music, deliberately setting forth an unmusical view of poetic declamation, and being corrected by the author of the ode which he set for the bicentenary of Purcell. Robert Bridges wrote several essays on musical declamation, which are no less authoritative on music than they are on prosody; but whether he would agree better with my heresies than with Parry's is a question which it is now too late to settle.

In the history of music the sixteenth century has been called the Golden Age; and the tendency of modern criticism is to extend that period backwards into the fifteenth century, so as to include a wider and wider range of the noble art that falls short of the consummate purity of Palestrina and Victoria. Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597) sets forth the theory and practice of the Golden Age, and refers to John Dunstable (d. 1453) as if to a classic whose name every one ought to know, though perhaps only as a legend. Now Dunstable was as remote from Morley and Palestrina as Bach is from us. In spite of the intensive labours of Roman Catholic choirs, secular madrigal societies, and such eminent artists of vocal ensemble as 'The English Singers', the Golden Age itself is to most concert-goers almost as legendary as its name implies. As its product consists essentially of unaccompanied vocal music, there are no material difficulties whatever in the revival of its culture. Without such a revival our standards of musical culture are like those of a Renaissance which knows no Greek.

In one aspect unaccompanied choral music ought to be the

most absolute of all arts, inasmuch as it needs no apparatus but the human voice, the most perfect of all instruments if it is not corrupted by imitating cruder mechanisms. On the other hand, there is a manifest artificiality and, as Plato strongly felt, a degradation in using the human voice without human speech. Hence, the music of the Golden Age presents us at once with the extremes of musical abstraction and of dependence upon words.

One of the first elements of conflict between speech and song is the natural tendency of the singing voice to refrain from articulation. The voice prefers to prolong a vowel indefinitely, and through most consonants, except those which hum and buzz, cannot sing at all. This kind of opposition is more fundamental than that between speech and song, for it is an opposition between the voice and music itself. It is even less natural for the singing voice to achieve a definite scale than to articulate syllables. But through the reconciling of fundamental oppositions the highest art achieves a nature of its own. In no way is this more astonishingly manifest than in the ascertainable fact that an unaccompanied chorus, trained in the art of Palestrina, achieves, without any theoretical knowledge whatever, a mathematically 'just intonation' that is beyond the possibility of any instruments with a fixed number of notes.

The theory of just intonation is beyond the scope of this essay; but the classical practices in the treatment of words are fortunately easy to ascertain, and not difficult to describe. One of the few things that we know about ancient Greek music is that it maintained a one-to-one correspondence between musical time-values and metrical quantities. We also know that the strophe and antistrophe of a Greek chorus were set to the same music. This enables us to learn from Aeschylus that the flow of music, like the flow of quantities, was expected sometimes to ignore pauses which grammatical sense would require, and that the same music might be used to describe indifferently the kittenish charms of a lion-cub and the tragic fate of the shepherd's flocks when the adult animal developed according to the course of nature.

In the rondels and rotas of the thirteenth century the correspondence between poetic and musical rhythm is still fairly close. Long and short syllables alternate in lilting iambic and

trochaic feet, which the music reproduces in a prevalent triple time sung at a pace hardly slower than that of speech. With the development of polyphony this correspondence disappeared; and, though the musicians were often poets and the poets musicians (as was Machault), early polyphony is an art in which the connexion between the verbal and the musical rhythm is definable only in abstruse and involved technical terms. We cannot always be certain how far such technicalities represent truths, and how far they degenerate into evasions subconsciously designed to conceal the fact that responsibility for the matter has long ago ceased to exist. Responsibility certainly had ceased to exist by the time of Palestrina (*c.*1525–94), though there were then many useful conventions governing the setting of words, and many habits, some good and some bad, by which certain words were selected as standard subjects for musical illustration. In an elaborate polyphony each voice, with one generic exception, would have far more notes than syllables, but every singer knew certain rules by which a run of notes would be assigned to a good vowel; and the composer collected his text at the beginning of each phrase without troubling to range the syllables under the notes. The generic exception was the part that sang a *canto fermo*, or theme round which the whole polyphony was woven. This theme was often given in notes of such enormous length that all rhythmic value was lost, and the singer distributed the syllables more or less evenly throughout the whole *canto fermo*, breaking the long notes into breathable ones as he chose.

After everything that modern research has achieved in whittling away the plausible story of the part played by Palestrina and the Council of Trent in the reform of church music, the demonstrable fact remains that Palestrina's most famous works are models of musical declamation and were accepted as such by the authorities of the church. It has been shown statistically that the *Missa Papae Marcelli* stands out among Palestrina's works by the systematic plan that the voices shall begin every clause exactly together before they diverge and break up in repetitions. The listener hears the sense of each phrase once for all in the highest voice, so that subsequent repetitions will not confuse him.

Not many even of Palestrina's earliest works show much

trace of the abuses in church music to which the Council of Trent undoubtedly objected. But early in the sixteenth century Obrecht and other Flemish masters habitually produced Masses which made it impossible for the officiating celebrant to find his place. Two parts out of six might be singing, with many repetitions, the text of the Gloria or the Credo; but the tenor might be singing the *canto fermo*, not only in notes of unbreathable length, but to words celebrating the miracles of Saint Martin, while another voice would be singing a Latin Christmas carol, and a third not less conspicuous voice would be singing in a lively rhythm a French song to its original and not always decorous words. There are no such improprieties in Palestrina's Masses, but his first published volume begins with a *Missa Ecce Sacerdos Magnus*, throughout which a *canto fermo* is sung to the text: 'Ecce sacerdos magnus qui in diebus suis placuit Deo et inventus est justus'. Before the Council of Trent intervened, such a feature probably passed as a graceful compliment to the Cardinal or Pope to whom the volume was dedicated, but the Mass cannot have been convenient to the celebrant who had to time his actions according to its unusual length, while the compliment to the 'great priest' was persistently more conspicuous than the liturgical text.

It is beyond my purpose to discuss in detail the art of setting the text of a Mass; but I may raise certain points of general interest. To a sixteenth-century master with a gift for extended composition the Mass is the occasion for a musical art-form representing the summit of his purely musical aspirations, much as the symphony and the string-quartet give scope to the highest ambitions of the nineteenth-century composer of music for music's sake. Whatever may be the current conventions in the treatment of certain words, the Mass transcends the details of musical illustration as the subjects of the Madonna and the Crucifixion transcend the merely illustrative scope of the painter. But the point that is of immediate interest to us is that in the sixteenth century the proportions of the liturgical text were favourable to the development of a music that was most free at the climax of the service, and most restricted where there was danger of prolixity and anticlimax.

At a later date the orchestral and harmonic resources of Bach and Beethoven were such that it was impossible to treat topics

like the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Life of the world to come, on less than the largest possible musical scale. The Gloria and the Credo thus became the most voluminous and dramatic parts of the composition, and inevitably tended to dwarf the Sanctus, which should be the culminating point of the Mass. But in Palestrina's art the scope of illustration is merely decorative; and the effect of the large bulk of words in the Gloria and Credo is to make the composer devise a kind of music which delivers the words tersely and with few repetitions. On the other hand, the few words of the Kyrie, the Sanctus, the Benedictus, and the Agnus Dei give the sixteenth-century composer a welcome opportunity to broaden his designs by repeating the words with cumulative effect. Thus, in spite of what Dr. Schweitzer rightly calls the appalling difficulty of setting the theological metaphysics of the Nicene Creed to music, the text of the Mass gave the sixteenth-century composer excellent opportunities for music that could both fit the highly specialized occasion and develop its own abstract musical consistency. Moreover, there was plenty of opportunity for well defined differences between one Mass and another. Between the Credo and the Sanctus of a Mass there was sung a setting of a text appropriate to the day. If the text possessed a traditional plain-chant setting, the composer might derive the themes of his motet from that plain-chant; and if he wrote a Mass for that particular day the themes of his Mass would develop those of his motet. Thus, one of Palestrina's greatest Masses is written for the Assumption of the Virgin, and is based on the themes of his great motet, *Assumpta est Maria*, the opening of which is derived from the plain-chant of its text. Similarly, his Mass for Whitsunday is the *Missa Dum complerentur*, which is expanded from his highly dramatic motet describing the events of the Day of Pentecost.

Luther was musician enough to leave room for a hardly less consistent musical scheme in the services of his Reformed church; and the researches of the late Professor C. S. Terry enable us to follow the coherent musical structure of the services of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig during every day of Bach's long tenure as cantor. English music has had no such luck. King Henry VI was a good musician; but that royal saint lived only during the dawn of polyphony, and his music

is archaic beyond our comprehension. Henry VIII's musicianship was probably not equal to his classical scholarship, but it was certainly better than Cranmer's, for there is no evidence that Cranmer was musical at all, and he left the Book of Common Prayer in such a shape that no coherent scheme of Anglican Church music is possible.

When we call the sixteenth century the Golden Age of music, we think in the first place of Palestrina and of a church music purified from archaic corruptions, and innocent of the instrumental, secular, and dramatic elements that fermented throughout the music of the seventeenth century. But the church can claim not more than half the bulk, and perhaps not more than half the aesthetic value, of Golden-Age music. The other half consists of madrigal and similar secular music. Now there is a sense in which perfect works of art, like infinities, cannot be compared with one another. In any case, what is right for one is uniquely right for it, and wrong for any other. But, when we have weighed the results of a long experience of different kinds of art, we may allow ourselves to conclude that one kind of experience outweighs another, without implying any depreciation of the lighter experience. On the whole, I feel entitled to say that the greatest motet will probably be greater than the greatest madrigal; and I do not expect a composer who has written nothing but madrigals to be of the same calibre as a great composer of motets and Masses. On the other hand, we may point to Masses which are based on madrigals. Long after the Council of Trent had condemned secular elements in church music, Palestrina's *Missa Vestiva i colli* remained in high esteem; and another Mass, *Già fu chi m'hebbe cara*, is on one of those madrigals to a mildly improper text for which Palestrina expresses penitence in the preface to his setting of the Song of Solomon, a late *magnum opus* in which he atones for his early wild oats by illustrating the love of Christ for His Church in music of a *genius alacrior.*

At this point we are confronted with one of the chief sources of confusion in the evidence of musical treatment of words. Even in art-forms and periods most involved in convention, there is always a difference between music that has been originally conceived for its words and music that has been adapted from other settings. Well-meaning choral societies

will produce a Mass of Palestrina without producing the motet on which it is based—an absurd procedure when the motet is by the same composer, for the motet is the quintessence of the Mass, and it is only by a *tour de force* that the Mass achieves anything better than a dilution of the motet. All its themes belong by rights in every detail of declamation to the motet, and their various adaptations to the text of the Mass are all more or less ingenious and artificial.

Now the great motets are not less sensitive in their treatment of words than the great madrigals; and the art by which the music of madrigals illustrates the words is always intimate, and often astonishingly subtle. Some of the illustrative devices are merely punning or cryptographic; but such quaint devices, though amusing enough to describe, form no part of the composer's inspiration, but are harmless customs for which conformity is easy and protest not worth while. The real madrigalian art is inveterately illustrative. It is subtle in ways more intelligible to the singers than manifest to the listener, though there is nothing to prevent the result from being musically convincing. For the critic this illustrative aspect has the danger that it may distract his attention from pure musical values.

But in the first and last resort the composer is more interested in music than in words. He will find that the way to produce the best music is to base it faithfully upon the words to which it is first composed; and we are entitled to guess *a priori* that a composer who is not deeply sensitive to the words he is setting will not have much purely musical depth in him. But we shall meet with many disappointments if we expect classical composers to retain their pristine literary sensibility after their music has taken solid shape.

The occasion of the first appearance of the word 'madrigal' in the English language is a glaring illustration of this. We are informed that it is not found as an English word before Yonge's *Musica Transalpina* (1588). Yonge's avowed purpose is to render the music of Italian madrigals available to singers in an English translation which does not consider the original sense of the words, but only 'the affections of the note'. In other words, Italian madrigals are to be sung to English words that are not translations at all, but independent poems composed with no respect for anything but the musical rhythm. We need not

consult the originals of Yonge's madrigals to guess how impossible it is that the finer points of the Italian composer should be reproduced.

