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The Diogenes Club

Santa Fe

Members of all the committees, but especially those reading poetry, would like to meet with those who submitted manuscripts to discuss the pieces.

The magazine depends for its quality on the quantity of good material sent to it for consideration. Submissions from students, alumnae, and friends of the College are urgently requested.

THE RACE

Right this way for the obstacle course of the century! Are you man enough for this challenge? Do you have a strong heart, a strong will and a body of iron? If so this is for you. Do you want to impress that little bluebird of a woman and have her fluttering about your feet, your great magnificent feet? Right this way competitors and spectators, the race is to begin in exactly five minutes. Everyman is welcome!

Line up here men. That's right, hey don't crowd toward the front there, there's no point in being the first, this is not a race for the fastest but for the wisest. Now men, here are the rules. There is no rest allowed. There is no sleeping allowed! Anyone who lies down will remain permanently petrified in that position. Do you hear? Open your ears for the rules. There will be no stopping nor looking back. You are not on this journey for the view! This is a proof of your eternal manliness. This is a test of precisely how far you are capable of exceeding your own strength. How far men! How far can you overcome your human capacities and still climb higher? Hey, don't leave! Look up towards that mountain. It's not a very large mountain. If it weren't for the obstacles everyone of you would consider it an elementary climb. As simple as an ascent of yonder Virtue Peak. But this mountain is different. This is Mount Mann! Can you climb over Mann?

Four, Three, Two, One and there they go. Ah, what a pity, they have misunderstood. They are sprinting like a bunch of wild antelope. Don't they know that it is not a question of speed.

The 1st obstacle

Ladies and Gentlemen! I see them approaching the very first obstacle. They have reached it in record time! It is a broad river with no bridge. Cataracts and waterfalls defy their efforts to cross. They are running like wild animals up and down the banks, searching for a way! But you and I know Ladies and Gentlemen, that there is only one way. Will they discover it? Wait! They have discovered it! The first line of men have plunged into the river and are swimming across. But wait. No. They are not swimming across. It is too wild a river to permit that. They are forming a human bridge for the others. The others are crossing. Stepping on their companions as if they were stepping stones. But they are not exactly like stepping stones, my friends, because stepping stones don't sink when you step on them. And that is exactly what is happening to this bridge! This is where the men are separated from the boys! This is where we really see the mettle of our racers. The bridge is breaking with every new man. Now there are gaps. There are more gaps. Only a few have made it across to the other side. All too many have gone under the water. All too few have reached the other side. They haven't stopped! They are running up the path. Let us applaud the survivors, spectators, they have overcome the first obstacle successfully. Let us cheer for their helpers. Those who demonstated the ingenuity of man! Ladies and Gentlemen. I cannot hear your applause. Louder!

The 2nd obstacle

Are you all here? Good. I can tell you now what is happening at the second obstacle. This is a most masterful race. Ladies? Chew your cud on this bit of hay! Your men are worthy of your love. They are crossing the second obstacle in grand style. It is a desert. It is many kilometers long and is infinitely wide. The sand is deep and hot. You are all familiar with the lack of water in deserts? Well then, you are all aware of the gravity of this obstacle. Again, Ladies and Gentlemen, there is only one way to cross this desert. It will be a treat to see who is the cleverest of our racers. A treat! Ah, they are now in the middle. They have strung themselves out into a single line. They are no longer running. But who is such a fool as to run in the desert? The last man in the line has fallen. No! He is up again. He is up again, back in the line and moving on. He has fallen again. So it goes, my friends, it seems that we have an indecisive member in our race. There, I can see him now. He has at last made up his mind! The Last man is out of the race. The rest have spotted something in the distance. It is galloping toward them. Can you guess what it is? Not in a million years. It is a camel! A desert camel. What's that young lady? You are asking how a camel happened to be in the desert? Little Lady, don't you know that camels <u>love</u> the solitude and silence of the desert. At last! At last the <u>way</u> has come to our racers. They have grabbed the camel by the tail and are swinging themselves onto its back. One is up. Now two, three, four men are on the camels back. The others are still hanging onto the tail. There is no more room on the camel's back. After all, lovers of man, how many men can you have and still have solitude? The camel has left the men off at the end of the desert. He is galloping into the very heart of his beloved solitude. In fact, Ladies and Gentlemen, <u>he</u> himself is the very heart of the desert!

