ART AND LIFE IN
THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE RIDDLE OF THE PAINFUL EARTH: THE INTERACTION OF ART AND LIFE IN THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most distinctive features of English literature is the long poem. France has nothing like The Faërie Queene or Paradise Lost. Ronsard's Franciad which attempted to become the French national epic, is by all accounts admitted to be not very good. The French genius favours the shorter lyric. Eliot and Pound who have both expressed an antipathy for Milton have fostered a most un-English trend in modern English verse. Corbiere, Laforgue, and the Japanese haiku, due to their efforts, have supplanted Milton as the dominant influences on poetic style in England and America. While it is true that in his two studies of Milton, Eliot makes his "charges" mainly against Milton's use of language, I have little doubt that Eliot with his sense of urban sterility and "the meagreness of his production"[1] felt overwhelmed by the precedent of Milton's sheer abundance; hence Eliot's subtle but unconvincing efforts to show that Milton was a bad example to past generations of English poets.[2]

The habits of thought and perception that made French models preferable to English ones, are obvious in the case of Eliot. Eliot's poetry lacks that particular degree of creativity that produces a synthetic world picture. At no point does he exhibit the fluidity

of inspiration that one finds in Milton, or, for that matter, in Spenser and the Romantics. Eliot usually composes in a sequence of separate mental éclairs and impressions (Four Quartets) and otherwise produces somewhat disjointed aesthetic structures based on allusions (The Wasteland). Edmund Wilson comments on this trait which Eliot possesses in common with Pound:

> Eliot and Pound have ... founded a school of poetry which depends on literary quotation and reference to an unprecedented degree .... We are always being dismayed, in our general reading, to discover that lines among those which we had believed to represent Eliot's residuum of original invention had been taken over or adapted from other writers 3

Eliot's style was formed before he became a Christian, that is, before he acquired an integrated interpretation of life. In his early career he was faced with the same difficulties as faced Mallarmé and Flaubert when they found themselves in a cultural milieu where the transcendental authority of the self no longer existed. English artists who had the benefit of a much stronger romantic heritage than the French, never had to experience the existential fear of non-identity that obsessed the continent. While the novelty of symbolism was emerging in France, the

Victorian poets were trying to recover the vision of their Romantic predecessors.[4]

When the transcendental self of romanticism was displaced as the seat of life's meaning and value, something had to take its place and French musicians, poets and painters began to find a substitute in formal technique. Morse Peckham states simply that in late nineteenth-century France, "Style itself was seen as the source of value".[5] This extreme formalism confirmed the typical brevity of French works. Flaubert obsessed with le mot juste, spent so much time revising his novels that he produced a very small oeuvre. Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud and Verlaine had likewise each a small output of highly-polished short verse.

Of course, this was not at all what was going on among the English novelists and poets of the time. Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson and Browning were immensely productive. Part of the explanation for the bulkiness of Victorian literature is commercial. The reading public in England was steadily increasing and money was to be made in feeding its interests. But the main reason was the traditional character of English literature and the propensity of English writers to create long works. English has always been a language in which metaphysical pattern and system matter more

than literary forms. It is when, as in poems like The Wasteland, system is remote or invisible, that French formalism begins to intrude and style becomes almost an end in itself. The long poem reflects a demand for total vision and synthetic meaning and persists in all centuries of English literature as the formal means of accommodating these ends. Decadence, by the traditional standards of English literature is either incomplete meaning or the predominance of form over content. Mallarmé summed up the whole direction of French decadence in his theory that the best poem is le néant, the state of nothingness in which form can exist without content.

This thesis attempts to characterize English literature during the period that Eliot's French predecessors, the real decadents, were becoming the literary voice of the continent. I hope to suggest that it is at least problematic when the historical English decadence occurred: in the late nineteenth century when Rossetti, Swinburne and the fin de siècle poets displayed some of the qualities of Baudelaire and Verlaine or in the mid twentieth century when Eliot, writing in a state of anti-romantic disillusionment that is nearer to Baudelaire than to anything in Swinburne, saw in formal devices a purpose that at times appears almost self-sufficient.

Decadent Rossetti and Swinburne were, but not in the sense that the French were for they never really dissociated themselves from the traditional English norms. It has often been said, even of Dowson and Johnson who carried the aestheticism and decadence of Rossetti and Swinburne into its final stage, that they did not wholeheartedly believe what they said.

The English instinct has always been to discover broad philosophical structures in literature, to achieve Miltonic breadth and to avoid pure formalism and unorganized detail. Richard Le Gallienne, who is usually anthologized with the decadents of the 1890's, describes as decadent any departure from the systematic outlook. Not in corrupt essences, but in broken structures is decadence found:

> ... disease, which is a favourite theme of decadents, does not in itself make for decadence: it is only when, as often, it is studied apart from its relations to health, to the great vital centre of things, that it does so. Any point of view, seriously taken, which ignores the complete view, approaches decadence .... To notice only the picturesque effects of a beggar's rags as Gautier, the colour scheme of a tippler's nose like Mr. Huysmans.... these are examples of the decadent attitude. At the bottom, decadence is merely limited thinking 6

The traditionalism to which, here, Le Gallienne so willingly subscribes, is present in Beardsley's satires

of decadence and in Wilde's resipiscence for it. An important fact about the period of the decadence and the fin de siècle in England, is that it does not create any real standards of its own but remains dependent on previously established ones. In France as Peckham demonstrates in the latter third of his book Beyond The Tragic Vision, decadence naturally grew out of the exhaustion of romanticism. It therefore had an independent and necessary existence of its own. Rossetti and Swinburne however, were erring parts of a tradition from which they never deliberately tried to separate themselves. Neither thought of rejecting the "complete view"; Swinburne in "Hertha" and in his praise of the sea sought it and Rossetti with his imitation of Dantesque themes, and cosmological imagery was never even conscious of sometimes losing sight of it. Both drew their lessons from the Romantics and had a natural respect for the synthetic type of philosophy advocated by Coleridge in his theory of imagination. Although their ideas of love were perversely specialized they were never sufficient to carry the atmosphere of evil and so, unlike Baudelaire's, sustained no moral conflicts.

I have made Ruskin the subject of the first chapter in order to provide an example of the English "complete view" that will allow for ready comparison with

Rossetti and Swinburne. All three belonged to the same circle of society and were subject to the same general influences in literature and politics. Yet Ruskin, because he remained faithful to the English tradition is a great figure in nineteenth-century thought whereas Rossetti and Swinburne are relative failures. Yeats who is considered in the third chapter, had, as it seems to me, the choice of aligning himself with the tradition of Ruskin or else following the confused alternative to it presented by Rossetti and Swinburne. Yeats, whose first literary love was epic, decided to align himself with the traditional ways of thought that have perpetuated the long poem in England. His A Vision is animated by the same search for a total view of reality that governs the psychological probing of the dramatic monologue. Yeats in his maturity knew that the age of the long poem was past and that he could succeed only as a composer of lyrics; yet into his lyrics he tried to put all the sweep and majesty that have typified the English poetic imagination for centuries. Yeats' work is often thought to be an offshoot of French symbolism. This is hardly true; he is the latest in the line of great "English" writers to which Eliot does not belong.[7]

The most essential part of the "complete view" has always been to perceive a vital rapport between art

and life; to combine the perspective of Joyce's detached artist, "invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his finger nails"[8] with movement and experience. These extremes connect more often in English than in French mainly because the English have a long tradition of practical ethics that the French do not. Milton's famous statement, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race ..."[9] stands for all ideals in English culture, aesthetic as well as ethical. Ideals must exist in common circumstances otherwise they are worthless.

In Catholic France the best ethical behaviour has always been that of the nun in the convent and this pattern is carried over into literature where, especially in the period with which we are dealing, art and life are more often divided than reconciled. At roughly the same time that Tennyson was writing "The Palace of Art" urging the necessity of involving life in art and art in life, French literature was developing around the poles of aestheticism and naturalism. Joseph Conrad's Victory which was written in 1914 at the very end of the Victorian cultural epoch, summarizes the moral-aesthetic values that were dominant through most of the nineteenth century in England. Axel Heyst whose name is reminiscent of the

hero's name in Villiers de I'sle Adam's play Axel, is a prototype of the fin de siècle artist whose philosophy is that "the faculty of detachment born perhaps from a sense of infinite littleness ... is yet the only faculty that seems to assimilate man to the immortal gods."[10] Conrad intends that this be the moral of the story but not in the naive sense that Heyst interprets detachment for the greater part of the novel. Until he is lured into abandoning his solitude on a tropical island by a distressed woman whom he adopts as a companion, Heyst avoids any type of engagement in the affairs of man. Once he has accepted love he has to accept enmity and bloodshed too. The end result is that Heyst and the woman are both killed and his detachment is broken. Yet Conrad calls the novel Victory. The victory is Heyst's for he learns that detachment is not retreat but full realization of the nature of human existence. This realization has a permanence that is in itself detachment because experience can hold no further surprises for Heyst. His victory is in the ultimate achievement of the detachment to which he has dedicated his life. Twenty years later, before the outbreak of a second global war, Yeats was to celebrate the same passive detachment in the tragic hero and the artist:

There, on the mountain and the sky,
On all the tragic scene they stare.
One asks for mournful melodies;
Accomplished fingers begin to play.
Their eyes mid many wrinkles their eyes,
Their ancient glittering eyes are gay.

("Lapis Lazuli")

This stoicism is founded on the complementary relationship in which aesthetic ideals and mundane affairs stand in all the great English literary artists.

Each of the three sections of the thesis attempts i) to explore the elements of art and life in the works of the writer with which it is concerned and ii) to establish the writer's success in arriving at the "complete view". In interpreting Ruskin and Yeats I have based initial discussion upon their conceptions of related arts (Ruskin saw the roles of painting and poetry as complementary; Yeats had a similar outlook on lyrical poetry and drama). In their theories of the arts, I have attempted to locate the embryonic forms of their theories of art and life. Swinburne and Rossetti do not integrate art and life as well as Ruskin and Yeats. This is part of the reason for their ill success. I do not, however, wish to say that the aestheticism of Baudelaire and Mallarmé which they attempt to adumbrate is necessarily inferior as an artistic principle to the synthesis of art and life in Ruskin and Yeats. Aestheticism afforded Baudelaire the

means of understanding good and evil. For Mallarmé it was essential as an escape from non-identity and insanity. As Frenchmen they took naturally to an aesthetic philosophy which had evolved by logical process from their own national literary traditions.

Rossetti and Swinburne cannot be put in the same category as Baudelaire and Mallarmé. They are part of English literature and their background is different. Their aestheticism is inconsequential because it does not underlie any significant purpose. It does not help them to penetrate the depths of man's moral being; it leads them away from moral insight altogether. It does not give them mental balance and self-identity; it unbalances them and makes them mad. Love and art which are emotionally interchangeable in Rossetti and Swinburne have no relevance to external reality and the broad patterns of human life. Because they were English they could not achieve the aesthetic discipline that in France made of specialized themes successful literature. In other words what I am saying is not that because English art is traditionally more conscious of the broad sweep of life than French art, it is ipso facto better; rather, I believe that an artist's heritage imposes certain restrictions upon him with respect to theme and perspective, that make it very hard for him to reject his predecessors' orientation for

another. If like Rossetti and Swinburne, an artist breaks with his heritage and fails to convincingly espouse an alternative to it, he will not find it easy to attain the formal control which instead of theme should be the criterion for aesthetic judgements.

Probably the best spokesman for French aestheticism in England was Pater who believed that any systematic approach to life was antagonistic to full appreciation of artistic form.[11] All the French writers of the symbolist movement were devoid of real metaphysical constructions. Of Baudelaire one of his editors has said: "There is no consistent metaphysic in Baudelaire, and in spite of the arguments of Pommier and Ferran, the theory of correspondances fails to provide one."[12] Valéry insisted that he was interested only in the form and method of his work and sought after a pure poetry of verbal form exclusively:[13] "La pureté est le resultat d'operations infines sur le langage, et le soin de la forme n'est autre chose que la réorginisation meditée des moyens d'expression".[14] Again, Rimbaud's poetic philosophy was totally anarchic; except for the idea of dérèglement des sens his work has no determinable philosophy behind it. And of course Mallarmé with his belief that the best poem is nothing is further than ever away from the English habit of basing art on philosophical structures.

Now one of the things that any student of English Romantics knows is that the main academic approach to Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Blake is philosophic not formalistic. And as Derek Colville explains, the Victorians were trying to reconstruct philosophies comparable to those of the Romantics. Rossetti and Swinburne were writing in a cultural milieu in which the majority of great poets were all inveterate system-builders. Their art, that is, was inspired by organized visions of life. These visions, (Tennyson's dialectic of spiritual renewal and physical decay, Arnold's outlook on life as an alternation between estrangement and involvement and Browning's ratiocinative efforts to justify Christian faith) were based on the idealistic and romantic certitude that there is an ultimate truth capable of being found. Rossetti and Swinburne had the same burning desire as their contemporaries and predecessors for an absolute truth but this required a serious commitment to life that their aestheticism would not allow them to make. They are caught between confused purposes; their English romanticism impels them to seek metaphysical truth and embrace the complete view and their un-English aestheticism encourages an indifference to such truth and a preoccupation with art forms. The result is that they are failures both in the formalistic and in the philosophic senses. Confused

and vague metaphysical dialectics interfere with formal perfection. On the other hand a preoccupation with artistic form for its own sake prevents any improvement in their philosophical outlooks.

The methodology of the English creative mind in the nineteenth century comes from Coleridge. Coleridge established the procedure of ordering art and life as systems of organized paradoxes. To demonstrate the success which Ruskin and Yeats achieved through working within the English tradition, I have spent considerable portions of chapters one and three documenting the metaphysical order that resulted from their approach to contradictions. Rossetti and Swinburne also thought in terms of contradictions but perfected no metaphysical order because their aestheticism compromised the advantages to be gained from the English tradition.

In sum: I want to advance a theory about the nature of the English literary imagination and what happened to it during and after the end of the last century. In the work of the four writers with whom I am dealing, my interest is drawn to their thematic treatment of art and life and to the structural shape of their philosophies.

I

RUSKIN

John Stuart Mill, in his essays on Bentham and Coleridge, describes the two main philosophical movements at the beginning of the nineteenth century in England. One of these followed in the empirical tradition of Bacon, Locke and Hume reaching its latest development (before Mill himself) in the work of Bentham. This movement, to whose ethical and political doctrines is attached the generally misunderstood term "utilitarianism", practised in the words of Mill "those habits of thought and modes of investigation which are essential to the idea of science".[1] The foremost of Bentham's premises is that consideration of a whole ought not to precede the analysis of its parts. The purpose of analysis, however, is not so much to increase knowledge and understanding as to establish truth or falsehood. Among the consequences of this outlook is a disregard for all <u>a priori</u> doctrines whether in morals, politics or psychology. Human nature is to be approached inductively; its truths can be discovered and interrelated solely on the grounds of quantitative observation.

In contrast to most of this, Coleridge, who represented conservatism was preoccupied with determining the <u>significance</u> not the correctness of propositions. Whereas Bentham wanted to designate all statements on

society and morals as true or false, Coleridge assumed truth to be latent in the majority of disputed opinions. Truth, in other words, was for him distributed and complex; it could not be entirely attributed to any one party in an argument. The philosopher should attempt to interpret and organise rather than to verify and refute. This principle Mill puts forth as his own although he probably derived it from Coleridge. Certainly it is identical with Coleridge's theories of psychology and imagination and has little in common with the Lockean theories of understanding which Mill inherited.[2]

Seeking to ascertain not the validity but rather the meaning of beliefs, Coleridge overcame the main limitation of the empirical thinkers. This was the habit of construing reality according to what Mill calls "fractional truths"[3] i.e. empirical truths based on insufficient experience. Bentham's rejection of all a priori principles interfered with his capacity to conceptualize wholes for it meant that synthesis could only be as comprehensive as empirical analysis would permit. Bentham's conception of human nature was thus made up of a small number of motives and impulses without the integration or the depth of intuitive comprehension.

Mill's criticisms of Bentham are important to an understanding not only of Coleridge but of all stages

of nineteenth-century romanticism. To appreciate the seminal position which Coleridge holds in relation to the writers treated in this thesis (and to recognize their successes and failures as his followers) the main weaknesses of Bentham should be observed. The inability to assimilate knowledge from others, an inadequate grasp of human motives, and a misunderstanding of the importance of generalisations produce a fatal poverty of imagination in Bentham. Mill explains that his mentor did possess a faculty akin to Coleridge's fancy but lacked imagination in a wider and more creative sense:

> The imagination which he had was not that to which the name is generally appropriated by the best writers of the present day: that which enables us by a voluntary effort to conceive the absent as if it were present, the imaginary as if it were real and to clothe it in the feelings, which, if it were indeed real it would bring along with it. This is the power by which one human being enters into the mind and circumstances of another .... It is one of the constituents of the historian; by it we understand other times. 4 (my italics).

There is a distinct allusion to Coleridge in "The best writers of the present day" and in the above quotation Mill's definition of imagination is not unlike that given in chapters thirteen and fourteen of Biographia Literaria. Mill, with considerable foresight, also includes in his definition an element that did not become

fully developed until romanticism had entered its final stages, viz. the relevance of historical consciousness to the imagination. Although present in an incipient form in Coleridge's thought, this element only became prevalent in the romantic literary tradition after the publication of the last three volumes of Modern Painters. Mill's observations show that not only was the concept of imagination popularly understood in a quite specific sense by 1840; it was evolving in a definite and obvious direction. The extent to which a work of literature possesses imagination ought to be the prime consideration in making a critical evaluation of it, for imagination was the standard to which the art of the period aspired.

Censuring Coleridge intermittently for an ability to see truth in opinions at variance with tradition, Mill contradicts his own judgement when he speaks of Coleridge's real ability to embrace extremes: "a Tory philosopher cannot be wholly a Tory but must often be a better Liberal than Liberals themselves; while he is the natural means of rescuing from oblivion truths which the Tories have forgotten and which the prevailing schools of Liberalism never knew".[5] The union of truths to which Mill refers is a combination of the opposing interests: permanence and progression. Bentham could never effect this reconciliation, being unable to see the necessity of antithesis in any

complete view of human existence. He could deal with such concrete problems as the mysticism of English law which could be remedied by abolishing abuses. He could not, however, envision many-sided ideals.

In Coleridge's idea of a state balanced between the landed proprietors who represent permanence, and the progressive manufacturing classes, imagination, above all else, is exemplified.[6] The most noticeable feature of the imagination, as Mill presents it, is its power to transcend contraries. Mill got the ideal of imagination from Coleridge, and the faculty itself, which Coleridge applied so well to politics, he first developed in his experience with literature. The rapprochement of art and society that becomes evident in these relationships, is essential to the imagination in its fullest sense and will be a recurrent theme in this paper.

Coleridge's literary imagination has its source in the acts of sensory perception; these in themselves constitute the so-called Primary Imagination. Coleridge takes issue with empiricist notions of perception, insisting that the mind instead of passively registering phenomena, half-creates the impression it gathers. The mind and its objects are, in fact, an antithesis that becomes resolved in the Primary Imagination; the perceiving agent unites with what it perceives. In his theories of human understanding as in

his political beliefs, Coleridge's preoccupation is with the opposites of experience and their imaginative integration. It is this that connects him so significantly with Ruskin and Yeats. More than any other nineteenth-century figure with the exception of Blake, Coleridge sets the pattern of achievement for the later romantics. The Secondary Imagination, which functions in the creation of poetry, is repeatedly suggested both in the particular features and the general outline of the work of Ruskin and Yeats. The duty of the artist is to harmonize the conflicting elements of life by reducing them to an ordered design:

> The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity with the subordination of its faculties to each other ... He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity ... by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power ... reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities. (my italics) 7

In the last years of the century, this power became increasingly difficult to exercise. The division of practical and aesthetic interests deepened and imagination tended to identify itself entirely with art. Aestheticism, nevertheless was as antithetical to the real nature of imagination as Bentham's materialism was. Either extreme betokened a fragmentation of sensibility.

But the common supposition that Victorian culture was dominated by the vision of economic progress and that its principal intellectual leaders were determined by their ability to orientate all things to the values of the age in which they lived, is an over-simplification. Graham Hough, for example, claims that Tennyson, Carlyle and Arnold all belonged to the system, whereas Ruskin was the first great writer after the time of the romantics to reject it. "In his work", says Hough, "we can see the life of the imagination asserting its rights against the external social order".[8] This view leads to an unbalanced view of Ruskin's imagination and the relationship of his writing to the literature of his time. In Modern Painters a work which is erroneously likened to Pater's Renaissance, Hough discovers the first stirrings of fin de siècle aestheticism. Ruskin's moral vision is considered secondary in comparison to these implications: "The pietistic jargon of Modern Painters found ready acceptance, but I doubt if the full implications of that rich and confusing work have been fully realised...."[9] Hough displays the same bias when he characterizes Ruskin's non-aesthetic contemporaries. Speaking of the dismal results of industrial expansion, he concludes: "The political minds, the organisers and administrators, were not fundamentally distressed ... trained in the belief that this was the inevitable condition of

progress, they could, without too much strain on the imagination, look forward to a future in which liberty and prosperity would go hand in hand". Here, Hough overstates the self-confidence of the Victorian materialists as much as he tends to exaggerate the distance of art from social values in Modern Painters. Mill's Political Economy, ostensibly an apology for the principles of Ricardo, is, as a matter of fact, perplexed with doubts about the desirability of commercial progress and capitalism.[10] As Basil Willey acutely argues: "Mill is a steam engine radical, frightened at his own progress, whistling for the flowery meadows ..... booming out the sentiments of Rousseau or D.H.Lawrence."[11]

The tensions in Mill exist quite as conspicuously in Arnold, Carlyle and Tennyson. It is not correct to think that Carlyle, despite his metaphysics, Arnold despite his culture and Tennyson despite his lyricism, merely celebrate the achievements of Victorian England and exude its practical spirit. Arnold, in Culture and Anarchy, and in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" commends the virtue of intellectual detachment from the world of causes. At the same time he writes in service of a pressing cause: the need of converting people to his way of thinking. Yet any attempt to classify him among the "parts of a system", because of his practical aims fails[12]

to recognise the conflict of ideals in his major prose.

Tennyson is neither the morbid mystic of Nicholson's creation nor the Victorian propagandist of Hough. He, like Mill and Arnold, is governed by split allegiances and cannot be understood otherwise. Valerie Pitt comes closest to an accurate summary of his character: "There is in his work a true dialectic, a tension between the insight of the solitary and the sense of the common and the social".[13] Hough's contention that Ruskin was the first Victorian writer to assert the imagination against the order of society, clearly ignores the role performed by Tennyson. The great Victorian writers, obsessed with inner divisions and struggling to regain a unity of spirit, were fulfilling Coleridge's ideal for the imagination. Ruskin is the last survivor of their line, not, as Hough suggests, the first of the "last romantics". The imagination is not reborn in Pater, Rossetti and other writers of the fin de siècle: in their renunciation of the world around them it begins to decline.

This is not to deny that Ruskin influenced the Pre-Raphaelites and certain others in their circle; but they did not emulate his synthesis of art, morals and social issues. His affiliation with them merely intensifies the contrast between his imagination and theirs. So far as the Pre-Raphaelites were concerned, the imagination was merely

the sense of beauty and was therefore the opposite of life. Ruskin's imagination, in all that he writes, manifests itself as the bond between art and experience.

The romantic imagination first arrived at critical self-awareness in Coleridge. It became a well recognized concept by the middle of the century and was consistently exemplified in the best literature of the Victorian period. After the decadence of the nineties, it came to life once again in Yeats. A significant parallel thus emerges between Ruskin and Yeats, the last great representatives of that imagination, one before and the other succeeding the aesthetic decades.

In making an approach to Ruskin, I have endeavoured to keep the imagination as the central object of my attention. At the risk of doing violence to the complex unity of Ruskin's philosophy I have examined the imagination under four different aspects:[14] (i) the theory of the related arts (ii) the complementary function of art and morality (iii) the historical consciousness (iv) the vision of the creative artist. These headings also epitomize the imagination of Yeats and I have therefore used them in my discussion of him to help to reveal the similarity of the two writers.

Among the mutual characteristics of Ruskin and Yeats are a marked electicism and an urge to systematize. The numerous sources upon which Ruskin draws in constructing his

theories of beauty often belong to conflicting traditions and vary from Reynolds to Wordsworth. His aesthetic is, in part, an attempt to reconcile the precepts of neo-classicism and romanticism. Yeats, with his simultaneous admiration for the aristocratic decor of Sidney and the earthiness of Villon, likewise seems to endorse incompatible qualities. In fact, his allegiances are intentionally contradictory; in the way of Ruskin, he attempts to found synthesis on inconsistency. Both men discover reality in contradictions and then go about the difficult business of locating a universal order in that reality. The effects of their epistemology extend through all the stages of their major works and palpably influence style as well.

Although Yeats, due to his esoteric system, is more successful than Ruskin in finding a universal order, Ruskin's limited realization of that goal is more genuine. Yeats pursues his quest on archetypal patterns set by the Victorians and Romantics. But the difference between the vision of the "eternal" in Adonais and Yeats' A Vision is in the amount of struggle required in their achievement. Yeats prizes "a mysterious wisdom won by toil"; still, the artificiality and sudden contrivance of his system belie this ideal. Ruskin's wisdom is truly a product of toil. It is dialectically evolved, like Tennyson's "far off

divine event," from a much more literal search for truth. Yeats can create the suspicion that his truths are all just "metaphors for poetry". Ruskin and Yeats illuminate each other's strengths and weaknesses.

The first stage of Ruskin's attempted system is his theory of the arts. It is based on a re-interpretation of the ut pictura poesis convention of the eighteenth century which had become obsolete by the time Modern Painters made its appearance. Although Turner had assimilated the arts in his lectures to the Royal Academy [15] and had used a fair number of literary captions for his own paintings, it was left to Ruskin to discover a rationale for the alliance which would be suitable to the nineteenth century.

As the pre-eminent art critic of his century, Ruskin occupies a position of historical importance analogous to that of Reynolds in the Augustan age. Theoretically they are alike in being protagonists of the ut pictura poesis doctrine. But a fundamental difference results from the change in the meaning of the word "poetry" from one period to the next. Reynolds maintained the neo-classic mimetic theory for all the arts whereas Ruskin thought of poetry in the expressive romantic sense. His ideas of painting and architecture were in turn influenced by the new literary trend. In spite of his neo-classic

insistence on truth to external nature in painting, he abnegates all architectural rules in favour of instinct and experimentation. (Witness his celebration of the uncontrolled spontaneity of Gothic churches in The Stones of Venice).

The precise distinction between Ruskin's version of ut pictura poesis and the original neo-classic theory, emerges in the comparison of a passage on painting and poetry from Modern Painters III with one from Dryden's preface to Du Fresnoy's The Art of Painting. Dryden, like Reynolds, argues that the visual factor predominates in all art forms. Aesthetic ideals are pictorially conceived:

> both these Arts ... are not only true imitations of Nature, but of the best Nature, of that which is wrought up to a noble pitch. They present us with Images more perfect than the Life in any individual: and we have the pleasure to see all the scatter'd beauties of Nature without its deformities or faults. 16

Ruskin shares Dryden's belief that the arts produce moral exaltation but he does not find this nobility in abstract ideals. Nobility is a quality in the feelings expressed by certain individuals. Consequently he thinks of the relationship of the arts as one of emotions rather than images. His emphasis is on the power of art to communicate feeling:

> Painting is properly to be opposed to speaking or writing but not to poetry. Both painting and speaking are methods of expression. Poetry is the employment of either for the noblest purposes .... Great art is produced by men who feel acutely and nobly; and is in some sort an expression of this personal feeling.[17]

The feeling that unites the arts also provides the foundation for one of the two main sections of Ruskin's doctrine of beauty. Ultimately it becomes the connection between aesthetics and the urgent moral and social concerns of his later life. Through the course of these developments it represents, most simply, the human spirit and acts as the causal factor in each phase of Ruskin's growth towards a systematic eclecticism.

However, to interpret Ruskin's alliance of the arts, simply as a romantic and emotional renovation of a neo-classic concept is to forget the complexity of their relationship. If he adopted a romantic view of poetry and allowed it to influence his ideas of painting somewhat, he still retained the belief in an aesthetic based on images.[18] His art theory is divided between expressive and mimetic concepts. Painting is essentially mimetic. Poetry is expressive. The alliance is made possible by a strong expressive tendency in painting.