Similarly the slightest carelessness in editing an English madrigal can ruin a delightful point, self-evident to the singers, and not beyond the possibility of reaching listeners who have become familiar with the work. Listen to Dr. Fellowes in his preface to his complete series of English madrigals:

> Any re-arrangement of the original position of the words is indefensible, and may often involve the destruction of an effect purposely designed by the Madrigal composers. In this matter their dramatic treatment of the words was often very subtle; but as an illustration of thoughtless editing we may quote the penultimate bar of 'I follow, lo, the footing' (No. 17 of Morley's five- and six-voice Canzonets), in which the composer has designed that, after many bars of breathless racing, the word 'caught' shall occur in a different vocal part on each of the four beats of the bar, and be sustained until all the voices sing the final word 'her' together in the final bar. Yet in one published version of this Canzonet the point has been entirely destroyed by a gratuitous and unnecessary repetition of the words in the Cantus part.

A device of the same kind, but Greek in its simplicity and accuracy, is shown in Weelkes's *Three Virgin Nymphs*. Three voices represent the virgin nymphs in the plain rhythm of the words with a triad high enough to sound bright without being unpleasantly shrill. The nymphs 'were walking all alone', and the voices accordingly walk up and down in closely overlapping scales, leaving the third voice all alone for a few notes after the others, 'till rude Sylvanus chanced to meet them'. Sylvanus is a rude bass voice whose themes and rhythms throw the trebles into confusion, though all join in the tale of how he 'leap't and snatch't at one'. In the outcome the composer evidently does not wish us to be clear as to who it was who said, 'Come back and bliss me' (rhyming with 'Kiss me').

Our English composers of the early seventeenth century were by no means provincially minded; but, though our own troubles ruined our church music, we were far enough from the continental centres of musical revolution to continue for the first quarter of the century in undisturbed development of our madrigal style. Our sense of key had always tended to become

more rigid than the subtleties of Palestrina's harmonic compromise with the church modes. And we retained from archaic times a robust taste in discord, more especially in collisions between major and minor thirds, which are even more shocking to nineteenth-century, if not to modern, ears than they had become to Palestrina. It will doubtless pass for correct to say that the modulations of *O care, thou wilt dispatch me* are 'remarkable for the time at which they were written'. Of all faint praises, this is the most damnable and futile. These modulations are remarkable for all time. There was no technical hindrance to Weelkes's writing them at the beginning of the seventeenth century. And there was no technical reason why he should not have written utter nonsense. What is remarkable is that he means by them exactly what Schubert or Brahms would have meant, and is able to express that meaning by the supreme luck of genius that has preserved him from discovering that he has none of the apparatus of instruments and art-forms on which Schubert and Brahms rely.

That condition of creative art which we call inspiration, and which transcends self-conscious reasoning, is manifest in whole schools and forms of art, almost as clearly as in the masterpieces of individual men of genius. In the Golden Age it seems as if the madrigalists, great and small, cannot go wrong. Before the seventeenth century has accomplished its first quarter, its most thoughtful composers seem unable to go right, though they theorize with great intelligence. But the theoretic propagandists of a new art seldom show a fine intelligence as to the principles of the old art which they would supersede. Milton's praise of Henry Lawes shows that, like Lawes, he thought clearly and obviously about contemporary music; but, when he claims that the 'tuneful and well-measured song' of Lawes

> First taught our English music how to span
> Words with just note and accent, not to scan
> With Midas' ears, committing short and long,

he reveals that he has completely forgotten, if he ever understood, the principles of that madrigalian art of which his own father had a respectable mastery. There is no conflict between notes and accents in the madrigalian style; for the musical rhythms have a freedom which, to begin with, eliminates all possibility of conflict between accent and quantity.

Early in the seventeenth century Thomas Campion (1567–1620) blasphemed, like Milton, against his own charming talent for rhyme, and became sadly entangled in efforts to reconcile the conflict between accent and quantity in his theories of English verse. He was technically an accomplished musician, with a pretty gift for melody on a small scale; and he wrote a compendious treatise on what purported to be counterpoint, though it amounted to little more than a collection of rules-of-thumb by which tunes could be harmonized in the narrow circle of major and minor keys into which the subtle harmonic compromises of modal counterpoint had declined.

Neither Milton nor Campion was conscious that the new musical developments of the seventeenth century were in many ways at least as effective in strangling musical composition as in liberating it. The 'tuneful and well-measured song' of Henry Lawes anticipates the tune and measure of eighteenth-century music; and the composer's pre-occupation with the scansion of 'just note and accent' leads him to over-punctuate the words and interrupt the flow of his music.

The fact is that the whole basis of musical rhythm has, by the time of which I am speaking, become muscular in a much grosser sense than any speech-rhythm. In sixteenth-century music there is no conflict between speech-rhythm and musical rhythm. The singers distinguish between *arsis* and *thesis*, the up-beat and the down-beat; and this normal distinction may sometimes correspond to accent, and sometimes to quantity, and may be at all times easily over-ridden so long as the voices come together at full closes. This is a very different state of things from that in which rhythm is as strong as the paces of a horse. It was already becoming coarsened in that direction by the time of Milton and Henry Lawes; just as the harmony was becoming coarsened in the direction of modern tonality, and the subtleties of modal harmony were disappearing. Milton stands almost alone among poets in the accuracy of his allusions to music, which are not less scholarly than the rest of his art; but his vision of music is almost as prophetic as that of Adam with his eyes opened by Michael. Bach might have been the organist whose

> volant touch
> Instinct through all proportions low and high
> Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.

But Bach was not born until nine years after the second edition of *Paradise Lost*; and, though his predecessors developed a 'volant touch' and the mastery of all rhythmic proportions and devices of fugue, they seldom achieved coherent works of art.

The relation between words and music does not become a subject of first-rate aesthetic importance except where the art of musical composition is on the same plane as that of poetry. The music of Campion and of Dowland does not pretend to achieve anything higher than pleasant little tunes, which have for us a mild exotic charm because of certain archaic elements in their harmony and rhythm. The archaism of the harmony consists mainly in decadent survivals of modal tonality. The archaism of the rhythm consists in the fact that the stiffness of modern musical rhythm has not yet entirely overborne the free speech-rhythm of older music. In Dowland's best-known song, *Awake, sweet love*, the prevailing rhythm is modern triple-time, which persists through the first eight lines without the slightest ambiguity; but the music of the ninth and tenth, and the thirteenth and fourteenth lines falls much more naturally into groups of four beats, though, as there are three of these, the triple-time may still be allowed to persist. Now Dowland ranks with Campion and Lawes as a musician who, in setting either his own or other poetry, meticulously fits his music to his words; but a modern composer, regarding musical accent from the standpoint of Wagner and Hugo Wolf, would be apt to accuse Dowland of scanning 'with Midas' ears committing short and long'. Our notion of triple-time commits us to a hard accent on the first of every bar, and is shocked when Dowland begins: '*A*-wake, sweet love', and still more shocked when Dowland not only makes his tune repeat itself symmetrically, but repeats the whole song note for note to another stanza. Brahms has been severely blamed for the 'faulty declamation' of his setting of '*Wie* bist du, *meine* Königin | *Durch* sanfte Güte wonne*voll*'. But his declamation is remarkably like Dowland's. Now here the self-conscious, literary musicians, including both Wagner and Hugo Wolf, are wrong, and the Elizabethan and Jacobean poet-musicians are on the side of the poets and of Brahms. No modern musical criterion is shallower than that which regards as lazy and primitive the setting of different stanzas of a poem to the same melody. Brahms regarded such strophic melody

as a far higher achievement than *durchcomponirtes* declamation.

It is not Dowland, but we, who accentuate falsely when we put hard, muscular accents into his triple-time; but, apart from details of scansion, every poet will also set high aesthetic value on the persistence of a tune that transcends the particular emotional details of different stanzas. Some of the most successful alliances between music and poetry have been those in which Scott and Burns have written or completed poems to pre-existing folk-tunes. If you write modern music to Scott's *Jock of Hazeldean*, you will find at the outset some difficulty with the cross-accent on 'ladie' in the first line, 'Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?' And you will get into serious difficulties with the line: 'And you the fairest o' them a' ', where your tune cannot avoid an impossible stress on the weak antepenultimate syllable. But the folk-melody has an upward turn that facilitates the cross-accent on 'ladie', and enables Scott to compose his poetry freely to the tune throughout. Such masters of lyric melody as Schubert and Brahms avail themselves constantly of the fact that even with the full muscular strength of modern musical rhythms, the strong beats of the bar constitute only one form of accent, which may be easily counteracted by the length of a note, by its height, by its harmonic colour, and by incidents in the accompaniment. Only a flat-footed kind of melody or dance-rhythm habitually brings all these elements on to the beat.

The Wagnerians certainly formulated a quite inadequate theory of musical declamation, based on a nineteenth-century stiffness of musical rhythm, and cognizant of no language except German, which is perhaps of all languages the one in which accent is most rigidly dominant over quantity. The French language is at the other extreme; and the most impeccable French composer is not afraid to bring the first beat of a bar on to an *e muet*. The Italian language has strong accents, but gains enormous musical flexibility by the custom of treating any number of successive vowels as if they were a single syllable, neither eliding them nor marking the rhythmic point at which one changes into another, even as between different words.

We have never learnt to treat our English vowel-syllables

thus; nor can such Italian privileges become a precedent for us. On the other hand, it would be a pity that the enormous musical possibilities of our language, with its varied texture of Teutonic, Romance, and classical threads, should be inhibited by a German theory of musical and poetic rhythm which is too provincial even for the classics of German poetry and German music. Our own provinciality is of a different and less patriotic kind. And we have been saved from its worst possibilities by the fact that Handel did us the honour of becoming a naturalized Englishman and setting his greatest music to English words. But, apart from Handel, we have learnt most of the classics of vocal music in translations; and the translations have, until quite recently, been the work of persons who achieved a highly specialized technique that strikes a balance between three evils: ignorance of the original language, ignorance of English, and ignorance of music. These now obsolescent, if not obsolete, translators also made a profession of writing specially for music; and, when they added to their responsibilities the profession of musical critic, woe betide such composers as Stanford and Parry, who declined their services and turned to such unprofessional persons as Milton and Shelley and Bridges.

The chief effect of a long tradition of musical translations was that English composers had no reason to suppose that nonsense was inadmissible in classical vocal music. The study of original musical classics will show that, as a rule, music, even in the most conventional art-forms, has a basis of common sense in such matters as the repetition of words. The British sailor's idea of 'a hanthem' is, unfortunately, true of many unintelligent imitations of the classics; but a first-rate composer, composing in his own language, will certainly manage to find a single appropriate theme covering the sentence: 'Bill, fetch me that there 'andspike' before the chorus develops the fugue which breaks up the words and piles them into *stretto*.

It would be tedious to search out and enumerate cases where mistranslation has violated the composer's commonsense. Sometimes with Biblical texts grievous conflicts of loyalty may arise between the rhythms of our Authorized Version and those of Luther's Bible. Thus Mendelssohn, at the first performance of *Elijah* at Birmingham, had to submit

to the destruction of a most important point in his overture because it would have been considered blasphemous to alter the text, 'But according to My word', so as to fit the phrase: 'Ich sage es denn', which looms ominously in the wind-instruments throughout the orchestral fugue that follows. The music loses a fine point without becoming unintelligible; but our Victorian composers piously renounced the presumption of understanding either classical music or theological dogma. Thus, generations of schoolboys and choirboys have been brought up to believe without question in a 40th Article of Religion which no theologian has ever explained, but which Barnby, in E, strenuously proclaims; the doctrine that 'As it was, it was in the beginning'.

The classical tradition of musical declamation lies elsewhere. Artists have a right to be judged by their strokes of genius, and not by their lapses. Handel's musical rhetoric is so superb that we may safely guess that, wherever a beautiful phrase misfits the words, Handel is adapting it from something else, sometimes quite unscrupulously, but more often sacrificing fitness of detail to the fitness of general impression. Thus, in *The Messiah*, the chorus *For unto us a Child is born* presents us with a rather disconcerting stress on the word 'For'. On the other hand, the theme of *And the government shall be upon His shoulder* is magnificently suggestive of taking up a burden with zest; and the descent on the word 'shoulder' is musically pictorial and fitting to the metaphor, without being comic. But both phrases originally meant something quite different and much simpler. The chorus is developed from an Italian duet, and the first phrase was *No, da voi non più fidarmi*, and the other theme is a scolding accusation of falsehood, with a glide on the word *lusinghieri*. And I shall never cease to hope that some day an original version will be found of *He shall feed His flock*. Most people object much more strongly than I to the accent 'He *shall*', but I am far more grieved by the evident loss of meaning in the rise and fall of the notes set to the word 'shepherd', and later to the word 'weary'. There must have been a time when that very remarkable musical phrase had words which it expressed with the same astounding rightness that is famous in Handel's declamation of *He turned their waters into blood*, and the falling seventh at *sheds delicious death*.