The 3rd obstacle

Did you have a good nap? I do agree that it became rather boring there for awhile while we were waiting for the runners to reach the third obstacle. Now that they have reached it, open your eyes and ears, to see and hear of this harrowing adventure. They are approaching a forest. It is inhabited by wild beasts. Lions! Black forest lions! Sir! yes you there in the front row. Could your help that elderly lady who is showing signs of faint in the third row. Ah, Thank you. Give her a little water would you. Now, companions, you shall see who the <u>real</u> heroes are. Which men do you think will become friendly with the deadly lions. One must become friendly with them, you know, if one is to get through the black forest. Shall we take a vote? How many think that the tallest man will accomplish this feat? All of you? Well, let's take a look. Our racers are now confronting the cruelest lion. He is chasing them back the way they came. Toward the lonely desert! All but two are running. The fools! Why are they standing there with their arms outstretched? Do they think they can overcome the lion that way? It is the highest man and the lowest man. The tall and the short of it is, friends, that the lion has devoured both of them. He is licking his chops and bounding toward the two run-aways. The forest is far behind them. They have returned to the desert. Will

they all be devoured by these jaws? Have faith, Ladies and Gentlemen. Do not cover your eyes! Look. The lion is cutting off the two runners. He is licking their faces. They are patting his great mane. He is saying something to them. Don't he alarmed, my friends. In this most unusual journey there are talking animals. Listen! He is saying I will help you through the forest. You have met me in the desert which is proper. You and your two companions misunderstood the neccesity of the desert. It was here that we needed to meet. And, Ladies and Gentlemen, the lion is, at this very moment, leading the two remaining racers to the forest, through the forest, to the next obstacle. You see, lovers of freedom, that you have all voted wrong. But don't despair! I will forgive you this time for your lack of knowledge. But perhaps, dear friends, you are not paying close enough attention to this event.

The 4th obstacle

There are only two men left! Two men out of hundreds. Did you expect more than that to arrive at the fourth obstacle? Did you really think, men and women, that this was going to be easy? Our two men, may Zarathustra help them, have reached the bottom of the mountain at last. They are preparing to climb the great hill! There is a road. Have they discovered it? Yes, there they are now. My friends, do you have an imagination? Does not that road have a striking resemblance to a dragon? Do you see the head and the long winding coils of its body? Can you imagind what that road-dragon represents. It represents your will! I see that that frightens you. Beg my pardon you noble people. Let me tell you what I have in mind. That dragon, or your will, is the good and noble part of you. It demands, now listen closely, it demands that mankind does his duty. And, need I explain it, that dragon defies a sacred No. Know you the meaning of that? If your racers overcome that road-dragon, it will mean that they have left their duty and their obedience behind! Oh, you snarl and spit like serpents at bay. Hold your peace! Let us return to a calm perspective. You need not feel threatened. We stand at a great distance from this happening. It is merely entertainment for us. Nudge your neighbor and ask him the plot of this next episode. The travelers have started up the incline. It is easy walking. Each loop brings them higher above themselves. It seems a long way from here but look how rapidly they are moving. No hesitation, no faltering. A steady pace and free heart. Aha they have almost reached the top. Yet, yet, onlookers! What do you see happening? What! Is it true? They have reached the head of the dragon and it has swallowed them. It has swallowed them to the very tip of its tail, and they are once again at the beginning of the trail. Oh, racers. You must be more clever than that. Can't you see the same recurrance again and again. Ladies and Gentlemen, you may breathe easy. It is not simple to overcome duty. It is, in fact, impossible. You may breathe purely for it is affirmed that you have the right values and the right direction. I see that you are relieved. Was there ever any doubt? But look again. See for yourselves that our racers are not giving up. They are rolling the dragon up into one huge coil. It is heavy and burdensome but it coils easily. Almost, my friends, a bit of wit, almost like a piece of dough is rolled into a caramel cookie! Laugh! Can't you see that they are more clever