In his conception of the arts Ruskin can already be seen tentatively trying to construct a system. Though

as yet only on an aesthetic level, he was searching for the intellectual integration that later became his greatest strength as a thinker. In imposing a structure on his diverse aesthetic attitudes he made a significant step in this direction. His next attempt at systematization was to infer the existence of a cosmic order from natural beauty. Beauty, he contends, is "a symbolizing of Divine attributes in matter".[19]

In Modern Painters II, Ruskin formulates the concepts of Typical and Vital Beauty which are respectively appropriate to the arts of painting and poetry. Typical Beauty originates in visual forms. It describes the images of divine order in the world. It is the Apollonian part of Ruskin's aesthetic.

Vital Beauty concerns the energy and happiness of living things and the expression of moral emotions. It is related in the latter sense to the deity behind Typical Beauty. Vital Beauty is the more adaptable of the two; it survives Ruskin's loss of theological faith and, slightly altered, co-exists thereafter with his mature historicism. Without the premise of a creator, Typical Beauty loses objective validity. Vital Beauty, because it is generated by natural emotions and organic efficiency is less dependent on the supernatural; its purely natural impetus points to a more humanistic outlook on life and an entirely new way of thinking.

Ruskin's habits of mental organisation changed considerably after he realized the inadequacy of his first world view. The change was not one of direction however; it simply involved a rejection of all impedimenta to his natural way of thinking. In trying to establish a theocentric order Ruskin had to rely on the logic and metaphysics of the eighteenth century. Typical Beauty is in all respects what Pope is referring to in An Essay on Man: "The gen'ral Order since the whole began / Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man." This mechanical perspective was contrary to the kind of organic relationship into which Ruskin always wanted to place things; but the mimetic principle in painting caused a dilemma because, for a century, it had been inextricably bound to a mechanical world order. In Modern Painters it reveals its old affinity by distracting Ruskin from the organic kind of union developed in his theory of the arts.

The organicism that relates poetry to painting is common in the technical structure of all expressive arts. Coleridge's idea of imagination, which is thoroughly organic, is conceptually derived from expressive art. In describing the synthesis of feelings in romantic poetry, M. H. Abrams pinpoints the connection of the organic and the expressive; "Poetry is the overflow, utterance, or projection of the thought and feelings of the poet; or else

(in the chief variant formulation) poetry is defined in terms of the imaginative process which modifies and synthesizes the images, thoughts and feelings of the poet."[20]

Having created a theocentric theory of beauty, Ruskin began to have misgivings about certain of its aspects. The result was a return to organicism and eventually the creation of a new system founded on historical rather than theological principles.

The disintegration of Ruskin's aesthetic system is a process that requires some attention because it is caused by factors that later become essential to his historical logic. In order to maintain his neo-classic beliefs in the design of nature, he was forced to resist the implications of the related arts doctrine. If beauty is the creation of God and not of human emotion, it must be a material quality in the object to which it is attributed or else a quality in the configuration of several objects. (The forms of Typical Beauty which particularly emphasize the importance of material order in aesthetic considerations are unity, symmetry and repose).[21]

English empiricism, after Locke proposed his theory of primary and secondary qualities, became the antithesis of neo-classicism in its speculations on matter. Blake's contempt for Locke in some sense reflects a prejudice

common to all romantics; nevertheless the Lockian theory of knowledge was the source of certain romantic attitudes that persisted down to the time of Ruskin. Among these was a preference for psychological instead of material and metaphysical approaches to reality. (Kant was also partly responsible for this romantic bias through his influence on Coleridge). Locke's separation of the qualities of matter into those which exist in the body and those which are created by the percipient led directly to Berkeley's conclusion that there are no empirical grounds for holding that some qualities of matter are less dependent on observation for their existence than others. Berkeley took Locke's theory of knowledge to its logical conclusion in denying the existence of matter.[22]

By the end of the eighteenth century Berkeley's outlook had been diffused through most areas of thought. In the realm of aesthetics it appeared as the notion that beauty is felt and not apprehended. In other words, beauty is an emotion not a perceived quality in a material object. Now the psychological principle of associationism was closely related to this interpretation of beauty. Archibald Alison, in Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790) proposes that feelings of beauty are entirely determined by subjective personal associations.[23] For two reasons which George Landow neatly summarizes,

Ruskin rejects Alison's analysis: (i) it is inconsistent with an objective or universal definition of beauty (ii) it removes from beauty any relevance to religion and morals[24] (so far as the mechanical Augustan understanding of the world is concerned).

Despite his disapproval of associationism, Ruskin's expressive alliance of poetry and painting amounts to a tacit acceptance of its first premise viz. that aesthetic considerations begin in human emotions and experiences. In the preface to the second edition of Modern Painters, Ruskin, in fact, declares an intention to "demonstrate the nature of the emotions of the Beautiful and Sublime"[25] (my italics). Since it would be impossible to conceive of an objective emotion, from this statement follows the conclusion that whatever he says about Typical Beauty in volume two, Ruskin regards aesthetics as subjective. It is not surprising therefore, to find Ruskin inadvertently making large concessions to the associationist beliefs he distrusts.

In Modern Painters II, Ruskin allows that "Accidental Association ... the accidental connection of ideas and memories with material things"[26] may be a source of pleasure though not of beauty. The concept of Rational Association he attacks with vigour for it endangers his theocentric aesthetic; "by Rational association I understand the interest which an object may bear historically as having been in some

way connected with the affairs or affections of men ... which to call beauty is mere and gross confusion of terms."[27] The Seven Lamps of Architecture and The Stones of Venice, however, propound very different ideas. There Ruskin is dealing not with nature but specifically with man-created forms of beauty. He represents beauty and ugliness as dependent on historical and humanitarian associations. The grotesque appeared in Venetian architecture when after "the death of the Doge Thomas Mocenigo in 1423 ... the nation drank with deeper thirst from the fountains of forbidden pleasure"[28] and abandoned itself to luxury. Similarly, of importance to the beauty of any building, is the Lamp of Memory: the air of the past. In either case Ruskin is acceding to the Rational Association which he rejects in Modern Painters II as having nothing to do with essential beauty.

Human concerns intruded with increasing frequency on Ruskin's thoughts as successive volumes of Modern Painters were published. His first and last effort to present a comprehensive aesthetic is in volume two. He did not make any systematic revisions after himself adopting arguments for which he had attacked Alison and in the chapter on the Lamp of Beauty he contradicts the implications of the Lamp of Memory by reverting to the old theocentric creed about the origins of beauty.[29]

Humanistic and religious conceptions of beauty form an indefinite mixture for some time after the conclusion of Modern Painters.

Ruskin's demand for a unified pattern of reality remained undiminished though he failed to erect one on the base of aesthetics. Hough speaks of "a gradual severance, increasingly apparent from Ruskin onwards, of art from the interests of common life".[30] Insofar as it concerns Ruskin, this statement is quite wrong. The ill-success in creating a metaphysics of art and beauty caused Ruskin not to turn away from common life but to embrace it in the hope of finding a meaning and purpose that art by itself could not give. He did not stop thinking that art and beauty were indispensable to human life but he came to the realization that beauty could be produced by men as well as by God. From this emerged the third general stage in his philosophic maturation in which he became more deeply conscious of the nexus of life, morality and art.

While the early volumes of Modern Painters are inquiries into the nature of cosmic order, Ruskin's work after 1849 is preoccupied with the orders of human psychology and history. Like Yeats, who goes so far as to depict the analogy between these subjects schematically, (personalities and eras are both governed by the lunar cycle) Ruskin's historicism is an enlargement of his understanding of

psychology. The complementary functions of morality and art are the most discussed feature of Ruskinian psychological theory. Therefore they provide the obvious transition from theological aesthetics to historical humanism.

The alliance of art and morality, like that of painting and poetry, is stimulated by romantic emotion. Ruskin inherited much of his moral philosophy from Lord Shaftesbury who in Characteristics, repudiates Augustan rules of moral decision by substituting "natural moral sense" for reason. A reliance on "moral sense" is implicit in Ruskin's arbitrary and rationally unsubstantiated judgements against such things as the nude and in his instinctive and insupportable belief that Gothic architecture was inspired by the nascent spirit of Protestantism etc. He shows his descent from Shaftesbury even more plainly when in later life he says: "To this fixed conception of a difference between Better and Worse, or, when carried to the extreme, between good and evil in conduct, we all, it seems to me, instinctively and therefore, rightly, attach the term of Moral sense".[31] Being quite removed from reason, moral sense expresses itself not through the intellect, but through the feelings. The deepest kind of perception Ruskin declares: "is in so small degree dependent on acuteness of moral emotion; in fact all moral truth can only be thus apprehended."[32] The

neo-classic values against which Shaftesbury's moral sense is a radical reaction were descended from ancient and mediaeval doctrines in which reason was always supreme among the human faculties; sense and emotion were thought to associate man with the animals. In the late eighteenth century, partly due to speculative thinkers like Hume (who undermined the authority of reason with his rational scepticism), emotions became more significant than reason. This applied in aesthetic as well as in moral judgements. Ruskin's definition of the beautiful makes it an instinctive perception like the knowledge of good and evil: "Any material object which can give us pleasure in the simple contemplation of its outward qualities without any direct and definite exertion of the intellect, I call in some way or in some degree, beautiful."[33] Urged to ponder the relevance of humanistic values to aesthetics, it is not surprising (for reasons aforementioned), that Ruskin should identify good art with good morality. Both are controlled by emotional instinct. If the moral instinct of the artist is healthy his art will be good.

The approximation of art to ethics which Ruskin thus reached, was abetted, George Landow and others have explained, by the inclusion of pyschology within the limits of emotional moral philosophy.[34] Romanticism in general and the sentimental moralists in particular, did not discriminate

the acceptance of moral obligations from the other mental operations. Ruskin's psychological aesthetic, by which I mean his associationist idea of beauty, naturally evolved into a moral aesthetic as he recognized more of the human sources of beauty. Morals and psychology are intersecting studies. Where one was, the other was naturally implicit.

This is not to suggest that Ruskin did not sense a close attachment of art to morality while he still believed intensely in the Christian God. But the loss of religious faith heightened the importance of humanist morality, whereof the correlation with art did not become conspicious until it could not be taken for granted on theological grounds. Not only did Ruskin believe in the attachment, he also wanted to prove that art is necessary to virtue as virtue is to art. He was not merely interested in passively defining the ramifications of aesthetics into other areas of philosophy. He felt that the activities of the artist must be vindicated to the rest of humanity.

In Modern Painters II, written in the spirit of a still strong evangelical piety, Ruskin condemns the attitude that treats art as a recreational activity. He posits two faculties of appreciation: the Theoretic and the Aesthetic. The latter degrades beauty "to a mere operation of sense or perhaps worse, of custom"[35] and produces contempt for the moral aims of aesthetic experience. The theoretic faculty

relates to moral perceptions of beauty which, even as they may be religious, already have the strong, humanistic and social bent of Ruskin's future writing. Ruskin expresses the function of art as follows: "Art, properly so called is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments ... ; it must be understood and undertaken seriously or not at all ... ; it is to summon the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty...."[36] Yet he is often suspicious of the value of art and of its capacity to move men. An art devoid of definite moral construction is worthless. The painters of landscape he finds exceptionally at fault: "No moral end has been answered, no permanent good effected by any of their works."[37]

Art exerts a portion of its moral influence by inculcating a certain balance of mind. This is the same idea that Newman expresses in his defence of knowledge for its own sake and to which Arnold refers when he says that the purpose of culture is the formation of the spirit and character. Ruskin, like his contemporaries, sees the moral function of art not only in practical but in idealistic terms. Egocentricity, alteration of nature's proper features and caricature are examples of the mental disequilibrium against which the good artist must guard.[38] Truth to nature is indicative of artistic excellence because it signifies mental well being. It is inseparable from

the "complete view" of reality which le Gallienne recommends and sets against disease and decadence.

Another edifying aspect of art is its power to comprehend different ages and cultures for contemplation in the present: "Whole areas of mighty history are summed, and the passions of dead myriads are concentrated in the existence of a noble art...."[39] Ruskin is here defining art approximately as Arnold defines culture; each requires renunciation of intellectual narrowness, of selfishness and bigotry: "Perfection as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated .... The individual is required to carry others along with him ...."[40] The moral sympathy that permits the individual to appreciate other ages in art broadens his participation in the struggles of mankind. The same faculty impels him to desire culture for his fellows in seeking it for himself.

Ruskin lays upon the artist "the responsibility of a preacher"[41] but not his methods. Art appeals to the sympathies and emotions. It refines them to achieve its moral aims. It does not adjure in the name of moral laws because it depends on beauty and beauty can exist only for itself. Yet this is a very different self-sufficiency from that which develops in Rossetti's presentation of beauty. Rossetti elevates beauty by eliminating from a consciousness of it the responsibility for good and evil.

Ruskin does not do this; he is able to appreciate the independence of beauty and nevertheless to value its power to stir the emotions that control human behaviour. The beautiful is not the moral: "it is didactic chiefly by being beautiful."[42]

The morality of art propounded by Ruskin was not a novelty of his own invention. It was a doctrine with considerable historical background some of which has been described. One must realize this to see that his synthetic impulse was addressed not just to the conflicts of his personal experience but to the popular movements that engendered them. Ruskin's work is a stage for the convergence of a wide spectrum of moral, aesthetic and political trends.

In investigating the purposes as equal in importance to the essence of art, Eneas Sweetland Dallas, a member of the Aesthetic Society at Edinburgh, bore some resemblance to Ruskin. In The Gay Science (1866), Dallas took issue with the methods of the Society for neglecting the psychological and subconscious aspects of beauty. Dallas located all aesthetic value in moral pleasure that evades conscious analysis.[43] Ruskin did not participate in this extreme moral psychologism, though as we have seen, psychological theories were crucial in his development. He did not deprive beauty of its ontological independence even if he regarded it as an

emotion. It was perhaps the partial survival of his objective definition of beauty that caused him not to lose track of beauty per se in speculations about subconscious pleasure. Ruskin's theories display a more coherent view of life and art than most of his contemporaries or forerunners ever achieved. They are also the necessary criterion for judgements of the Pre-Raphaelites and the poets of the 1890's.

Too much life could foster only the practical virtues of the philistine. At the other extreme, art without life, lay the aestheticism of Whistler. Ruskin considered the dispositions of philistine and aesthete to be fundamentally alike. Either depended on ignorance of the complete view and both were immoral. J.B.Priestley interprets the aesthete from the perspective of a Ruskinian wholeness: "an artist does not gain freedom from this desire to shock stupid conventional people, for he is still compelling himself to accept their standards by deliberately reversing them."[44] The aesthetic movement in England was essentially a fragmentation of Ruskin's synthesis. It was not indigenous to English taste and its English representatives were correctly dismissed by Arthur Symons as "small beer". They were not able to abandon the memory of an art firmly rooted in life and so could not truly believe in an art for its own sake.

The outline and origin of the moral aesthetic are most easily accessible in the five volumes of Modern Painters. Between the years 1846 - 1856 when the third and fourth volumes were written, Ruskin's faith weakened. The third volume shows the first evidence of this in what amounts to a slight adumbration of aestheticism. Natural beauty is not attributed to God with the insistence that it is in volume two. The book is pervaded by a lack of direction that is caught in the vagueness of the subtitle:"Of many things". The militancy of Unto this Last undiscovered, the religiosity of the previous volume fading, Modern Painters III is more exclusively preoccupied with art, nature and beauty than almost any other work by Ruskin. But this indecisiveness is the prelude to a profound pessimism.

Until 1845 nature had seemed to Ruskin the image of divine perfection while man was stained with sin and sensuality. In 1858 the famous incident occurred in which, appalled by a sermon which seemed to him abusive, he left a chapel in Turin to admire the sensuality of Veronese's Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The reason for this change in spirit also accounts for the depression of Modern Painters Iv and V. Ruskin had grown conscious of the dignity of man; but as a consequence death and suffering had become inexplicable as the deserts of original sin. Like Keats, he was now incapable of resigning himself to them. Man was the victim, his environment the oppressor. In the last two

chapters of Modern Painters IV "The Mountain Gloom" and "The Mountain Glory", Ruskin juxtaposes his earlier vision of nature against the horrific one that was gaining possession of him. The imagery of "The Mountain Gloom" indicates that Ruskin no longer holds the Wordsworthian belief in nature's goodness. And although the chapter contains some pious invocations on the theme of human sin, the natural creation, once celebrated as a speculum dei is evil and sinister:

> Here it is torpor -- not absolute suffering -- not starvation or disease but darkness of calm enduring; the spring known only as the time of the scythe and the autumn as the time of the sickle, and the sun only as a warmth, the wind as a chill, and the mountains as a danger ... that cloud of rocky gloom, born out of the wild torrents, and ruinous stones ... a smoke, as it were, of martyrdom ... amidst the images of tortured bodies and lamenting spirits in hurtling flames, the very cross, for them, dashed more deeply than for others, with gouts of blood. [45]

I have quoted this passage of considerable length because it seems to me to reflect the full consciousness of Ruskin's moral aesthetic. Art to be moral must fulfil the same requirements as Arnold's culture, it must give unity to the mind and arouse sympathy. But beyond this it must contemplate the horrors of human existence. Ruskin illustrates his meaning in the chapter of Modern Painters III entitled "The Moral of Landscape". One may admire the

splendour of a snowcapped Alp so long as one has no distinct idea of the danger of the villagers who live around its base. But should the imagination be arrested by their prosperities and misfortunes, "The snowy peak ceases to be visible, or holds its place only as a white spot upon the retina."[46] The beauty of any natural scene can be appreciated only if the observer's mind is evenly balanced between the powers of aesthetic sensibility and human interest. The mind which is deficient in the latter soon loses the former and becomes no more sensitive to the grandeur of its surroundings than birds and insects. In the reverse case, that of the philanthropist like John Howard, the affairs of humanity stifle the capacity for disinterested aesthetic enjoyment. Nevertheless even where there is balance there must still be tension between the aesthetic and humanitarian instincts. Usually the humanitarian impulse is the stronger:

> and when we glance broadly along the starry crowd of benefactors to the human race, and guides of human thought, we shall find that this dreaming love of natural beauty -- or at least its expression -- has been more or less checked by them all and subordinated either to hard work or watching of <u>human</u> nature. [47]

Ruskin's social criticism was, as critics like Francis G. Townsend have maintained, the result of the

decline of his former feeling for nature. Yet his diaries show that Ruskin struggled to keep the power to experience the old emotion after society had consumed the greater part of his attention. The body of Ruskin's mature prose is a composite of the natural emotions of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads and the humanitarian spirit of Dickens' Hard Times. He never ceased aspiring to the condition of sensibility in which these, and all other conflicting emotions would be unified. The fullest perception of any natural object involves fastening "our fancies about it as a centre, making a garland of thoughts for it, in which each separate thought is subdued and shortened of its own strength, in order to fit it for harmony with others."[48] Such was the highest operation of the mind for Ruskin as for Coleridge before him. The ideal was presented later by Yeats as unity of being or stabilization of the antithetical and primary gyres.

The ultimate union of art and social morality is set forth in "The Law of Help" in Modern Painters V. Ruskin makes the above his rule for the perception of nature, the principle of organization for the good painting and the ethical society alike. He begins by defining as artistic composition "the help of everything in the picture by everything else."[49] Whatever is constituted of warring members is impure and devitalized. Energy is increased

through co-operation. Anything that has reached the maximum strength of which its combined members are capable, exists in a state of purity and vitality. Death is literally the decomposition which comes about from a loss of internal co-operation. The garland of thoughts mentioned above is equally the template of aesthetic and economic order: "A pure or holy state of anything, therefore, in that in which all its parts are helpful or consistent."[50] Co-operation and competition are the laws of life and death respectively. The competitive society like the ill-composed picture is impure. The good picture must be moral in theme, but above all cohesive in structure. Similarly, and this accounts for Ruskin's occasional totalitarian inclinations,[51] a society is considered just not only for its aims and purposes, but, alternatively, for its intrinsic efficiency and cohesion.

Although in the chapter "Greatness of Style", Ruskin stresses subject as the first criterion for artistic greatness, a more comprehensive definition of aesthetic morality must take his laws of composition into account. Ruskin's principles of art are superior to Rossetti's not because they are based on evangelical ideas of virtue, but because they espouse the "complete view". John Rosenberg sums up the matter: "There may be irreligious painters but not, in his sense of the word, immoral painters, for their

'magnificent animality' is a sign of vital and controlled organization of powers in themselves moral".[52] Rossetti's art is deficient in moral tone because, as the following chapters will attempt to explain, it does not have this vital control.

For Ruskin's evaluation of particular artists, (from the viewpoint of the moral and aesthetic standards that are cumulatively built up in Modern Painters), we must turn to the section of volume five called "Invention Spiritual". After assessing a series of painters from different historical periods for their integrity of spirit, Ruskin directs his attention to Turner. When he began Modern Painters Ruskin had esteemed, primarily, Turner's accurate depiction of nature. This seemed the most a moral art could accomplish. By the time he was approaching the end of the last volume he had learned to admire the painter for new reasons. It was now the simultaneous perception of natural beauty and human suffering that impressed him. Turner, he now recognized, knew how to combine aesthetic sensitivity and moral responsibility. He was a master of the complete view.

In chapter eleven Ruskin interprets the canvas Apollo and Python (1811) in which the emotions of beauty and suffering meet and interact. The battle which is portrayed there is "the strife of purity with pollution; of

life with forgetfulness; of love with the grave."[53] Apollo wins, but his adversary does not die; he merely melts and from his blood arises a "smaller serpent worm". Ruskin in his comment on this, comes close to the heart of his own moral aesthetic as he summarises Turner: "He is ... the painter of the loveliness of nature, with the worm at its root: Rose and canker worm, -- both with his utmost strength; the one never separate from the other."[54]

A contradiction would seem to exist in the fact that Ruskin defines moral composition as consistency of parts yet believes the tragic discord of beauty and corruption inalienable from great art. In a diary entry which is quoted by Rosenberg, he revises his opinion of Fra Angelico whose purism had once represented the deepest possible moral conscience: "The great artist must not evade the fact of evil, but gaze without fear into the darkness ... not pass on the other side looking pleasantly up to the sky, but ... stoop to the horror, and let the sky, for the present, take care of its own clouds."[55] There are two forces at work in this statement: sympathy and the sense of beauty. Ruskin did not think that these are unalterably opposed to each other. As I have tried to explain, for him their ideal function is reciprocal inspiration. Nonetheless, he understood that not all the time could they be quite consonant. Whenever a harmonious alliance appeared

impossible, conflict was preferable to a naive simplification of reality. Always the complete view ought to be preserved. It is for failing to do this that he is reproving Angelico. Purity, consistency, vitality and nobleness of subject -- all these Angelico has but they are somewhat diminished by not having to triumph over corruption, confusion and death.

Ruskin valued consistency but he saw that reality is conflict. The conflict must be resolved before the consistency can be achieved. Often the acceptance of conflict can be an approach to consistency. This is what was meant when at a previous stage in this paper I claimed that Ruskin and Yeats both discover unity in opposition. The consistency of the imagination, the reconciling of "opposite or discordant qualities", is not the strict logical consistency of Bentham by which all statements can only be either true or false. Ruskin's statement that ideally everything in a picture must help everything else, requires some interpretation. Ruskin many times said things that show that he would have agreed with Blake's maxim "Without Contraries is no Progression". In terms of organicism, the structural pattern of all the expressive arts, conflict is "helpful". In Apollo and Python Turner matches sympathy for suffering against his responses to beauty just as Ruskin does in his criticism of Angelico.

The conflict is not generated by incompatibility of the emotions themselves, but by the circumstances which evoke them. Beneath the turmoil of life, Ruskin and Turner possess unity of spirit.

The cynosure of Modern Painters is "Invention Spiritual". The explication of Turner's art which climaxes it, shows why. Ruskin has come to an open awareness of where his theories about the related arts, the different types of beauty, the psychology of beauty and the moral aesthetic have been leading him. He puts it plainly:

> In these books of mine, their distinctive character as essays on art, is their bringing everything to a root in human passion or human hope. Arising first not in any desire to explain the principles of art, but in an endeavour to save an individual painter from injustice, they have been coloured throughout, - nay, continually altered in shape, and even warped and broken by digressions respecting social questions, which had for me an interest tenfold greater than the work I had been forced into undertaking. Every principle of painting which I have stated is traced to some vital or spiritual fact and in my works on architecture the preference accorded finally to one school or another is founded on a comparison of their influences on the life of the workman. (my italics) 56

Ruskin's work is, he says, an extended effort to penetrate the association between life and art. These are the basic contraries of Victorian culture and of Ruskin's thought. They can also be regarded as the alternatives of action

and reflection. Ruskin first confronts them in the arts of poetry and painting. Poetry is, to use Schiller's expression, Dionysian or emotional. Painting is Apollonian, static, and only indirectly fed by the emotions of life. Subsequently these same opposites express themselves as Vital and Typical beauty and after that, as morality and art. Modern Painters ends when Ruskin's dialectic has reached the last mentioned pair. His later books are somewhat overbalanced by social controversy as his early ones are by aesthetics. These interests are more or less evenly matched in "Invention Spiritual" from which perspective we can move to the third category of Ruskin's imagination.

R.G.Collingwood has called Ruskin's mind historical. This is an appropriate epithet for two reasons: (i) it underscores the significance of human life in his aesthetics (ii) it precisely characterizes the organization of the different parts of his philosophy. About the first of these enough has been said. Ruskin had his first important thoughts about historical influences on aesthetics when he recognized the validity of Alison's principle of Rational Association. We cannot establish any definite time for his acquiescence in Alison's theory since he never openly acknowledged it. But in "Invention Spiritual" he is plainly engaging in historical art criticism of the type found earlier in The Seven Lamps of Architecture and The Stones of Venice. The comments on the historical

backgrounds of the painters about whom he writes are an unofficial preface to his future writings. It is a safe generalization to say that Ruskin's mature aesthetic goes through three stages of development: psychological, moral and historical, each of which interprets the relation of art and life more comprehensively than its predecessor.

Ruskin's historicism cannot be defined on the basis of anything he says about it. Probably he was not aware of it as such. He was conscious of holding a certain position with respect to psychology; this is obvious from his expressed opinions on associationism. And he was very self-conscious about his humanist ethics. In speaking of him as an historicist however, we are looking backward with a finished mental picture of the nineteenth century which he could not have. Furthermore, in the sense that historicism refers not only to a stage in his aesthetic development but to the structure of his philosophy,[57] we are dealing with a subject that he would have apprehended differently at each period in his development.

Historicism is that branch of modern idealist philosophy which broke away from Platonic metaphysics with its eternal forms and created a new species of metaphysics whereby ideal essences realize themselves in time. Hegel was the greatest historicist philosopher. It was he who systematized methods of thought that had begun to evolve after the time of Kant and gave a new definition to

idealism. Hegel made truth contingent upon historical causes and rewrote logic on the principles of historical contradiction. In so doing he replaced the syllogistic logic that had dominated all post-Aristotelian philosophy.

Traditional logic interprets experience as a set of analytic propositions. Knowledge is discovered in general and unchanging principles not in the ambiguities and inconsistencies of particular facts. All disputes have a right side and a wrong side. To arrive at truth we must reduce the complexities of "mire and blood" to the correct a priori values. The eighteenth century possessed a culture in which logicist principles had permeated most areas of art and life. The doctrine of the ruling passions, Reynold's "general nature", and Pope's unvarying heroic couplets are some of the manifestations of the neo-classic belief in an eternally consistent and static reality.

Historicist logic typifies the mind of the nineteenth century. Though it seldom presents as a formal dialectic like Hegel's, its methods and ideals are essential to an appreciation of the period. It was a reaction against the anti-historic rationalism of the Enlightenment that Mill censures: "The brilliant light which has been thrown upon history during the last half-century has proceeded almost wholly from this (Coleridge's) school.[58] The disrespect in which history was held by the philosophes is notorious.

But the philosophes saw as usual what was not true, not what was."[59] Mill's last remark applies to the rationalists' contempt for facts. For the historicists, synthetic propositions drawn from particular conditions and events constitute perceived reality. "The historical mind" states Collingwood, "when challenged for an explanation ... asks, not 'what general law does this fact illustrate'? but 'in what particular circumstances did it arise'"?[60] Like rationalism, historicism is governed by general laws. But these originate in experience not in logic and are more often laws of paradox than of consistency.