Let this suffice for a hint as to the problem of musical declamation in detail. But the larger and more important question is that of musical composition on a large scale in relation to the treatment of words and of dramatic situations. Here we come to the tragedy of English musical history. The faculty of composition on a large scale is gloriously manifest in our literature. On the other hand, our artistic habits are not tidy, and our tidy artists are highly specialized and limited. Yet we may truthfully claim, not only that no problem of composition in literature has been too great for our courage, but also that no problem has been left unsolved with as high a perfection as art has ever attained. It is not discreet to claim that *Paradise Lost* is a faultless poem, or that it propounds a possible enterprise; but it is folly to deny it the qualities of faultless poetry and perfect form. Music is of all arts the least tolerant of accidents that warp its essential perfection; and most musicians would be the better for a training in the criticism of arts in which perfection is seldom originally possible in whole works, and in which we are accustomed to recognize it in things grievously mutilated by time. But, after making due allowance for the special opportunities and responsibilities of music, we may fairly conclude that the records of English literature show qualities of composition not less extensive and profound than those of German music from Bach to Wagner. We cannot conceive that such powers could remain long inhibited by any external causes, though every period has its own special forms of art and its own limitations. Yet in music our talent for composition has undoubtedly failed to stand the strain of adverse influences, until recent times, when perhaps we may flatter ourselves that we have overcome most of our obstacles and inhibitions.

In the music of the Golden Age it is not easy to be sure whether a musician has or has not the gift of composition. Motets and the higher types of madrigal demand a flowing style; but the composer seldom has to occupy as much as five minutes with his largest single design. Still, much grandeur of design can be expressed in three minutes. On such a scale Tallis and Byrd can prove themselves to be great architects, whose powers of composition cannot be exhibited in short quotations, and whose omnipresent merit far transcends that of

epigrammatic wit. In the early seventeenth century no large musical art-forms had been devised; and until the time of Bach and Handel most composers, even of vocal music, clung, as drowning men to a straw, to such devices as the ground-bass, a pregnant theme repeating itself many times as a bass to a varying superstructure.

Even a haphazard set of quotations from Henry Purcell gives us the impression of the work of a composer quite as great as Bach or Handel, and more different from either of them than they are from each other. His treatment of words is always interesting, and at its quaintest not merely quaint, even when he commemorates the king's narrow escape in a storm by making the chief bass singer of the Royal Chapel sing *They that go down to the sea in ships* in a descending scale of two octaves from top D to bottom D. His sturdy British independence of the Italian art of recitative was already commented upon by his countrymen when that art was still a novelty. The fact is that the art of recitative is that of the rise and fall of spoken language stylized in musical notes, and that every language ought to develop its own type of recitative. Parry comments shrewdly on the wisdom of Charles II in sending his most talented choristers to France to learn from Lully, the great master of French ballet, how to write English church music. But in this matter of recitative Purcell anticipated the dramatic resources of a later epoch, and, 'in spite of all temptations To belong to other nations', remained an Englishman.

But the musical privileges of remaining an Englishman are few; and neither politics nor the traditions of other English arts have been kind to music. Our docility in obeying foreign fashions fails to be educative because we have not the presumption to obey with intelligence. Charles II showed excellent taste and common sense in sending Purcell and Pelham Humfrey to study under Lully; but he disconcerted our English musicians by appointing the inept Monsieur Grabu over their heads as court musician. And, though Dryden was gullible enough at first to praise Grabu above all English masters, he also mistrusted music so profoundly that he firmly established the miserable tradition that an opera, as understood in England, was a play in which all occasions for music lay outside the plot. In *Dido and Aeneas*, to a libretto by Nahum Tate of the firm of

Tate and Brady, Purcell achieved a music-drama which anticipates by some eighty years the full fruition of Gluck's operatic reforms; but the work does not seem to have been appreciated in Purcell's lifetime, except at Mr. Josias Priest's boarding-school, for which it was written, and where it was performed between 1688 and 1690. By the time Dryden had learnt to think better of Purcell, the musical disjointedness of English opera was an established fact. Dryden's *King Arthur* is a voluminous work; and Purcell's music to it is important, but has nothing whatever to do with the play. His masques in *Timon of Athens* and *The Tempest* are musical fragments that contribute nothing to Shakespeare. This Jew-and-Samaritan relation between music and the stage persisted until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and ruined the last work of Weber, who wrote in his best English to Planché, the librettist of *Oberon*, in these words:

> I must repeat that the cut of the whole is very foreign to all my ideas and maxims. The intermixing of so many principal actors who do not sing, the omission of the music in the most important moments—all deprive our Oberon of the title of an opera, and will make him unfit for all other theatres in Europe.

It is impossible to suppose that the English talent for musical composition on a large scale could have been crushed by any adverse influences or foreign dominations if it had been comparable to our talent for composition in literature. The popular theory for our failure is that English music was 'crushed beneath the ponderous genius of Handel'. But for most of his life Handel dominated England as a writer of Italian operas; and the ultimate effect of his oratorios was by no means to crush our native talent, but to inflate it. He was far more dangerous to our composers than Milton was to Keats. In the first place, Keats had the sense to recognize the danger; and, in the second place, Milton is a very elaborate artist. Beethoven revered Handel as the master of all masters, and declared that no one else produced such stupendous effects by the simplest means. But Handel's means are so simple that some portion of Beethoven's acumen is needed to see in Handel the art that conceals art, and to distinguish it from the effrontery that avoids art. At the present time most musicians are terrorized out of writing anything that does not profess to be a new language on

some abstruse or subversive theory that contradicts all classical tradition; but many of us can vividly remember the prevalent tendency of the advice given to young composers in later Victorian days. It could all be summed up in two principles. Be sublime. At the age of twenty-one follow exclusively the practice of great masters in the works which they composed at the age of sixty and upwards, avoiding as reprehensible indiscretions all the practices by which these masters developed their style in earlier works.

And so it has come to pass that we have neither made our own musical traditions, nor learnt solid lessons from the foreign music to which we are so laudably hospitable. We do not know from first-hand experience where and why the conventional repetition of words is excellent in some classical art-forms; and we are equally at a loss as to the steps by which Wagnerian music-drama developed the kind of musical composition that forbids unrealistic repetition of words as unnecessary and, therefore, disturbing. It is not very difficult to spread some kind of musical continuum over a play, as one might spread butter over bread. Nor is it difficult to make short musical themes serve as labels to the nameable ideas and incidents of a drama. If this were all that Wagner achieved, his works would probably have made no permanent impression, and many composers would not have wasted their lives in producing enormous numbers of operas which attempt this and nothing more.

A mature Wagner opera is organized as highly, and almost as purely musically, as a Beethoven symphony. Its organization is on totally different lines; and any analysis that attempts to apply symphonic terms to Wagner is doomed to fantastic abstruseness. But the analysis of Wagner's music into hundreds of short themes associated with dramatic incidents and thoughts carries us no farther into his principles of composition than the compiling of a dictionary of his words. The music is no more built from these details than the drama is built from its words. Behind and above this apparatus, the music is architectural on a scale actually from ten to twenty times larger than anything contemplated in earlier music; and it is true to the architectural nature of music; its symmetries are expressed in recapitulations as vast and as exact as those of any symphonic music. Words

are not thus recapitulated, nor is the singer often conscious of taking part in a recapitulation, since the musical declamation fits the words at every moment, and the voice-part itself, therefore, does not recapitulate. The music of the death of Isolde recapitulates the whole peroration of her love-duet with Tristan in the second act; and in *Götterdämmerung* Siegfried, guilelessly telling his sworn enemies the story of his youth, not only takes the inevitable course of recapitulating the music of the forest-scene, but, after the brief interruption of his death-wound, completes the musical recapitulation by dying to the strains of Brünnhilde's awakening.

These recapitulations are only a few obvious cases forced upon the listener by the externals of the drama; but the whole tissue of Wagner's mature music is similarly architectural, without being in the slightest way warped by any survival of earlier classical forms. Wagner thus presents us with the extreme case of the reconciling of oppositions between verbal and musical principles. The modern composer has no excuse, even in lyric music, for giving even a classical poet grounds for Tennyson's complaint that 'These song-writers make me say twice what I have only said once'; and, if the modern composer of vocal music has the sense and the skill to set lyric poetry to a lyric music instead of to a prose declamation, the world may yet become the richer for songs as unscrupulously musical and perfectly metrical as the music of those ignorant and absolute musicians Mozart, Schubert, and Brahms.

PHALARIS AND PHALARISM

By H. W. GARROD

SIXTEEN hundred and eighty-nine was one of the busy years. William III became King of England, Stillingfleet Bishop of Worcester, Aldrich Dean of Christ Church—three excellent appointments. Bentley went to Wadham as tutor to the young Stillingfleet, Swift to Moor Park as 'servant' to Sir William Temple. In June of this year Swift—whom Macaulay calls 'a disagreeable young Irishman', but who was, in fact, like Bentley, a disagreeable young Yorkshireman—wrote an agreeable but uninspired Ode to the Hon. Sir William Temple. The ode was 'in the manner of Cowley'—both Sir William and his lady had the good taste to admire Cowley, and Swift had the good sense to appear to do so. He had been looking through some of Temple's essays—essays in which, while he is a little like Cowley, he misses Cowley's happiest merit, that of knowing when to stop. That he had read the essay *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus* his ode everywhere intimates. But he had not neglected an essay destined to greater celebrity:

> They purchase knowledge at th' expense
> Of common breeding, common sense,
> And grow at once scholars and fools;
> Affect ill-manner'd pedantry,
> Rudeness, ill-nature, incivility,
> And sick with dregs of knowledge grown,
> Which greedily they swallow down,
> Still cast it up, and nauseate company.

The lines are suggested by the paragraphs on pedantry which conclude Temple's essay *Of the Ancient and Modern Learning*. Temple's paragraphs were to furnish the hint, nine years later, for the character of the Pedant in 'Boyle against Bentley'.

When he wrote the essay *Of the Ancient and Modern Learning*, Temple was a little past sixty. It is hard if a man may not take advantage of that eminence of years to make essays of his likes and dislikes. And Temple begins so gently and naturally ('Whoever converses much among the Old Books, will be

something hard to please among the New . . .'); and concludes so sweetly and tenderly ('I shall Conclude with a saying of Alphonsus (surnamed the Wise) King of Aragon; That among so many things as are by Men possessed or pursued in the Course of their Lives, all the rest are but Bawbles, Besides Old Wood to Burn, Old Wine to Drink, Old Friends to Converse with, and Old Books to Read . . .'); and throughout writes so much from temperament, that cavil and contradiction seem inapposite. The mixture of vanity is, as Hume says, 'rather, a recommendation'. Temple genuinely preferred horticulture to statesmanship, literature to science; and in his essays he sought no more than to express the character of one governed by these genteel prejudices. He had his favourite authors, as a man of sixty—or perhaps, any gentleman—is entitled to have, without giving his reasons. Among them was King Solomon; and in *Some Thoughts upon reviewing the essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning* (published posthumously) he closes the discussion with a sentence from Ecclesiastes: 'The Thing that has been, is that which shall be, and there is no new Thing under the Sun.' In 1689 the tragedy of his son's death weighed heavily upon him; and the Preacher's doctrine of the vanity of human things was very present. 'Strange and vain the earthly turmoil'; and not a little unreal the new knowledge. 'Old Books to Read' still meant something; the modern world with its Gresham College and its well advertised scientific discoveries very little.

For Temple 'modern learning' means the learning of the Royal Society; and it is surprising how small a part of his essay —eight short paragraphs, less than two pages of the 1740 folio— is occupied with literature. Fontenelle's *Digression* and Perrault's four dialogues had been almost exclusively concerned with the comparison between ancient and modern art and literature; though the *title* of Perrault's book seems to promise a discussion of the sciences. But the issue on which the 'battle of the books' was joined in this country was not a literary issue. That ancient literature, considered merely as literature, is better than modern was a thesis which nobody in England was the least disposed to contest. Temple was welcome to prefer Virgil to Boileau, Homer to *Gondibert*. What could not be borne was his disparagement of modern science, his contempt for 'the studies, the writings, the productions of Gresham College'.

It was past bearing that, in the age of Newton and Halley—when the *Principia* had been already two years before the public—he should write that 'there is nothing new in astronomy to vye with the Ancients, unless it be the Copernican System'. It was past bearing, again, that he should poohpooh Harvey—whose great discovery was given to the world in the year in which Temple was born.