than you? Does it appall you that they can roll up the past present and future of man's duty into a little cookie? I myself must say that it is an admirable feat. But the real question is not whether you can make a cookie, all of us can make cookies, it is Can you eat the cookie? Can you affirm, digest and destroy that which you have made! Regard our climbers as better men than yourselves then. For they have eaten the dragon and have but two more obstacles to overcome.

The 5th obstacle

You are complaining of sore necks. You are right, faithful standers, it is a strain to look up and up with no relief. So let us look down to the ground. Let us immerse ourselves in the spirit of gravity. Yonder, the men on the mountain have many miles to the next obstacle. We will rest our necks for a moment and see what is happening at our feet. Look at your magnificent feet! How steadily and firmly they are attached to the ground. Do you not marvel at the grip of the firmament? Under your feet. That's right my Ladies, lift those small heels for a brief second off the ground. Do you see your wills crushed under those heels? I think you should know, with all due respect to you, my audience, that your wills are always under your feet ready to be crushed. If once, once, you lower your feet to the ground, they die. And, this very second, you have killed them with the spirit of gravity. Indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a sad moment in your lifetimes. But all is not lost! For our climbers have just overcome what we at the bottom weep to revive. Begone old wills! I hear a yodel from above. The spirit of gravity has sunk to the bottom! We are at last free to climb! The race is over. We two are no longer competing. We <u>will</u> the ascent. It is ours not your entertainment. Don't go home yet, friends, there is yet one more stage to come. One more sideshow before the curtain rises! Step this way please. Here, here in this dark room you will see better the last obstacle. You will see, I whisper with reverence, the <u>birth</u> of the new will.

The 6th and last obstacle

At last, at last. Our men are running again. They have renewed vigor as they approach the finish line of their own race. Their faces are beginning to seem almost cheerful. Cheerful? you say. But why not? They have just escaped all that is black and ugly. But it is not over. For there is yet one more task. They must become nauseated with pity for those of us who remain below. Do you, dear crowd, feel the weight of this nausea? It curls around you like insipid fumes. Don't breathe or all is destined! You, like the runners are caught in a huge black cloud. You, unlike the runners, call your cloud charity. I shall speak louder for you blindmen! I shall tell in loud, clear and vivid tones what is happening on Mount Mann: That very mountain we have all been watching for so many hours this morning. One of the runners has come reeling and vomiting out of that black cloud and is falling back down the mountain. His face is a mask of tragedy, a choral mask of Apollo. He is coming to join us in this dark room. He will soon land at your feet, recognizable and belonging to you. The other runner has dispelled the cloud and is standing before the summit of the peak. He is walking up the last few yards.

No wait! Are my eyes deceiving me? Would you believe me if I told you? He is dancing off the ground. Literally dancing. He is the winner of this race. Now his gift is being presented. He is still dancing! His gift is a wreath of olive leaves and a large bunch of grapes. Now he is dancing away. And, faithful followers, before you return to your noon-time lunches, look to the mountain and see that our winner is diaappearing over Mann. Blink!

Catherine Ingraham
class of 1973

AUCTOR VS OPUS

A man reads a work, a gift from the past. But how does he read it? Obviously, he makes certain decisions concerning how to go about it. But what are the bases of these decisions? One can possibly understand the problem through an examination of an individual aspect of it. The problem discussed here shall be, what part should an historical analysis of the author play in the interpretation of his work?