Evidence of historicism assumed varied forms. At the turn of the century the first generation of Romantics were the dominant influence in literature. They were mystic and apocalyptic in outlook, yet in their fidelity to fact and detail they anticipated the historicist art of later decades. The preoccupation of the Lyrical Ballads with the experiences of common people unglossed by pastoral conventions, is an artistic expression of the historicist contempt for generalizations unsupported by fact. The bias in favour of detail that runs in romantic art from Wordsworth to Rossetti is rooted in the historical awareness of the century. The indifference of the Pre-Raphaelites to things outside art attests to the self-proving incompleteness of their philosophy. The fidelity to nature upon which they insisted, is traditionally a branch of historicism and its

implications followed to their conclusion, necessitate an interest in historical and social matters. Ruskin held the materialistic ideals of Rossetti: "And the whole power, whether of painter or poet, to describe rightly what we call an ideal thing depends upon its being thus, to him, not an ideal, but a real thing."[61] However, the roots of his political philosophy (with which this paper is not directly concerned) are in this quotation as well. An artistic orientation to the real could not evade social realism.

The great Victorians and the Pre-Raphaelite poets added an idealization of the Middle Ages to the historical elements already existing in Wordsworth. It became increasingly popular among later romantics to found ideals in the human past and future. Coleridge dreamed of Kubla Khan's stately pleasure dome and caves of ice, Shelley, of the abolition of the cycles of history. But William Morris' mediaeval romances, Pater's The Renaissance and Tennyson's Idylls of the King are historicist in their idealisation of time instead of eternity. Ruskin regarded the ideal art as mediaeval Gothic and invariably governed his criticisms of the present and his hopes for the future by the criterion of the mediaeval past. Ideals took a human more than a transcendental form.

The attributes of Ruskin's historicism that are most relevant to this paper are those relating to the structure and organisation of his ideas. I have discussed

the elements of his thought and must now offer a few statements on the method of their integration. Historicism is a type of romanticism. In its treatment of the law of contradiction it shows this kinship. Coleridge in his romantic theory of imagination and Hegel in his dialectic of antithesis together sum up the century's contravention of the logicist idea that truth is unilateral. The eclecticism of Ruskin's mind is by itself an indication of views more explicitly put forth as a Cambridge lecture. Describing the mental discipline behind his search for life's truth he declares:

> Perhaps some of my hearers this evening may occasionally have heard it stated of me that I am rather apt to contradict myself. I hope I am exceedingly apt to do so. I never met with a question yet, of any importance, which did not need, for the right solution of it, at least one positive and one negative answer, like an equation of the second degree. Mostly, matters of any consequence are three-sided, or four-sided or polygonal; and the trotting round a polygon is severe work for people any way stiff in their opinions. For myself, I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly till I have contradicted myself at least three times.[62]

Ruskin's conviction that truth is embedded in contradiction is due to the historicist reverence for facts. It is a conviction that is largely responsible for his belief that all human faculties are interdependent and that the mind is a unified entity. It can, at any rate,

be strongly argued that where, as in the Augustan world view, there is less emphasis on facts than on laws, the mind is analyzed as a group of discrete faculties. For Ruskin, the mind, which must work in contradictions to understand polygonal reality, is like the reality it perceives; it is many-sided, often self-contradictory, but nevertheless a unity.

The sources of Ruskin's philosophy of mind are a good deal more complex than this and cannot be properly talked about in the space of one paper. His debt to the expressive art theories of the Romantics and the concomitant principle of organicism have been mentioned. These were an important prefiguration of his historicist psychology. Associationism also contributed to it by disclosing ties among emotions which previously had either not been related or had been considered exclusive of one another. Mill, whose shrewd insights into the temper of his time made him continually useful as a standard of reference, classifies each human action into a moral, a sympathetic and an aesthetic aspect. The error of the sentimentalists is to slight the first aspect while moralists habitually neglect the latter two.[63] Ruskin corrected these deficiencies by not losing track of the humanitarian and moral obligations of the artist. Yet his refusal to dissociate art and morality was only the beginning of a philosophy equal in range, unity and metaphoric content to Blake's.

Ruskin so firmly believed in the unity of mental processes that he could assume analogous relationships among all disciplines and modes of thought or action. Few of Ruskin's commentators have failed to notice this. He would invariably, for instance, attempt to prove a point concerning painting by appealing to the rules of poetry or to substantiate a claim about art by an analogous illustration taken from science.[64] On a larger scale all the features of an historic period are analogous because they too are created in the human mind and therefore reflect its unity. The Aristotelian mind would treat history as a succession of categories and archetypes, self-contained and unrelated, whereas the lesson of Ruskin's work is that literature, architecture, politics and religion exist together cohesively in time as in thought. That is the basic conception of The Stones of Venice. Each period of history is an organic whole and is organically linked to the next. The synthetic shape of Ruskin's mind ought now to be roughly apparent. But as history is not strictly pertinent to the aesthetic perimeter of our discussion, it is necessary to focus again on the theme of life and art.

The last thing I want to consider is the role of the artist as Ruskin conceives it. The artist must internalize everything that is demanded of great art. He must possess a sensibility that reconciles the demands of an active existence with the still formal beauty of poetry, painting

and architecture. Addressing the artist, Ruskin requires a "triple love -- for the art which you practise, the creation in which you move, and the creatures to whom you minister."[65] To achieve a perfect union of life and art, the artist must confront and reconcile all contrary aspects of his profession; ideal and real, naturalistic and decorative, personal and public, expressive and formalistic. Yeats recognized the same truth when he said that only in phase fifteen, the state of unity of being, could great art exist.

Ruskin's artist must always look for perfection in a combination of intransigent qualities. In the chapter "The Nature of Gothic" of The Stones of Venice, Ruskin speaks of the western preference for naturalism and compares it to oriental decorative design. The error of western and eastern artists has been to forget that "the best art is the union of both .... Most men have been made capable of giving one or the other, but not of both: only one or two, the very highest, can give both."[66] This idea is later more thoroughly elaborated in a lecture called "The Unity of Art" from The Two Paths. Ruskin designates Titian as the paragon of artists for he alone possesses a synthesis of the sensuality, thought, sanctity, colour and form which usually appear as separate specialities in lesser artists of his time. There is only one way of seeing things and that is "seeing the whole of them without any choice, or more intense perception

of one point than another, owing to our special idiosyncracies."[67] To be able to see the whole nature of a human being and express it in art, the painter must transcend the dichotomy of art and life, or as Ruskin calls them in his lecture, Idealism (the concern with the formal conditions of art) and Realism (the striving to produce some record of nature). He concludes: "You will find that large masses of the art of the world fall definitely under one or the other of these heads ... pleasure first and truth afterwards ... or truth first and pleasure afterwards...."[68]

Ruskin effected the necessary union of ideal and real in his doctrine of "characteristic truth". He hereby denied that the truthful artist should pursue either the abstract idealism of Foussin or the concrete, idiosyncratic, realism of the Dutch painters. The artist does not eliminate factors of reality to accommodate an imposed ideal form; he discovers the permanent, the universal, and the ideal in everyday things. In order to do this he needs penetrative imagination for this is the faculty that discovers ideal form and elevates realism above mere photography. In his chapter on the "True Ideal" in Modern Painters III, Ruskin credits Shakespeare with having brought together the true ideal and the true reality in this way:

> ... they are perfect plays just because there is no care about centuries in them, but a life which all men recognize for the human life of all time; and thus it is not because Shakespeare sought to give universal truth, but

> because, painting honestly and completely from the men about him, he painted that human nature which is indeed constant enough .... the work of these great idealists is therefore always universal because it is complete portrait down to the heart, which is the same in all ages. 69

In the process of depicting characteristic truth or fulfilling the threefold purpose of art (which amounts to the same thing), the artist must display two sides of character. Insofar as he is under obligation to his art, he must be serene, aloof and unique. But as he is a man speaking to men, he must also share their emotions and the realities of their existence. He is simultaneously an aristocrat and an artisan. His art expresses peaceful contemplation and emotional turbulence.

Ruskin says in his Fors Clavigera, a series of letters to the working men of Britain: "the true artist is only a beautiful development of tailor and carpenter." This, while it properly bespeaks the oneness of art and society which Ruskin deemed essential to human life, is just one side of the artist. Ruskin was also a disciple of Carlyle and the romantic poets. He was influenced by their images of the artist as hero and seer. In "Greatness of Style", Modern Painters III he gives the artist an aristocratic elevation when he declares what great art is: "Great art is precisely that which never was nor will be taught, it is preeminently and finally the expression of the spirits of great men." 70

The characteristics that Ruskin repeatedly stipulates for great art (sincerity, truth, memory and beauty) are all members of the artist's personality. All great artists are gentlemen: "Only a great man can choose, conceive or compose .... But to become a great artist it is only necessary to be noble."[71] The art that contains characteristic truth is a product of mind and body: it is "that in which the hand, the head and the heart of man go together".[72] This integration of the powers of mind and body is what Ruskin means when he refers to the nobility of the great artist. In the conclusion to The Stones of Venice he makes this apparent: "All art is great, and good, and true, only so far as it is distinctively the work of manhood in its entire and highest sense; that is to say, not the work of the limbs and fingers but of the soul, aided by the inferior powers."[73] It is the nobility that Yeats later celebrated as unity of being in Major Robert Gregory: the reconciliation of life and art, the body and the soul. The aristocrat in the artist opposes, but ultimately assimilates the common worker, just as the soul initially rejects yet ultimately becomes reconciled with the "inferior powers". Angelico's purism is valued, but not so much as the beauty of Turner which cannot be kept apart from the pain of ordinary life. The great artist is most like Dante. His matter is pain and tumult but it is stabilised and frozen in art:

> The high creative poet might even be thought to a great extent, impassive (as shallow people think Dante stern), receiving indeed all feelings to the full but having a great centre of reflection and knowledge in which he stands serene, and watches the feeling, as it were, from afar off. 74 (my italics)

I have given what is intended to be (i) a study of Ruskin's struggle with the contradiction of art and life including, in succession, the stages this struggle went through in the period of the publication of Modern Painters I - V (1843 - 1860), and the process through which the contradiction was resolved. The next chapter will consider two departures from the synthesis set up by Ruskin. It will concern the failure to cope adequately with the relationship of art and life.

II

ROSSETTI AND SWINBURNE

In transferring our attention from Ruskin to Rossetti and Swinburne, we must adopt a new set of critical terms and disengage ourselves from the possible notion that all great art must follow Ruskin's prescription. Instead of the related arts, the moral aesthetic and historicism, we shall now be talking about love, the fatal woman and the alleged autonomy of art. Nevertheless, the controlling question of the thesis is the same in this chapter as in the last: how successfully do the writers concerned combine art with the common interests of humanity? The argument is that Rossetti and Swinburne fail almost totally to do this. This failure produces the conclusion that they are secondary artists not because great art must universally involve life, but, as argued, because in the English tradition it invariably does.

The thesis is not an apology for the Ruskinian, or if one prefers, the Arnoldian treatment of art and life. It is an attempt to interpret the central norm of Victorian culture as flexibly as possible. I have tried to imagine how Rossetti and Swinburne might have written major poetry without professing that art is indissolubly attached to life. The probability that they could have, is demonstrated by the example of Baudelaire and the movement in French literature

that sprang from him. The fact that after all they did not, shows the extent to which even the strongest rebels against Victorian culture, were unable to establish a viable alternative to it.

In this chapter I have used love, which in Rossetti and Swinburne is closely identified with art, as the starting point for a discussion of art and life. This is the approach taken with Ruskin and Yeats whose theories of the related arts serve as the aesthetic basis of philosophies that radiate outwards to include life. The contrast between love, as seen by Rossetti and Swinburne, and the related arts, as seen by Ruskin and Yeats, is intended to reveal how one aesthetic leads to life and how another falls short of it. The pages of this chapter dealing with Rossetti's and Swinburne's inability to control paradox form another parallel with the discussions of Ruskin and Yeats whose adherence to English tradition enables them to contend successfully with contraries.

One advantage to be gained from a comparison of the subject of love in Rossetti and Swinburne is that it contributes to the sense of complexity involved in deciding who are the really great Victorian poets. Tennyson, Browning and Arnold whom we habitually regard as the strongest claimants to preeminence are more or less supported by the standards of realism summed up in the dictum that art should be a criticism of life. We tend to think that they

are great because they all combine a fair amount of technical competence with active awareness of the social and intellectual problems of the nineteenth century. This criterion is aesthetically inadequate, and it excludes as minor, a wide variety of brilliant poets ranging from Hopkins to Swinburne, without directly examining their merits or their faults.

In evaluating the Victorian poets it is not theme which should be the main determinant of greatness. What is more important is the capacity to organize subjective feelings and impulses in the struggle for aesthetic resolutions. Arnold is not entitled to higher esteem than Hopkins merely because he expresses more of the characteristic anxieties of his time, for it cannot be maintained that the Arnoldian criticism of life is any more effective for creative purposes than the Christian one. Besides this, Arnold is immensely inferior to Hopkins as a technical artist. The error of judgement that designates Arnold the superior poet derives from the inaccuracy of the criticism of life theory. Again, we may well believe that Tennyson's In Memoriam is better poetry than Rossetti's House of Life, but the chances are that we draw this conclusion from the wrong premises. It is erroneous to think that the conflict of religion and evolution is a greater subject for poetry than the fluctuations of a love affair; Tennyson's poem is finer than Rossetti's only in that its struggles are more clearly

defined and its resolutions more palpable.

There is no question about the fact that Rossetti and Swinburne are secondary poets but this judgement must come from an estimate of the success with which they discipline themselves as artists. It should have nothing to do with the themes they choose. They are minor poets because their own private visions are in disorder and not because they stand apart from controversies of faith and science. In failing to achieve aesthetic order within the worlds they create for themselves they cannot attain the control and/or the mature vision that make Tennyson a great poet. The interest which the theme of love contains for us in this context lies in its power to illuminate, in many subtle and significant ways, the patterns of this failure in Rossetti and Swinburne.

In the portrayal of women and the ways of love there are roughly two main channels of Victorian poetry, which for want of equally concise and more expressive terms, we might call the aesthetic and the realistic. On one side are the ferocious ladies of Swinburne-- Dolores and Faustine, the Lilith and Sister Helen of Rossetti, Wilde's Salome and la Gioconda as she appears to Pater. The same type prevails on the Continent in the predacious enchantress of Baudelaire and Huysmans. This conception of the female figure usually associates itself with extreme reverence for art and beauty and makes its first appearance in modern poetry in Keats'

"Lamia" and his "Belle Dame sans Merci". The witch in "Christabel" may possibly be included as an earlier representative of this category.

The opposite of all these is the conventional angel in the house found in Coventry Patmore as well as in Tennyson's poem "The Two Voices". Tennyson dilates on the merits of female submission at somewhat greater length in The Princess but he is not unequivocally conventional. The "high born maiden" of some of his poems ("Mariana," "The Lady of Shallot" and "The Palace of Art") runs counter, as a symbol of aesthetic mood and isolation, to normal rules of domesticity. Ultimately however, Tennyson's choice to meet the demands of life and reality removes him from the influence of the fatal woman. In like fashion, Arnold leaves Marguerite and returns to England because life requires it; this breaks the spell of La Belle Dame sans Merci and gives Arnold's utterances on love a deep tone of personal regret but no trace of visionary pain and torture. Hardy, another realist whose tone is sometimes akin to Arnold's expresses controlled remorse for the sorrows of love, a sense of deep wistfulness but again no suggestion of grotesque suffering. Browning, in dramatizing situations between lovers, is strongly disinclined to idealize his women. When he is buoyant and optimistic his happiness is proportioned to reality; in his sadder moments he finds no exhilaration in pain, as Swinburne does, and never succumbs

to Rossetti's inordinate bouts of melancholy.

In Rossetti and Swinburne the fatal woman is in the ascendancy and this is what distinguishes them as love poets from their contemporaries. Even Meredith, who depicts the anguish of love in considerable detail, is psychologically realistic whereas Swinburne and Rossetti shape their women to archetypal proportions much larger than life itself. The viciousness of these creatures is the price paid for ignoring public reality and La Belle sans Merci in one of her many forms always seems to exact a painful tribute from those poets who seek their existences in art and beauty. Tennyson comes close to being a victim in "The Palace of Art" but in the end decides that the pains of reality are more bearable and adopts public values in exchange for those of the aesthete. But it must be stressed that this is not what makes him a great poet and Rossetti and Swinburne minor ones.

Baudelaire, whose literary reputation is probably greater than Tennyson's, is thoroughly indifferent to social concerns. Yet this does not render him less capable than Tennyson of searching for meaning and cosmic order. His search is carried out for the most part inside the palace of art, but his moral struggles, stemming from the religious instinct to find good through evil, are material for the highest poetry. Les Fleurs du Mal is highly subjective in theme and origin but it is as adequate a monument

to the conflicting forces of good and evil as The Idylls of the King.

In Swinburne we do not find the tang of evil that Baudelaire exudes; Swinburne is erotic and perverse but all the same, oddly naive. In the case of Rossetti, good and evil are altogether blurred and no clear conflict emerges at all. From this we may decidedly infer that the theme of subjective love is not the source of the limitations of Rossetti and Swinburne; the theme itself is full of possibilities for great poetry and this is why Baudelaire is as fine a poet as Tennyson whose thematic material is more extensive. Rossetti and Swinburne are minor because their perceptions of good and evil are less profound than the implications of their themes. Whether a poet chooses the social realism of Tennyson, Browning, Arnold and Hardy, along with its corresponding idea of controlled, measured love, or whether he sacrifices himself to the fatal women of Rossetti and Swinburne makes no immediate difference to the quality of the poetry he will write. Of primary importance is the depth of vision a poet achieves after he has selected his point of view, and Rossetti and Swinburne, unfortunately, do not maximise the moral implications of their chosen species of love.

Up to this point we have made no distinctions between Rossetti and Swinburne and have spoken only of what they have in common and how this separates them from their

contemporaries. But there are important differences in their ways of prostration at the feet of the enchantress, and these when collated, demonstrate the inequality of the two poets. The lack of organization and serious moral struggle, which is the main flaw in both, is more exaggerated in Swinburne than in Rossetti. This we shall illustrate at length, but first it is necessary to obtain an initial grasp of their basic attitudes regarding love and, to do this, let us compare the last sonnet in the first part of The House of Life (entitled "Love's Last Gift") with the last stanza of "Thalassius".

In these two poems, highly biographical in orientation, the poets are being rewarded by their muses for having been creative. Rossetti's muse is love, a figure similar to the god in mediaeval romances, who is also the thematic centre of most of the sonnets. Swinburne's muse is much vaguer; he is personified by the sun but he is also a misty combination of the sea, and the winds, and of the poet's song itself. The "great god Love" who appears earlier in the poem is subordinate in the end to this abstract mingling of essences of which the sun is the mouthpiece. Rossetti's gift is particularized in the same way that his muse is; Love says to the poet, "Only this laurel dreads no winter days: Take my last gift; Thy heart hath sung my praise". In contrast with the palpable laurel, Swinburne's gifts are very indeterminate; the sun commends him and bestows his rewards

> Because thou hast heard with world unwearied ears
> The music that puts light into the spheres;
> Have therefore in thine heart and in thy mouth
> The sound of song that mingles north and south
> The song of all the winds that sing of me,
> And in thy soul the sense of all the sea.[1]
>
> (ll. 495-500)

It is no difficult matter to interpret the significance of the laurel which represents the endurance of love in winter and hardship. Rossetti's values are clearly delineated just as the imagery of his sonnet which is solid and concrete. But what exactly is meant by the "sense of all the sea" is somewhat problematic. Swinburne's imagery is indiscriminate to the verge of meaninglessness and it is not easy to discover what values may be hidden beneath it. No doubt the "great god Love" is an aspect of this total 'sense' but his significance is blurred and left uncertain. It is this relative exactitude on Rossetti's part that gives him his superiority to Swinburne as a love poet.

In Rossetti, love is a vital emotion capable of inspiring moods of urgency, anticipation, hope and despair which we know from biographical evidence were abiding realities with him. The precision he reflects in his sonnet can therefore be seen as the artistic complement to vividly experienced emotion. Swinburne creates a much more literary atmosphere in which love is secondary to a desired poetic effect. The aura of sun, wind and sea which

represents poetry and art, is more prominent in his mind than love, as a specific emotion. Throughout "Thalassius" Swinburne speaks of art as being greater than emotion; he learns hate, hope fear and love from the "high song" which is the dominant image in stanzas III-X. And the significance of these emotions is derived purely from their connection with song and art. In the last stanza the sun praises him because: "... thou hast set thine heart to sing, and sold Life and life's love for song ...". Actual emotion is of comparative unimportance and instead of the very literal love described by Rossetti, Swinburne feels something much more nebulous, regarding himself as: "A manchild with an ungrown God's desire" and his utterances as "visions, truer than truth " (1.493).

Apart from Swinburne's one disappointment in courtship which concerned Mary Gordon, his cousin, his serious amorous adventures were of an entirely abstract conception. Hence he usually seems to be a curiously disengaged love poet and from this arises his quality of innocence. The only trouble is that his lack of involvement prevents him from investing the theme of love with the moral intensity of Baudelaire or the felt experience of Rossetti. In "Love's Last Gift" there is a higher degree of organization and thought than there is in the final stanza of "Thalassius" and this difference between Swinburne and Rossetti is to be seen in all their poems related to love.

Another way in which Rossetti and Swinburne differ is in atmosphere. We have placed them in the same category with each other not because of their common connections with Pre-Raphaelitism, but because they manifest the same archetypal figures in their poetry. They are both indifferent to modernity, devoted to art and preoccupied with thoughts of love; hence they both suffer from the fatal woman complex which it is in the nature of their obsessions to produce. Apart from this archetypal connection, they are rather separate in tastes and sensibility. Rossetti is essentially a mediaeval Italian poet with the profound religious instinct of the courtly lover. His scenery is moonlight and candlelight, the lady's scented boudoir, and Arcadian glades reminiscent of Watteau. Swinburne is a pagan worshipper of seas and winds and surging forces of nature, violently irreverent towards religious temperaments and inclined to sadomasochism in the service of his mistresses, where Rossetti's proper impulse is piety. But these wide temperamental differences are finally absorbed in the archetypal affinity of the two poets and we must conclude, that however their personalities may vary, the fundamental pattern of their love poetry is the same; the predominance of the fatal woman, a persistent failure to resolve paradox and confusion, and an absence of poetic growth and development in the moral understanding of their themes. To bring out this common identity in Rossetti and Swinburne we must give

separate consideration to each in turn. This will be done in the two ensuing brief essays.

ii

Rossetti's conception of art and the emotions of love and beauty is summarized in a small prose story written in 1849 called Hand and Soul. The story tells of a young painter of the thirteenth century, Chiaro dell'Erma, who learns about the reputation of a famous artist, Giunta Pisano, and successfully applies to become his pupil only to discover, "I am the master of this man"[2] He decides to go about achieving fame but is distracted by dissipation for a time. Then one evening he receives news of a brilliant rival his own age named Bonaventura and, recovering his ambition, sets to work and in three years becomes celebrated.

The interest of the story is Chiaro's divided understanding of art. On one hand he is drawn to "his own gracious and holy Italian art" personified by a holy maiden of passion and sensuous beauty; on another, he doubts the worship of beauty and feels obliged to enter the service of faith to create works of cold, abstract, moral symbolism. The first alternative obviously has the greater natural appeal for Chiaro but, under the pressure of conscience, he abandons the art of beauty which seems to him to lack moral seriousness and forces himself in the direction of the art of faith. This is the beginning of the unresolved inconsistency of the love of the flesh and the love of the spirit in Rossetti's poetry.

One day while Chiaro is suffering the pains of this irresolution, a woman who is the image of his own soul appears to him and tells him that it is folly to imagine that beauty and faith are irreconcilable. The pursuit of beauty she says, is merely another kind of faith no less worthy in God's eyes than that of the ascetic. Chiaro must learn to follow, not the conscience of his mind, but the conscience of his heart which knows no dissociation of

beauty and faith. This amounts to relying on the heart's desire for guidance in life and art and it is the key flaw in Rossetti. Chiaro discerns the incompatability of the beauty of the flesh and the ideals of the spirit but in seeking the advice of his heart and not his mind, he resolves the problem only by ignoring it. The 'image of his own soul' becomes a physical embodiment of this heart's knowledge and whether we choose to see her in terms of Rossetti's own life as Elizabeth Siddal, Fannie Cornforth, or Jane Morris, the essential point is that in all his representations of the beloved, Rossetti is pursued by this unresolved discrepancy.

This dilemma can be traced to the roots of Rossetti's sensibility where the two sides of love emerge quite distinctly in his translations of Early Italian Poets. Among the predecessors of Dante, Rossetti found a conception of love based on the courtly conventions of the Provencal troubadors which exacted reverence and obedience from the lover, but which was basically of a physical nature. Death of the lady meant the end of a relationship because theological faith had no part in an affair; this attitude is to be seen in Pugliesi's lament "Of his Dead Lady".[3] Dante, in the Vita Nuova, radically alters this older type of love for, in beholding a vision of Beatrice after her death, his love is exalted above the physical level and becomes a thoroughly spiritual perception of God and paradise.

However in his beatific vision of Beatrice, little remains of the original earthly affection.

Rossetti was powerfully influenced by the inspiration of Dante but he could never accept the discontinuation of the love of the earthly senses and kept reverting instinctively in his "heart's conscience" to the physical experiences of Dante's predecessors. Love, for Rossetti, is a wishful unification of sensuousness and immortality; instead of marking out conflicts clearly, as great artists like Blake, Yeats, Baudelaire, and Tennyson have done, Rossetti seeks to evade them. Because he cannot acknowledge mental problems and tries instead to engulf them in emotion, he weakens the faith he had hoped to gain through his heart's knowledge of beauty. All that remains to him in the end, is the one hope on which he based the final sonnet of The House of Life: the tenuous and dim possibility that his ideal love might be realized after death.

The ambiguity of Rossetti's concept persists in his poetry from first to last. In "The Blessed Damozel" we have a notable early instance of it. This poem substantially resembles the situation of the parted lovers in the Vita Nuova and in it we can see how Rossetti tries to retain the physical aspects of love in anticipating a reunion in heaven. The poem has a peculiar likeness to a child's day dream, being suspended between reality and complete imaginative abstraction without the determination to settle

for either. C.S.Lewis paints a picture of heaven that is vaguely reminiscent of this in The Great Divorce, but with Lewis as with Dante, we are being presented with decided ethical values within an organized cosmology, neither of which Rossetti possesses. But although the belief in a universal order holds no vital sway over his mind, he does tend to think cosmologically of earth and heaven in a way that is somewhat Miltonic. A universe ordered in a chain of being is suggested by images such as the following:

> Beneath the tides of day and night
> With flame and darkness ridge
> The void, as low as where this earth
> Spins like a fretful midge.
>
> .....
>
> From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
> Time like a pulse shake fierce
> Through all the worlds
>
> .....
>
> The sun was gone now; the curled moon
> Was like a little feather
> Fluttering down the gulf.
>
> (ll. 33 - 58)

There is no belief or intellectual conviction about Rossetti's heaven. Like Chiaro, he is merely following his heart in these descriptions. Another way in which he uses images of a basically moral import for aesthetic purposes alone, is in the creation of atmosphere with Christian symbolism. In "The Blessed Damozel", references to the Lady

Mary, to Magdalen, to the angels, aureoles, doves and to Christ Himself are quite empty of theological significance and Rossetti displays the same propensity to couple the worship of the senses with Christian religion in "The Portrait":

> Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears
> The beating heart to Love's own breast
> Where round the secret of all spheres
> All angels lay their wings to rest ....
>
> (11. 91 - 94)

These poems are highly successful in the evocation of mood, in mysteriously blending nineteenth-century romanticism and mystical Christianity but they are conspicuously lacking in controlled vision and their structure is not as organized from a moral point of perspective as it is from an atmospheric one. When Tennyson speaks in the last stanza of In Memoriam of:

> That God which ever lives and loves
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves, (CXXXI)

we recognize in his voice the integrity of a conclusion drawn from a real moral struggle in which opposing forces have been clearly aligned. But when in "The Portrait" Rossetti says:

> How shall my soul stand rapt and awed
> When by the new birth borne abroad
> Throughout the music of the suns
> It enters in her soul at once
> And knows the silence there for God,
>
> (ll. 95 - 99)

we feel that, for all the loveliness of poetic mood, he is not reaching a truly creative resolution. The conclusion of the poem seems to evolve from the mood itself rather than from genuine thought. More than twenty years later, after all the vicissitudes of an uneven life, Rossetti's concept of love remained unchanged. He grew sadder, and more mature in a practical sense but artistically he did not develop beyond the stage he was at when he wrote "The Blessed Damozel" and "The Portrait". All this is visible in "The One Hope" where he still anticipates the immortalization of physical desire and a personal union with his Beata Beatrix, describing a material heaven wherein the wan soul is juxtaposed with "dew-drenched flowering amulets", "green plains" and "the spray of sweet life fountains".