The quarrel was between literature and science. Wotton, who prepared the answer to Temple, was not a man of letters. He was a clergyman interested (like Bentley) in bringing to religion the support of science. He had taken his degree at Cambridge in 1679, an infant prodigy of twelve. In the summer of that year he had been on exhibit at the Royal Society, chatting with Burnet and Lloyd, who 'did not believe there had the like appeared in the world'.[1] Burnet and Lloyd were very likely right. As a child of five Wotton was a competent scholar in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. To these tongues he had added, when Burnet and Lloyd met him, Arabic, Syriac, and 'most of the modern languages'.[2] In divinity, law, 'all the sciences', history, chronology, mathematics, he was 'universally and solidly learned'. Boys of twelve were not eligible for membership of the Royal Society. But so soon as he reached the age of twenty-one, Wotton became a fellow.[3]

Temple's book had been published in 1690. Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* was not ready until the summer of 1694. Why Wotton, or the Royal Society, waited so long it is not easy to say. 'All or most of the materials' for the book, it is said, were supplied to Wotton from 'other hands'—Halley and the surgeon Charles Bernard were particularly mentioned. Bentley and Evelyn were implicated. A dozen years previously Evelyn had himself written a 'discourse' in which he

> did attempt to shew how far a gentleman might become very knowing, and to good purpose, by the onely assistance of the modern languages. . . . Nor was it without purpose of one day publishing it; not for ostentation, but because 'twas written with the virtuous

[1] Evelyn, *Diary*, 6 July 1679.

[2] In 1722 he preached a sermon in Welsh (Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, iv, p. 262).

[3] Birch, *History of the Royal Society*, iv, p. 557. Bentley had to wait till 1694, though he matriculated at Cambridge in the same year as Wotton.

design of provoking the court *fopps*, and for incouragement of illustrious persons who have leasure and inclynations to cultivate their minds.

But he had mislaid his essay. He was in close touch, however, with Wotton, while Wotton was writing the *Reflections*. Wotton's delays are perhaps to be explained out of his character. If he spent four years writing the *Reflections*, he spent the rest of his life writing nothing, or nothing worth reading. Hearne speaks of him, in 1711, as 'a very debauched man', and mentioning his death in 1727 makes grave charges against him. A more friendly notice of him records that owing to 'difficulties in his private fortune' he quitted his living in 1714; and attributes to 'the eccentricity of his conduct' the fact that advancement in the Church was consistently withheld from him. In 1694—or for that matter in 1679—he seemed marked down for the highest preferment. 'But some dark shadow came'; and the most learned man in England died poor and despised.

In the year in which Temple's essay was published, there had matriculated at Christ Church two clever Westminster boys, the Hon. Charles Boyle and his friend Anthony Alsop. Boyle, destined to be fourth earl of Orrery, was a grand-nephew of Robert Boyle. Assigned as pupil to Atterbury, he received both from his tutor and from the Dean those attentions which his title and talents deserved; in return, Aldrich and Atterbury supped familiarly at Park Place. Two pretty compliments the Dean paid his favourite. He wrote for his use a handbook of logic, *Artis Logicae Compendium*, which, first printed in 1691, still held its place in the Oxford schools in the middle of the nineteenth century—readers of Clough's *Bothie* will remember the Oxford tutor ('the grave man, nick-named Adam') who, albeit 'shady in Latin', was 'topping in Plays and Aldrich'. The other compliment was more embarrassing. Temple had remarked that 'the oldest Books we have are still in their kind the best' ('a thing observ'd even by the ancients', Bentley comments, drily). But 'the two most ancient that I know of in prose', he had added, unluckily, ' . . . are Aesop's Fables and Phalaris's Epistles'. Every one knows how Lord Baldwin embarrassed the booksellers by praising Mary Webb. Similarly, when Temple praised Phalaris and Aesop, the demand for these authors was beyond what the booksellers could meet.

Aldrich, 'finding Mr. Boyle was a good Grecian, desired him to put out a new Edition of the Epistles of Phalaris', an author 'likely to inspire a young Man of Quality with Sentiments agreeable to his Birth and Fortune'. Alsop was commissioned at the same time to prepare a text of Aesop.

Alsop was the better scholar of the two. But it is hard, as Byron said, if a young nobleman may not 'have his merits handsomely allowed'; and Boyle had industry and cleverness beyond the common. His letters to Atterbury exhibit him as a serious—perhaps slightly priggish—student, genuinely interested in literature. Already in 1691 he had been reading Temple's essays. At the end of that year, and in 1692, he was engaged in making a translation of Plutarch's Life of Lysander —it was, no doubt, this piece of work which caused the Dean to think him a 'good Grecian'. Nor was he a bad Latinist. In 1693, in conjunction with two of his Christ Church friends, he composed a Latin poem—a bucolic idyll—on the subject of the university Act, revived in that year by Aldrich. Six years later the piece was thought worth printing among the *Poemata melioris notae* included in the two volumes of *Musarum Anglicarum Analecta*; where it is preceded by a poem of Aldrich's and followed by a poem of Addison's. The comedy which he printed in 1703 is, though not particularly witty, not without wit—Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle acted in it, George Granville wrote the Epilogue. A sentence from this comedy might have furnished the motto to 'Boyle against Bentley': 'He has one damned ill Quality above all the rest, he speaks well of all Mankind.'

For the publication of his *Phalaris*, Boyle was left to make his own arrangements with the booksellers. Since, in the style of a Man of Quality, he asked no share of the profits, he had no difficulty in finding a printer who was willing to take the risks of printing his book. These were not considerable; Aldrich himself took 100 copies, and nearly the whole of the edition was without difficulty subscribed in Oxford alone. Dedicated to the Dean—who happened at the time to be also Vice-chancellor—the book appeared ἐκ Θεάτρου ἐν Ὀξονίᾳ on 1 January 1695. The Preface contained two notable sentences; of which the first paraphrased the judgement upon Phalaris of 'that great glory of our age and nation', Sir William Temple;

the second spoke of the 'singular humanity' of the King's Librarian, who had refused the Editor reasonable facilities for collating a manuscript in the Royal Library.

The King's Librarian addressed to the Editor a letter of complaint, in which, denying the discourtesy charged against him, 'Perhaps I might think myself obliged', he wrote, 'to make a public vindication'. He was told in reply that 'what he said in his own behalf might be true; but that Mr. Bennet had represented the thing quite otherwise'. Mr. Bennet was the London bookseller through whom Boyle had applied for the use of the manuscript. As for his threat of 'a public vindication', Bentley 'might do himself right in what manner he pleased'.

Bentley had been quick to bark. But it was two years before he saw fit to bite. Though his friends urged him to 'defend the honour' of the King's Librarian, he 'resolv'd to take no notice' of 'the insult', but 'to let the matter drop'. He took this course, he would have us believe, 'out of a natural aversion to all quarrels and broils, and out of regard to the Editor himself'. In 1697, however, a new edition of Wotton's *Reflections* was required. When Wotton was preparing the first, Bentley had promised to contribute to it 'a dissertation about Phalaris and Aesop', but 'could not at that time be as good as his word'. Wotton now asked him to redeem his promise of three years ago. But, in the meantime, Boyle's *Phalaris* had appeared, with the 'insult' which Bentley had 'resolv'd to take no notice of'. Bentley, not wishing 'to be necessitated to give an account of that Story', begged to be excused. But Wotton was not the man to take no for an answer; and, forgetting his 'aversion to all quarrels and broils', and his 'regard' for Boyle, Bentley contributed to the new *Reflections* a 'Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris . . . and the Fables of Aesop'.

At the end of the section upon Phalaris, he 'begs the favour of one word' with Phalaris' 'late editors'—the plural, to indicate that Boyle's book is the work, not of himself, but of his tutors. Of his one word, the first four pages are occupied with the 'vindication' of his own behaviour in the matter of the manuscript. There follow ten pages devoted to exposing the faults of scholarship in Boyle's book.

In the quarrel about the manuscript, Bentley's biographers mostly side with Bentley. Monk, De Quincey, Hartley Coleridge,

and Jebb do so without hesitation. Hinton, however, Bentley's earliest biographer, is more doubtful. 'The whole', he writes, 'is so perplexed and confounded that there is no coming at the truth and reality of the affair.' For this he makes Bentley himself primarily responsible. Bentley allowed an interval of more than two years to elapse between Boyle's complaint and his answer to it. Between some of the incidents discussed and the discussion of them there is an interval of three years. When Bentley excuses this interval by his 'natural aversion to all quarrels and broils', we are entitled to remember that most of his life, and a great part of his scholarship, was given to quarrels and broils. The explanation of the interval is simpler than this. He had written to Boyle in the first instance on 26 January 1695. The purpose of his letter was, no doubt, as he states it—he hoped that Boyle 'would put a stop to the publication of his Book, till he had altered that Passage' (the 'singular humanity' passage). As late as 1699, he writes that 'it was in his power to stop it . . . he might have cut out the leaf and printed a new one'. In fact, it was not in Boyle's power to stop the book. A hundred copies of it had been given out in Christ Church on 1 January 1695, and by the 25th of the month all the booksellers had their copies.[1] But Bentley had hoped to stop the book; and that failing, he left the matter alone. It put an affront upon him. Yet it is difficult not to think that in this matter of the manuscript he had been, to say the least, unhelpful and peremptory. Bennet could produce correspondence between himself and Boyle which showed that Bentley's assistance had been invoked at least as early as the beginning of October 1693. At that date Bentley was not yet King's Librarian; but he was applied to because he was in a position to assist. On his own showing he did nothing until the end of the second week in May 1694. On a day which he calculates to have been either the 13th or the 14th of that month, he delivered the manuscript to Bennet. According to his own account, he stipulated that it should be returned on 19 May. Bennet, however, denied that any date was named for its return. Five days, in any case, did not allow Bennet much time to find a collator, nor the collator much time to do his work. But on 19 May Bentley demanded the return of the manuscript; and to Bennet's

[1] *A Short Account of Dr. Bentley's Humanity*, &c., p. 121.

request that the collator might retain it till the following morning gave a brusque refusal: he was going out of town on 21 May, and did not see why he should be at the trouble of going to the library on 20 May, which was a Sunday. The collator had collated the first forty chapters—the afternoon of 19 May gave him plenty of time, Bentley said, to do the eighty-seven remaining chapters. 'For experiment's sake' Bentley himself collated the first forty chapters, and found that it took him an hour and eighteen minutes. The first forty chapters in Boyle's text make 400 lines. Bentley's rate of collation is, accordingly, something above five lines to the minute. It is difficult to believe that any modern scholar would think this a safe rate, even for the collation of a printed text in English. Bentley's zeal for the safety of this manuscript seems, in any case, somewhat exaggerated, when we remember that he thought himself entitled to keep the Codex Alexandrinus—perhaps the most important manuscript in the world—in his own lodgings.

Bentley, then, was not helpful. Nor had he been at pains to conceal his contempt for the project of editing Phalaris. 'It was my hard hap', he writes, 'to say the Epistles of Phalaris were spurious, and unworthy of a new edition.' It was, no doubt, his 'hard hap' to be reported with additions; and there is perhaps something in his suggestion that Bennet used misrepresentation in order to cover up 'his own neglect'. But sufficient had passed to hurt Boyle's pride; and he was young enough to enjoy writing the sentence about Bentley's 'singular humanity'. The sarcasm is only effective if we suppose that the repute of Bentley's discourtesy was already fairly general.

The ten pages in which Bentley reviews the faults of Boyle's edition are not a favourable specimen of his scholarship; and he was probably conscious of this, for he omits them from the second edition of his *Dissertation*. Except that he convicts Boyle of having in two places overlooked a true reading of the manuscripts, the criticisms which he makes are not telling—to any one of them it would be possible to devise a plausible rejoinder. Of his 'singular humanity' he could not have given a more unfortunate illustration. Boyle was a youth of twenty. On a tolerable construction of it, his offence was not much more than a schoolboy pleasantry. But so roughly did the first scholar in Europe handle this pert undergraduate that he

enlisted half the world on the side of 'Boyle against Bentley'. 'A severe critic sowr'd into a fit of unmannerly Rage, against an innocent Gentleman'; 'a Mean Dull Unmannerly Pedant'—expressions like these, devised by Bentley's enemies, found an easy and winning career.

Bentley himself gave to our language the word Phalarism. 'There's a certain Temper of Mind that Cicero calls Phalarism, A Spirit like Phalaris's.' 'One would be apt to imagine', he adds, impudently, 'that a Portion of it had descended upon some of his Translators.' As a method of scholarship, what he calls 'the Science of Phalarism' has, in fact, for its foremost practitioners, in Latin Scaliger and Salmasius, in English Bentley and Housman.