One can take one of three positions concerning this question: 1) the work should be read in the context of the author, i.e., whatever the author is known to have thought or to have been influenced by is constantly applied to any assertion about the meaning of his work; 2) the work should be read mainly in the context of the words presented, but that any fact(s) concerning the author may be applied to a final decision on a particular interpretation of those words; and, 3) the work should be examined as an entity in itself without reference to the author.

Considering the first position one finds that a supposition of the theory is that the author has an intended meaning which can only be understood by reading both his work, and any existent biographical or autobiographical material. One then finds oneself in the position of applying information about the author's drinking habits, sexual desires, class position in a given society, and so on, to an understanding of such a statement as "It seems that besides philosophical doctrine we have no need of any further knowledge."[1]

I find two objection to this theory. First, to apply it in its fullest implications is to examine ideas in terms of their causes, and those causes in terms of their causes, thus bringing one to an infinite regress. Second, to examine the work in the context of the author is to deny the nature of the work.

My first objection seems the most evident, for if we see Aquinas' statement as the result of his education in a high class of society, we must see that education as the result of, say, his royal lineage, and that as the result of an opportune political marriage, and that as the result of the state of politics in his country at the time, and that as the result of...ad infinitum.

My second objection, which seems less clear, must be taken in two parts. First look at the nature of a work in which the author is primarily presenting an instruction or, in a sense, a lesson. Consider again Aquinas' statement as due to his blue blood. One has taken this historical fact as the reason or cause of his statement. In itself such an anylysis is fine, it gives up an idea of what circumstances occasioned such a theory. But the theory tells us nothing of the work and the meanings present in that work. It therefore presents a separate question from that of how to read a work, and thus is invalid as an answer to that question. Next look at the nature of a work in which the author is primarily presenting, or trying to create, a feeling. As, for example, in any poem the words themselves create and promote the context in which the reader

experiences a feeling. Any poem that is truly a work will express its "meaning" as the result of those forces conveyed through its words, meter, etc., and will form that "meaning" in the reader's mind solely through that text. Again, I can look at information about the life of the poet and make certain grandiose generalizations about the lines of thought in the Western World; but the same reasoning now applies as before and I see such an analysis as a different question from that of how to read a work.

The second position is a more reasonable one. It admits of the priority of the text, and says that information about the author should only be used when absolutely essential to finding the intended meaning. This sounds very reasonable; however, there remains one problem: such a course of action is never absolutely essential, or in any sense necessary. The position presumes two things: 1)that it is possible to discover the intented meaning through research into the past of the author; and, 2) that there is an intended meaning.

Presumably, the intended meaning of a work is that meaning which the author wishes to convey through his work. Thus if the meaning of the work is unclear, the reader should find out the views which the author held during his life. Such a research can only go in two directions: what the author had told others and they had written down, or what he wrote himself. If you depend on the first kind of source you rely on a certain type of hearsay, and must put it under great scrutiny. If you depend on the other source you read either another work of the author, or a part of the work (in question) itself. If the author is inconsistent in his views this creates a bit of a problem, but if he is consistent one can surely resolve any question of the author's ideas. And so, with either biography or author's hand one can possibly put together a synopsis of the views of that author.

And equipped with such knowledge, we can stipulate the author's intended meaning in any work. Or can we? What exactly is an "intended meaning?" Again, presumably, the "intended meaning" of an author is that meaning which that author is attempting to convey through his work. How can we designate whether or not what the author said in other works or during his lifetime has anything to do with what he was writing about in the work -- its meaning? Or even more of a question, can we assume that the work itself presents what the author was trying to say? I maintain that the phrase "intended meaning" is useless. Again, it presents consideration of some other question than the one of <u>how</u> to read a work. The author could have been unsuccessful in getting his point across through his work, but could have written the work in such a way as to present even greater thoughts which he may not have realized he was placing on paper. The work stands alone from the author. First because of the possibility that he may not have expressed himself as desired, and because any written words are separate from any human being, and are therefore different. I thus must assume that the word is not the thought, just as I presume that the word is not the thing. And so the second position presented at the beginning of this paper must fall.