"The Blessed Damozel" and "The Portrait", along with his translations of the Italian poets and the Vita Nuova are the purest and most optimistic of Rossetti's love poems. They are ideal in tone, not experiential and, in cleaving to the immaculate and imaginary subject of "The Portrait" all his life, trying to find her in all the real faces he knew, his career took the same course as Shelley's or Gerard de Nerval's. The consequence of this

idealism was that to Rossetti, as to the artist in the Symphonie Fantastique of Berlioz, the beloved would assume a double aspect, reappearing eventually as a vindictive projection of guilt, a tormenting witch. On a psychological plane this divided identity in the person of the beloved was reflected in the schizophrenia which took an increasing hold on Rossetti's mind near the end of his life. The doppelgänger sketch "How they Met Themselves", the reproaches of his own murdered selves in certain sonnets in The House of Life, and an abundant number of weird biographical incidents, allude to this malady. Even as early as "The Portrait" there are intimations of split personality:

> ... many a shape whose name
> Not itself knoweth, and old dew,
> And your own footsteps meeting you
> And all things going as they came.
>
> (11. 24 - 27)

The work which exemplifies all the nuances of Rossetti's idea of love is The House of Life and it illustrates a gradual transition from the early image of the beloved to the demoniac women of his later poetry and painting with the mental illness that accompanied them. C.M.Bowra ascribes to the work a unity based on the reflection of "a consistent and closely knit personality",[4] which is quite true in the sense that it is full of recurrent motifs and symbols and displays a consistently

developed progression of mood. But in a more crucial respect it lacks unity because its parts are centrifugal and, instead of compounding and synthesising in any coherent system, they tend to dissipate. The first sonnet of the series, "Love Enthroned", presents what for a time appears to be a core of convictions; Love is apotheosized 'far above' the lesser powers of Life, Death, Hope and Youth, to reign in an aesthetic eternity like the one depicted on Keats' Grecian Urn; "He sat in breathless bowers they dream not of". This diction distinctly recalls Keats' Ode, particularly the "all breathing human passion far above". Yet Rossetti does not envision a "breathless" passion in the sonnets that immediately follow; "Nuptial Sleep" and "Supreme Surrender" are in quite the opposite mood. Evidently the still world of the lovers in Keats' poem was in Rossetti's thoughts when he wrote "Love Enthroned", but his familiar tendency to seek to unite with it, the incompatible gratifications of the senses, compromises his idealism from the very beginning. Consequently the opening sonnet, while it sounds a chord of passionate intensity, actually rests on very little in the way of determined belief.

In describing the movement of The House of Life as centrifugal, what is referred to is the disintegration of the ideal expressed in the first sonnet. As the work progresses a slow exfoliation takes place, revealing to us layers of inadequately systematized desires and gratifications, which

are originally incorporated in the "breathless" apotheosis of Love. Towards the end of the sequence, when both sensuality and idealism have evaporated, a vague relic of the original vision is all that remains— the one hope. Tennyson in The Idylls of the King also portrays the decay of an ideal but, whereas Rossetti's Love is always an ambiguous concept, the Round Table is not. For Rossetti the flesh and the spirit are not moral opposites but components of one ideal of love and beauty and therefore, when their inconsistency starts to undermine that ideal, it is impossible to represent the drama in an ethical spirit, The Round Table, on the contrary, while it embodies the opposing potentials of the flesh and the spirit, is ethically orientated to the latter, and its history has the unity belonging to any work of art with a definite base of values. While Tennyson works towards a meaning in life, Rossetti in bewilderment falls away from meaning, tired and devitalized, having discovered no moral order in the universe. The unity absent from The House of Life, is the coordination of parts that depends on a central moral vision. George Eliot excelled in the very area where Rossetti was most deficient; her novel Middlemarch for example, is so highly organized that there is scarcely an aspect of its structure or imagery that is irrelevant to its central system of values.

It was stated earlier in connection with "Love's Last Gift" that Rossetti's imagery is explicit in its allusions and readily grasped by the understanding. None the less this clarity conceals a weakness of moral thought. In the earlier poems like "The Portrait", where Rossetti's ideal is much more hopefully entertained than it later comes to be, there is a noble simplicity in his style. But in The House of Life, as the vision of love dissolves and the power of his ideas begins to fail him, Rossetti's style becomes increasingly precious. His imagery in the later sonnets has an extraordinary fineness of detail and a precision that can be deceptive. He evidently feels the inadequacy of his moral perceptions and endeavours to achieve with technical virtuosity the order that could have been established only by formulating a guiding set of principles. The style of The House of Life therefore, betrays an intrinsic disunity in the work.

It is not necessary to discuss more than a few of the sonnets in order to justify the preceding comments. Let us begin with "Bridal Birth". Here Rossetti is working a theme that he probably derived from the Vita Nuova and which is very frequent in his verse; the death and resurrection of love. Rossetti is obsessed by the contraries of life and death and is always reinterpreting love in relation to them. In this sonnet he cannot think of the birth of love without anticipating physical death and rebirth after death.

But where Dante's resurrected Beatrice is utterly transformed and becomes "a lady round whom splendours move", "a new perception born of grieving love"[5] Rossetti introduces no change to the love that exists up until the time of death. As in "The Blessed Damozel" he hopes for a reunion that will not deny or transform the physical but will simply raise it from earth to heaven. The religious atmosphere of "The Blessed Damozel" is here as well and pervades all the sonnets; Love is conceived as a figure analogous to Christ bringing light in darkness:

> . . . at her heart Love lay
> Quickening in darkness, till a voice that day
> Cried on him, and the bonds of birth were burst.
>
> (11. 6 - 8)

In these lines there is an obvious suggestion of Easter without the knowledge of good and evil that Easter implies. Rossetti rarely thinks in moral terms and his religious imagery, like his natural imagery, serves only the purpose of an amoral beauty which is the goal always sought after by love. This means in effect love itself ceases to be a moral power and becomes purely aesthetic. Rossetti does not carry this tendency to the extreme which we have noticed in Swinburne; love is still an emotion to be felt and experienced in life as well as in literature, but despite this connection with reality which is altogether lost in Swinburne, Rossetti prizes love for its beauty and not for its goodness.

Even death, which to traditional moral consciences is the most potent of evils is not recognized by Rossetti as a form of corruption. In pessimistic sonnets like "New Born Death" where it has become an imminent reality, death awakens regret and sorrow, but not consciousness of sin.

Because of this obliviousness to moral issues and because he makes no separation between the body and the spirit that would accommodate knowledge of good and evil, Rossetti never stops thinking that heaven is to be reached through the simple intensification of physical love. In "The Kiss" this peculiar moral indistinction between body and spirit is particularly striking. The poet implies a direct transcendence to heaven through sensual affection:

> I was a child beneath her touch -- a man
> When breast to breast we clung, even I and she, --
> A spirit when her spirit looked through me
> A god when all our life breath met to fan
> Our life-blood, till love's emulous ardours ran
> Fire within fire, desire in deity.
>
> (11. 9 - 14)

In "Heart's Hope" we find the blurring of moral perceptions still more concisely expressed. Rossetti seems to refuse to acknowledge evil as a force of any ultimate significance for his world is absorbed by an aesthetic vision of love that leaves no room for moral differences. All divisions between heaven and hell, soul and body, good and bad, are erased:

> For lo! in some poor rythmic period,
> Lady, I fain would tell how evermore
> Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
> Thee from myself, neither our love from God.
>
> (11. 5 - 8)

The more closely one examines Rossetti's love poetry, the clearer it becomes that love is defined in relation to the beautiful and not the ethical. The House of Life, apart from the occasions when the poet castigates himself for his own failures, is not a world inhabited by moral choices. Love is not love because it denies and resists sin and evil; it derives its character, expression and intensity from beauty alone. "Soul's Beauty" visualizes love in homage to beauty much as "Love Enthroned" sees life, death, hope and youth gathered at the seat of love:

> Under the arch of life, where love and death,
> Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
> Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe
> I drew it in as simply as my breath.
>
> (11. 1 - 4)

Beauty is with Rossetti the predominant inspiration of love and an ideal that he always hoped to see realized in the flesh. It was beauty that led him into his involvement with the cantankerous Elizabeth Siddal and it was beauty that was the active force behind his life:

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still -- long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem,-- the beat
Following her daily of the heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days.

(11. 9 - 14)

Not until the end of his career did Rossetti's art become seriously disturbed by conscience and guilt. When it did, a transformation took place in the figure of his beloved and she came to be in some sense a personification of evil, though more so, of pain. This engendered the fatal woman and his own psychic disease. If Rossetti had been aware of the strong forces of good and evil in beauty during the earlier stages of his career he might have achieved far more as a poet. As it was, love and death remained morally insignificant too long to give shape in his work to an organized vision of life. In a poem like "Sister Helen", written early in his life, the female protagonist is a witch but the evil represented in it is hardly central to Rossetti's art at this stage. In the period around 1850 when "The Blessed Damozel" was written, the recurrence of "Three days today between Hell and Heaven" ought not to suggest that his conception of heaven has become any clearer than it was in that poem. This also applies to "The Last Confession" and "The Bride's Prelude"-- other poems of this same period which turn on moral issues arising from sexual relationships. Particularly in the latter, an over-abundance

of Keatsian lushness tends to distract the reader from the supposed moral theme and Rossetti is obviously more interested in the Pre-Raphaelite aura he is creating than in the conscience of Aloyse. The moral content of his early work is not basic to his aesthetic idealism.

Baudelaire is in plain contrast to Rossetti with regard to beauty. Rossetti manages for a long time to avoid coming to terms with its moral ambiguousness. He does not seek beauty as something that is ethically desirable nor does he originally find it in any appreciable amount of evil. It is entirely identified with the Blessed Damozel's heaven -- a place not distinguished as the opposite of hell but only as the quintessence of loveliness. The French poet, who has been justly called a fragmentary Dante, is imbued with the fascination of beauty but his deeply implanted sense of the contraries of heaven and hell, causes him to paint a picture of it that is very different from Rossetti's. For Baudelaire, love or the search for beauty is an attempt to arrive at confirmation of the existence of good and evil:

> Viens-tu du ciel profond ou sors-tu de l'abime
> O Beauté? ton regard, infernal et devin
> Verse confusement le bienfait et le crime
> Et l'on peut pour cela te comparer au vin.[6]
>
> ("Hymne à la Beauté")
>
> (ll. 1 - 4)

As Rossetti grew older the fear of 'death's imperishable wing' magnified itself to him and beneath the palmier

features of Part I of The House of Life we detect his uneasiness. If this fear could have been translated into a positive conception of evil, he might have equalled Baudelaire but it was too late in its appearance ever to be the awakening of true moral insight. The fatal woman and death must therefore be seen as emanations of fear and foreboding rather than realities of sin and evil. Baudelaire from the first knows the evil in beauty but Rossetti is only brought in contact with it when his hopes of beauty's immortality decline and he can discover no other hope to replace them. He then sees himself as a victim of his own illusions and modifies his images of beauty accordingly; but since there is no tangible division of heaven and hell in his mind, the perverted images have no clearer moral context than the beatific ones.

The undercurrent of suspicion and misgiving in Part I develops as the dominant theme of Part II. The poles of hope and despair are accentuated by comparison of the group of sonnets comprising "The Kiss", "Nuptial Sleep" and "Supreme Surrender" with "The Willow Wood" series. On one hand the imagery of flowers and water is used to communicate the fulfillment of love and on the other it is associated with loss and disappointment. In "Nuptial Sleep" the waters retain the image of the beloved and the physical and the ideal are blended in a kind of permanence:

> Slowly their souls swam up again, through gleams
> Of watered light and dull drowned waifs of day
> Till from wonder of new woods and streams
> He woke, and wondered more; for there she lay.
>
> (ll. 11 - 14)

"Willow Wood" IV describes the fading of the fancied image from the waters into which the poet is gazing with no hope of rediscovery:

> And her face fell back drowned, and was grey
> As its grey eyes; and if it ever may
> Meet mine again I know not if Love knows.
>
> (ll. 6 - 8)

The use of water imagery under similar circumstances occurs again in "The Stream's Secret". The poet begs knowledge of the beloved from the waters but receives no answer to his question: "Shall time not still endow one hour with life . . . . " As in"Willow Wood" he mentions the ghosts of the 'dead hours', the mournful forms of the lost selves of himself and his beloved recalling again the split personality motif recurrent in his art. He concludes that only those who know death can know love and that: "On deathlier airs the hour must come / Which to my heart shall call me home ...." (ll. 211 -213). The "Souls Sphere" sonnet brings the changing significance of this water image to a desperate climax:

> The rose-winged hours that flutter in the van
> Of love's unquestioning unrevealed span
> .....
> That clangs and clashes for a drowning man.
>
> (11. 10 - 14)

Out of this experience emerges new born death, the last gift of life, (which has already deprived the poet of two previous children -- love and art) and having advanced no farther in his knowledge of the deeper forces of life than in the original vision of "Love Enthroned", Rossetti ends despondently with "The One Hope". The House of Life has been compared to the web of "The Lady of Shalott", a beautiful fabric of dreams and abstractions blighted by the intrusion of reality. The analogy is apt so long as we do not start thinking that the Tennysonian solution is the only one possible for great art. Rossetti might just as easily have retained his exclusive fidelity and yet have succeeded in weaving a stronger fabric if he had penetrated as deeply in the knowledge of good and evil as Baudelaire. Had this been done he could have created a great art out of the love of beauty without practising the criticism of life of his contemporaries.

What is best about The House of Life is the delicacy of tone it so well combines with a wide variety of shades of temperament. And although it falls short of the highest artistic achievement because in it love is essentially a mood of beauty instead of a force of moral order, there are

aspects of its style that become very influential with poets of the following generation like Yeats: the profusion of its symbolism for example. A cursory reading of the work reveals a dense succession of water, fire, flower, fruit, cloud, wing and hair images -- to name some of the more salient ones. Any one of these threads is an intricate psychological path in the mind of the poet and has its own accretion of emotional connotations. In his essay "The Symbolism of Poetry", Yeats mentions two main types of image: the emotional and the intellectual. It must be admitted that Rossetti's verse is constituted predominantly of the former kind. This, of course, is the consequence of his failure to construct a systematic foundation for intellectual images - a task completed vicariously by Yeats.

The place occupied by death in The House of Life is given to the fatal woman in Rossetti's paintings and his more public utterances. As his dream of love and his health were deteriorating, the "Beata Beatrix" was often supplanted by such sensual pagan figures as the 1877 "Astarte Syriaca" depicted in a haunting and distorted way. The elongated necks, the gloating eyes, the swollen lips and the writhing gestures that typify this later mannerism, are visible to some extent in the painting of "The Blessed Damozel". And other paintings such as "Dazio's Mistress", "Venus Verticordia", "Lady Lilith" and "Monna Vanna" manifest a vampirish sensuality that differs very much from earlier Christian

and mediaeval subjects.

In 1869 the famous exhumation of Rossetti's manuscripts took place and this certainly contributed to the development of the fatal woman image in his work. He became increasingly obsessed with the idea that Elizabeth Siddal was exercising a supernatural power over him from another world. His paranoia, which suggested to him on one occasion that an injured sparrow was the embodiment of her soul, contained a growing consciousness of guilt that brought an ever widening severence between his own selves and their corresponding images of the beloved. Gerard de Nerval in a similar state of neurosis to Rossetti's, imagines one fragment of himself being cut off from his dead beloved while supernaturally his schizophrenic counterpart is married to her. His remorse and feverish self-vituperation recall the sonnets "A Superscription" and "He and I" from The House of Life and in all respects are markedly reminiscent of Rossetti's mental state in its conjunction with the fatal woman:

> I reviewed with bitterness the life I had led since her death and reproached myself, not with having forgotten her, which had not been the case, but with having outraged her memory in facile love affairs .... But what was this Spirit who was me and yet outside me? Was it the Double of the old legends or that mystical brother Oriental people call ar-ruh .... There was some talk of a marriage and of the bridegroom who, they said, was to come and announce the beginnings of the festivities.

> Immediately a mad rage seized me. I imagined that the man they were waiting for was my double and that he was going to marry Aurelia. 7

Here, in Nerval's Aurelia, a literary product of a latinate temperament much like Rossetti's and like Rossetti's much influenced by the Vita Nuova of Dante, we see again the division between the spiritual and the fleshly and the transformation of the ideal beloved into a creature of inexorable punitive capacities. In Rossetti's fatal woman the fleshliness of Fanny Cornforth is mixed with the supernaturalness of Elizabeth Siddal to inflict a physical pain that becomes spiritually transcendent. This is well exemplified in the sonnets "Lilith" and "The Card Dealer"; it is even more intense in compositions Rossetti began but never brought to fruition like "The Orchard Pit" with its macabre vision of a beauteous dame who sings "Come to Love, Come to Life, Come to Death" over a trench containing the corpses of her dead lovers. Other works comparable to this are the unfinished prose pieces The Doom of the Sirens and "The Philtre" which date from 1869-1870.

The personification of death in The House of Life, the mannerisms of his later painting and the vicious female portraits in the poems, are different expressions of the fatal woman syndrome that Mario Praz refers to as Rossetti's "Conspicuous preference for the sad and the cruel".[8] Due to a congenital inability to conceptualize the forces of good

and evil with clarity, Rossetti fails objectively to convert this syndrome into the highest form of art. It is always a microcosmic and egocentric world that we find in his work and he lacks the moral discernment and spiritual control needed to give his finely wrought attainments the permanence of design which they deserve.

iii

In Swinburne, the ambiguity which we have indicated as the main flaw in Rossetti extends beyond the realm of thought and morals, becoming the essence of style as well. Where Rossetti cultivates artistic precision to make up for the uncertainty of his values, Swinburne permits that uncertainty to achieve dominance in his expression. As we shall see, Swinburne's irresolution stems from sources other than the bewildering alliance of the flesh and spirit, but its consequences for his art lead to the same basic criticism that has been brought against Rossetti.

The contrast made earlier between "Thalassius" and "Love's Last Gift" revealed strikingly Rossetti's clarity of thought and expression relative to Swinburne's diffuseness. The intention was not, of course, to say that these qualities are typical in the larger context of Victorian poetry, but only in comparison with Swinburne. The want of organized structure which characterizes both, is less salient in

Rossetti. Rossetti is more successful on the whole than Swinburne because the limits of his disorganization are more circumscribed. His moral indistinctions may be confusing and his failure to progress and develop through experiences may disappoint, but at least we have a clear idea of where his difficulties lie. We know that the ideal of beauty is morally retarded and yet we are able to settle for ourselves how this is so because its constituents, the flesh and the spirit, have tangible boundaries. Love, which is Rossetti's verse, takes its inspiration from this beauty, has singleness of purpose and direction. We might say that it is not so much his emotional energies as the object of their aspiration that generate the disorder in his philosophy.

Swinburne has no object so clearly defined as an ideal beauty and his energies are in constant eruption, forever varying and losing their former outlines. It is the persistent eroticism of these energies that justifies treating Swinburne as a love poet even though he is less often directly concerned with love than Rossetti. It could be said of our juxtaposition of "Thalassius" and "Love's Last Gift" that no just comparison has been made because Swinburne is not specifically saying anything about love in the quoted stanza whereas Rossetti is. However it must be kept in mind that, for the latter, love is definable in

terms of a particular concept of beauty and that for Swinburne it is a cumulative mass of erotic energies which are not determined or characterized in such fashion. Hence, the total conception of love gained from "Love's Last Gift" is a blending of images of fruition and decay with an almost visual mood of despondence that carries pictures of languorous Pre-Raphaelite beauty in the repeated personifications of love. Swinburne's idea of love cannot be summarized in images but must be felt as an illimitable potential energy for which the sea is the only adequate symbol.

Rossetti's love finds its source in the Apollonian head waters of Dante; Swinburne's love is essentially an outpouring of archaic bacchic forces and his poetry in manner and expression conforms to Nietzsche's definition of lyric verse as the incarnation of Dionysian forces in Apollonian forms.[9] Nietzsche speaks of music giving birth to tragedy and declares that poetry is composed of musical images; Pater argues that all 'art constantly aspires to the condition of music' and it is to these critical definitions that Swinburne's understanding of the poetic art belongs. The secret of Rossetti's art is the image that reflects an ideal beauty and therefore in some sense his poetry is organized by a standard outside itself. Swinburne's poetry tends to become its own ideal because it is one of the most intense ways in which its creator can experience the

gratuitous outlet of passions which is so vitally necessary to him. As C.M.Bowra astutely remarks: "Dante Gabriel Rossetti sought an Ideal Beauty through love; Swinburne sought the essence of poetry".[10]

The facelessness of Swinburne's expressions and the prevalence of the image in Rossetti's are a real indication of different levels of organization; for despite the fact that the alembicated style of The House of Life conceals an underlying mental disarray, the use of the image seen from another angle, suggests a determined and continuous effort to approach a heightened intellectual and moral vision. The lack of imagery in Swinburne's verse has the opposite effect; it impresses on us his acquiescence in the movement of passion and gives little evidence of attempted thought or systematization of impulses. Where images do occur they are often vaguely introduced out of alliterative coincidence that has no bearing on thought or meaning:

> Thou wert fair in the fearless old fashion
> And thy limbs are as melodies yet
> And move to the music of passion
> With lithe and lascivious regret.
>
> (ll. 273-276)

One has the uncomfortable feeling that any number of rhyming or alliterative alternatives would have served equally well in place of the words actually chosen.

Swinburne's stylistic techniques are highly

efficient when used to their best advantage and not uncommonly do they resemble effects in the paintings of J.M.W.Turner. In the same way that Turner's canvasses are explosions of light and energy in which there is none of the particular correspondence to nature so emphasized by Holman Hunt and Millais, Swinburne's poems are microcosms of sense and sound from which precise visualization has been eliminated, separate words and images taking their connotations from the overall atmosphere of the composition and not, as with Rossetti, containing individual significance as unique images. Furthermore it is curious to note, that, contrary to the popular and fallacious belief that Swinburne's decadence takes the form of lushness and excessive ornamentation, he intentionally uses the most inexpressive adjective and in order to transpose the significance of what he says from the particular image to the general emotional effect, his diction is generally quite pallid. Consider the repetition of wan epithets 'sweet', 'glad', and 'sad' in the following stanza from "A Ballad of Life":

> I found in dreams a place of wind and flowers
> Full of sweet trees and colour of glad grass
> In midst where of these was
> A lady clothed like summer with sweet hours
> Her beauty fervent as a fiery moon,
> Made my love burn and swoon
> Like a flame rained upon.
> Sorrow had filled her shaken eyelids blue,
> And her mouth sad red heavy rose all through
> Seemed sad with glad things gone.
>
> (ll. 1 - 10)

The words are all extroverted and divested of the subjective meanings of Rossetti's rich and sometimes inscrutable images. The effect always sought in generality which is achieved likewise in this stanza from "The Garden of Prosperine" with its unremitting stockpiling of plural substantives:

> There go the loves that wither,
> The old loves with wearier wings;
> And all dead years draw thither,
> And all disastrous things;
> Dead dreams of days forsaken,
> Blind buds that snows have shaken
> Wild leaves that winds have taken
> Red strays of ruined springs.
>
> (11. 65 - 72)

Yet another means of creating an atmosphere in which all elements contribute to a general impression rather than drawing attention to themselves, is the displacement of nouns and adjectives. A famous example of this technique appears in one of the choruses from Atalanta in Calydon:

> Before the beginning of years
> There came to the making of man
> Time, with a gift of tears;
> Grief, with a glass that ran.
>
> (11. 314 - 317)

The perplexed nature of human existence is brilliantly expressed by the mere rearrangement of word application and again we see Swinburne effecting in poetry what Turner did in paint. We are never exactly sure of the spatial location

of objects in Turner's "The Shipwreck" and often with Swinburne the details of a stanza are only seen in perspective when taken in reference to the whole. We can look at a sonnet of Rossetti's and understand much about it simply by noticing the images and not taking the trouble to read, but Swinburne, whose adjectives as often as not modify whole passages, demands a response to the general and total effect and cannot be appreciated in fragments. (He is not among the most quotable of English poets). His descriptions capture the ambiguities of scenery while his themes turn on the paradoxes of existence. He is preoccupied with mixing of opposites as in these passages from "Evening on the Boards".

> Softly the soul of the sunset upholden awhile on
> the sterile
> Waves and wastes of the land, half repossessed by
> the night ... (11.3-4)
>
> .....
> Lights overhead and lights underneath seem doubt-
> fully dreaming
> Whether the day be done, whether the night may
> begin ....
> (11. 43-44)

The analogy between Swinburne and Turner is suitable for purposes of technical comparison but, recognizing the difference of medium, we should be careful about extending it as far as to say that the underlying vision of life is the same for both men. The important thing about Swinburne's technique is that, despite its virtuosity, it is a weakness

and this may not be true for Turner. The style of Swinburne reflects the confusion of his outlook on life and art; words are emotions for him and the torrential outpourings of words in all their generality and contradiction are identical with his state of mind. Rossetti at least controls the outbursts of his emotions and imposes an apparent order on them; images in his poetry are the intellectual correlatives of an emotion which they govern and direct, but Swinburne's musical phrases are pure emotion without the precise mental discipline of the intervening image.

The fundamental and unresolved paradox in Swinburne which corresponds to the spirit-flesh irresolution of Rossetti is his incapacity to choose between rebellion and submission. To return to the subject of love, Rossetti is unable to decide whether to take his mistress in flesh or in spirit and confusedly attempts to have both; Swinburne cannot make up his mind whether to rebel against her or to submit to her and fluctuates endlessly. It is for this reason that liberty becomes so important for him; it allows him the scope to indulge his riotous emotions in all the sweep which we see reflected in the undifferentiated generality of his poetic style. In turning now to the content of Swinburne's love poetry we shall be using the paradox of rebellion and submission to reveal the characters of his fatal women, his moral indecisiveness and his lack of poetic growth, just as we used the paradox of the flesh and the

spirit to the same purpose in discussing Rossetti.

Swinburne differs from Rossetti in never having possessed an ideal of the beloved and his career as a poet represents even less development than Rossetti's. As a young man he was told by a physician that he was not like other boys and would never acquire virile muscles or voice or normal masculine energies. This was no doubt an important factor in causing the perversions of his view of things and more important, it probably had a lot to do with his failure past the age of twenty-one to form new attitudes based on new impressions. In 1878 in the depths of murderous dissipations, he was writing poetry little different in essence from the perverse erotic compositions of his Etonian days; and his capacity to elaborate new themes was certainly never as boundless as the amount of energy he could expend within the sultry framework of his obsessions. His imagination was never the sort that could dissolve and dissipate in order to recreate; he began with a conception of the sexual cruelty of women that came to Rossetti only through experience and continued to compose variations on it all his life so that his growth was always quantitative and never qualitative. "I have added, "he once said, "yet four more jets of boiling and gushing infamy to the perennial and poisonous fountain of Dolores."[11]

Psychologically less complex than Rossetti, Swinburne is also easier to criticize; George Meredith's statement of

his basic defect as an artist may be taken as definitive; "... I don't see any internal centre from which springs anything that he does. He will make a great name, but whether he is to distinguish himself as an artist, I would not willingly prognosticate".[12] This is fundamentally relevant to the rebellion - submission paradox which deprives Swinburne of any consistency or direction; it is also relevant to his propensity to sham and the lightness with which he was prepared to treat his themes. We never have doubts about Rossetti's seriousness but seldom can we be sure of Swinburne's. It is not necessary to look very penetratingly at Poems and Ballads, First Series, 1866 to see that they fail to be great art because they are based on temporary sensations and physical lusts; because they are reactions against convention rather than true creations in themselves and because they are perverse and eccentric without the moral foundation that distinguishes perversity and eccentricity in Baudelaire. Nicolson describes these early publications of Swinburne as: "seventeen studies of highly specialized sexual stimulations";[13] the truth of this however, is pathetic rather than evil. There is nothing of the deep moral corruption here that is so patent in the stimulations of Huysman's Des Esseintes or in Baudelaire.