The main body of the *Dissertation* is occupied with the proof of the spuriousness of the letters attributed to Phalaris. Whether disingenuously or from mere carelessness, Bentley has forgotten to tell the reader that Boyle himself, in the Preface to his edition, had questioned the genuineness of the letters. More than that: Boyle had put to the reader some of Bentley's own arguments, stating them briefly and sensibly, putting first the argument which Bentley himself puts first, that, namely, which derives from the dialect in which they are written. It is not more than good sport when later, in *Boyle against Bentley*, he indicates that Bentley's reasons for supposing the letters spurious have half converted him to a faith in their genuineness. I think we may believe him when he tells us that he edited the letters because he enjoyed them—he found in them 'life and smartness'. That Temple should have enjoyed them is more remarkable, at least for the reason given by Boyle, when he writes that 'Sir William Temple has spent a good part of his Life in transacting Affairs of State; He has written to Kings, and They to Him; and this has qualified him to judge how Kings should write'. The truth is that knowledge of the world does not help a man to detect literary imposture. Nobody, again, ever knew so well how kings talked as Shakespeare, who had never the opportunity of conversing with them.

Bentley had intimated covertly that Boyle's edition was the work of his tutors. In the Preface to *Boyle against Bentley*, Boyle gives an account of the matter which is frank and natural and may pass for true. But of *Boyle against Bentley* it is pretty certain

that he wrote little more than the Preface and the first twenty-nine pages (those that deal with the question of the manuscript). Warburton had it, on the authority of Pope, that 'the body of the criticism' was the work of Atterbury and (John) Freind. The 'droll argument' by which Bentley is proved not to be the author of the *Dissertation* was supplied by King. So, too, was the telling Index. Other accounts name other auxiliaries—Smalridge, Alsop, Robert Freind. The presiding genius of the undertaking was Atterbury. It seems to have escaped the notice of the commentators that Wotton, who had introduced Bentley's *Dissertation* to the world, was rector of the parish[1] in which Atterbury was born, succeeding Atterbury's father. It is worth noting, again, that a niece of Freind's became Bentley's daughter-in-law.

Boyle against Bentley was at any rate first-class journalism. Nor did it lack a kind of learning. Its authors were not fools, and they had not been lazy—they had rummaged widely in antiquity. If now their scholarship seems despicable, it must be remembered that they were pitted against Bentley. If they were beaten, perhaps nobody knew it except Bentley and themselves. Boyle had the wit to suspect it—rather basely, he blamed Atterbury. 'They have had enough of me', Bentley wrote in 1706, 'and hereafter will let me alone.' But they had the world with them—the only sure test of good journalism. Garth's preposterous *mot* expressed the world's judgement—'to a Bentley 'tis we owe a Boyle'. The wit of *Boyle against Bentley* is good. The scholarship is not good; but it was good enough for the purpose. Its badness was of a kind that made an effective exposure of it difficult. There was an infinite parade of learned detail, of which nearly every item was vitiated by inaccuracy. Bentley's prime embarrassment was that he had to handle a succession of errors of minute detail. He was driven upon detail and minuteness; he had to fight, that is, upon ground where it was

[1] Milton Keynes, near Bletchley. In Foster's *Alumni* Wotton has become confused with his namesake William Wotton of St. John's, Oxford; and to the latter are assigned not only the living of the former, but his wife and children and degrees. The St. John's Wotton was a friend of Smalridge. Smalridge introduced him to Atterbury as 'an honest warm fellow'. Rumour said that he had been expelled from St. John's for drinking the health of the Devil (*Epistolary Correspondence of F. Atterbury*, i, pp. 7–9). In the Bodleian is a letter of his to Archbishop Sancroft, through whom he seeks to obtain a fellowship at St. John's (I owe my knowledge of the letter to Mr. J. A. W. Bennett).

difficult to be victorious without being dull and tiresome. Yet to be dull and tiresome was to be beaten—it was to give his enemies just what they wanted, and to earn the title of 'Pedant'. Perhaps not all the means by which Bentley saved his *Dissertation* from dullness are creditable—some of the most effective writing in it has no better inspiration than 'unmannerly rage'. But, whatever the faults of his book, no other book in the world is at once so learned and so little dull.

To Boyle, in truth—or to *Boyle against Bentley*—we owe, not a Bentley merely, but two Bentleys: the Scholar, and the Wit. And yet they are not two persons, but one; the embodiment of a single quality, deadly accuracy of mind.

Bentley's *Dissertation* is one of the grand monuments of European scholarship. Something like a century had passed since Scaliger had given to the world his *Emendatio Temporum*, with its great sequel the *Thesaurus*. With those two books Scaliger broke down the barrier between secular and religious learning, altering for ever the whole horizon of scholarship. With them learning achieves infinite outlook, beholding in one equal view east and west, the near and the distant. How much of modern learning has its forgotten source in them, it would be difficult to say. To-day, they are scarcely read, even by scholars. Yet we use them in all our studies, we use them as we use air and the light, with little thought of the genius which built the firmament and divided the darkness from the day. Bentley's *Dissertation* is not a book of such universal character. Yet the sweep and range of it, though less catholic, is wide and deep. There still lives in it something of the temper of the heroical age of scholarship. When all is said and done, Bentley's heart was with that heroical age; it would be a mistake to allow his 'wit', and the element of blackguardism in him, to obscure his fundamental seriousness in the construction of truth. On a personal matter he was perhaps not always truthful. But in scholarship he was scrupulously truthful. His book lives by qualities deeper than those for which it is read.

It is read for its readability, its versatility, its modernity; and because it has the luck of being written in the vernacular, and connects with Temple and Swift and the rise of modern science. If it is not literature, it rubs shoulders with literature. It is the only great work of scholarship which is read by persons

who are not scholars. It is the only book in the world from which a man who is not a scholar can get to know what great scholarship means.

By the time Bentley's book appeared, Temple was dead. His whole connexion with this 'battle of the books' had been paradoxical. The strife of tongues was essentially distasteful to him. He had given the signal for the onset by an inadvertence. He had not blown a trumpet-call; he had dropped an aside. Hating whatsoever things are even mildly vulgar, it had fallen to him to be the invisible head-quarters of a war waged with all the weapons of vulgarity. In a strife waged for Greek, and about Greek, and to a large extent in Greek, he did not know Greek. He knew his own likes and dislikes. He liked the ancients, and he disliked the moderns. His natural friends were the scholars, his natural enemies Gresham House and modern science. In the event, he found himself opposed by the greatest scholar whom this country has produced. Yet harder was it to bear that of the many persons who engaged themselves in the controversy Wotton, who represented Gresham House, was the only one who wrote like a gentleman. Temple was, again, a Cambridge man; he had dedicated his book to the University of Cambridge. Yet Wotton and Bentley were Cambridge men; the support of Temple's cause had to be entrusted to Oxford.

Swift may perhaps be called an Oxford man by accident. He had taken a Dublin degree 'by special favour'—a term used, says Dr. Johnson, in that university 'to denote want of merit'. But the University of Oxford granted him the degree of M.A., in the belief (if we may credit Orrery) that the Dublin phrase 'by special favour' 'signified a degree conferred in reward of extraordinary diligence or learning'. Swift entered the battle when it was, in effect, over; not, it seems likely, from loyalty to Temple, or from love of a losing side; but with something of the instinct of the vulture.

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

By BASIL WILLEY

> Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night:
> God said, *Let Newton be!* and all was light!

THE eighteenth century—'the silver age of the European Renaissance'—virtually begins in the final decades of the seventeenth. When we enter those decades we recognize on all sides the familiar eighteenth-century landmarks, lit by the familiar illumination of the time. Glory and loveliness may have passed away, but so also have the fogs and glooms of history; the common daylight which now descends upon a distracted world may be prosaic, but at least it is steady and serene, and has not yet become dark with excessive light. One meets everywhere a sense of relief and escape, relief from the strain of living in a mysterious universe, and escape from the ignorance and barbarism of the Gothic centuries. Nature's laws had been explained by the new Philosophy; sanity, culture, and civilization had revived; and at last, across the vast gulf of the monkish and deluded past, one could salute the ancients from an eminence perhaps as lofty as their own. In England there was added to the general feeling of emancipation from historic spectres a sense of security from the upheavals of the Civil War period. 'We have been so long together bad Englishmen', wrote Dryden in 1668, 'that we had not leisure to be good poets'; but now, 'with the restoration of our happiness, we see revived Poesy lifting up its head, and already shaking off the rubbish which lay so heavy on it.'

In this 'noble Eluctation of Truth, wherein, against the tenacity of Prejudice and Prescription, this Century now prevaileth', no conception played a more significant part than that of 'Nature', and in the pages that follow it is proposed to examine some of the uses to which that idea was put at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. 'Nature' has been a controlling idea in western thought ever since antiquity, but it has probably never been so universally active as it was from the Renaissance to the end of the

eighteenth century. Nature was the grand alternative to all that man had made of man; upon her solid ground therefore—upon the *tabula rasa* prepared by the true philosophy—must all the religion, the ethics, the politics, the law, and the art of the future be constructed. Sir Leslie Stephen has said that 'Nature is a word contrived in order to introduce as many equivocations as possible into all the theories, political, legal, artistic, or literary, into which it enters'. An American scholar has recently distinguished sixty different senses of the term. Even in the seventeenth century Robert Boyle,[1] the natural philosopher, could enumerate eight senses of the word as used in philosophy and natural science, and Pierre Bayle,[2] complaining of the ambiguity of the same word, mentions that eleven different meanings for it can be discovered in 1 Corinthians. Nevertheless, in our period it was not the ambiguity of 'Nature' which people felt most strongly; it was rather the clarity, the authority, and the universal acceptability of Nature and Nature's laws. The laws of Nature are the laws of reason; they are always and everywhere the same, and, like the axioms of mathematics, they have only to be presented in order to be acknowledged as just and right by all men. The historic role of 'Nature' at this time was to introduce, not further confusion, but its precise opposites—peace, concord, toleration, and progress in the affairs of men, and, in poetry and art, perspicuity, order, unity, and proportion.

Natural Science and Natural Religion.

This was the Golden Age of natural theology and deistical free-thinking, the age of Spinoza and of Bayle, of the Cambridge Platonists, of Locke, Toland, Blount, Collins, Clarke, Wollaston, Shaftesbury, Tindal, and the rest. During the Christian centuries religion had rested upon revelation; now it rested largely upon 'Nature', and even the orthodox, who retained the supernatural basis, felt that faith must be grounded firmly upon nature before one had recourse to super-nature. 'All the duties of the Christian religion', says Archbishop Tillotson himself, 'which respect God, are no other but what natural light prompts men to, excepting the two sacraments, and praying

[1] *A Free Inquiry into the vulgarly received notion of Nature*, *Works*, 1744, vol. iv.

[2] *Réponse aux questions d'un Provincial*, ed. 1706, vol. ii, ch. cv, p. 391.

to God in the name and by the mediation of Christ.' 'And even these', continues Anthony Collins[1], after quoting this passage, 'even these', he justly observes, are of less moment than any of those parts of religion which in their own nature tend to the Happiness of human Society.' Whereas 'Nature', in one sense, had been opposed to 'Grace', and in another sense —as 'natural Light'—could at best conduct the Christian pilgrim to the point where Beatrice must supersede Virgil, now 'Nature' (in perhaps yet another sense) was to furnish the principal evidences of religion, while a somewhat embarrassing Revelation must be harmonized with it as best might be. How had this situation arisen? To account fully for the change would be an intricate task; let us merely remind ourselves of two relevant forces, the scientific movement of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, and the religious conflicts following the Reformation. By the 'scientific movement' is meant the work of, for example, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Harvey, Gilbert, Descartes, Boyle, the Royal Society, and Newton. For our purposes the results of this great movement were twofold. First, it produced a 'climate of opinion' in which supernatural and occult explanations of natural phenomena ceased to satisfy, and the universe came more and more to be regarded as the Great Machine, working by rigidly determined laws of material causation. The supernatural, in both its divine and its diabolical forms, was banished from Nature. But, if one may put it so, Satan was banished on harsher terms than his divine Antagonist; and this brings us to the second point, namely, that though the new philosophy was anti-supernaturalist, it was not at first anti-religious. Most of the great scientists just mentioned conceived that they had rendered the highest services to religion as well as to science, and Descartes, Boyle, and Newton, as is well known, were notable theists. As Bacon had said (and Sir Thomas More before him), science was the study of the *works* of God, and this should be almost, if not quite, as pious a pursuit as the study of His *word*. A little learning might be a dangerous thing, but deeper draughts of philosophy would bring us back to sober faith. This view involved a changed attitude towards Nature and natural science; it meant that Nature was rescued from Satan

[1] *Discourse of Freethinking*, 1713, p. 136.

and restored to God. For the physical world, in spite of its divine origin, was traditionally held to have shared in the fatal consequences of the fall of man, and to have become the chosen abode of the apostate spirits. Science in the Middle Ages was largely black magic; Nature was full of pagan divinities turned devils, and to meddle with it was to risk damnation. Friar Bacon was imprisoned as a sorcerer, and the Faust story illustrates the fascinated horror with which, as late as the sixteenth century, the popular mind regarded scientific knowledge. But now the more fortunate Francis Bacon could announce with conviction and authority that science was not the forbidden knowledge; that God had provided two channels of revelation, not one merely, the Scriptures, of course, but Nature also. Did not the Psalmist write *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei*? And Bacon's follower, Sir Thomas Browne, assured his readers that 'there is no danger to profound these mysteries', and that God prefers a 'devout and learned admiration' of His works to that 'gross rusticity'[1] which stares and gapes at Nature, or trembles at portents where none were intended.