The argument leads to only one conclusion: that because the work is an entity in itself it must be read without reference to any facts about the author. Although the author, his ideas, and his work are intimately connected in the creation of the work, or its becoming; when considered as it actually is, its being, one must conclude that they are separate entities. And so if one takes any information about the author into account when trying to understand the meaning of a work, one is not really reading the work, but considering entirely different questions in the realm of thought.

What has been previously presented is a type of reductio ad absurdum. The argument only eliminated all other possibilities, without consideration of the merits of reading a work as an entity in itself. In representing this point of view I find myself in the position of appealing to the aesthetic values of my reader, something which I feel C.S. Lewis has done quite well:

> Only the learned read old books and we have now so dealt with the learned that they are of all men the least likely to acquire wisdom by doing so. We have done this by inculcating The Historical Point of View, put briefly, means that when a learned man is presented with any statement in an ancient author, the one question he never asks is whether it is true. He asks who influenced the ancient writer, and how far the statement is consistent with what he said in other books, and what phase in the writer's developement or in the general history of thought, it illustrates, and how it affacted later writers, and how often it has been misunderstood (specially by the learned man's own colleagues) and what the general course of criticism on it has been for the last ten years, and what is the "present state of the question." To regard the ancient writer as a possible source of knowledge -- to anticipate that what he said could possibly modify your thoughts or your behavior -- this would be rejected as unutterably simple-minded. And since we cannot deceive the whole human race all the time, it is most important to cut every generation off from the others; for where learning makes a free commerce between the ages there is always the danger that the characteristic errors of one may be corrected by the characteristic truths of another.[2]

Mark P. Habrel
class of 1975

1 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica (Chicago, Britannica, Inc., 1941) p.3, as translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

2 From The Screwtape Letters (New York, The MacMillan Co., 1961) the 27th letter, in whihh a demon named Screwtape, a servant of Satan, is writing letters of advice on how to catch soulds to his nephew and fellow tempter Wormwood.

*

In the time of the mourning reign
centuries in a day of nightmares
passed by even the horse in one
trodden rowless field gone dry
in the cold of summers vacation.

In the time of the mourning reign
the mountain kingdom fell with
the useless cry of a wolf on old
rock hardness, his nails gone dull
with no more longing hunger.

In the time of the mourning reign
south flown the birds have left
nests rotting in leafless forests
no call of living ring the empty
space of heavy darkness waiting.

In the time of the mourning reign
a day is useless waiting.

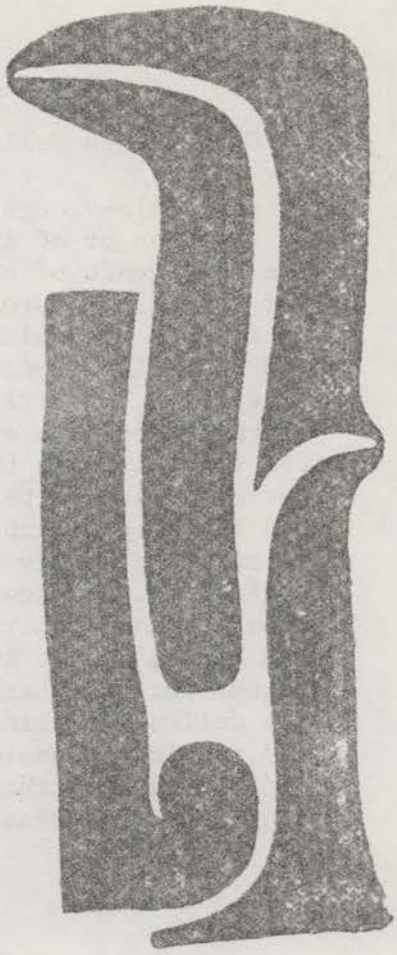
- - - Oriana Rodman

GRACE

A gull on spread of wingspan rests: moment
Of relinquished will to rise; then motion
Prompts a wheeling downward, swift the fall
And in the earthward plummet lost the gain
That chance of upsweep current gave.