In the Poems and Ballads sensual rebellion and submission are reactions sparked by the inextricable entanglement of pleasure and pain. On a grossly simplified and

exaggerated scale this is a reappearance of the dilemma of Rossetti, for whom a paradoxical love is the counterpart of Swinburne's paradoxical sensuality and whose reverence for an idea of beauty corresponds to what in Swinburne is debased into sadomasochistic worship of pleasure in pain. The recurrent motif of rebellion and submission involves the inflection and reception of suffering. In "Anactoria" Swinburne -- Sappho rhapsodizes with pure sadism:

> I would find grievous ways to have thee slain
> Intense device and superflux of pain;
> Vex thee with amorous agonies and shake
> Life at thy lips and leave it there to ache;
> Strain out thy soul with pangs too soft to kill,
> Intolerable interludes, and infinite ill.
> (11.27-32)
> .....
> Ah that my lips were tuneless lips but pressed
> To the bruised blossom of thy scourged white breast.
> (11. 105-106)

"Dolores" presents a mixture of the sadistic and the masochistic impulses in a moment of simultaneous rebellion and submission:

> Could you hurt me, sweet lips though I hurt you?
> Men touch them, and change in a trice
> The lilies and languors of virtue
> For the raptures and roses of vice ....
> (11. 65-68)

Swinburne's relations with his fatal women are invariably of this ambivalent nature. Sometimes, as happens with the hero of Chastelard, who watches Mary Stuart in deshabille in order

that she will bless him, he is entirely submissive but it is never long until the counter impulse awakens in him. In "Faustine", Swinburne relishes the sense of victimization and yet shows a cynical and sinister defiance towards the corrupt and powerful Empress. It is hard to tell which emotion is dominant:

> Did Satan make you to spite God
> Or did God mean
> To scourge with scorpions for a rod
> Our sins Faustine?
>
> (ll. 53-56)

Faustine is a scourge but she is also punished by suffering, not in the moral sense, but in the mere reception of the pain she doles out:

> And when your veins were void and dead
> What ghost unclean
> Swarmed around the straitened barren bed
> That hid Faustine.
>
> (ll. 129-132)

"The Leper", which tells the grisly tale of a necrophiliac monk who ravishes the corpse of his lady, turns on the same opposition of rebellion and submission. At first says the narrator of his <u>femme fatale</u>:

> More scorn she had of me
> A poor scribe nowise great or fair
> Who plucked his clerk's back to see
> Her curled up lips and amorous hair.
>
> (ll. 9 - 12)

And then God, who always appears as a master sadist in Swinburne, casts leprosy on the lady and the monk sadistically enjoys a rebellious participation the infliction of pain:

> Love is more sweet and comlier
> Than a dove's throat strained out to sing
> All they spat out and cursed at her
> And cast her forth for a base thing.
>
> (11. 49-52)

He withdraws with her remains to a wattled house where he indulges his new superiority over her but in a way that is as automatically submissive and masochistic as it is rebellious and sadistic:

> Love bites and stings me through, to see
> Her keen face made of sunken bones.
> Her worn off eyelids madden me
> That were shot through with purple once.
>
> (11. 105-108)

The fault with all these poems is their vacancy. Like Rossetti's poems they are devoid of moral conflict. They are based on the opposite beauties of flesh and spirit.

"Laus Veneris" is as broadly representative of Swinburne as "The Blessed Damozel" is of Rossetti; in both cases the subject of the poem is occasioned by an event of religious significance and in both cases the poets fail to supply substantial moral foundations. According to the legend on which Swinburne's poem is based, the German knight,

Tannhauser, formerly the servant of Christ, fell into the toils of Venus and lived in her court inside the Horselberg mountain in dissipation until one day he remorsefully set out to obtain forgiveness from the Pope. Upon reaching Rome and being granted an audience he was told that mercy would be inaccessible to him unless the papal staff should miraculously blossom and flourish. In despondence Tannhauser returned to the Horselberg and ironically, after his departure, the miracle took place.

Although this is the narrative that Swinburne follows, the conflict of the poem is not between good and evil, that is, between heaven and the Horselberg; the real conflict is simply between Tannhauser's opposed desires to rebel and submit to Venus. Thus the narrative is just another version of Swinburne's favourite obsession and the true religious meaning of the tale is lost to the actual poem as the religious significance of Rossetti's imagery is to the amoral atmosphere of "The Blessed Damozel". Before his departure, Tannhauser laments:

> Yea, all she slayeth, yea, every man save me;
> Me, love, thy lover that must cleave to thee
> Till the ending of the days and ways of earth,
> The shaking of the sources of the sea.
>
> (11. 137-140)

His consciousness is so absorbed by the presence of Venus that we recognize no traces of good at all. In Marlowe's

Dr. Faustus, in which a cosmic struggle for the soul of a man actually does occur, the forces of good and evil are both strongly depicted. In "Laus Veneris" the real struggle is not between lust and the desire for grace, but between the contradictory desires of lust itself, and hence there is no urgent representation of the power of good. Tannhauser sets out for Rome not to seek salvation, but because he must submit once again to Venus as readily as he has rebelled against her. The real dialectic is between rebellion and submission, not good and evil.

The tension of rebellion and submission continues unabated through the republican phase of Swinburne's career. In the Prelude to Songs Before Sunrise he seems to come to a realization of the disorder of his vacillating impulses:

> Since only souls that keep their place
> By their own light and watch things roll
> And stand have light for any soul.
>
> (11. 168-170)

But this statement seems ironic in view of the persistence of the same unresolved conflict that runs through the Poems and Ballads. Liberty becomes a mere surrogate for Our Lady of Pain and evokes the same turbulent energies. "The Oblation" addresses her in the very attitude of erotic submission demanded by Venus:

> All things are nothing to give
> Once to have sense of you more
> Touch you and taste of you sweet

> Think you and breathe you and live
> Swept of your wings as they soar,
> Trodden by chance of your feet.
>
> (11. 7-12)

There is the submission of hero worship ever latent in Swinburne's praise of liberty. Even though liberty is the spirit of rebellion itself, he could not exalt Italian liberation without also prostrating himself before liberty and her chief defenders like Nazzini. Basically, the Songs Before Sunrise are an externalization of the eroticism more inwardly experienced in Poems and Ballads. Without detracting from his democratic political beliefs, it must be said that so far as his poetry is concerned, Swinburne's treatment of liberty is dictated by abstract values no more than "Laus Veneris" is by religious perception of good and evil. The reality of Swinburne's attitudes is always to be located in the amoral and subjective psychological impulses of rebellion and submission. This confirms the validity of Meredith's criticism for we never know what is essential to Swinburne; even if we provisionally disregard his deficient moral vision, we still cannot decide whether there is anything that has permanent appeal for him because acceptance always runs into rejection. Liberty tends to become enslavement; pleasure becomes pain, and all things become their opposites.

In "Hertha" Swinburne attempts to condense and clarify his position. The poem may be read as political,

as religious, or as a romantic eulogy of nature. But behind such aspects operate the forces of the Poems and Ballads and these make it essentially a love poem. Hertha, the ancient earth goddess is a magnification of liberty in the way that liberty is a magnification of Dolores and Venus. All of these metamorphoses of the fatal woman fill the poet's mind with the same passions, the rebellious and the submissive. "Hertha" does this no less than the others and, because Swinburne considered it to be the finest of his works, the failure to achieve resolution which it displays in common with the rest, may be acknowledged as the ultimate failure on Swinburne's part to develop an ordered vision of his existence. The poem is grounded on the paradoxical eroticism of "Laus Veneris", not knowing whether to renounce or whether to submit:

> Beside or above me
> Nought is there to go;
> Love or unlove me
> Unknow me or know,
> I am that which unloves me and loves; I am
> Stricken and I am the blow.
>
> (11. 16-21)

As usual, the fusion of the sadistic and the masochistic occurs in conjunction with rebellion and submission and these contradictions remain unsettled to the very last. "Hertha" absorbs man: "Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I", but the cosmic size of the poem's

perspective is no compensation for its lack of organized interpretation.

In Poems and Ballads, Second Series, 1878 Swinburne enters upon a period of disappointment comparable to Rossetti's but he is no more successful in improving the organization of his artistic vision as a result of this, than Rossetti is. Movements of passion stay the same though emphasis has shifted to the victory of time over passion. In certain pieces from the first series of Poems and Ballads, "The Triumph of Time", "Hymn to Prosperine" and "Before Parting" this mood is anticipated. Now it becomes dominant. The violent and contrary energies of Swinburne's erotic concept of love subside into universal death and sterility. In "A Forsaken Garden" he envisions the death of passion with a possible sense of relief:

> And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened
> And or ever the garden's last petals were shed
> On the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened
> Love was dead.
>
> (ll. 45-48)

The vastness of the sea is invariably symbolic of the world of death and yet the sea is no less often used to represent the highest passion as in the well known stanza "I will go back to the great sweet mother" in "The Triumph of Time". The symbol really has no constant meaning; it signifies everything in life and death and serves as a

gigantic metaphor for Swinburne's generalized style and his thematic disorganization. This disorganization exists on many levels, for, whether we regard the fatal woman as Dolores, Liberty, Hertha, or the sea, the conflict of rebellion and submission prevails. Ultimately the sea is more than just another of Swinburne's erotic mistresses for it becomes the total context of all conflicts, and therefore of the ending of these conflicts as well. In "At the Month's End" the death of human love is swallowed and absorbed by the clamorous noise of waves:

> The night last night was strange and shaken
> More strange the change of you and me
> Once more for the old love's love forsaken,
> We went out once more towards the sea. (11.1-4)
>
> .....
>
> With chafe and change of surges chiming
> The clashing channels rocked and rang
> Large music, wave to wild wave tuning
> And all the choral waters sang.
>
> (11. 13-16)

But as chaos is not order, neither is cessation the equivalent of resolution. Swinburne does not systematize his emotions and we cannot regard the mere suspension of them as an adequate alternative. There is not even one final stage of cessation in Swinburne's verse. In 1866 he could say in "The Garden of Prosperine":

> I am weary of days and hours
> Blow buds of barren flowers
> Desires and dreams and powers
> And everything but sleep.
>
> (11.13-16)

But in 1882 in "Tristram of Lyonesse" and in 1894 in "A Nympholept" his erotic passion is as vigorous as ever. In all this experience the only outstanding form or direction is a circular recurrence of moods of passion effervescing and subsiding and then effervescing again.

There is one work however in which Swinburne manages to achieve control and direction of his passions: Atalanta in Calydon. This play is based on his own rebellion - submission complex as well as on a mixture of traditional Hellenic elements with the anarchistic doctrines of Sade and Blake whom he had been reading at the time of its composition. From Sade comes the idea of God as a cruel master of fate who strikes the good and bad alike and likewise the implication that the order of nature is suffering. The influence of Blake suggests itself in the impulse of rebel against this order of things and the God who governs it, but it is well to bear in mind that Swinburne's conception of Blake is apt to be divergent from Blake's real character. Swinburne's rebelliousness against God is more akin to Sade's.

Atalanta in Calydon recreates macrocosmically the situation of Swinburne vis à vis any one of his fatal ladies. The power of fate and of God is an expansion of that of Dolores, and it too, simultaneously subjugates and calls forth revolt. Meleager and the brothers of Atalanta are fated by God and yet the strident defiance of the chorus

in stasimon three (which is the most un-Hellenic part of the play) captures the familiar challenge of resistance; "All we are against Thee, O God most high." (1.1192)

Atalanta is the central type of the fatal woman in this instance, although Althaea shares the role with her when she is forced to act out the will of fate against Meleager. Together the women represent the sadistic forces responsible for his death.

It is partly the precision and symmetry of this eighteen part dramatic symphony that make it, on the whole, superior to Swinburne's other compositions. It has none of the endless lyric monotony of such things as "By the North Sea" and in its structure it is by far the most Aristotelian specimen of his writings. With the exception of stasimon three which allows the chorus to break into a tirade that is ill knit with the progress of the plot, Swinburne maintains a tone that is always in proportion to the action taking place. The action itself moves easily from the first appearance of Meleager as a symbol of youth and vitality, through his ominous dialogue with Althaea concerning the claims of love and duty and on to the hunt itself and the final catharsis. But more important than this artistic finesse is the fact that Swinburne for once sees the passions of rebellion and submission within the framework of a definite pattern of existence. Instead of the specious

unity of "Hertha", which amounts to no more than a catalogue of cosmic antitheses, Atalanta in Calydon interprets and coordinates the forces that operate in it, and arrives at a balanced intellectual understanding of them. Whether one accepts the sadistic philosophy of the play should not affect its artistic merit. At least the play has built a philosophy around passions which in all the later poems and lyrics tend to be specialized, transitory and uninterpreted. Unfortunately, the play is the least characteristic of Swinburne's works and it illuminates by contrast his chronic weaknesses.

iv

Rossetti and Swinburne are outstanding members of the English corps of "decadent" poets; in them we discover a continuation of the tradition of La Belle Dame sans Merci and an intensely lyrical, yet conceptually disorganized subjectivity, in contrast with the disciplined social and practical bias of Tennyson, Browning and Arnold. In forming a just critical opinion of Rossetti and Swinburne, it is desirable to avoid too strict a correlation between thematic content and artistic merit; for we must decide whether the notion of their inferiority is derived from the prejudices of Victorian propriety alone or whether it has objective validity in the analysis of their work.

In the foregoing discussion the suggestion has been made that both poets possess intrinsic disabilities which necessitate their classification as minor literary figures and which are highly analogous in manifestation and in consequence. Granting the disparity of temperament that exists between them, (recognizing Rossetti as essentially religious and mystical and Swinburne as pagan and sensual) we can find, for each characteristic possessed by one, a closely corresponding characteristic in the other. Both are dominated by irresolution arising from inability to confront and meaningfully interpret mental inconsistencies. Rossetti is religious in emotion and sensibility but does not succeed in organizing the different categories of experience according to a religious moral structure; Swinburne's paganism lacks nothing but the pagan's deep consciousness of moral alternatives and world order. It is as though Rossetti had tried to distil from Dante, and Swinburne from Aeschylus and Sophocles, the aesthetic qualities of great art without their moral schemes. Hence both poets tend towards egocentricity and aesthetic specialization where a more rooted sense of the order of things would have served to universalize their experiences. Had Rossetti retained, as did Baudelaire, the mediaeval ideas of sin and evil that properly belong to his type of sensibility, he could have been among the very greatest poets of the nineteenth century.

Had Swinburne exercised in his lyric verse the balance and moral perception of Atalanta in Calydon his eccentric powers would have been directed and developed to greater advantage. Regrettably, his eccentricity tends to be a pattern in itself that always changes, makes no endeavour to recognize its own identity or purpose, and periodically succumbs to exhaustion.

The main correspondence between Rossetti and Swinburne holds between their respective spirit-flesh and rebellion-submission dialectics. From these sources stem their confusion as thinkers and also the characteristics of their poetic styles. As Rossetti's dialect involves the entities of flesh and spirit, so Swinburne's follows the energies of rebellion and submission. Rossetti obtains a synthesis but at the cost of intellectual clarity and firmness of conviction while Swinburne alternates tiresomely between his opposing instincts, which being perverse to begin with, imply nothing universal that could justify or give meaning to them. Rossetti's imagery and exactness of detail are produced by a sensibility composed of entities while the general fluidity of Swinburne naturally arises from energy. Furthermore, we can see in the schizophrenia of Rossetti and the sadomasochism of Swinburne, the emotional diseases appropriate to their divided sensibilities; one is unable to coordinate the entities in himself, the other cannot reconcile the energies. The problem with them is

that neither has much to say that is not primarily pertinent to himself as a neurotic individual and each, in his manner, typifies the artist in isolation.

The solution of the eminent Victorian poets was to withdraw as much as possible from the dream of the artist into objective criticism of life. Yeats, somewhat anomalously, expanded his own subjective existence to such universal dimensions that he was able to comprehend all experience without abandoning the original dream. But Rossetti and Swinburne failed to escape into objectivity and likewise failed to control their experiences subjectively. Their peculiar dilemma was to remain painfully trapped between the nightmares of narrow subjectivity and the harsh impositions of an industrial world.

III

YEATS

The decadence is a complicated subject which cannot be appropriately confronted unless each of the writers who created it is given more serious critical attention than is now common. Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Arthur Symons, Wilde and Richard le Gallienne are seldom remembered for their poetry. Together, they are popularly associated with morbid religiosity, alcoholism, French symbolism, and erotic perversion. Yet apart from a reputation for effete derivative style, they do not have a definite literary image. As poets, they belong to the outskirts of studied literature; cultural personalities but not really writers of known works.[1]

Since I am attempting to establish a certain perspective on Ruskin and Yeats by focussing on their parallel relations to decadent literature, the necessity of foregoing a complete analysis of the decadence may seem partly to disqualify my aim. However, in restricting my discussion to Rossetti and Swinburne, I have intended to keep an even balance between the two halves of my thesis (choosing the best two representatives of a dozen or so decadents to compare with Ruskin and Yeats). Additionally, in the effort to supply a serious critical vocabulary that is lacking in the usual loose and impressionistic interpretations, I have

shifted emphasis from personal content to structure and style. The conclusions that have been reached about the themes and personalities of Rossetti and Swinburne originate in formalistic, not in biographical considerations. On the premises that they are archetypal among poets of the late nineteenth century and that their written works have been the cause of my judgements of them, I think it reasonable to illustrate my generalizations about decadent literature by referring primarily to Rossetti and Swinburne.

Ruskin gave the last formulation to the Victorian synthesis of art and morality before it was fractured by the influence of Pre-Raphaelitism. While Rossetti resented the acclaim he got from the aesthetes and decadents, it cannot be doubted that he contributed more to the spirit of the nineties than to the maintenance of Ruskinian ideals. It was left to Yeats to reconstruct the unified vision of Ruskin and Coleridge out of the broken fragments of the decadence.[2] This will be the subject of the present chapter.

Before we can appraise Yeats as a successor of Ruskin, he must first be understood as a Pre-Raphaelite. His early poetry is decidedly "decadent" in that it is circumscribed and subjective like Rossetti's. The trouble with Rossetti is that he could not make the spirit higher than the flesh (like Dante) or give a precise outline to their conflict as Yeats did in his later work. The relationship of both parts of man's being is wholly vague

and unsatisfactory. The symbolic rose recalls Rossetti's damozels being neither corporal nor ethereal. It is longed for in a similarly self-indulgent manner: "Surely thine hour has come, the great wind blows, / Far-off most secret and inviolate Rose"("The Secret Rose"). Yet though there is an apparent unwillingness to face struggle in this and some other apostrophes to the rose, the mature Yeats is discernible in the early poetry. The rose is potentially an ideal that cannot be gained without strife for it shares man's suffering:

> Rose of all Roses, Rose of all the World!
> You too have come where the dim tides are hurled
> Upon the wharves of sorrow ....
>
> ("The Rose of Battle")

In a declaration of the close attachment between human life and its ideals, Yeats rises above Rossetti's inability to perceive unity in opposition. He does not divorce ideal beauty from life but neither does he imagine a facile blending of them: ". . . the quality symbolized as The Rose differs from the Intellectual Beauty of Shelley and of Spenser in that I have imagined it as suffering with man and not as something pursued and seen from afar".[3]

The difficulty of interpreting the early Yeats consists in differentiating the decadent elements from the first traces of a reconstructed synthesis. What Yeats says about the rose and man's suffering eventually applies to art

and life: they must coexist. As the rose is fastened to the rood of time, so the aesthetic images of Byzantium are taken from "the gong tormented sea". There is a surprising consistency between the poetry of the nineties and that inspired by A Vision. Yeats uses many of the same symbols to communicate the same essential thoughts. The permanence of aesthetic values is invariably immersed in the sea of life. He concludes his invocation in "The Rose of Battle": "Beauty grown and with its eternity / Made you of us, and of the dim grey sea." The conceptual similarity of these lines to the third stanza of "Sailing to Byzantium" cannot be missed. The rose, or beauty, has become the sages in God's fire viz.the images of art:

> O sages standing in God's holy fire
> As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
> Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre
> And be the singing masters of my soul. 4

The symbolism is here more complex than it is in "The Rose of Battle"; the phrase "perne in a gyre" demands the participation of art in the antinomies of the natural world. Only through natural inspiration can the artist reach eternity. God in the context of the poem is the supreme artist whom the speaker emulates. The holy fire and gold mosaic are alternate symbols of art and so on. This kind of detailed explication is required by each line of the poem whereas "The Rose of Battle" is immediately understood through the emotions it evokes. Nevertheless the intercourse of time

and eternity is not appreciably different in either case. "Sailing to Byzantium" places greater reliance on intellectual than on emotional symbols.[5] A Vision, written twelve years previously in 1917 gave clarity and distinction to ideas which Yeats had apprehended through a haze of emotion in the nineties.

Much of the apparent change in Yeats' philosophy is due simply to a new type of style and expression. Although nationalism and personal affairs brought about certain adjustments between his aesthetic ideals and human life, the main business of outgrowing the decadence was in freeing himself from the stylistic influence of Rossetti. As he progressed beyond the descriptive lushness characteristic of The House of Life towards a more concise and dramatic style, Yeats became more successful at convincingly embodying the "complete view" in his verse. I therefore propose to analyze the stylistic problems of the volumes, Crossways (1889), The Rose (1893) and The Wind Among the Reeds (1899), to show how Yeats rejected moral decadence by resisting the poetical techniques that went with it. At the same time I shall examine Yeats' theory of related arts which like Ruskin's proved to be the starting point for a synthesis of art and life.

There were two main streams of romanticism in the nineteenth century. One was evolved from the principle of

truth to the apocalyptic imagination and it discovered its prototype in "Kubla Khan". The other, which imbued a wider range of poetry has already been discussed to some extent. It was the tradition of truth to fact. Rosenberg suggests that "The Leech Gatherer" is the most obvious example but might as well have chosen "The Eve of St.Agnes" because an awareness of the factual means not so much realism as a sense of detail.[6] Detail is evident in Keatsian decorativeness as well as in Wordsworth's naturalism. Keats is perhaps more important because he insured the continuation of the factual tradition by his influence on the pre-Raphaelites and Tennyson. Except from Arnold who revered but did not imitate him, Wordsworth got little attention among subsequent poets of the century.

Yeats reflects both traditions; but it is obvious that decorative romanticism which the pre-Raphaelites had made by far the more popular of the two, often conflicts fruitlessly with the visionary and daemonic tradition in his early verse. This is what, in "The Secret Rose", turns apocalyptic desire into vacant wishfulness. The heritage of Spenser, Keats and Rossetti stifles the energy needed to sustain such a poem. Shelley's Adonais typifies the mould in which infinite aspirations must be cast. Although it is somewhat retarded by lushness, it does not lose all its energy in description as does Keats' Endymion, the forerunner of Yeats' "Secret Rose". It pursues a course of

gestures and actions, not of static images.

The challenge which faced Yeats was to find a medium between descriptive and dramatic poetry; to use vivid symbolism and detail without sacrificing energetic thoughts and actions. In other words, he had to bring the arts of painting and drama within the compass of his poetry. It was natural for Yeats to be susceptible to these above all other arts. The son of a painter, he went to the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin in May 1884 and though he did not stay beyond the next summer, painting and poetry were reciprocally influential during the formative stages of his career. So close was the alliance that Yeats wanted to do in paint what he was experimenting with in verse. Richard Ellmann describes the strong infusion of Pre-Raphaelitism in Yeats' taste, which entered his poetry through the paintings of others and which, but for parental opposition, he would have emulated in his own painting: "Had he possessed the courage, he would have liked to create pictures like tapestries in his painting as he was doing in his poetry".[7] On the other hand Yeats was strongly impressed by the controversial powers of his father and by the latter's predilection for the age of Shakespeare. J.B.Yeats educated his son to believe that dramatic poetry, having less dogma and more of life and passion than other genres, was superior to all other types of literature.[8] Yeats accordingly was taught to recite dramatic passages from Manfred and

Prometheus Unbound and this substantially affected his aesthetic ideas years afterward.

Yeats was not a gifted polemicist like his father and he grew interested in symbolism which is closely related to painting as a refuge from argument and drama. "He soon found," says Ellmann, "that a picture, unlike a logical proposition cannot be refuted".[9] But he also found that symbolism, argument and drama could not be indefinitely separated. His earliest attempts at escapism had paradoxically contained an important element which Ellmann emphasizes: ". . . he slept in a cave or among the rhododendrons and rocks of Howth Castle. There he dramatized himself as a sage, magician or poet using Manfred, Prince Athanase and the hero of Alastor as his models".[10] The same dramatic instinct led him to adopt the heroic mask of Cuchulain after Maud Gonne's marriage to Major MacBride in 1903, an event that caused him to abandon his escapist reveries as the cause of his ill-success in human relationships.

The conflict of reverie and action (painting and drama) is crystallized in Yeats' adoption of the lyric. The precedent of Keats' ornate, sensuous odes and the more recent development of French symbolism made of lyric verse a kind of word painting at the fin de siècle. Swinburne's poetry, as we have seen, is an exception to this rule, but most non-dramatic poetry evaded psychological intensity. It was

inspired by a reaction against what Yeats calls in the introduction to The Oxford Book of Modern Verse: the mischief that "began at the end of the seventeenth century when man became passive before a mechanized nature".[11] But in revitalizing nature, the romantic traditions of sensuous detail only perpetuated man's passivity. A moderate use of natural imagery could give discipline to the emotions of the poet. This can be seen in the comparison of Rossetti and Swinburne that I made earlier. But a superfluity of it quickly interferes with the activity of the imagination as Yeats realized when in 1906 he wrote:

> Without knowing it, I had come to care for nothing but impersonal beauty. I had set out on life with the thought of putting my very self into poetry and had understood this as a representation of my own visions and an attempt to cut away the non-essential, but as I imagined the visions outside myself my imagination became full of decorative landscape and of still life. 12

When he pretended to be a sage or magician in the woods at Howth Castle he was making his earliest ventures in self-projection. The descriptions of golden age settings which abound in his juvenilia (e.g. Mosada, "Anashnya and Vijaya", "The Indian to his love" and The Island of Statues) were meant to sustain these imagined personae, but as he himself says, thwarted them instead. For his poetry to be psychologically or dramatically interesting, it would have to lose some of its verbal plenitude. Yeats criticizes Coleridge and Rossetti for a wrong approach to the lyric

and advocates a style which is closer to Swinburne's:

> In dream poetry, in Kubla Khan, in The Stream's Secret, every line, every word can carry its unanalyzable, rich associations; but if we dramatize some possible singer or speaker we remember that he is moved by one thing at a time, certain words must be dull and numb. 13

He is searching for a language austere enough in its imagery not to exclude the elements of characterization, action and genuine emotional expression from lyric poetry. These were all present in the apocalyptic variety of romantic verse written by Blake, Shelley and, occasionally, Coleridge. Yeats, with his fascination for Byzantium and the mystic rose had a congenital affinity with these poets and his dominant theme as Harold Bloom argues,[14] is the subjective romantic quest. However, Yeats is different in important respects from his predecessors. Blake and Shelley were more interested in the struggles of the quester than in his fulfillment. The prophesies of Blake deal largely with the frustrations of Albion's divided faculties. Shelley's Alastor is dedicated to romantic failure.

Yeats' version of the quest is modified by Pre-Raphaelite and Keatsian ingredients. Keats was the most complacent of the romantics. (The self-questioning in The Fall of Hyperion is not typical of the body of his work.) His imagery is rich rather than energetic like Shelley's and the same applies to Rossetti. Since Yeats grew up when the direction of poetry was being determined by the popularity

of Keats, the quest theme in his lyrics is constantly being tainted with an indolence that does not properly belong to it. Although the lyrics grew out of a quest impulse as urgent as Shelley's he was prevented from dramatizing it by an acquired habit of writing.