Science, then, it may be said, played an all-important part in producing the divinized 'Nature' of the eighteenth century, and ultimately of the 'Romantic' generation. That science was thus able, for a time, to furnish natural religion with one of its two indispensable foundations, belief in a divine universe, was perhaps due to the fact that the findings of science, up to date, could fuse harmoniously with the presuppositions inherited from Christianity, which, though shaken by controversy, still remained as almost unquestioned certainties in men's hearts. For what had science revealed? Everywhere design, order, and law, where hitherto there had been chaos. Whether one contemplated the infinitely great through the optic glass of the Tuscan artist, or the infinitely little through the microscope of Malpighi, one received at every turn new assurance that all was 'according to the Ordainer of order and mystical mathematicks of the city of heaven'. Biology had as yet revealed no disturbing ancestries, and man was still unassailed by anthropology and psycho-analysis. Materialism itself could scarcely dispense with a divine hypothesis (though this soon followed):

[1] *Religio Medici*, i, sect. xiii.

the Great Machine presupposed the Divine Mechanic. And when Newton bound together in one dazzling synthesis the great and the little, the stars in their courses and the fall of an apple, a thankful generation, at once scientific and pious, could exclaim with its spokesman, Alexander Pope:

> Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night:
> God said, *Let Newton be!* and all was light!

and with its other spokesman, Addison:

> The spacious firmament on high
> With all the blue aethereal sky
> And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
> Their great Original proclaim.

Secondly, how did the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lead up to the growth of natural religion in our period? Briefly, by calling in doubt all the points of the faith, and reducing them to the level of controversy. Christianity, instead of producing Christian individuals and societies, seemed for so long to have been producing disputes, persecutions, and wars, and had, in the Protestant countries, not only renounced the Holy See, but split up further into multitudes of sects, that a desire arose during the seventeenth century to formulate a creed which should be acceptable to all good and reasonable men. Christianity was based upon Revelation; well and good, but what had in fact been revealed? No one seemed to know, or rather—which was worse—everybody seemed to know that his own version was the only correct one. As Anthony Collins complained in his *Discourse of Freethinking*, the Bible might be divinely inspired, but this had not prevented its official interpreters from disagreeing on all fundamentals; there was hardly in those days one clergyman, 'that has consider'd and examin'd things with care, that believes all the Thirty-Nine Articles, in their proper and original meaning'. 'All Faiths have been shaken', writes Charles Blount, 'but those only which stand upon the Basis of Common Reason.'[1] What then? Must we abandon religion itself along with the metaphysical jargon bequeathed by our uncouth forefathers? By no means; there were ways of escape. The Cambridge Platonists, for example, adopted the technique of setting religion in a new framework, and changing the

[1] *Religio Laici. Written in a Letter to John Dryden, Esq.*, 1683, p. 85.

vocabulary of exhortation. The Platonic and neo-Platonic tradition was ready at hand to supply them with both. To platonize was to avoid the controversial danger-zone; it was to suggest that salvation did not depend upon the correct solution of the credal puzzles. Platonism had after all been, if not the Church's one foundation, at any rate, as John Smith observed, the 'Church's loving Nurse'. The values which Christians and all men respected had been taught by Plato, and the advantage of approaching them by the Hellenic route was that it led you direct to the summits, and avoided all the theological morasses which beset you on the Christian side. But above all, there was the grand alternative, Nature; that at least proclaimed its divine Original unmistakably. 'The works of Nature everywhere sufficiently evidence a Deity', said Locke; sufficiently, that is, for us to be able to dispense with a troublesome and controverted Revelation. Nature simply obtruded upon us its evidence for divine activity and wisdom; why then seek the living amongst the dead? Why seek for evidence of what we already know? And especially why seek it in the 'historical' annals of an illiterate Semitic tribe? But that was not all. Natural religion reaches God not only through the starry heavens above, but also through the moral law within, through Reason as well as Nature. *Intra te quaere Deum*; look for God within thyself. And what exactly would you find when you looked within? Not the questionable shapes revealed by psycho-analysis, but something much more reassuring—the laws of God and Nature inscribed upon the heart, the 'ideas of first impression', 'truths of first inscription', 'common notions (*communes notitiae*)', to mention a few of the names by which they were then known. From these clear imprints Lord Herbert of Cherbury had already formulated his fundamentals of natural religion: acknowledgement of God's existence, duty towards Him and our neighbour, necessity for repentance, future state of rewards and punishments. The knowledge of these points, as even the schoolmen had held, could be attained without Revelation, by that Reason which, in Locke's phrase, is natural Revelation, whereby the Father of Light, and fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties.[1]

[1] *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, iv. 19, sect. 4.

These are the saving truths vouchsafed not merely to a 'chosen people', but to all mankind, 'Enacted by the All-wise and Supreme Being from the beginning of the World, and therefore not to be destroyed or altered by every whiffling Proclamation of an Enthusiast'.[1] To the question, What must I do to be saved? therefore, natural religion made answer: 'We want not so much knowledge to tell us what to do, as Wills to do that which we may know!' You know perfectly well what to do: your own nature informs you. Follow Reason, the God within; look after your conduct, and your creed will take care of itself. In short, whether you looked without or within, Nature, without any supernatural revelation, offered you all that was needful for salvation. One should endeavour to realize how persuasive, and how sound, these injunctions must have seemed at that time. You had then upon the surface a great deal of obvious and clamorous dissension about doctrinal principles, but below the surface a far greater mass of real unanimity about the nature of the good life, the end and purpose of living. To this body of beliefs and attitudes, the product of the blended traditions of Greece and of Palestine, appeal could confidently be made, as to Nature itself. However furiously the sects might brawl, these common notions would remain. Whether this attitude can seem so obviously wise and so available to-day as it did to the Platonists and Deists of our period, and to such later followers as Matthew Arnold, Tulloch, or Dean Inge, is open to question. We cannot now be so sure that it is God we shall find if we look without, and perhaps still less if we look within. Even in the seventeenth century some warning notes were heard. Pascal found nothing but terror in the thought of inter-stellar space; Nature only proved God to one who already believed. And even Dryden could write with well-affected conviction:

> These truths are not the product of thy Mind,
> But dropt from Heaven, and of a Nobler Kind.
> *Reveal'd Religion* first inform'd thy Sight,
> And Reason saw not till *Faith* sprung the Light.
> Hence all thy *Natural Worship* takes the Source:
> 'Tis *Revelation* what thou thinkst *Discourse*.[2]

But few believed this report; on the contrary, the light sprung by faith had become so dimmed by controversy that Nature

[1] Charles Blount, op. cit., p. 94.

[2] *Religio Laici* (1682), ll. 66–71.

now seemed to supply the true divine sunshine. 'Twas discourse what we thought revealed. Let us not evade the issues, says Toland, by prating about our sinful and corrupted state since the Fall. We have got reason enough if only we will take the trouble to be reasonable. And the Gospel 'affords the most illustrious Example of close and perspicuous Ratiocination conceivable'.[1] 'What is revealed in Religion, as it is most useful and necessary, so it must, and may be as easily comprehended, and found as consistent with our common Notions, as what we know of Wood or Stone, of Air, of Water, or the like. . . . As for God, we comprehend nothing better than His Attributes.'[2] The essence of the New Testament revelation was, for Toland, that it did really reveal, that is, make plain and comprehensible, things formerly mysterious. Had it been otherwise, where would have been the superiority of Christianity over 'the idle dreams of the philosophers', the 'impieties and fables of the Alcoran', or the other esoteric quackeries with which the world was already overstocked? Faith itself is 'entirely built upon ratiocination', since it consists in trusting those to whom we believe God has spoken, and the latter belief must be established by evidence. As for 'the vulgar', who are said to be incapable of rational conviction, 'the vulgar are more oblig'd to Christ, who had a better Opinion of them'. It is the gibberish of the divinity schools which is above their heads, not the plain, easy truths of Christianity. Jesus taught pure morals, a reasonable worship, and just conceptions of heaven; He 'stripp'd the Truth' bare of all ceremonial and symbolical trappings, and made it 'easy and obvious to the meanest Capacities'.[3] Stripping the truth bare was what that age and generation felt itself to be mainly engaged upon, stripping it bare of mythology and all the accretions of paganism and popery. Protestantism, which evolved in England (and elsewhere) through Puritanism into 'rationalism', had always been in almost equal measure anti-pagan and anti-Catholic; the sin of popery was that in proselytizing the pagans it had absorbed so many of the pagan beliefs and practices. Now more than ever it was felt that the late era of controversy had

[1] Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1702), p. 46.
[2] Ibid., pp. 79–86.
[3] Ibid., p. 151.

obscured the divine simplicity and rationality of early Christianity, which had really been so exactly like the natural religion of the reign of William and Mary. That the free-thinkers should have thought their deism more 'natural' than paganism or popery illustrates a familiar ambiguity in the meaning of that term. If 'natural' means what is original or primitive, natural religion would be that which was most deeply grounded in prehistory and the collective unconscious, while deism of the Stoical or eighteenth-century varieties would appear as a late product of civilized sophistication. But, for our deists, 'natural' meant what is congenial to the mind of an abstract Man whose traits corresponded to those of the *honnête homme*, the man of parts and sense, who had become the moral norm of the age.

Speaking broadly, we are confronted, on approaching the eighteenth century, with a steady decline in what has been called the tragic sense of life. We have gone on too long, it was felt, repeating that we are miserable offenders, and that there is no health in us. We must change these notes to something more cheerful, something more befitting a polite and civilized age. As that excellent representative of the time, Halifax, puts it in *The Character of a Trimmer* (1684): 'there should not always be Storms or Thunder; a clear Sky would sometimes make the Church look more like Heaven',—our Church, especially, which (thank Heaven) is itself 'a Trimmer between the phrenzy of Platonick visions and the Lethargick Ignorance of Popish Dreams'. 'Religion', says the same author in his *Advice to a Daughter* (the daughter who became the mother of Lord Chesterfield), 'is a chearful thing, so far from being always at Cuffs with Good Humour, that it is inseparably united to it.' 'A wise Epicure would be religious for the sake of Pleasure.' 'No other thing is the better for being Sowre, and it would be hard that Religion should be so, which is the best of things.' Exorcize from religion, therefore, its sombre and tragic elements —its jealous and offended God, its conviction of sin; put in place of Jehovah the Supreme Being, in whom there is no darkness at all, and see in Adam's posterity a race who would always have loved the highest if only designing priests had not prevented them from seeing it. Against the *Deus absconditus*, the *Dieu irrité* of Pascal, Shaftesbury puts forward a Deity who is 'the best-natured Being in the world'. 'What a charming Idea

does he give us of the Deity', says Collins of Tillotson:[1] 'it is alone sufficient, without any further Argument, to make the Atheist wish there were a Deity.' M. Paul Hazard has recently described the deists of this time as 'rationalists with a nostalgia for religion', men, that is, who had allowed the spirit of the age to separate them from orthodoxy, but who liked to believe that the slope they had started upon was not slippery enough to lead them to atheism. Meanwhile, one might delete from the Beatitudes 'Blessed are they that mourn':

> On veut détourner les yeux du Christ douloureux, crucifié pour le salut des hommes; on ne veut plus entendre l'appel muet de ses bras. Le bonheur est l'expansion d'une force qui se trouve spontanément en nous-mêmes, et qu'il suffit de diriger. L'acceptation des peines, l'appétit du sacrifice, la lutte contre l'instinct, la folie de la croix, ne sont plus que des erreurs de jugement, des habitudes mauvaises. Le Dieu-Raison nous défend de concevoir notre existence mortelle comme une préparation à l'immortalité.[2]

Meanwhile, significant confirmatory evidence for natural religion and natural morality had for some time been pouring in from the accounts of voyagers, both real and imaginary, to non-Christian lands in distant parts of the earth. The noble savage had made an important entry upon the European stage in the sixteenth century, when Pigafetta, who voyaged round the world with Magellan, wrote that the Brazilians followed nature, wore no clothes, lived to be 140 years of age, and were free from the civilized vices. Montaigne, whose essay *Of Cannibals* is best known as the source of Gonzalo's Utopian speech in *The Tempest*, describes therein the conduct of three savages at the court of Charles IX, and declares that what he had seen of their manners surpassed 'all the pictures with which poets had adorned the golden age'. In the seventeenth century a host of travellers repeated the same tale. Most remarkable of all, perhaps, not only merchants and philosophic dreamers, but even Jesuit missionaries to Paraguay, Brazil, Canada, China, and elsewhere agreed to praise the virtues of the unspoilt natural man, whose physique and whose morals everywhere, it seemed, put those of Christendom to shame. The Utopian method of satirizing or criticizing one's own civilization was,

[1] Op. cit., p. 136.