So moment gathers motion; comes the fall;
So falling, gains a more enduring grace.

- - - Anonymous



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I look into the pool
  and find that I am there --
  paling
    against the signs
    of a nature more free
  than I

Paling among the blue
  the green and rough and smooth
  I -- paling
    with a fire coronal
    that is not mine
  but the water's
  and the sun's

---Anonymous

15-1b. Hammer

Baptised in sweat
Blessed by the rain
Annointed by the sun,
I break these rocks,
With the steel hammer
Of my heart.

---William Blount

He Regrets His Hollowness

As pure calm-wrought as green crystal
Or the thought of it, purer than crystal.
The leaf, made of autumn and light, floats down
But to add one more dance to the sky,
Or to make mild with wind-tabled hues harsh earth.
And so would be mind's own creations,
Indefinite, effortless crafting and shaping
If only were able of birth.
But such birth is truly rareness,
For soul-plotted pathways come, uninvited,
And tangle the sight-blinded threads spun in wonder,
To make them their own, whimwarped tools,
To fashion, not towers or walls, but hard pathways,
Ones heading to mirrors and death.
And heart, caught in such self-made mazes as these,
Sighs, for the passage of time,
The delicate outlines of uncome day,
And meanings dissolved by hot tears,
And drinks from the juice of these images, crushed,
Routinely preparing escape.

--- James Hamilton

Nachtlied

Come to me in twilight still,
And we shall waking share a dream;
As shadows upon another spill,
And all that is must shadow seem.

Then, when angles lose their shape
And dimension sensed by touch alone,
Shall we that searching light escape
And feel we know as we are known.

But then shall we, with day's warmth waking,
Gently leave the living night,
And, from our love new strength taking,
Welcome once more the gift of sight.

--- Kevin Snapp

She[LA]

As opposed to He
She.
[In the midst of passing passion
teeth
tattooing
my chest
thigh

from which impressions
spring buds
shining
of red and black
blooming
into
vermillion petalled flowers
trembling
and finally overflowing

into simple red streams
over my side
between my legs (hanging
as red pearls
upon the hair
there) and
onto the bed

and in the morning
when she sees it]

She
(foolish thing)
will cry
thinking I am hurt

He would have understood such things.

---Greg Ford

TRAGEDY

When I was a youth and exitable, I went to a performance of Ibsen's Ghosts. The question may be asked, exitable in which direction? Certainly it was not the one Ibsen intended. The truth is, I had absorbed (second or third hand) The Decline of the West, and was all for the spiritual expression of early cultural ages, even for the sweep and evergy of Renaissance expansion, but I would have run blocks to avoid those post-romantic products of the conscious and disillusioned selfhood. Under such conditions it was absurd to go to Ghosts anyway. I came away with no very amiable rememberance. Such a play I refused to call tragedy, the name was too noble. I coined another for it, "pathody," the story of pathetic suffering.

This may have been unfair to Ghosts, I shall return to that as I find occasion; but it is in curious agreement with some speculations of out time about tragedy. There has been a general feeling that the limits of tragedy should be narrowed, that tragedy means "great tragedy," tragedy in the grand manner, and that everything which does not end nobly with outward destruction and implicit spiritual triumph is somehow unworthy of that designation. Some writers have pushed all other drama over into comedy (Comédie Humaine), extendingthe term "bitter comedy" to cover a host of disillusions, from Shakesheare's Troilus and Cressida to Ibsen's Wild Duck, Chekov's The Cherry Orchard, and the most serious modern plays.