A series of three poems from Crossways, "The Indian to His Love", "The Falling of the Leaves" and "Ephemera", display this combination of contradictory elements. The leit motif comes from Shelley and concerns the cyclical decay and fulfillment of passion upon which Epipsychidion is based. Yeats has eliminated the drama of passion from all three. The first of the series envisages a state of communion with the beloved in a setting reminiscent of Shelley's " . . . isle twixt Heaven, Air, Earth and Sea, / Cradled, and hung in clear tranquility" (11.457-458). But it is quite devoid of any accent of exultation. Yeats is conscious of Shelley's example when in celebrating fulfillment ("While grows our love an Indian Star/ A meteor of the burning heart") he echoes the lines from Epipsychidion: "One passion in twin-hearts which grows and grew/ ... like two meteors of expanding flame" (11. 575-576). Nevertheless the passionate archetype is concealed in Yeats' poem by an enervated Pre-Raphaelite style:

> The heavy boughs, the burnished dove
> That moans and sighs a hundred days
> How when we die our shades will rove,
> When Eve has hushed the feathered ways,
> With vapoury footsole by the water's drowzy blaze.

This mood is even stronger in the other two poems and again, it contrasts sharply with Shelley's reactions to the death of passion. In Epipsychidion the loss of previous loves intensifies the desire for permanent fulfillment whereas in Yeats the obsession with exotic imagery overbears the energetic impulses that ought to compensate that loss. Ephemerality is seemingly enjoyed for its own sake when ". . . the poor tired child, Passion, falls asleep" ("Ephemera"). This is oddly paradoxical in a lament for the waning of passion. It indicates that Yeats' handling of emotinns is controlled to a marked degree by his style. He tends to say the things that are best suited to a langorous diction and then tries to adapt them to Shelleyan situations. The results are often confusing.

As soon as he learned to restrict his imagery Yeats' poetry began to take a more decided direction. The difference is already detectable in The Rose where the dramatic part of his sensibility begins to find parity with the pictorial. His verse gives evidence of greater internal tension and becomes more effective in communicating desire and aspiration. By 1899 Yeats had acquired an aptitude for the lyric that subsumed the passion of drama and the verbal imagery fomented by Pre-Raphaelite painting. The evolution of the dramatic lyric commenced as early as 1888 for in that year, Yeats expressed to Katherine Tynan his dissatisfaction with the very traits of his style that we have been criticizing:

> Always harmonious, narrow, calm. Taking small interest in people but most ardently moved by the more minute kinds of natural beauty ... Everything done then was quite passionless .. Since I have left the "Island (of Statues)" I have been going about on shoreless seas. . . . Everything is cloud and foam. 16

The expression "cloud and foam" signified the advent of a fresh emotional intensity concentrated on the dichotomy of mundane existence and the supernatural. Hereafter his poetry became more apocalyptic and showed its Shelleyan roots less ambiguously.

I have spoken of the peculiar intermediary state between flesh and spirit in which Rossetti's Blessed Damozel exists and have mentioned how the rose symbol can be likened to Rossetti's women. It must now be pointed out that in his first volume, Yeats is more surrounded by this aura than ever afterwards. The rose has more connotations of the daemonic[17] than of the Pre-Raphaelite. It belongs essentially to the cloud and foam period and carries only lingering connotations of the former mood. In "Fergus and the Druid", the second poem in The Rose volume, a new kind of confrontation occurs that except for "The Madness of King Goll" and "The Stolen Child", is not intimated by anything in Crossways. The man of action is endowed with the "dreaming wisdom" (the supernatural intuition) of the druid who is a prototype of the artist. The visions of other lives experienced by Fergus, ("I see my life go drifting like a river from change

to change"), represent a supernatural perspective on natural life. It is the second time the two orders are precisely differentiated, and this poem, like the pair in Crossways that anticipate it, is consequently composed as a set of dramatic utterances and not as a sensuous lyric.

The conflict of orders that produced the dramatic lyric can also be observed in Yeats' progress towards a successful stage drama. Orthodox Christianity with its antithesis of spirit and flesh constituted the background for this conflict. Irish myth reinforced it. Leonard Nathan in his The Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats quotes an item from a collection of untitled comments that summarizes the essence of the Irish matter to which Yeats was indebted: "The thought of war of immortal upon mortal life has been the moving thought of much Irish poetry".[18] Man strives for the immortal as he does in the romantic quest but the immortal is disdainful of him.

Yeats' first mature plays, The Land of Heart's Desire and The Shadowy Waters etc., are wishful like Rossetti's poems because the intransigence of the orders is not completely expressed. When he wrote The Shadowy Waters he was still intent on freezing the passions and reducing them to lyrical states of contemplation.[19] The hero of the play, Forgael, conquers mortal resistance to his supernatural desires without struggle or passion. He subdues his mortal

opponents by wrapping them in dreams and by means of dreams translates himself to the realm of supernatural fulfillment. The same conditions prevail in The Land of Heart's Desire which is sustained by fantasy not conflict. Mary Bruin, the protagonist, is wooed away from her husband and family by the sidhe but offers no palpable resistance to her supernatural captors. In both plays, though particularly in The Shadowy Waters, lyricism and an alembicated symbolism take the place of an efficient dramatic structure.

After he grew out of the aesthetic style of his first plays, Yeats learned to present dramatic conflict by emphasizing the tragic failure of his heroes to integrate the various parts of their characters. The war of the orders became manifest in the heroic failure. Such failure was strictly due to human mortality. This the immortal sidhe (who figure prominently in these plays) do not have to suffer because of their inhumanity. On Baile's Strand (1904) depicts the hero, Cuchulain, compelled to reject the life of peaceful domesticity. In At the Hawk's Well (1917), Yeats first experiment with the Japanese Noh, Cuchulain has to renounce contemplative wisdom. In The Only Jealousy of Emer (1919), his humanity prevents him from accepting immortality from the Woman of the Sidhe. The plays return to one basic theme; the contrast between the consummation of all immortal desires and the frustrations that mortals must live with and

accept. The transition from one order to the other cannot be as easily effected as it can in the first lyrics and plays Yeats wrote. In making Cuchulain a failure most of the time, he was eliminating from his art the facile interfusion of spirit and flesh.

The daemonic spirit of the Noh plays and the early dramatic lyrics arises from the antithesis of supernatural and natural. This changes in the latter part of the poet's life. The supernatural order becomes the sphere of mental images found in "Byzantium". These, though they resemble spirits (shades), are in fact according to Yeats, the ideal creations of art. Thus the antithesis eventually develops beyond human life versus spiritual immortality to human life versus the immortality of art. Art, like the people of the sidhe, transcends human weakness but it cannot be severed from man's imperfection without losing its vitality. This is also true of the sidhe who for all their immortality lack the peculiar satisfaction that man has in seeing his soul struggle against and triumph over the adversities of his mortal condition. A soul is, indeed, impossible without struggle: "A man has a hope for heaven / But soulless a fairy dies...."[20] The import of Yeats' mature thought is that spirit and flesh, art and life are mutually antagonistic but nonetheless inseparable. Man cannot renounce the desire for perfection but perfeption is meaningless without the passionate soul of man.

A play that Yeats wrote at the end of his life, A Full Moon in March[21] (1935), recapitulates all this and reveals the ultimate significance of the daemonic in the early poems and plays. The principal characters are a queen who has offered her hand in marriage to whomever can please her with his singing, and a swineherd who ventures to do so. The refrain of the song that opens the play, "Crown of gold or dung of swine," underlines the symbolism of the extremes that will be united by the marriage.

The play anticipates the basic issues of the Byzantium poems. The swineherd speaks of the "beggars of my country" just as the poet of "Sailing to Byzantium" looks back on "Those dying generations ... of the land" whence he comes. Looking at his foul rags he asks the queen, as if expecting some reward: "Have I not come through dust and mire?" The lines repeat the symbolism of "the dolphin's mire and blood" ("Byzantium") and alert us to the fact that the swineherd is the imperfect human artist who is in quest of an ideal perfection, the queen. She is represented by the full moon of the title which stands for unity of being, the fifteenth phase of the lunar cycle in which consummate art and beauty exist.

Despite her flawlessness the queen is soulless like the sidhe because she has not shared in the dust and mire of the swineherd. She has not been fertilized with compassion

and human suffering: "But they that call me cruel speak the truth, / Cruel as the winter of virginity." After making this remark, the queen makes a descent from her throne to hear the swineherd sing. Her action prepares for a ritualistic union between the ideal and the human for she must be tainted by contact with humanity to be fulfilled. One of her attendants makes the pointed query: "What can she lack whose emblem is the moon?" And is answered by another: "But desecration and the lover's night". The Queen's marriage with her swineherd lover is consummated, when, having ordered him to be decapitated she receives the severed head, kisses it, and then dances with it. The dance, like that in the last stanza of "Among School Children", represents the union of body and soul which for Yeats, as for Ruskin, is integral to great art. The queen's dance also calls to mind the golden bird of Byzantium (to which she is analogous) that sits upon the topmost bough of the tree of life -- not to sing of Byzantium but to celebrate "those dying generations" in all phases of their existence.

A Full Moon in March is the logical extension of the war of the orders. The image of the ideal devastates human life and demands its sacrifice in the same fashion that the immortal order wars upon the mortal. But just as unity of being depends on a coming together of the orders, art cannot be produced unless the ideal is desecrated and the human is

sacrificed. This brings us back to the old Ruskinian maxim that art and life cannot fulfill their purposes without each other.

ii

This discussion may seem to have diverged from the subject of Yeats' early poems. However, it is necessary to apprehend the implications of the dramatic lyric before the details of its analysis assume their full importance. The question "What and how much did Yeats owe to the Pre-Raphaelite" must still be answered. I have said that an over-indulgence in the imagery of Rossetti was a negative result of their influence; nonetheless, Yeats' relationship with them is more complex than this and not always disadvantageous to him.

In 1891 the Rhymers' Club was established. It introduced Yeats to his contemporaries Dowson, Johnson and Symons and gave him more direct acquaintance with Victorian literature. He sympathetically identified himself with Rossetti and Morris whom he preferred above all others and later wrote that at this time he was "in all things Pre-Raphaelite".[22]

Yeats was indebted to the Pre-Raphaelites for three of his most important values: the belief that poetry is pure art and should not be mixed with moralistic teaching, the concept of life as a ceremony, and the mystique of womanhood.

Each of these he reinterpreted and each became as much a strength for him as it had been a deficiency with his predecessors. All three combined, they communicated a powerful stimulus to the dramatic lyric of the nineties. Largely through a strengthening of Yeats' daemonic antithesis,[23] they were the source of a continuous supply of dramatic energy to compensate for the static Pre-Raphaelite elements in his verse.

Yeats' concept of poésie pure is frequently mistaken to support the view that his work is dissimiliar to all that was written by the great Victorians. Certainly he rejected the moralism into which Tennyson declined in his later years for he made many attacks such as the following on the obvious faults of Victorian literature:

> The revolt against Victorianism meant to the young poet a revolt against irrevelant descriptions of nature, the scientific and moral discursiveness of In Memoriam..., the political eloquence of Swinburne, the psychological curiosity of Browning, and the poetical diction of everybody. [24]

The Pre-Raphaelites were in a manner of speaking, free from most of this and their aestheticism was an attempt to escape it. This does not mean that Yeats followed their interpretation of pure poetry. He understood the purity of art to mean what Ruskin meant when he said that the beautiful is didactic chiefly by being beautiful. Yeats and Ruskin did not seek purity in a retreat from life but in a detached perspective on life. It was the function of the arts,

particularly poetry, to furnish this perspective.

Yeats was essentially neither an aesthete nor a symbolist, but the last Victorian. The responsibility of art to life first became an issue in Keats and was carried over into Tennyson and Arnold both of whom tried to project an artistic order on the world of active concerns. The practical morality that impeded their efforts is not the main characteristic of Victorianism. What they and Yeats have in common, that appears in no other school of poetry after the Romantics, (aesthete, decadent, symbolist, etc.) is the conviction that art and life should be harmoniously involved in the same system of values. Yeats, unlike Arnold and Tennyson, perceived that the autonomy of art needed to be consistently upheld if this were to be possible. He therefore took the Pre-Raphaelite notion of pure poetry and adapted it to serve a typically Victorian moral aesthetic.

Rossetti and Swinburne were unable to transcend character and subjectivity to achieve an impersonal art. In the opinion of Yeats, pure poetry required impersonality and this in turn had to be generated by an outward-looking, dramatic style. The mistake of Rossetti had been to think that aesthetic purity lay in introspection, a notion that Yeats firmly disqualifies in "Ego Dominus Tuus":

> Hic. And I would find myself and not an image.
>
> Ille. That is our modern hope, and by its light
> We have lit upon the gentle sensitive mind
> And lost the old nonchalance of the hand.

25

If the prose passage from the introduction to The Oxford Book of Modern Verse (quoted above) is Yeats' condemnation of Victorian science and moralism, "Ego Dominus Tuus" criticizes the aesthetic escapist. For Hic we could substitute Rossetti to obtain a concrete focus for the words of Ille (Yeats). The latter pursues the active virtues of the hand and not the refinement of the subjective powers of the mind. The image to which Hic adverts is the anti-self of the reflective Ille and also a reflection of the dramatic art Ille wishes to create. Hic, of course, is looking for images too, but expects to find them within himself. These images are the sensuous entities of The House of Life that are incompatible with "the old nonchalance of the hand". In Ille's combination of hand and image we find the rapprochement of drama and painting that Yeats produced in the dramatic lyric. The images of Ille are the still mirrors of dramatic action whereas those of Hic express only the subjective uncertainty of a mind divorced from action and incapable of dramatic decision.

Drama, however, can produce only impersonality for the subjective artist. Impersonality depends, fundamentally, on the search for opposites and pure poetry arises when the subjective spirit forgets itself in dramatic situations. For the dramatic spirit, action fails to produce impersonality and so is not a subject for pure poetry:

Ille. ... those that love the world serve it in action,
Grow rich, popular and full of influence,
And should they paint or write, still it is action
The struggle of the fly in marmalade.

Pure poetry in Yeats' sense is neither subjective nor objective, neither escapist nor moralistic. It is found in the disinterested, contemplative view of life's activities and interests. "Ego Dominus Tuus" belongs to the Wild Swans at Coole (1919) volume but the aesthetic theory that it propounds is germinated in the alliance of painting and drama and developed in the dramatic lyrics of preceding volumes.

The ceremony of life that Yeats believed in all his life and celebrated formally in "A Prayer for My Daughter" is another dimension of the moral aesthetic. It began in the ritualism that Yeats learned in spiritualist circles and contributed to the evolution of the dramatic lyric in highlighting a pattern of human actions for art to imitate. Ceremony and ritual pervade the early lyrics in the form of quasi-religious invocations: "Be you still, be you still, trembling heart / Remember the wisdom of the old days" ("To his Heart, bidding it have no Fear") and "Great Powers of falling wave and wind and windy fire/ . . . Encircle her and love and sing unto her peace" ("The Poet pleads with the Elemental Powers"). These poems are often structurally based on arcane ritualism; for example, the mystical vision often provides a dramatic framework for the lyrics. "The Man Who

Dreamed of Faeryland"[26] is a fine example of the dramatic lyric because it not only carries a powerful daemonic theme, but has the dramatic resource of repeated dream visions which give the basic conflict a cumulative build-up. The poem presents four instances of a man's failure to reconcile himself to worldly satisfactions and the dream of the supernatural that in each case calls him away from them. His first vision is of fish that sang ". . . what gold morning or evening sheds / Upon a woven world-forgotten isle ...." He is successfully distracted by more images of another world, by a lug worm, a small knot grass and the worms in his grave. The poem ends expectantly in the dramatic present. "Dream until God burns Nature with a kiss / The man has found no comfort in the grave". It is perhaps the apotheosis of Yeats' dramatic lyric, comprehending a well developed set of lyrical images and a strong dramatic movement.

Johnson and Dowson attempted with less success to base their poetry on ritual. Both got their instinct for this from the liturgy of Roman Catholicism and used dramatic invocations and dramatic structures without being able to sustain them. Eddins compares certain passages from their poetry with passages from Yeats which show how readily they lapse out of direct dramatic address into abstract reflection on the emotions.[27] Yeats' poetry owes a lot of its dramatic

conciseness to a sense of life's ritual. Rossetti and Swinburne cannot approach what Eddins calls the "tight logic" of Yeats' verse because they did not have a disciplined attitude to life as he did.[28] Rossetti had his own ceremony of life certainly; the mediaeval life style he sought in his residence on the bank of the Thames and the mediaeval dream world which he inhabited with his wife are typical parts of its constitution.[29] Swinburne, who brought a prayer stool to a dinner party at which Browning was to be present so as to be able to pay him proper homage, and whose politics were an extension of the eroticism in his verse, had also a unique way of seeing life as art. The difference between them and Yeats is that he insisted on life and art exerting a mutual discipline upon each other whereas they forgot that there was such a thing as life and lived solely in art. The dramatic ritual in Yeats' lyrics is coterminous with a strong sense of reality, for want of which decadent verse is generally vaguely reflective and devoid of internal necessity and order. Yeats' comments on Swinburne's "Faustine" are critical of this very thing: "... the Faustine of Swinburne, where much is powerful and musical, could not, were it read out, be understood with pleasure ... because it has no more logical structure than a bag of shot".[30]

The ceremony of life took on larger proportions

later. What was originally merely the ritualistic structure of his poems matured into an ethical principle: "How but in custom and in ceremony / Are innocence and beauty born" ("A Prayer for My Daughter"). Here artistic ceremony gives form to life as it had not in the fantasies of Rossetti. "A Prayer for My Daughter" being a mature product of the elements of the dramatic lyrics, is a parallel to "Ego Dominus Tuus". It sees life in its relation to art as the latter does art in its relation to life. I say this now to prepare for the subject of the next stage of this discussion: the moral implications of art (that make their seminal appearance in the dramatic lyric).

Lastly, we must consider the contribution made by Pre-Raphaelite and Swinburnian concepts of femininity to the early dramatic lyrics of Yeats. The beloved in Yeats is not a femme fatale in the same sense that she is with the poets on whose precedent her figure is constructed. Yeats makes her the feminine principle of an hermaphroditic godhead from the very outset. In "The Rose of the World" he speculates on the function of a personified beauty and concludes that it is a primary facet of the deity and an archetype of the beloved:

> Bow down, archangels in your dim abode:
> Before you were, or any hearts to beat,
> Weary and kind one lingered by His seat;
> He made the world to be a grassy road
> Before her wandering feet. 31

Yeats' women are therefore daemonic. They are allied with the supernatural in his nineteenth-century work (the beloved is often an aspect of the rose symbol) and in the responses they evoke from the mortal lover instigate the war of the orders. Whether Maude Gonne, Deidre or Helen, the beauty of the beloved has an awesome effect on mortal powers:

> Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?
> For these red lips, with all their mournful
> pride
> Mournful that no new wonder may betide,
> Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,
> And Uona's children died.
> ("The Rose of the World")

The women of Rossetti and Swinburne are devastating too, but for another reason. They are not taking part in "the war of immortal upon mortal life"; they represent merely a reflexive movement of mortal decadence. Lilith and Dolores are symbols of the self-inflicted penance their creators had to suffer for not possessing a daemonic consciousness. Had they been daemonic in their outlook Rossetti and Swinburne would have been able to see some necessity and conflict in life. Whether or not this daemonic conflict had remained at the cruder level of immortal versus mortal or had evolved like that of Yeats

into art versus life, would not have mattered so long as their conceptions of art and life had found direction in struggle. As it was, they were left to experience the remorse of a purely mortal enervation, primarily sensuous, and undramatic, and it was this that engendered their fatal women.(The directness of Swinburne's address to Dolores and Faustine is not dramatic. It does not have the concentration and economy of genuine dramatic speech. Although it makes a better approximation to drama than Rossetti's, Swinburne's poetry has as much dramatic immediacy in it as the Senecan discourses of Kyd compared to the Shakespearian tragedies). As we have seen, Yeats' rose became, with modifications, Byzantium, which ideal was extrapolated from the image of the beloved. The beloved in the early lyrics is always partly identifiable with the poet's art. In A Full Moon in March this identification is put forward as the theme of the play.

The death of the swineherd seems to resemble the fate inflicted by Dolores, Faustine, Wilde's Salome etc. but does not, in fact, because these are the punishments of the aesthetic escapist. Yeats' play concerns the sacrifices that art must make to life (the descent of the queen to the swineherd is a motif that has no parallel in the decadent art devoted to the femme fatale) and vice versa. A Full Moon in March is closer in spirit to Ruskin's

Mountain Gloom than to any of its more superficially obvious analogues.

Having this inherent daemonic significance, Yeats' women were an incentive to his dramatic style -- unlike the languishing pre-Raphaelite types who served only to perpetuate Rossetti's ineptitude in the area of dramatic poetry. Part of the drama of the beloved is due to her complex significance as a figure of both art and the supernatural, the far-ranging influence of her simplest gestures:

> You need but lift a pearl-pale hand,
> And bind up your long hair and sigh;
> And all men's hearts must burn and beat 32

("He gives his Beloved Certain Rhymes")

and her embodiment of past ages of history. In this last sense she is particularly symbolic of the permanence of art:

> When my arms wrap you round I press
> My heart upon the loveliness
> That has long faded from the world;
> The jewelled crowns that kings have hurled
> In shadowy pools when armies fled;
> The love tales wrought with silken thread
> By dreaming ladies upon cloth ..., 33

("He remembers Forgotten Beauty")

The Wind Among the Reeds dramatizes three relationships to the beloved each of which is represented by a persona who is a separate aspect of the lover. The pronoun "he" that appears so often in the titles of poems in this volume was originally Aedh, Hanrahan or Michael Robartes who are identified as follows: "Michael Robartes is fire

reflected in water, Hanrahan is fire blown by the wind and . . . Aedh . . . is fire burning by itself".[34] Less enigmatically expressed, Robartes is the student of the occult who can see all the intersections of mortal beauty and spiritual existence. He speaks of the "loveliness that has long faded from the world" because he alone has the historical perspective of occult knowledge. Hanrahan, the frustrated speaker in "He Reproves the Curlew", is a figure of insatiable and tormented desire and is thus associated with the wind: "I use the wind as a symbol of vague desires and hopes . . . because wind and spirit and vague desire have been associated everywhere".[35] And Aedh, as imagination (fire) by itself is the purely creative side of the lover who creates images of the beloved as in "He [Aedh] gives his beloved Certain Rhymes".

The self-analysis that produced these personae is an important function of a dramatic objectivity somewhat akin to the technique in the dramatic monologues of Tennyson and Browning.[36] Robartes, Hanrahan and Aedh are used to give motion and gesture to the lover's inner feelings and to help him gain control over them by portraying them as an external drama. The existence of Robartes, Hanrahan and Aedh is a consequence of the dramatic conception of the beloved. This conception brings about a corresponding treatment of the lover whereby Yeats avoids falling into the habits of the "gentle sensitive mind" and manages to treat his own

emotional states with "the old nonchalance of the hand". The personae are, indeed, early masks; they are the images that Ille wishes to find instead of himself. Combined with dramatic invocations, a less discursive and wandering syntax than is found in decadent lyrics and a freedom from archaic words and constructions, these personae create the dramatic tension of the lyrics.

The dramatic lyric is a synthesis of painting and drama. It arose out of the apocalyptic romantic tradition and was dependent on a strong daemonic sensibility. The ideas of pure art, ritual and femininity in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites were adapted to the purposes of the dramatic lyric. The genre itself combines the stillness and tranquility of images and symbols (the poetic derivatives of painting) with the movement and activity of drama. This alliance of arts has the same outcome as Ruskin's; it expands into an intricate theory concerning the moral function of art.

iii

At the beginning of the first chapter I commented on the greater honesty of Ruskin's dialectical search for the truths of life, saying that Yeats' system let him out of the responsibility for establishing literal as distinct from metaphoric truths. Before going on to define the similarity of Yeats' moral aesthetic to Ruskin's it is as well to

demonstrate from the outset what Yeats lost irrecoverably to the decadence.

The ultimate development of Yeats' moral aesthetic is his vision of tragedy -- the vision embodied in "Lapis Lazuli" and "The Gyres". Despite this, Yeats does not elicit the emotions of Sophocles and Shakespeare because he cannot often produce the terror and pity that an audience feels at the spectacle of a world disordered by evil. He did not have a deep-rooted sense of evil and in this shared the limitations of Swinburne who could not portray moral conflicts. Yeats never grew out of this particular feature of the decadent influence. Austin Warren criticizes Yeats' amoral, systematic determinism:

> . . . he was free from any sense of sin or need of redemption . . . Though his is a vision not of man's sin but of necessary pain, an unflinching view of world history which moves characteristically not by smooth progressions but by revolutions, reversal and brutalities, it is an advance in Yeats' apprehension that he insists upon this realism. 37 (my italics)

Yeats' ominous poems like "The Second Coming", "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", and "Meditations in Time of Civil War" are not exceptions to Warren's generalization. Although they present a world inundated by the "blood-dimmed tide", this deterministic cosmos removes the factor of moral responsibility from mankind. As a result there is no counter-acting force of good in them. Bad circumstances are accepted

with resignation as necessary to the historical cycle. Yeats himself knew this, for in 1925 he depicted Owen Aherne (one of his fictional creations) as saying: "Mr. Yeats has intellectual belief . . . but he is entirely without moral faith, without that sense, which should come to a man with terror and joy, of a Divine Presence".[38] Yeats never recovered a significant awareness of the opposition of good and evil after the loss of his Christianity. In this respect he was quite different from Ruskin whose normal conscience became more active after that event and in roughly the same category as the decadents. However, Yeats had something that was absent from Rossetti and Swinburne and also from orthodox moralists like Eliot; a vital realism. Warren is correct when he calls this an advance in Yeats' apprehension. Eliot's morality is stifled by his traditionalism.[39] It has less bearing on the concrete facts of life than the amoral paganism of Yeats. We should not expect to find in Yeats a revival of Ruskin's ethics, but shall find that he had not lost Ruskin's conviction of the conjunction of art with life.

Yeats' morality of art is predicated on a series of reconciled conflicts. Its ends are in principle the same as those of Coleridge's imagination or Ruskin's law of help. Art, to Yeats' mind, is the organization of the heterogeneous multiplicity of life's details into a unity such as

Ruskin calls a "garland of thoughts". (Recall that for Ruskin this required the subordination of all separate and conflicting movements of sensibility to a total harmony (Ch.1). In ideal historical circumstances where society like art is in phase fifteen, not only each single work of art, but all works of art, compose a unified reflection of life.

> I think that in early Byzantium ... religious, aesthetic and practical life were one ... The Painter, the mosaic worker ... almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design absorbed in their subject-matter ... the vision of a whole people. They could ... weave all into a vast design, the work of many that seemed the work of one ... a single image. 40 (my italics)

It must be stressed that this unity is forged out of opposition, the organic principle of order to which Coleridge and Ruskin held. Yeats' perceptions of reality are much like Ruskin's. He belongs to the same historicist school of philosophy and he sees a reality plotted between contradictions. Furthermore, history, personality and art are superimposed on one another because they all partake in the basic contradiction of the primary and the antithetical gyres. The terms of Yeats' aesthetic dialectic, action and reflection, recur in his system of history and reveal that all of Yeats is comprised in a "single image". His moral aesthetic inheres in a system which admits no "logical" separation of faculties -- at least no more than Ruskin's.

Yeats arrived at the aesthetic alternatives of action and reflection by way of an alliance of the arts (in which the elements of painting were represented mostly in the literary genre of the lyric). However, little enough has been said about the themes and subject matter underlying this marriage of genres; these must receive some attention if we are to follow Yeats' development beyond the dramatic lyrics of his youth. The Celtic Revival offered Yeats two possible subjects; either he could concentrate on the peasant folklore of Ireland or he could choose for a theme, the aristocratic heroes of Irish mythology. He had always had the vision of a society constituted of peasants, aristocrats and artists (the only people he could find in himself to admire) and he decided to integrate folklore and mythology instead of adopting one or the other.[41]

Yeats had a strong initial propensity to make drama the literary genre of folklore and epic and lyric the genres of aristocratic mythology. One should be careful not to confuse Yeats' definitions of the genealogies of genres with Nietzsche's better known ones. In The Birth of Tragedy Nietzsche argues that lyric and drama belong to the same Dionysian family, both deriving from the spirit of music. With Yeats, the reverse holds true. Owing to the recent symbolist movement, lyric poetry had taken on a static Apollonian character at the turn of the century which for

all votaries of Arthur Symons, including Yeats, placed it in a different generic category with epic instead of drama. Epic and lyric are both exhibited in the aristocratic "The Wanderings of Oisin" belonging to a pagan cycle of legends: "The tumultuous and heroic Pagan cycle . . . having to do with vast and shadowy activities and with the great impersonal emotions expressed itself naturally -- or so I imagined -- in epic and epic-lyric measures."[42] Lyric and epic are profoundly contemplative genres; their emotions are tranquil and solid. Yeats who had a respect for epic beyond all other literary forms, but realized that the times did not provide a foundation for it, tried to achieve a miniature epic breadth in the space of the lyric (e.g. "Lapis Lazuli"). The lyric, an extremely personal though Apollonian genre, was thus always subject to the objective direction of the epic and this gave it more predisposition than it would otherwise have had to cooperate with drama (an objective but uncontemplative genre).