[2] *La Crise de la Conscience européenne*, Paris, 1935, vol. ii, p. 93.

of course, a well-established convention, and many Utopias appeared during this time, for example Foigny's *Terre Australe Connue* (1676), describing an ideal island in the southern seas inhabited by hermaphroditic deists enjoying perfect liberty and equality, or 'La Bétique' in Fénelon's *Télémaque* (1699). But the interesting point is that so many actual travellers and missionaries wrote in like fashion. Evidently they wrote rather as moralists and satirists than as anthropologists. Noting what seemed to be the absence from savage society of the characteristic institutions of Europe, especially property, inequality, coercive government, and the Church, they concluded that the primitives lived in the paradise lost long since for us by Adam. In any case, such accounts provided a safe means of indirectly attacking the institutions of one's own country. As Geoffroy Atkinson says:[1]

> En parlant des indigènes de l'Amérique, les auteurs de voyages ne risquaient pas d'alarmer les autorités qui auraient très mal reçu, probablement, un traité sur le communisme.

But even so, the ecclesiastical authorities in France became seriously perturbed by the end of the century, for there were awkward theological implications in all this primitivism. These good savages, these sage Chinese, these noble Indians, these honest negroes, these wise and tolerant heathens of every colour—had they somehow escaped the curse of Adam? It was not to be thought of; though Foigny had indeed suggested that his Australians were descended, not from Adam, but from a previous being—an androgyne unmentioned by Moses—who had never fallen. What seems finally to have awakened the orthodox to the menace from beyond Christendom was a book about China by the Jesuit Father Le Comte (1696), in which he asserted that the Chinese had preserved the true knowledge of God for more than two thousand years, and had practised all the while a purer morality than most Christians. This book was condemned by the Paris Faculty of Theology in the following terms:

> Si tous ceux qui ont vécu selon la raison, soit Juifs, soit Gentiles, ont été véritablement et proprement Chrétiens et en état de salut,

[1] *Les Relations de voyages du 17e siècle et l'évolution des idées*, Paris, 1926, p. 40. I am indebted, for the above references, to this work and to the same author's English work, *The Extraordinary Voyage in French Literature before 1700*, Columbia University Press, 1920.

comme ceux qui ont eu la foi et à qui Jésus-Christ a été révélé, on peut donc se sauver par les forces de la nature, et la foi en Jésus-Christ Médiateur n'est nullement nécessaire.[1]

On the whole, this was in fact very much what the age wanted to believe. For centuries Christian kings and Christian priests had been spreading the dark blight of tyranny and superstition over a portion of the world's surface; only pass beyond that shadow, and you would find unspoilt Nature, still apparelled in celestial light. These generations, especially in France, were anxious to escape from the tragic glooms of history, and they willingly adopted the touching belief that *là-bas on était bien. Là-bas*, for Montaigne and the sixteenth century, had mostly meant America, but closer acquaintance with that country drove the mirage farther and farther off, until it finally settled, for the eighteenth century, in Tahiti. It happened that Bougainville, the explorer, published his glowing account of Tahiti just at the time when Rousseau had made the noble savage fashionable. Once again, in Bougainville's narrative, the dreams of philosophers and poets seemed to be confirmed by fact. Diderot, in his *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, made use of Tahiti, as his editor says, 'to verify, localize, and render more real the hypothetical reconstruction of the earliest ages in Rousseau's second *Discourse*':

> Voulez-vous savoir, he wrote, l'histoire abrégée de presque toute notre misère? la voici. Il existoit un homme naturel: on a introduit au dedans de cet homme un homme artificiel, et il s'est élevé dans la caverne une guerre civile qui dure toute la vie.[2]

Natural Law.

Samuel Pufendorf was the first to occupy a chair as professor of the Law of Nature and of Nations, at Heidelberg, *c.* 1662, but the idea which he expounded had behind it a long and venerable history. In antiquity the cry 'Follow Nature' was raised by Cynics, Stoics, and Epicureans; and the Stoics, like their later counterparts, linked together the starry heavens and the moral law within: the law that preserved the stars from wrong was also the rule of duty. The Stoic law of Nature, as

[1] Atkinson, *Relations de voyages*, p. 97.

[2] Diderot, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, ed. G. Chinard, Johns Hopkins Press, 1935, quoted in editor's Introd., p. 57.

the source and test of morality, fused with the *jus gentium* of the Roman jurists, which, originally a body of customary usages employed between Romans and aliens, came later to be identified with the laws of that Nature before which all men are equal. The writings of Cicero (who, by the way, was held in exaggerated esteem at the end of the seventeenth century) seem to have helped towards this fusion:

> Nations and princes may make laws, but they are without the true character of law if they are not derived from the original source of law, which existed before the State was established.[1]

Gaius defines the *jus gentium* as *jus quod naturalis ratio constituit* and in Justinian the identification is complete. The pagan conceptions of the natural law and of a life according to Nature were assimilated and modified by Christianity. The law of Nature now becomes the law of God, or rather, as St. Thomas Aquinas puts it, that part of the Law Eternal which is made known to man through his reason.[2] Though in Pauline and Augustinian teaching our legal righteousness is mere dross, and our loftiest virtues only splendid vices, yet Christianity had in Adam and his prelapsarian bliss a type of the natural man, and of a state of nature which, unlike the fabulous *Saturnia regna* of the pagan poets, had really once existed. Christianity was thus able to use the conception of a natural state, i.e. of a state in which the laws of God and of reason, and, we may add, the Gospel laws especially, should prevail, as a perpetual check upon existing ways of life. From the first, however, Christian natural law had two aspects corresponding to the 'original' and the fallen natures of man; there was, on the one hand, what was natural in Eden, and on the other, what was natural in Europe. Private property, in the opinion of St. Ambrose, for example, is not an institution of Nature; Nature gave all things to all men in common: it was usurpation and greed which created dominion. Things being as they are since the Fall, however, property is not necessarily an evil. Similarly, men made in the image of God are 'by nature' free, yet sin has made serfdom and all the paraphernalia of coercion a necessity. The Gospel rule that we should do as we would be done by was a law of nature, yet man in his depravity must be compelled by positive law to

[1] *De Legibus*, i. 7.

[2] *Summa*, Ia, IIa, Q. xciv, 2.

obey this natural law. On the whole, then, the existing system was sanctioned by God and Nature for the preservation of order, and departures from it would be unnatural. Yet still the idea of the first and purer natural law hovered in the background, and man, though severely damaged by the Fall, could feel that he had not yet lost all his original brightness. Liberty, equality, and fraternity were still the perquisites of his ideal if not of his actual nature, and even in the Middle Ages the established order could be criticized from this standpoint. For instance, as goods were originally or by nature held in common, natural law still demands that the rich shall relieve the poor out of their superfluity. Similarly, slavery was supposed to be contrary to Nature (in spite of Aristotle, who had thought it quite natural), and the various radical revolts of the Middle Ages were partly inspired by Natural-Law doctrine. On the whole, however, one may perhaps risk the generalization that it was the idea of a controlling *law* of Nature which officially dominated the Middle Ages, rather than that of the liberating *rights* of Nature; and that in passing into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'Nature' ceases to be mainly a regulating principle, and becomes mainly a liberating principle. The Middle Ages condemned usury as unnatural, 'a breed of barren metal', contrary to Scripture and to Aristotle; and it also condemned, in the names of Scripture and Nature, precisely 'that effort to achieve a continuous and unlimited increase in material wealth which modern societies applaud as meritorious'.[1] The centuries following the Renaissance liberated the acquisitive impulses, also in the name of Nature, and severed economic ethics from control by any comprehensive conception of the ultimate purpose of human, not to say Christian, living. The inhabitants of the brave new world could feel that the world was all before them, and Providence their guide. For, as the eighteenth century discovered,

> Thus God and Nature fixed the general frame,
> And bade self-love and social be the same.

So beneficently had God planned the world, that by giving full rein to his acquisitive appetites the individual was, in fact, adding his maximum quota to the sum of human happiness.

[1] Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 35.

Thus, instead of Dante ascending to paradise under the guidance of Reason and Grace, instead of Spenser's Arthur, fashioned in noble and gentle discipline, instead of Bunyan's Pilgrim, setting forth with his load of sin to escape from the wrath to come, the new world offers us as its symbolical figure Robinson Crusoe, the isolated economic man, pitting his lonely strength successfully against Nature in a remote part of the earth, and carrying on a little missionary activity as a side-line. The Law of Nature, which in the Middle Ages had been a check on unregenerate impulse, had now been transformed into a sanction for *laisser-faire*, and free competition for the spoils of the world.

Somewhat similarly, the idea of a State of Nature, especially after Locke, came to be used as a means whereby the new ruling classes could vindicate, against the surviving restraints of the old feudal and ecclesiastical order, their cherished rights of individual freedom and of property. But further, the eighteenth century was haunted by the philosophical mirage of the State of Nature, and used it as an ideal standard by which an obsolete actuality could be condemned. It has often been pointed out that Locke's vindication of the Whig Revolution inspired both the American and the French Revolutions, both of which were accompanied by declarations of the natural and inalienable rights of man. It was especially his successors, the French *philosophes*, who, in Bryce's somewhat rhetorical phrase, converted 'that which had been for nearly two thousand years a harmless maxim, almost a commonplace of morality', into 'a mass of dynamite which shattered an ancient monarchy and shook the European continent'.[1] Natural law, sanctioning liberty and progress, was to be the basis of the modern liberal-bourgeois State.

Nature in Literary Theory.

> First follow Nature, and your judgement frame
> By her just standard, which is still the same.

Critics and poets, no less than theologians, jurists, and political philosophers, were at this time referring habitually to Nature as their standard. The protean ambiguity of the term is well illustrated in the circumstance that it was Pope, commonly

[1] *Studies in Jurisprudence*, vol. ii, p. 163.

regarded by the nineteenth century as the chief exemplar of an 'artificial' poetry, who wrote the lines just quoted, and who described Nature as 'at once the source, and end, and test of Art'. The Nature of one age becomes the Art of the next, and each new school has to fight against the Nature of the last age. Wordsworth himself, when rejecting the 'gaudy and inane phraseology' of the eighteenth century, hardly felt more conscious of making a salutary return to nature than Dryden when abandoning 'metaphysics' and Jacobean over-luxuriance in favour of the style of Sir John Denham, whose *Cooper's Hill*, he wrote, 'is, and ever will be, the exact standard of good writing'. The 'Nature' of the critics doubtless borrowed some of its authority from physics and theology, but the special problem in criticism was to reconcile adherence to Nature with adherence to the rules of art and both with the requirements of reason and good sense. The favourite solution, that of Rapin and Pope, was to identify Nature, the Ancients, the rules, and sound reason, so that to follow one was to follow all. 'Art', says Rapin, is 'good Sense reduc'd to Method'; and again, the Rules were 'made only to reduce Nature into Method'.[1] The Rules, in fact, are those laws in whose service is perfect naturalness; only by following them does the poet's work become 'just, proportionate, and natural'; they are founded on 'good sense and sound reason, rather than on Authority and Example'—though, of course, the ancients exhibit these qualities in the highest degree, and 'it is in these great Originals that our modern poets ought to consult Nature'. Further, 'the only certain way to please, is by Rules'; hence, what pleases must be in accordance with the rules, and must therefore also be an imitation of Nature. What, for instance, is 'natural' in poetic diction? Dryden answers:

> Virgil and Horace, the severest writers of the severest age, have made frequent use of the hardest metaphors, and of the strongest hyperboles; and in this case the best authority is the best argument; for generally to have pleased, and through all ages, must bear the force of universal tradition. And if you would appeal from thence to right reason, you will gain no more by it in effect, than, first, to set up your reason against those authors; and, secondly, against all