Strangely enough, it turns out in the end that though the narrowing down of tragedy may have seemed a qualitative one (ruling out plays, that is, which do not fulfill certain structural and emotional requirements) the result proves historical: we come out with plays belonging only to specific periods and no other. Thus Farnham in The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy: "to out European perception, only two peoples have also purged human suffering by the creation of tragedy in the grand style. These two are, of course, the Greek and the Christian European." And it is clear, in Farnham as elsewhere, that great tragedy is limited not only to these two peoples, but to the two ages they chiefly formed, Periclean Athens and Renaissance and seventeenth-century Europe.

Such an assertion implies, for better or worse, a dialectic of history, a pattern of cyclical recurrence within the larger growth or change. Thus the aesthetic investigation becomes also an historical investigation, and the question, what are the qualities of this thing we have been calling "great tragedy" merges with another question, what are the apititual qualities of those rare ages from which it springs. The answer cannot be a simple generalisation as of black and white. A work of art, like the age which gives it birth, is a fabric of crossing and contradictory threads, or better, like Aristotle's virtues, it inheres in the tension of opposite elements, either of which if too exclusively predominant may destroy it. As we define axes in the study of a curve, so here we may define ideal poles for that tension in the flow of which tragedy is formed.

The lif of this world
Ys reuled with wynd,
Wepinge, derknesse,
And steriinge; (suffering)
With wind we blomen,

With wind we lassun;
With weopinge we comen,
With weopinge we passun.
With steriinge we begynnen,
With steriinge we enden;
With drede we dwellen,
With drede we wenden.

This is an English poem of the fifteenth century, of the late Middle Ages. It defines the pole of contempt for the world; we may call it earthly pessimism, for pessimism can be of various kinds. Is that the tragic attitude? Certainly it recurs again and again in Greek and Elizabethan tragedy. It might almost be called the ground or sub-stratum of tragedy. So Aechylus in the Agamemnon:

Alas! the fates of men: their brightest bloom
A shadow blights; and, in their evil day,
An oozy sponge blots out their fleeting prints
And they are seen no more. From bad to worse
Our changes run, and with the worst we end.
(II. 1327-30)

Or Sophocles in the Oedipus Colonus:

...To the Gods alone
Comes never Age nor Death. All else i' the world
Time, the all-subduer, merges in oblivion.
Earth and men's bodies waaken, fail and perish;
Faith withers,breach of faith springs up and grows;
And neither men nor cities that are friends
Breathe the same spirit with continuing breath.
(II. 609-14)

Or Shakespeare, more terribly, in Macbeth:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.
(V. V. 24-28)

But great tragedies do not merely express such earthly pessimism. The same Sophocles who wrote in Oedipus the King:

O generations of men, how I
Count you as equal with those who live
Not at all!
What man, what man on earth wins more
Of happiness than a seeming
And after a turning away?
(II. 1187-92)

wrote also of the wonder of man (Antigone, II. 332-38):

Many a wonder lives and moves, but the wonder of all is man,
That courseth over the grey ocean, carried of Southern gale...
And Earth, supreme of mighty Gods, eldest, imperishable,
Eternal, he with patient furrows wears and wears away,...
Subduing her unwearied strength with children of the steed.

The same Shakespeare who wrote in King Lear:

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,
They kill us for their sport,
(IV. i. 38-39)

brought that play to some kind of spititual triumph, and closed his career with the confident humanism of The Tempest and Miranda's admiring cry:

O wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in it!
(V. i. 181-84)

And this was not only Miranda, it is the voice of Bacon in The New Atlantis, it is the surge and discovery of the Renaissance, as it was in an earlier time of Periclean Athens. Great tragedy may spring from a ground of earthly pessimism, but it rises in the convintion of human worth and the divine splendor of things. If contempt for the world is one pole of the tragic tension, humanistic hope is another, and it is in the flux of these that an age of great tragedy moves. The conditions for such a blend are as precise and rare as for a great age of physical science or any other distinctive cultural phenomenon. What are these conditions and how do they occur?