So many factors enter into Yeats' early development that it is impossible to keep a completely clear consistency among all generalizations; for instance, though the passions of peasant folklore were a force behind his experiments with dramatic techniques, the heritage of Pre-Raphaelitism which cannot be construed as demotic, had the same effect. To clarify matters, we must say that this heritage did not

naturally express itself in the dramatic genre; it merely fed the dramatic interaction of art and life whereas folklore was associated more directly with the drama itself.

After Maud Gonne's marriage, Yeats became, as though to escape the pains of loss and introspection, deeply involved with the Abbey Theatre. In his early drama he tried to combine the images of mythology with the passions of folklore, that is, he tried to unite lyric and drama on the stage instead of in poetry. He wrote little poetry between 1904 and 1914 and was noted to be externalized upon his return in November 1904 from an American lecture tour.[43] His interest in folklore increased with the self-deprecation he felt for his evasion of activity and passion in the nineties. With more peasant vitality he might not have lost Maude Gonne: "Yeats blamed his own timid, critical intellect for restraining his impetuous nature so that when he should have embraced he had feared and qualified and idealized."[44] His trips to the countryside with Lady Gregory added further to his desire for emotional spontaneity, literally for life.

On Baile's Stand (1904) dramatizes the subversion of the impetuous hero Cuchulain to the calculating intellect of Conchubar who tricks him into murdering his son. Cuchulain and Conchubar are both sides of Yeats, the former symbolizing the passionate intensity he had sacrificed in the period of

the Celtic Twilight to the contemplative standard. To recompense himself for this loss he now placed greater weight that he had ever before done on an art devoted to life. Describing the possible directions his work might take, Yeats presents a choice he never really made:

> There are two ways before literature -- upward into ever-growing subtlity, with Verhaeren, with Mallarme, with Maeterlinck until . . . a new agreement among refined and studious men gives birth to a new passion . . . or downward, taking the soul with us until all is simplified and solidified again. That is the choice of choices -- the way of the bird until common eyes have lost us, or to the market carts. 45

Yeats always wanted a literature that would be popular i.e. bred from the soil and not artifically produced by academic education and the printing press. He did not understand by "popular literature" a literature of topical issues; in an essay of that title written in 1901 he contrasts peasant literature with elitist writing: "I wanted to write popular poetry like those Irish poets (Allingham and Ferguson) for I believed that all good literatures were popular . . . and I hated what I called the coteries . . . I thought one must write without care for that was of the coteries but with a gusty energy . . . out of the right heart."[46] The coteries are the groups of "refined and studious men" giving birth to new passions: the exotic passions of the decadents divorced from the simple and the solid elements of life. Wary of any sign of decadence, Yeats eschewed,

temporarily, the upward way of literature. A.E.Huysmans, Wilde and Mallarme and Yeats himself -- all exuded the enervation of the coteries.

Nevertheless Yeats did not renounce a remote and detached art for long. He peculiarly wanted art to be popular and simultaneously detached even though he thought detachment to be the vice of the coteries.[47] The plays written after 1904 and before 1917 are a fusion of aristocratic mythology and simple folklore passion. He was probably not thoroughly conscious of it at this stage, but Yeats was coming ever closer to his mature justaposition of art and life.

There was no stability to be found in mere "Theatre business, management of men". Yeats had originally argued against contemporaries like John Eglinton that topical realism was of no value in a national literature and that the peasant traditions ought to be used instead. This was an essentially Ruskinian attitude for Ruskin had always considered that art had more to do with the emotions of life than with the facts of life. Yeats had difficulty cleaving to Ruskin's position because drama was principally a mimetic genre and in the age of Ibsen and Shaw, mimesis tended towards a realism which Yeats abhorred. In the previous century drama had not brought this risk because it was grafted on to the lyric. When his reaction against aesthetic

refinements had run its course, Yeats began to see some of the problems in popular poetry; a measure of the lyric's detachment from life again seemed desirable. In the 1910 volume, The Green Helmet and Other Poems, he finds in the public life which he had formerly embraced as an escape from the effects of abstraction, the sterility from which he had suffered until 1903:

> The fascination of what's difficult
> Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent
> Spontaneous joy and natural content
> Out of my heart. 48
>
> ("The Fascination of What's Difficult")

The active life had brought upon him the frustration of "the fly in the marmalade". He needed to renew his confidence in the value of pure poetry for only in the contemplation of life could he sustain a controlled and disciplined vitality. Too much participation in the long term was no different from excessive detachment.

In 1937, two years before his death, Yeats described the purposes of his plays as twofold: "When I follow back my stream to its source I find two dominant desires: I wanted to get rid of irrelevant movement -- the stage must be still that words might keep all their vividness -- and I wanted vivid words".[49] He did not want to eliminate action in favour of words or words in favour of action; as in his earlier period, painting and drama had to be reconciled. Words and action are the "two ways of literature" of which

he had written years before; his stream is a long continuation of this one antithesis.

His drama now grew deliberately lyrical but the poetry of the same period did not lose the simple and concentrated rhyme and diction that had already been transplanted to it from the stage. Responsibilities (1914), a volume that is preoccupied with the theme of balancing contraries, confronts and attempts to balance the factors of trance and action; typically, the action of each play was a mixture of two ingredients, dance and dialogue.[50]

Nathan thinks that the most important component of the Noh was, for Yeats the mask,[51] for in distancing psychology and character from emotions, it brought to them universality and permanence instead. The mask was the focal unison of silence and intensity, an image concealing deep emotion. It did not have the vulgar intensity of realists; it was not static and dead like the images of the Pre-Raphaelites. In a 1910 essay, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", Yeats states the value of the mask to him at that time:

> A mask never seems but a dirty face, and no matter how close you go is yet a work of art; nor shall we lose by stilling the movement of the features, for deep feeling is expressed by a movement of the whole body. In poetical painting and in sculpture the face seems nobler for lacking curiosity, alert attention, all that we sum up under the famous word of the realists, 'vitality'. [52] (my italics)

The mask is, by this definition, simply a type of the image sought by Ille and its relation to feelings and actions, the answer to Yeats' demand for a pure poetry untainted with realism.

The imprint of the Noh mask leaves itself on many of Yeats' major poems after 1919. Passionate stillness starts to typify his imagery to an unprecedented degree. "The Wild Swans at Coole" offers a good example of what I mean. The subject of the poem is time and to focus a perspective on it, Yeats uses contrasting images of passionate movement and stillness as analogues for mutability and eternity. The first stanza which depicts the swans afloat upon the water on an autumn day has all the characteristics of a silent water colour painting:

> The trees are in their autumn beauty,
> The woodland paths are dry,
> Under the October twilight the water
> Mirrors a still sky;
> Upon the brimming water among the stones
> Are nine-and-fifty swans. 53

But there is an obvious discrepancy between the stillness of the sky and that of the water. The sky is eternal and the water which mirrors it is only time in which the image of eternity can occasionally be seen. The water is furthermore "brimming" and this participle suggests an anticipated interruption because it gives an impression of uneasiness and discontent. To an otherwise self-contained scene, it

introduces the possibility of alteration. The stanza thus can be interpreted as a scenic mask for it contains both stasis and potential motion.

In the next stanza the poet reflects upon the past nineteen years and with this intrusion of time the initial image disintegrates and the swans burst into movement: "All suddenly mount/ And scatter in great broken rings." The remainder of the poem is a series of variations on time and physical movement but for the last stanza which returns us to a silent setting like that in the first: "But now they drift on the still water, mysterious, beautiful . . ." Once again this is an intense, not a dead stillness. The image of the still water is complemented by the poet's expectation that disturbance will again occur" ... when I awake some day/ To find they have flown away".

"Easter 1916" uses a comparable style of imagery. The heroes of the rebellion are likened to stone for their consistency to a cause and their permanent example to the changing life around them:

> Hearts with one purpose alone
> Through summer and winter seem
> Enchanted to a stone
> To trouble the living stream. 54 (my italics)

Although Yeats warns in the last stanza that "Too Long a sacrifice/ Can make a stone of the heart," and sees that stone can become a metaphor for death, the first appearance of the image creates a unification of immobility and

movement. However temporarily, the sacrifice of the rebels is seen as frozen and solid but nevertheless alive. Their sacrifice is "enchanted" because of its embodiment of this peculiar paradox.

The instances of this kind of imagery and conception in Yeats' mature poetry are too numerous for discussion. The most important of them appear in "Byzantium"[55], a poem which possibly tells us more than any other about Yeats' theories of life and art. Here permanence and mutability which are the themes of "The Wild Swans at Coole" and "Easter 1916" receive their definitive interpretation. The first stanza describes the banishment of passion and mutability ("The unpurged images of day recede") and the institution of a superhuman world of stillness ("Night resonance recedes . . .") which is caught in the image of the dome of St. Sophia ("A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains/All that man is . . .").

The middle stanzas of the poem are intent on this world of ideal existence and only by implication are "the fury and the mire" visible behind it. This imbalance repeats a pattern in "The Wild Swans at Coole" where only the first and last stanzas envisage an equipoise of movement and stasis. The walking mummy and the miracle bird of "Byzantium" belong entirely to art. Having attained the end of reincarnation, they are liberated from human life and

rebirth. In stanzas four and five the direction of the poem turns abruptly. Instead of continuing to celebrate the scorn of art for the "complexities of mire and blood", Yeats declares that into the ideal world, "blood-begotten spirits come". The vision of art is rendered complete by the crucial lines (cited previously) to the effect that art is both dance and trance, life and contemplation.

"Byzantium" concludes with a symbolic dilation of this idea. Whereas in the second stanza our attention is on the breathless and superhuman aspects, of spirits and images, the last stanza places them "Astraddle on the dolphins mire and blood" in the midst of the "gong-tormented sea" of life. The oxymoron, "Marbles of the dancing floor" expresses the close relation between still art and passionate life. The sudden resurgence of the "unpurged images of day" coalesces with the entranced quietude of the first part of the poem to produce a violent silence at the finish.

Since I intend to speak of A Vision in the context of Yeats' philosophy of history, I will spend no further time on poems like "Byzantium" derived directly from it. A Vision is really an expanded version of the synthesis of opposites in the Noh and Yeats' progress in the drama must be appreciated before the continuity of the poetry from 1914 to 1933 can become apparent. The Noh was a swing away

from popular drama towards lyrical detachment. As the few preceding examples show, the Noh made a marked imprint on Yeats' poetry as well as on his drama and this development continued until it brought about A Vision, Yeats' most significant synthesis of contemplative detachment and active life. Eventually Yeats swerved away from the aristocratic bias of the lyric, the Noh and A Vision, towards the demotic and popular things from which he had for twenty years been distancing himself. Once again he sought passion and violence as he had in the years after Maude Gonne's marriage. Reality was Yeats' passion and because he thought it must incorporate the reflective and the active in exact proportions; he was always vacillating between them in an insatiable quest for balance.

> During the last years of his life Yeats struggled to come to even closer grips with reality. Looking back over his career he was conscious of much "evasion" and "turning away" and knew how elaborate was the machinery which he had invented, especially in his prose and in his day to day experience, to prevent frontal attack. In his moments of doubt even the Vision seemed like a gigantic protective mask and like Melville's Ahab, he sometimes wanted to break through all masks. 56

The result of this disillusionment was the peasant lust, passion and rage of Crazy Jane and Tom the Lunatic. But in Last Poems (1936-1939) Yeats moved back in the direction of lyrical detachment in his idea of tragic joy. The spirit of tragedy was the final resting place of his dialectic of

art and life.

Yeatsian tragedy is controlled by the antithesis of contemplation and action. The tragic hero's dilemma is his ineligibility to have both and thereby achieve unity of being. At the Hawk's Well and On Baile's Strand concern Cuchulain's failure to unite passionate action with spiritual wisdom. This of course is Hamlet's failure too; he is destroyed because he cannot bring together promptness of action with mental certitude about the causes of his father's death. Hamlet is an unusual tragic hero because he chooses to seek contemplation rather than action. But he states the contradiction which obsesses all Yeats' heroes nonetheless.

> To be, or not to be— that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles . . . .
>
> (III, i, ll.56-59)

Yeats may have borrowed this metaphor of the sea to describe the struggle of the tragic hero with life:

> Cuchulain stirred,
> Stared on the horses of the sea, and heard
> The cars of battle and his own name cried;
> And fought with the invulnerable tide. 57
>
> ("Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea")

Cuchulain's blind fight with the waves is provoked by the intellectual agility of Conchubar. Cuchulain is capable of taking arms but does not have the power of contemplation

that would enable him to understand his situation. His fight is an analogue of the fly's struggle in marmalade because it is action trying to come to grips with problems arising from other actions. These problems can be coped with only if they are approached through the mind. The frustration of Cuchulain is like the failure of the artist who cannot produce genuine art because he cannot sufficiently detach himself from life.

Yeats was influenced by Nietzsche as well as by Shakespeare. In The Birth of Tragedy, the philosopher puts the dichotomy of intellect and action in terms of the destruction of the detached, contemplative Apollonian images by the passion of the Dionysian life force. It is notable that this force is conceived as a tide:

> Lest this Apollonian tendency congeal the form to Egyptian rigidity and coldness, lest the effort to prescribe to the individual wave its path and realm might annul the motion of the whole lake, the high tide of the Dionysian destroyed from time to time all those little circles in which the one-sidely Apollonian 'will' had sought to confirm the Hellenic spirit. The suddenly swelling Dionysian tide then takes the separate little wave mountains on its back....58

According to Nietzsche the Apollonian is the lucid and intellectual strain in Hellenic culture. It is also the spirit that gives images and definitions to the sea of shapeless emotions. In tragedy these Dionysian emotions burst their

Apollonian embodiments asunder and dissolve them in a "swelling tide". (Characters are Apollonian structures. The tragic character disintegrates before the impetus of the life force that animates it.) Tragedy is thus the destruction of intellect, mind and form.

Yeats did not agree to this. Although he accepted Nietzsche's idea of tragic experience as a confrontation with the tide of life, his whole past career was rigidly opposed to the one-sided absorption in life. Tragedy had somehow to reconcile passion with contemplation. If it meant the destruction of the Apollonian "circles" of the mind, it must allow for their final regeneration; that is, the Dionysian tide that destroys Apollonian tranquility must itself succumb to form and become an image of contemplation. Where Nietzsche decides that destruction is inevitable and that it must be rejoiced in, however catastrophic, because it is a triumph of the life force ("the overflow of a primordial delight,") [59] Yeats says that in the intensest tragedy the life force and the image making faculty in the mind become one.

The tragic heroes of Yeats are defeated primarily because the circle of qualities which in Nietzschean terminology are called Apollonian (repose, wisdom, contemplation, mental organization etc.) cannot be imposed on their Dionysian experience. And this applies also to Nietzsche's ideas of Greek tragedy. Yeats makes his departure from Nietzsche in

defining as tragic joy, the union of the Apollonian and Dionysian perspectives that could not be attained in life. In recognizing the full meaning of his failure, the tragic hero can rise above fighting with the sea and in the final moment of his tragedy, gain mental control over that which happens to him. In seeing that he is tragically divided between his thoughts and his actions, his mind suddenly incorporates the significance of his deeds. His defeat dissolves the antithesis in which it originates. Instead of succumbing to the Dionysian the Apollonian merges with it. Thus Yeats' tragic vision returns to the fusion of silent contemplation and passionate intensity that appears in most other phases of his work. Tragic art must combine iron rectitude and strong passion. Passion by itself signifies only a want of balance and perception:

> I think that the true poetic movement of our time is towards some heroic discipline . . . When there is despair, public or private, when settled order seems lost people look for strength within or without. Auden, Spender, all that seem the new movement look for strength in Marxian socialism or in Major Douglas; they want marching feet. The lasting expression of our time is not this obvious choice but in a sense of something steel-like and cold within the will, something passionate and cold. 60

The absence of detachment, whether it is exemplified by Auden or Nietzsche, loses sight of the ultimate meaning of tragedy. In "Lapus Lazuli" Yeats turns the passionate overthrow of civilization into a single Apollonian image

and discovers in the midst of the event "something steel-like and cold". The poem is built on images as much as emotions. The catalogue of tragic names in the second stanza, the lapis lazuli carving, the mountain from which the Chinamen of the third stanza stare "on all the tragic scene" are static forms which counteract the hysteria of destruction. The carving of universal tumult in stone is Yeats' last major representation of life invested in art.

The moral aesthetic in Ruskin and Yeats follows basically the same pattern. The aesthetic faculty is intrinsically inseparable from the moral in all their work. Yeats' challenge "What theme had Homer but original sin?" might as easily have been issued by Ruskin. Art arises from the contradictions of human life. Still, while they reach a common agreement about this, they do not pursue the same route to it. At the beginning of this chapter, I claimed that Ruskin was the last protagonist of a synthesis which the decadents broke and Yeats rebuilt. Having Pre-Raphaelitism and aestheticism as his immediate literary background, Yeats was less inclined than Ruskin to see moral efficacy in art. Ruskin, like all the Victorians, was subject to the stern religious consciousness of his age and by the turn of the century this element had vanished from the cultural scene. Yeats, whose traditionalism was an unconscious nostalgia for the Victorian world view, could not really disentangle himself from the moral indifference of the generation to

which Rossetti and Swinburne belonged. Consequently his idea of the connection between life and art is more general and less specifically ethical than Ruskin's. I am using the term "moral" to fit this general idea of the importance of life rather than to signify any precise system of ethics. The main conclusion I wish to offer is that in the case of either Ruskin or Yeats, a moral aesthetic is the enclosure of vital emotion in static form.

Yeats' historicism is generally like Ruskin's. It is descended from the same post-Enlightenment sources and also locates its ideals in time.[61] Historical consciousness was an expression of Yeats' moral conscience; after 1917 the moral aesthetic became an historical aesthetic because A Vision which commenced in that year overshadowed all his subsequent reflections on human life and art with its scheme of eras and dispensations. This progression we have already discerned in Modern Painters where Ruskin moves successively through psychological, moral and historical definitions of art.

In the account of Ruskin's historical mentality I emphasized two angles of interest: historicism first as an outgrowth of the role of human life in art, and second as a formula for the organization of ideas. Insofar as Ruskin and Yeats followed the organic philosophical tradition of Coleridge and Hegel, there is little difference in their premises for treating the moral and aesthetic faculties

as interdependent. I will not, therefore, recapitulate what I said previously about polygonal reality and the truth of contradiction. The principle of unity in both writers is found in historicism. I am more concerned with the projection of the laws of Yeats' moral aesthetic in his system of history. History is experience which engenders art. Looking at the evidence around him Yeats concluded in the manner of Ruskin in The Stones of Venice that art is the chief index to the understanding of an historical milieu and vice versa: "All art is the disengaging of a soul from place and history, its suspension in a beautiful or terrible light to await the judgement. . . ."[62] Yet another time do we encounter the contraries of form and movement. Even in the first days of the literary renaissance in Ireland, Standish O'Grady saw the affinity between art and historical events when he proclaimed that the literary movement would be succeeded by a military and political one.[63]

However, in the Ireland of Yeats' time, there was no deep-seated sympathy between art and political commitments, a fact for which the poet's "barren passion" supplies the evidence. O'Grady,A.E. and Yeats who desired a national culture were not endeared by their isolation from causes to Pearse, MacDonagh and Plunkett who desired a national state. The tension separating these two forms of nationalism was created by the refusal of the artists to place all their

faith in the possibilities of action. Art, seeing causes from afar, brings an awareness of universal patterns to every scene of events while activism is wholly attuned to the immediate drama of life. William Irwin Thompson, in his fine book The Imagination of an Insurrection puts it in these words:

> To live out his role the politician must believe or pretend that the next generation or piece of legislation will make a difference and that the difference is worth living and dying for. The artist, with an older sort of wisdom, knows better. Like the anarchist Bakunin, he sees the revolution that is to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat will only bring about the dictatorship of the ex-proletariat. 64

The artist's vision is static because it is complex. It is compounded from the record of many actions which are seen only individually by the person involved directly with life. Art occurs when part of the active consciousness is displaced from life and enters a static form. History has two faces, one visionary, the other existential. The former, like Ruskin's Lamp of Memory,is the formal embodiment of the moving continuum of causes and effects. In its elevation to form, the existential face of history grows self-conscious. Art cannot truly reflect life without reflecting history but history cannot truly reflect life without first becoming art. Its drama and action must be observed from an immobile location before they mean anything; they cannot be understood from within themselves. "Did that play of mine send out/

Certain men the English shot?" Yeats asks in "The Man and the Echo".[65] The fact that Cathleen ni Houlihan did have this effect shows that when history achieves self-consciousness in the aesthetic form, stasis actuates motion in just the proportion that other motion is solidified in stasis. Life invoked art, "When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side" ("The Statues") and all history is a series of interchanges like this one. The post office in which the Easter 1916 rebellion began, was the place in which the visionary and existential faces of history met with more éclat than anywhere else in Yeats' lifetime.

From the time he was inspired by O'Leary to create a literature suitable to the growth of nationalism in Ireland to the time he wrote A Vision and became a senator of the Irish Free State, Yeats was impelled by the necessity of joining historical vision and historical drama. A Vision is the stasis form that corresponds to the existential experiences of civil war and public life. "The Wanderings of Oisin" is partly an attempt to find an aesthetic structure to liberate the self-consciousness of nationalist Ireland. The cycles of time, the apocalyptic thirteenth cone and the inaugurations of primary and antithetical dispensations are all displacements of the active consciousness. All are formal reflections of the process of history which facilitate control of its changes. On the other

extreme, history's changes control mankind for mankind is dramatically caught among conflicts and destruction. A Vision is like the awakening of the tragic hero ("Heaven blazing into the head because it is the mind's still transcendence of history ("transfiguring all that dread".)[66] Art and historical vision are the meaning and the consolation for its existential drama.

Yeats' historical poems vary according to whether they are visionary in the above sense, or existential. "Lapis Lazuli" which we have looked at in a slightly different context obviously fits the first category. It is passive and has finished interpreting the events it describes. The conflicts of experience have been solved in its "gaiety". It literally "cannot grow by an inch or an ounce". But "The Second Coming" which is based on the same impending catastrophe is not visionary (though it is closely tied to A Vision) because in it, drama prevails over stasis. In contrast to the decisive consummation of experience in "Lapis Lazuli", "Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,/ Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay --, "The Second Coming" closes with all the uncertainty of immediate and unorganized experience" . . . what rough beast, its hour come round at last /Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"[67] "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" is another existential view of history. It too ends on an incomplete

action as the nightmare figure of Robert Artisson "lurches past, his great eyes without thought".[68] In an earlier stanza Yeats anticipates his own phrase "that gong-tormented sea", declaring: "All men are dancers and their tread/Goes to the barbarous clangour of a gong." The dance is the sea of dramatic history and it is not accompanied, as it is on the pavements of Byzantium, by trance and stabilizing vision.

These poems are creations of art and so they are not really immersed in the active consciousness; by Yeats' criterion action cannot directly beget art. But the mere existence of two sets of historical poems make it clear that in his art Yeats is defining the relationship of art and life.

v

The ties that bind visionary and existential views of history are analogous to those that unite the contemplative and active parts of the artist's personality. In fact there is not so much difference between these pairs of opposites as is required in an analogy; One is simply the other on a cultural rather than an individual scale. Furthermore a nation or culture which must find its self-consciousness in its art cannot realize itself until the individual who produces that art has realized himself.[69] That is, the displacement of time and events into a static

form must happen in the individual's contemplation of his own active life before it happens in a nation's awareness of its destiny. There is a perennial interaction between artist and life as there is between art and history. The panorama of history does not make sense if it is studied from individual interpretation of it. The Easter 1916 rebellion was not an incident that ceased with the defeat of the insurrectionists; it continues to take place in the works of O'Casey and Yeats. The detached view of art is the other half of the acted event.

All this Yeats says in a late poem called "The Statues". The first line, "Pythagoras planned it", casts backwards across the expanse of history and attributes to the artist the controlling power over life and action. The artist rules events by creating ideal images in his art which give shape to life. Not military power but the visions of the artist defeated the Persians at Salamis:

> Calculations that look but casual flesh, put down
> All Asiatic vague immensities,
> And not the banks of oars that swam upon
> The many-headed foam at Salamis. 70

Yeats is referring to the measured statues of Grecian art, ideal forms capable of influencing life in any aspect whether by feeding the romantic fantasies of youth or by overwhelming alien hordes. A prose passage from On the Boiler, runs: "Europe was not born when Greek galleys defeated the Persian hordes at Salamis, but when the Doric

studios sent out those broad-backed marble statues against the multiform, vague, expressive Asiatic sea...."[71] What took place at Salamis was what Pythagoras planned. This is Yeats' equivalent of the "triple love" which Ruskin's artist is obliged to pursue ("for the art which you practice, the creation in which you move and the creatures to whom you minister"). The calculations of Pythagoras "that look but casual flesh", honour art in their stillness and detachment, nature in their lifelikeness, and mankind through their guidance and inspiration.

To accomplish these things the artist must be poised between remoteness and involvement. His soul calls him away from life but his self insists on returning him to it to commit the "crime of death and birth" ("A Dialogue of Self and Soul"). The triple love necessitates this kind of inner division because it calls equally for the detachment of art and the passion of human involvement. Yeats again concurs with Ruskin in seeing contraries as the way to perfection. Since the artist is intrinsically divided by conflicts, he can only seek unity by embracing the opposing impulses of his personality with equal determination. Perfection and unity of being are even rarer for Yeats than for Ruskin but they must be resolutely sought all the same. Great art is the union of differences:

> . . . the nobleness of the arts is in the mingling of contraries, the extremity of sorrow, the extremity of joy, perfection of personality, the perfection of its surrender, overflowing turbulent energy, and marmorean stillness; and its red rose opens at the meeting of the two beams of the cross, and at the trysting place of mortal and immortal, time and eternity. No man has ever plucked that rose, or found that trysting place.... 72

Yeats is a little more astringent in his denial of man's final capacity to unite opposites than is Ruskin, but the conception of perfection in art is the same for both. The last pair of opposites that Yeats mentions are the most important for they are the ones on which this entire discussion has been based: "overflowing turbulent energy" and "maromorean stillness", life and art.

Yeats' tastes were vast and eclectic like Ruskin's and it is hard to settle upon an ideal artist for either of them; just as Ruskin could praise Angelico in one instance and Veronese in the next, Yeats was equally at home with Villiers de l'Isle Adam and Villon. The example of Titian which Ruskin eulogizes in The Two Paths, reflected to him the complexity, even the inconsistency of his tastes. It was just because Titian excelled at forging unity out of discordant qualities that Ruskin seemed to regard him as supreme. Likewise, Yeats saw Dante's greatness in his power to forget his own "special idiosyncracies", (his own sensuous images) and deliberately to balance them with themes

of chastity that were foreign to his private sensibility. This same power inhabits Shakespeare who sees all things in just balance: "Shakespeare's persons, when the last darkness has gathered about them, speak out of an ecstacy that is <u>one-half</u> the self-surrender of sorrow and <u>one-half</u> the last playing and mockery of the victorious sword before the defeated world".[73] This is exactly what Ruskin is getting at in words which I quoted in the first chapter: " . . . seeing the whole . . . without choice or more intense perception of one point than another".[74]

The greatest manifestation an artist can give to prove his balanced unity of being is to harmonize detachment and action. Yeats uses the figures of the aristocrat and the commoner in the same way that Ruskin does to illustrate these modes of being. The artist is explicitly identified with the highest and the lowest:

> Three types of men have made all beautiful things; <u>aristocracies</u> have made beautiful manners because their place in the world puts them above the fear of life, and the <u>countrymen</u> have made beautiful stories and beliefs, because they have nothing to lose and so do not fear, and the <u>artists</u> have made all the rest because Providence has filled them with recklessness. [75]

Yeats' countrymen are like Ruskin's builders of Gothic cathedrals. Their art is inspired by passion and freedom from restraint; they embody the essential vitality of human existence. They are the symbol of action and bodily

exuberance. It is the emotion of the peasant that draws the artist out of detachment and into the struggle with life.