[1] *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie* (1674). Rymer's translation, 1706 ed., vol. ii, pp. 146 and 240.

those who have admired them. . . . I grant you, that the knowledge of Nature was the original rule; and that all poets ought to study her, as well as Aristotle and Horace, her interpreters. But then this also undeniably follows, that *those things, which delight all ages, must have been an imitation of Nature.*[1]

Here 'imitation of Nature' seems to approach the sense of 'satisfying to the mind or heart or imagination of man'—an interpretation made explicitly in the next century by Reynolds:

My notion of Nature comprehends not only the forms which Nature produces, but also the nature and internal fabric and organization, as I may call it, of the human mind and imagination. . . . He who thinks Nature, in the narrow sense of the word, is alone to be followed, will produce but a scanty entertainment for the imagination: *everything is to be done with which it is natural for the mind to be pleased. . . . In short, whatever pleases has in it what is analogous to the mind, and is, therefore, in the highest and best sense of the word, natural.*[2]

Whatever pleases *whom*? The principle would seem to sanction the most unlimited individualism in taste. In fact, however, most educated people between Rapin and Reynolds were pleased with much the same things, and 'whatever pleases' meant whatever pleased them; their preferences and aversions could well seem those of average educated humanity. 'Natural' in this context (as in most others at this time) has lost all reference to what is original or primitive, and has come to mean what is congenial to those in whom human nature is most fully developed, that is, to the educated in the most polite nations of the civilized world. To establish the 'natural' in art we must follow the method of Grotius in establishing the authority of Natural Law: we must refer to what is received amongst the 'most civil', since 'what is natural we must judge by those in whom nature is least corrupt, and not by the depraved'.[3] What pleased the Goths is not natural, for in their time poets 'suffered their Wits to ramble in the Romantick way'.[4] And what qualities in poetry best pleased the most civil of our period? All must be 'just, uniform and proportionable'; design or 'ordon-

[1] *Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic Licence* (1677), in Ker's edition of Dryden's *Essays*, vol. i, p. 183. (My italics.)

[2] *Discourse VII*, pp. 193 and 197 in Roger Fry's ed. (My italics.)

[3] *Of the Law of Warre and Peace*, Eng. transl., London, 1655, First Part, sect. V.

[4] Rapin, op. cit., p. 158. The ensuing quotations are from the same treatise.

nance' is the first consideration. The epic or heroic poem is 'the greatest Work that Human Wit is capable of', and the weightiest critical remarks of the age refer to this, or to tragedy. The fable should combine the astonishing with the probable 'in such a just Temperament as may please the Fancy without shocking the Reason'. Poetic probability is preferable to 'Truth' (realism): 'Nothing is brought into the World that is not remote from the Perfection of its Idea from its very Birth. Originals and Models are to be search'd for in Probability, and in the Universal Principles of Things, where nothing that is Material and Singular enters to corrupt them.' In this theory the two meanings of 'natural'—(*a*) what is 'true' and (*b*) what is 'pleasing'—are harmonized. *We are in fact pleased by what is 'true'*, but 'true' here means the universal, not the particular. 'Nature' for the poet is the idea, the form, the potentiality which in history, and in 'fact', strive to realize themselves in refractory matter. Art completes what Nature leaves imperfect; Nature offers a brazen world—the poets only deliver a golden. The problem was that which has exercised poets and critics in all ages, namely, how to intensify Nature without distorting it; how to attain the universal without abandoning the particular; how to 'subject the shows of things to the desires of the mind' without producing chimeras; how to be poetical without ceasing to be natural; how to be natural without becoming mean or insipid. The critics of the neo-classic age could solve the problem in their own way because they knew what pleased them, and they surmised that this corresponded with Nature's own intentions. A play, says Dryden, 'to be like Nature, is to be set above it'; a serious play 'is indeed the representation of Nature, but 'tis Nature wrought up to an higher pitch'.[1] We must not follow Nature on foot, but mounted upon Pegasus. So, the characters in our heroic poems or plays must be types, not individuals; their thoughts, sentiments, and expressions must be suited to their age, sex, quality, employment, and fortune. In our Eclogues, our shepherds and nymphs must not be real rustics, nor should their talk run too much upon the technicalities of their calling. We must avoid alike the gross bucolicism of Theocritus and Ronsard, and the over-sophistication of Guarini or Marino. 'L'illusion et en même temps

[1] *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, ed. W. P. Ker, vol. i, pp. 100 and 102.

l'agrément des bergeries', wrote Fontenelle,[1] 'consiste donc à n'offrir aux yeux que la tranquillité de la vie pastorale, dont on dissimule la bassesse: on en laisse voir la simplicité, mais on en cache la misère.' Similarly, our diction must be 'Apt, Clear, Natural, Splendid, and Numerous';[2] one must be simple, but nobly simple, not base, dull, or without sinew; one should aim at the grand manner, but without conceit or extravagance. *Decorum* is the most universal of all the Rules.

All this decorum, this propriety of thoughts and words, this unity and proportionableness, this mending of Nature by Nature herself—to what purpose is it? For delight, certainly, Dryden and others will say; but Rapin's statement is sufficiently representative:

> 'Tis true, Delight is the end Poetry aims at, but not the principal End, as others pretend. In effect, Poetry being an Art, ought to be profitable by the quality of its own Nature, and by the essential Subordination that all Arts should have to Polity, whose end in general is the publick Good. . . . Heroick Poesie proposes the Example of great Virtues and great Vices, to excite Men to abhor these, and to be in love with the other. . . . Tragedy rectifies the use of Passions, by moderating our Fear, and our Pity, which are obstacles of Virtue.[3]

But as the immediate aim is delight, the poet tries 'to give the most common and natural things a fabulous Gloss, to render them more Admirable, and heighten Truth by Fiction'. 'The common and ordinary Terms are not proper for a Poet.'

As the seventeenth century wore to its close, Nature and Reason began on the whole to gain upon Aristotle and the Rules. The great influence of Descartes, who had taught men to look within for their first certainties, and had spread abroad the clear light of geometric reasoning, told strongly on behalf of 'Moderns' versus 'Ancients'. It was not that one adopted any new standards; supporters of both parties in that controversy seem to have shared the same general scale of values. It was a sense that the world's great age was beginning anew, and that pupilage to antiquity was now unnecessary. Now that Right Reason had down returned to men, we could address ourselves

[1] *Discours sur l'Églogue* (1688), *Works*, ed. 1790–2, vol. v, p. 16.
[2] Rapin, op. cit., p. 163.
[3] Ibid., p. 140.

direct to her, and neglect the mediation of Aristotle and Horace, her interpreters. But with the triumph of the Cartesian spirit a new and disquieting question did suggest itself: now that we were delivered from ancient error, now that our minds were filled with clear and distinct ideas, should we really need poetry any more? poetry, which heightens truth by fiction, and imparts to all things a fabulous gloss? Perhaps poetry was the 'mental rattle' which awakened the attention of man in the infancy of society, and perhaps we should now put away childish things? Let us hear, on 'the geometric spirit', a writer whose range of interests and whose longevity render him singularly representative of the period under discussion, Fontenelle, poet, critic, mathematician, historian, philosopher, and popularizer of Descartes.

L'esprit géométrique n'est pas si attaché à la géométrie, qu'il n'en puisse être tiré, et transporté à d'autres connoissances. Un ouvrage de morale, de politique, de critique, peut-être même d'éloquence, en sera plus beau, toutes choses d'ailleurs égales, s'il est fait de main de géomètre. L'ordre, la netteté, la précision, l'exactitude, qui règnent dans les bons livres depuis un certain temps, pourroient bien avoir leur première source dans cet esprit géométrique, qui se répand plus que jamais, et qui en quelque façon se communique de proche en proche à ceux même qui ne connoissent pas la géométrie. Quelquefois un grand homme donne le ton à tout son siècle; celui [i.e. Descartes] à qui on pourroit le plus légitimement accorder la gloire d'avoir établi un nouvel art de raisonner, étoit un excellent géomètre.[1]

An age which has produced such a man, and in which truth has so mightily prevailed against prejudice, should look forwards to a glorious future, not backwards to the infancy of society. History, the past, is a nightmare from which we are trying to awake. The sciences are only recently born, yet what exhilarating advances they have already made! We might, indeed, be grateful to the ancients for having exhausted all the wrong theories for us in advance. It might have been easy, we may think, to perceive that

tout le jeu de la nature consiste dans les figures et dans les mouvemens des corps: cependant, avant que d'en venir là, il a fallu

[1] Preface, *Sur l'utilité des mathématiques et de la physique*, &c., *Works*, vol. vi, pp. 67–8.

essayer les idées de Platon, des nombres de Pythagore, des qualités d'Aristote; et *tout cela ayant été reconnu pour faux, on a été réduit à prendre le vrai système.*[1]

But although we so easily surpass the ancients in physics, mathematics, and medicine, which depend upon experiment or exact reasoning, it may be otherwise with poetry. Eloquence and poetry only require a limited outlook, a little vivacity of imagination, and a few rules, in order to arrive at all the perfection of which they are capable, and thus in these accomplishments—'quoiqu'elles ne soient pas en elles-mêmes fort importantes'[2]—the ancients may have excelled. Fontenelle thinks that they attained this limited perfection in the century of Augustus. Virgil's versification was the finest in the world, though in 'ordonnance', variety, and nobility of characters our romances have revealed new possibilities. Poetry, moreover, is essentially something primitive; it began before prose, and it was bound up with all that pertains to the childhood of man—with fable and myth, which even now are so congenial to us that 'nous retombons aisément en enfance'. But now that we have reached maturity, now that Descartes and Newton have sprung the light, what of poetry? 'Ce qui n'est fondé que sur d'agréables fantômes, n'aurait-il rien à craindre?'[3] Fontenelle echoes such writers as Thomas Sprat and anticipates Johnson and Wordsworth, in his opinion that the 'fabulous' images of poetry have now worn very thin—they are 'extrêmement usées', though he admits that they 'mettent de la vie dans tout cet univers', this universe which is becoming so mechanical. Nothing else is exempt from the touch of cold philosophy, and it is unlikely that poetry will escape it. Poetry must save itself, if at all, by becoming philosophic, by concerning itself less with surface ornament and more with underlying realities. It must use 'real' or 'material' images, in defiance of those who think its function is merely 'se jouer sur la superficie des choses, la décorer, l'embellir'.

Et que seroit-ce si l'on venoit à découvrir et à s'assurer que ces ornemens, pris dans un système absolument faux et ridicule, exposés depuis longtems à tous les passans sur les grands chemins du

[1] Fontenelle, *Digression sur les anciens et les modernes*, *Works*, vol. v, p. 287. (My italics.)

[2] Ibid., pp. 290–1.

[3] Fontenelle, *Sur la poésie en général*, *Works*, vol. iii, p. 195.

parnasse, ne sont pas dignes d'être employés, et ne valent pas la peine qu'ils coûtent encore à employer? Qu'enfin . . . il y a de la puérilité à gêner son langage uniquement pour flatter l'oreille, et à le gêner au point que souvent on en dit moins ce qu'on vouloit, et quelquefois autre chose?[1]

When opening a book of poetry, wrote Jean Le Clerc in the last year of the seventeenth century, the reader should remember that he is about to peruse 'the Work of a Liar, who intends to entertain him with Fictions. . . . The poets are full of false thoughts, by which if we are not deceived, yet we insensibly lose a good Taste and right judgement, which are the finest ornaments of human nature.'[2]

Cut off by philosophy from their traditional 'machinery' because it was too fabulous, and cut off, in spite of all that Perrault and Dryden[3] could urge, from Christian material because it was too sacred, the poets of the new century may well seem to have stood shivering in a spiritual east wind. Boileau is reported to have said that Descartes had cut the throat of poetry; however, it was only pseudo-poetry that he helped to destroy. Great new subterranean forces—political, social, and economic—were, indeed, to be required in order to break the glittering surface of the silver age; but meanwhile, by shifting off the dead weight of antique authority, and by clearing away the neo-classic lumber, the geometric spirit was preparing the way for the return to a new Nature, and for a poetry which should devote itself 'moins au talent qu'à l'esprit, moins aux ornemens qu'au fond des choses'.

[1] Ibid., pp. 195–6.

[2] *Parrhasiana* (1699), Eng. trans., 1700, p. 6.

[3] Cf. *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes* (1692), vol. iii, pp. 7 ff., and Ker's *Dryden*, vol. ii, pp. 30 ff.

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1912

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