The aristocrat represents the other half of the artist -- the half that creates marmorean stillness and "beautiful manners", in short, the forms of civilization. Yeats was influenced by Ezra Pound and Castiglione in the very fashion that Ruskin was by Carlyle. Pound who provided what disillusionment Yeats had not already met with in his own experience decried the idea of popular culture that had been behind the founding of the Abbey Theatre. So far as Pound was concerned all art was of the coteries:

> Nothing but ignorance can refer to the "troubadors" as having produced a popular art. If ever art was made for a few cultivated people it was the troubador poetry of Provence. The Greek populace was PAID to attend the great Greek tragedies and it damn well wouldn't have gone otherwise, or if there had been a cinema. Shakespeare was "Lord Somebody's Players", and the Elizabethan drama, as distinct from the long defunct religious plays, was a court affair. 76

Yeats and Ruskin did not adopt the characteristic nastiness of Pound and Carlyle, but they certainly acquired a distinct aloofness of attitude from them and they transferred it to their ideas of the artist's personality.

Yeats, writing in isolation from his tower at Thoor Ballylee envisioned himself as one of a small elite, a company of artists and great men far above the common elements of humanity.

> I declare this tower is my symbol; I
> declare this winding, gyring, spiring
> treadmill of a stair is my ancestral
> stair; That Goldsmith and the Dean,
> Berkeley and Burke have travelled
> there. [77]

Yet the aristocratic image of the artist had serious limitations. "Meditations in Time of Civil War" discovers that without the presence of action and emotion aristocratic forms are beautiful but effete like "some marvellous empty sea-shell flung/Out of the obscure dark of the rich streams . . ." [78] of real life. The artist is an aristocrat but he must be an aristocrat who possesses the passions of the body and a role in life's events, not one who avoids them.

Ruskin as we recall, thought that great art was the product of"manhood in its entire and highest sense". [79] and that such manhood was a union of the detached aristocratic soul and the passionate body of common man. Yeats presents this ideal in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory". The son of his patroness was killed in the first World War and though Yeats probably felt the loss more than Milton felt Edward King's, he used the elegy primarily as an opportunity to depict Gregory as the archetype of the aristocratic artist:

> . . . he that practised or that understood
> All work in metal or in wood
> In moulded plaster or in carven stone?
> Soldier, scholar, horseman he,
> And all he did done perfectly
> As though he had but that one trade alone. [80]

Gregory had the bodily passions of the peasant "He rode a race without a bit" and the soul and intellect of the aristocrat: "And yet his mind outran the horse's feet". The combination of these two things makes for a higher type of aristocracy than that symbolized in the empty sea shell. Regretting his time wasted on the people, Yeats states the constitution of this type in a poem "The People" written about the time of the elegy: "I might have had no friend that could not mix/ Courtesy and passion into one ...."[81] Courtesy provides all the established formal beauty of the sea shell; it is art per se. Passion drawn from the experience of living animates this art. The result is as ever, movement frozen in form. Ruskin sees Dante standing serene as he watches passion from a distance. Yeats, in his tribute to Robert Gregory interprets the Major's unison of physical and mental powers in a similar vein. At the end of his life Yeats saw that all his art had this basic meaning. Michaelangelo is portrayed in one of his very last poems as another Pythagoras, one whose mind and art are silent and detached while their consequences reverberate throughout life:

> That girls at puberty may find
> The first Adam of their thought.
> Shut the door of the Pope's chapel
> Keep those children out.
> There on the scaffolding reclines
> Michael Angelo
> With no more sound than the mice make
> His hand moves to and fro
> Like a long-legged fly upon the stream
> His mind moves upon silence. 82
>
> ("Long-legged Fly")

CONCLUSION

Edmund Wilson's book, Axel's Castle, upon which I have based some previous observations, claims that Yeats is French in his literary orientation. Wilson argues quite correctly that the symbolist movement was always foreign to England, that the Pre-Raphaelites, the aesthetes, and the decadents who are supposed to have represented it in England are not genuine counterparts of Baudelaire and Mallarme, and that English critics have never known what to do with symbolist works.[1] However his suggestion that the leading figures in modern English literature (Joyce, Eliot, Pound and Yeats) were attracted to Paris because they themselves were not Englishmen is hard to accept. Yeats' mature philosophy is as alien to the attitudes of French art as can be. It is metaphysical and highly resistent to the disseverance of the interests of art and life. Yeats' reaction against the art of Axel's Castle, and (the ivory tower) is visible in every phase of his career. He lived in a tower periodically but he came down to write about Crazy Jane.

Yeats attributed to Pater, whom I have suggested was the nearest thing to Mallarme in England, the responsibility for the destruction of his friends of "The Tragic Generation". These are not the words of a man convinced of "the inferiority of the life of action to the life of solitary vision":[2]

> Three or four years ago I re-read Marius the Epicurean . . . and ... I began to wonder i it, or the attitude of mind of which it was the noblest expression, had not caused the disaster of my friends. It taught us to walk upon a rope, tightly stretched through serene air, and we were left to keep our feet upon a swaying rope in a storm. 3

Yeats is voicing the scruples of Tennyson who also envisioned the dangers of aestheticism and the state of the soul that renounces life:

> Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
> Fell on her, from which mood was born
> Scorn of herself; again from out that mood
> Laughter at her self-scorn. 4
>
> (11. 228-232)
>
> ("The Palace of Art")

Whatever Edmund Wilson may say about Yeats French background -- and his misconstructions are partly explained by the fact that Axel's Castle was published in 1931 before some of Yeats' most important work had been written -- Yeats is typically Victorian and typically English. The numerous parallels between him and one of the great spokesmen of Victorian England corroborate this. The proximity of Ruskin and Yeats is not accidental it exists because Yeats spent his life trying to get away from the confusion of English aestheticism and decadence and from the one-sided literature of aestheticism and decadence in France.

Wilson states in his last chapters that the French

influence has brought modern literature to an impasse. Life and art have become so bifurcated that all modern artists have to choose either to retreat to their isolated sanctuaries like Proust and Valery or else to throw themselves into life so entirely that they lose detachment and therefore art. The archetypal example of the second type of artist is Rimbaud who repudiated the hypocrisy and sophistication of France and sought a brutal vitality on the trade routes to the East.[5] Here once again Wilson is right. Proust and Valery have their English-speaking counterpart in T.S.Eliot. Rimbaud has had a numerous progeny from Hemingway to Graham Greene. So far there have been no further great figures in the tradition of the poets of Victorian England. Yeats was perhaps the last English writer to combine an intense aesthetic idealism with a complete realization of life.

NOTES TO PAGES 1 - 14

1 Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), p. 125.

2 T.S.Eliot, Milton: Two Studies (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), pp. 22-48.

3 Wilson, Axel's Castle, pp. 109-110.

4 Derek Colville, Victorian Poetry and the Romantic Religion (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1970), pp. 4-5.

5 Morse Peckham, Beyond the Tragic Vision, (New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 303.

6 This quotation comes from a review of Churton Collins' Illustrations of Tennyson. The review, which appeared in 1892, is reprinted in part in Aesthetes and Decadents of the 1890's: An Authology of British Poetry and Prose, ed. Karl Beckson (New York: Random House, 1966), p.134.

7 I am using the word 'English' to typify literary qualities only.

8 James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (New York: Random House, 1928), p.252.

9 John Milton, Areopagitica (London: Macmillan & Co.Ltd., 1959), p.16.

10 Joseph Conrad, "Authors Note", Victory (London: J.M.Dent and Sons, 1915), p. X.

11 Walter Pater,"Conclusion", The Renaissance (New York: New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1959), pp. 156-159.

12 Francis Scarfe, ed., Baudelaire (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961), p. xiii.

13 Wilson, Axel's Castle, p. 72.

14 Paul Valery, Charmes (Paris: Librarie Larousse, N.D.), p. 23.

NOTES TO PAGES 15 - 64

1 J.S.Mill, "Bentham", The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill, ed. M.Cohen (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 11.

2 Mill is paradoxical in most of what he writes. In his ethical theories he completely changes Bentham's utilitarianism by adding qualitative to quantitative procedures of moral judgement. Since Bentham's standards are completely based on quantitative ethics, ("The greatest good for the greatest number") Mill's contention that it is better to be Socrates discontent than a swine happy, must be based on unacknowledged a priori assumptions. Mill is continuously qualifying his father's and Bentham's empiricism with principles borrowed from the idealists and Romantics.

3 Ibid., p.25.

4 Ibid., p. 22.

5 Mill, "Coleridge", The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill, p.115.

6 Ibid., p.101.

7 S.T.Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. G.Watson (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1906), p. 174.

8 Graham Hough, The Last Romantics (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co.Ltd, 1949), p. xv.

9 Ibid., p. xvi.

10 Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 161. Willey says earlier of Mill's uncertainty about his political opinions: "Mill ... is constantly being hit by the boomerang of his own ideas . . . in this classic work on political economy written on the assumption . . . that men want to get richer and richer . . . he asks the most startling of questions: "Do we want to get richer and richer?", p. 159. Mill says: "There would be as much scope as ever for all kinds of mental culture; as much room for improving the Art of Living, and much more likelihood of its being improved, when minds ceased to be engrossed by the art of getting on." See Principles of Political Economy, ed. W.Ashley (New York: Augustus M.Kelly, 1969), p. 751.

11 Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies, p. 161.

12 Hough, The Last Romantics, p. xiii.

13 Valerie Pitt, Tennyson Laureate (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 18.

14 The general sense in which I am referring to the imagination should not be confused with Ruskin's nebulous analysis of the term in Modern Painters II. His distinctions between imaginative power and fancy, the faculty that plays with fixities and definites, are like Coleridge's: but his concepts have none of the same depth. His creative work is not for that reason any less imaginative: Ruskin is superficial in his metaphysical speculations alone. Besides lacking the theoretical cogency of Coleridge, Ruskin's interpretation of imagination tends to be limited to aesthetics. See Modern Painters II, part III, sec.II chaps. 1-5 inc. in E.T.Cook and Alexander Wedderburn eds., The Works of JohnRuskin, Vol.II (London: George Allen, 1903), 223-313. All subsequent references will be taken from this edition. Volume and page numbers of Works will be given preceded by section and chapter references to specific works.

15 Jerrold Ziff, "J.M.W.Turner on Poetry and Painting" Studies in Romanticism III (1964), 193-215. I am indebted to Ziff for much of my material in this chapter.

16 John Dryden, "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting" in The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden Vol. III (London: Printed by N.Baldwin and Son, 1700), p. 325. The whole essay is a useful guide to the Augustan idea of ut pictura poesis.

17 Modern Painters III, part IV, Chap.1 Works V, 31-32

18 Ruskin often describes the imagination visually: "We all have a general and sufficient idea of imagination and of its work with our hands and in our hearts: we understand it, I suppose, as the imaging or picturing of new things in our thoughts." see The Two Paths.

19 Modern Painters II, part III, sect.1, Chap. 15, Works IV, 210.

20 M.H.Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953,) pp. 21 - 22.

21 See the discussion of Typical Beauty in Modern Painters II part III, sect.1, chap.6, Works IV, 92-127.

22 G.J.Warnock, Berkeley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1953), pp. 86-109.

23 George Landow, The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin (Princeton N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 103-104.

24 See Ruskin's criticisms of associationist theories of beauty in Modern Painters II, sec. I, chap. 4. Works IV, 74-75.

25 Ibid. I,"Preface to the Second Edition", Works III, 48.

26 Ibid. II, part III, sect. I, chap. 4, Works IV, 71-72.

27 Ibid.

28 The Stones of Venice III, chap. 3, Works XI, 195.

29 The Seven Lamps of Architecture, chap.6, Works VIII, 138.

30 Hough, The Last Romantics, xvii.

31 A Joy Forever, "The Basis of Social Policy", Works xv, p. 164.

32 Modern Painters II, part III, sec.II, chap.3, Works IV, 287.

33 Ibid., I, part I, sect. I, chap. 6, Works III, 109.

34 see George Landow, The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin, pp156-158 and John Rosenberg, The Darkening Glass (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp32-43. Rosenberg gives a somewhat florid description of the overlapping of the different areas of Ruskin's mind: "Ruskin's mind lacked tidy compartments. Any one of its wide areas of thought shaded off into all the others. His contradictions are the local shifting and discords of a larger consonance, quite like that of a Chartres window, in which a shadow cast on one panel causes all the others to oscillate in altered tones.". p34.

35 Modern Painters II, part III, sect.I, chap.1, Works IV, 35.

36 Ibid. III, sect.1, chap.1, Works IV, 26-28.

37 Ibid. I, "Preface to the Second Edition", Works III, 21.

38 Ibid. I, "Preface to the Second Edition", Works III,22-25.

39 Sesame and Lilies III, "The Mystery of Life and its Arts", Works XVIII, 170.

40 Mathew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, ed. J.D.Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969),p.48.

41 Modern Painters I, "Preface to the Second Edition", Works III, 48.

42 The Queen of the Air, III, Works XIX, 394.

43 Jerome H.Buckley, The Victorian Temper, (New York: Random House, 1951),p.145.

44 J.B.Priestley, Literature and Western Man (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969),p.222.

45 Modern Painters IV, part V, chap. 19, Works VI, 388-389.

46 Ibid. III, part IV, chap. 17, Works V, 357.

47 Ibid. III, part IV, chap. 17, Works V, 359.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid. V, part VIII, chap.1, Works VII, 205.

50 Ibid. V, part VIII, chap.1, Works VII, 207.

51 In an unfootnoted quotation from Ruskin given by Quentin Bell, much of Ruskin's Carlyean political philosophy is contained in summary. This was addressed to the Oxford undergraduates: "We are still unregenerate in race, a race mingled of the best northern blood. We are not yet dissolute in temper, but still have the firmness to govern and the grace to obey. We have been taught a religion of pure money, which we must either betray or learn to defend by fulfilling." See Quentin Bell, Ruskin (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd,1963), p.105. Yeats makes a similar transition from art to public morality and nationalism. His chauvinism like Ruskin's, exposes some of the undesirable and fascist consequences of a moral aesthetic:

> Irish poets, learn your trade,
> Sing whatever is well made,
> Scorn the sort now growing up
> All out of shape from toe to top,

Their unremembering hearts and heads
Base-born products of base beds.

Sing the lords and ladies gay
That were beaten into the clay
Through seven heroic centuries;
Cast your mind on other days
That we in coming days may be
Still the indomitable Irishry.

("Under Ben Bulben")

52 Rosenberg, The Darkening Glass, p. 43.

53 Modern Painters V, part IX, chap.11, Works VII, 420.

54 Ibid. V, part IX, chap. 11, Works VII, 422.

55 Rosenberg, The Darkening Glass, p. 25.

56 Modern Painters V, part IX, chap. 1, Works VII, 257.

57 R.G.Collingwood discusses the question of whether or not a philosophy can be attributed to a mind as unsystematic in the formal sense, as Ruskin's. Ruskin took no interest in academic metaphysics but he had a cohesive set of intellectual principles. see R.G.Collingwood, Essays in the Philosophy of Art, ed. Alan Donagan, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), pp. 5-12.

58 Mill is referring to the school of Coleridge the historicism of which anticipates Hegel's. This is important because it reveals the affinity of the theory of imagination propounded in Biographia Literaria with the great idealist system of the century. The "reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities" is related to the dialectic of historical contradictions. The influence of both is felt in Ruskin.

59 Mill, "Coleridge", The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill, p. 84.

60 R.G.Collingwood,Essays in the Philosophy of Art, p.14.

61 Modern Painters III, part IV, chap. 7, Works V, 114.

62 "Inaugural Address at the Cambridge School of Art", Works XVI, 187.

63 Mill,"Bentham", The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill p.48.

64 Modern Painters III, "Preface", Works V, 5.

65 The Two Paths, "Lecture IV", Works XVI, 369.

66 The Stones of Venice, II, chap. 6, Works X, 217.

67 The Two Paths, "Lecture II," Works, XVI, 297.

68 Ibid., "Le cture II", Works XVI, 306.

69 Modern Painters III, part IV, chap. 7, Works V, 127-128.

70 Ibid.,part IV, chap. 3,Works V, 69.

71 Henry Ladd, The Victorian Morality of Art (New York: Ray Long and Richard Smith, Inc. 1932), p.277.

72 The Two Paths, "Lecture II", Works XVI, 294.

73 The Stones of Venice, III, chap. 4, Works XI, 201.

74 Modern Painters III, part IV, chap. 12, Works V, 210.

NOTES TO PAGES 65 - 120

1 There are no definitive editions of Swinburne's complete works. "The Bonchurch Edition" which I have cited in the bibliography contains most of Swinburne's writing but is inadequately indexed, badly foot-noted and without line and stanza numbers. I have therefore decided not to cite page and volume references to this edition. To do so would require more footnotes than would be useful or necessary. The titles of the poems discussed are given in the text of the chapter relevant to Swinburne. All the poems discussed are among Swinburne's better known works and can be found in all anthologies and editions of his work.

2 D.G.Rossetti, Poems and Translations (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), p.159. All references to Rossetti's poems and prose come from this edition.

3 Ibid., p. 228.

4 C.M.Bowra, The Romantic Imagination, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p.203.

5 D.G.Rossetti, Poems and Translations, p.384.

6 Charles Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du Mal, (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1961), p.28.

7 Gerard de Nerval, Selected Writings, (University of Michigan Press, 1970), pp. 138-142.

8 Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 218.

9 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 33-80.

10 Bowra, The Romantic Imagination, p. 243.

11 A.C.Swinburne, Letters, ed. Cecil Y.Lang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), I, 122.

12 C.L.Cline ed. Letters of George Meredith Oxford: Claredon Press, 1970), I.106.

13 Harold Nicolson, Swinburne, (Archon Books, 1969)p.105.

NOTES TO PAGES 121-184

1 There are exceptions to the general kind of criticism that the decadents receive. See Harold Bloom's chapter "The Tragic Generation" in Yeats (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 38-51. Bloom is particularly good on Lionel Johnson. Also good is Thomas B. Swann's Ernest Dowson (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1964) pp. 56-90. Apart from article-length discussions there is not much else in the way of modern criticism that has been published on these poets.

2 Of Ruskin's early and marked influence on Yeats there is plenty of evidence. Ruskin is recurrently mentioned in Autobiographies alone and in connection with the Pre-Raphaelites who were the greatest influence on Yeats' early sensibility. As a young man, Yates read Unto This Last the ideas of which corresponded to the nationalist ideals which were then in his mind for Ireland. Ellmann notes: " . . . Yeats would say that no one should discuss national issues unless he could describe his Utopia. His own Utopia . . . shows the effect of Ruskin's Unto this last which deeply impressed Yeats as a young man of twenty-three or twenty-four. . . ." See Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (New York: E.P.Dutton & Co., Inc., 1948), p.112. Not only did Ruskin influence Yeats, but Yeats recognized Ruskin as a complement to aesthicism and Pre-Raphaelitism. The social bias of Ruskin and the authentic bias of the Pre-Raphaelites became the constitutents which his own philosophy held in balance. Describing W.E.Henley, Yeats outlines the factors of life and artistic expression that were so complementary in his own work: [he] sought always to bring life to the dramatic crisis and expression to that point of artifice where the true self could find its tongue . . . in his youth, Ruskinism and Pre-Raphaelitism ... were the only possible opponents, ..." See Autobiographies (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1961), p.126.

3 The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B.Yeats, eds. Allt and Alspach (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1957). p.842. The poems quoted above, "The SecretRose" and "The Rose of Battle" may be found on pp. 169 and 113 of their edition. All subsequent quotations from Yeats poetry are taken from this edition hereafter cited as Variorum

4 Variorum, p. 407.

5 Emotional and intellectual symbols, which I referred to in the previous chapter, Yeats defines by the following examples:

> If I say 'white' or 'purple' in an ordinary line of poetry, they evoke emotions so exclusively that I cannot say why they move me; but if I bring them into the same sentence with such obvious intellectual symbols as a cross or a crown of thorns, I think of purity and sovereignity. Furthermore, innumerable meanings, which are held to "white" or to "purple" by bonds of subtle suggestion, and alike in the emotions and in the intellect move visibly through my mind . . . .

Yeats does not specifically say that one or the other of these types is inferior; but he does recognize that intellectual symbols can carry emotions while at the same time having determinate meanings which the others do not have. The effect and purpose of Yeats' A Vision was to define a universe for the intellectual symbols he required for a concise and dramatic style.

6 Rosenberg, The Darkening Glass: A Portrait of Ruskin's Genius, p.18. The awareness of fact did not bear the same significance for the Romantics that it did for Zola and Taine. Facts for the Romantics were the concrete particulars of poetic imagination which in apocalyptic compositions like Prometheus Unbound and "Kubla Khan" tend to be submerged in emotional sweep and suggestive generalities.

7 Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 31.

8 Ibid., p. 27.

9 Ibid., p. 55.

10 Ibid., p. 28.

11 W.B.Yeats, The Oxford Book of Modern Verse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. xxvii.

12 Essays and Introductions (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p.271.

13 Autobiographies (London: Macmillan, 1961), pp.434-435.

14 Bloom outlines the importance of Shelley's image of the poetic quester to Yeats. See the discussion of Alastor in Yeats, pp.11-16.

15 Variorum, p. 77.

16 Letters, ed. Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1954), p.88.

17 The word "daemonic" is here used in a sense that derives from Shelley's fragment The Demon of the World which dramatized the incidence of the spiritual on the material world. This fragment is roughly similar in inspiration to the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" the theme of which is put forth in its opening lines:

> The awful shadow of some unseen Power
> Floats though unseen among us, -- visiting
> This various world with as inconstant wing
> As summer winds . . . (11. 1-4).

Harold Bloom, in Shelley's Mythmaking (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), p.37, says that "for Shelley Beauty is Intellectual in the sense so often carried in the eighteenth century of 'spiritual' or behind the senses". "The daemon of the World" is identifiable with this "Intellectual" Beauty for in that poem, Shelley celebrates the very union of spiritual and material that he does in the Hymn:

> Earth floated then below:
> The chariot paused a moment
> The spirit then descended
> The body and soul united then . . .
>
> (11. 610 -615)

I am therefore using "daemonic" as a less confusing correlative than "intellectual" to describe the tension between natural and supernatural and the influence of supernatural on natural that becomes increasingly evident as Yeats' poetry matures. George Bornstein has discussed the profound impact of Shelley to Yeats and because of this impact it is not unreasonable to use a term derived from Shelley as a critical definition for Yeats' poetry. See Bornstein's "Introduction" to his Yeats and Shelley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp.xi-xv. Dwight Eddius also employs the term. See Yeats: The Nineteenth Century Matrix (University Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1971), p.156. Yeats' Shelleyan background in what separates him from Rossetti and the company of the Pre-Raphaelites.

18 Leonard Nathan, The Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965) p.3.

19 Ibid., p. 42. See also Richard Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.124.

20 The Island of Statues II. iii. 248-251, Variorum, p.676.

21 The Collected Plays of W.B.Yeats (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1952), p. 619.

22 Autobiographies, p.114.

23 By this term I mean the situation of mortal versus immortal.

24 The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, p.ix.

25 Variorum , p. 367.

26 Variorum, p. 126

27 Eddins, The Nineteenth Century Matrix, pp. 97-99 and p.124. He cites Johnson's "The Destroyer of a Soul" as an "extreme example" of the tendency to abandon an initial dramatic apostrophe for reflective monologue. Queensbury, Wilde's destroyer, is directly addressed in the first line, but subsequently the poem wanders rather sheepishly into impersonality and indirect address:

> I hate you with a necessary hate.
> First, I sought patience: passionate was she:
> My patience turned in very scorn of me,
> That I should dare forgive a sin so great,
> As this through which I sit disconsolate
> Mourning for that live soul I used to see . . . .

See The Complete Poems of Lionel Johnson (London: The Unicorn Press, 1953), p. 94.

28 Eddins, The Nineteenth Century Matrix, p. 126.

29 William Gaunt in The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy offers a very entertaining discussion of Rossetti's personal life. This is much the best biographical study of the poet.

30 Autobiographies, p. 301.

31. Variorum, p. 111.

32 Ibid., p. 157.

33 Ibid., p. 155.

34 Ibid., p. 803.

35 Ibid., p. 806.

36 Robert Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience (New York: W.W.Norton & Co. Inc., 1963), pp.38-108, offers an indispensable discussion of dramatic elements in Victorian poetry. Yeats displays a typical feature of Victorian sensibility in his attempt to govern self-consciousness by means of dramatic personae. It is the basic technique of self-projection in the dramatic monologue.

37 Austin Warren, "William Butler Yates: The Religion of a Poet" Southern Review, VII (1942), rpt. in J.Hall and M.Steinmann eds., The Permanence of Yeats (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p.212.

38 Walter Houghton, "Yeats and Crazy Jane: The Hero in Old Age", Modern Philology, XL, (1943), 328.

39 Ibid., p. 329 Houghton calls Murder in the Cathedral "a trifle archaelogical" beside the immediacy of Crazy Jane.

40 W.B.Yeats, A Vision (New York: Macmillan, 1937), pp. 279-280.

41 Edward Engelberg, The Vast Design (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1964), pp. 34-35.

42 Variorum, p. 845

43 Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 165

44 Ibid., p. 166.

45. Essays and Introductions, pp. 266-267.

46 Essays and Introductions, p.4.

47 Yeats says in his essay "A People's Theatre": "I want to create for myself an unpopular theatre and an audience like a secret society where admission is by favour and never too many . . . an audience of fifty, a room worthy of it (some great dining room or drawing room) . . .". See Selected Criticism, ed. A.N.Jeffares (London: Macmillan, 1964), p.190.

48 Variorum, p.260.

49 Essays and Introductions, p. 527.

50 Nathan, The Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats, p.165.

51 Ibid., p. 169. (The mask in the Noh plays is quite literally a disguise for the facial features. It is related to, but not identical with, the mask in the gyres of personality).

52 Essays and Introductions, p. 226.

53 Variorum., p. 322.

54 Ibid., p. 391.

55 Ibid., p. 497.

56 Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 273.

57 Variorum, p.105.

58 Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner, trans. Walter Kaufmann, p.72.

59 Ibid., p. 142.

60 Letters on Poetry to Dorothy Wellesley (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.7.

61 This statement should not be taken to suggest that historicism is a departure from the daemonic outlook. Though Yeats ceased to believe less literally in the supernatural than he did as a young man, its place was filled by art. Byzantium which for Yeats was a symbol of art, was a symbol of timelessness in the midst of time.

62 Essays and Introductions, p.339.

63 William Irwin Thompson, The Imagination of an Insurrection (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.113.

64 Ibid., p. 114.

65 Variorum, p. 632.

66 Ibid., p. 565.

67 Ibid., p. 401.

68 Ibid., p. 433.

69 Thompson writes à propos of this idea: "History is, in fact a process by which a private imagination becomes a public event, but any study that restricted itself to public events would have to ignore the fact that history is also the process by which public events become private imaginations." See The Imagination of an Insurrection, p.235.

70 Ibid., p. 610.

71. Explorations (London: Macmillan, 1962), p.451.

72 Essays and Introductions, p.255.

73 Ibid., p. 254.

74 See footnote 67 in chapter I of this thesis.

75 Essays and Introductions, p.251.

76 Ezra Pound, The Letters of Ezra Pound, ed. D.D.Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p.155.

77 Variorum, p. 480.

78. Ibid., p. 417.

79 See footnote 73 in chapter I of this thesis.

80 Variorum, p.327.

81 Ibid., p. 352.

82 Ibid., p. 618.

NOTES TO PAGES 185-187

1 Wilson, Axel 's Castle, pp. 23-24.

2 Ibid., p. 266.

3 The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 257.

4 Tennyson, The Poems of Tennyson. (London: Longman's Green and Co. Ltd. 1969) p. 400

5 Wilson, Axel's Castle, p.2.

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