Consider the case of Greece. Imagination must feel its way into the history of that time. First is the old mature civilisation of the Aegean, of Crete and Mycenae, contemporary with Late Kingdon Egypt, an age of imperial refinements, like the late Greek and Roman on a smaller scale -- vessels over the Mediterranean bearing wine and oil and spices for a luxurious and decaying people. Then a time of troubles. The beginning of barbaric invasions. The Egyptian scribes recording: "The islands of the sea are restless." The Trojan wars, the weakening and collapse of the old cultures, and always tribes of blond barbarians from the North, the Dorians, Ionians, Aeolians. So we come to the Greek Dark Age, a primitive span between the Mycenaeen civilisation and the Hellenic.

What characterises a primitive way of life? A cult and faith, a tribal belief and worship. But also a bare hard existence and sombre sense of its cruelty. Earthly pessimism, and belief in the gods. This sets up a paradox. For the gods rule life, and their rule is cruel, yet they must be worshipped as the gods. They act in jealousy and spite; they destroy men and towns. The Iliad has been called "The Poem of Force;" it relates the impartial destruction that is the rule of life:

We to whom Zeus
Has assigned suffering, from youth to old age,

Suffering in grievous wars, till we perish to the last man...
Nothing there is more wretched anywhere than man
Of all that breathes and creeps upon this earth...

All the terrible stories of the later tragedies arise in this time: of Oedipus hounded by the fates, Orestes commanded by the gods to kill his mother, and then tormented for the act, Prometheus punished for good will to men. And yet the gods of these myths are not to be questioned, but admired, revered. It is apparent that a probing, rational age could never sustain this problem. It must be an age of inherited dogma, taboos, fear. Fear and faith merge in acceptance, in resignation.

Such an age produces many expressions of earthly pessimism: here is Hesiod of the eighth century B.C.:

Condemn'd to sorrows and to toil we live,
Rest to our labours death alone can give;

Or Mimnermus in the seventh, after a catalogue of afflictions:

There is no man in the world to whom Zeus does
not give manifold woe.

It produces also testaments to the primitive faith. Theognis, who had summed up the tragic ground in a passage echoed in the Oedipus Colonos: "Best of all things upon earth is it not to be born nor to behold the splendors of the sun; next best to traverse as soon as possible the gates of Hades" -- Theognis gives the ritualistic answer:

Pray to the Gods, with the Gods is power.

But such an age cannot produce great tragedy. Tragedy must combine the humanistic pole; it must grow from the spiritual question and daring of a Promethean people, from the attempt to make the old faith and its legends conform to enlightened reason, to humanise and moralise the gods. This is the spirit in which Greece rising from its "Dark Age" and defeating the Persians built the glory of Periclean Athens, the art, drama, philosophy, the democratic life, which by their very energy were to undermine themselves.

Socrates does not speak of the seventh-century God of Semonides: "Thundering Zeus...doeth...what he will;" but rather: "no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods." It was in this spirit and at the same time that the ninety-year-old Sophocles took up the Oedipus story again, that cruel primitive tale of the direful gods, adn transformed it in his Oedipus Colonos to a drama of redemption, the spiritual rise through suffering, the vision and deification of "a man more sinned against than sinning." Those happen to be the words of Lear, but with the parallel insight that unites great tragedy, Bophocles also has Oedipus say: "My life hath more of wrong endured than of wrong done." As in the case of the execution of Socrates, suffering becomes here the means to a greater kingdom of spirit, and it is with perfect right that the chorus rounds out the close: "Come, I lament no more. His destiny has found a perfect end."

Yet, even here we must observe now perilously great tragedy is poised. This spiritual victory, which in its tension with the primitive world of waste had in effect formed tragedy, is already too rationalised, too dominant. Pity and terror are eased in Socratic peace. This is perhaps a philosophical gain, but already it is a dramatic loss. Moreover, another difficulty arises. The duality of the primitive time was faith and pessimism. Faith now has sumitted to reason, and the very probing which with Sophocles justified the way of god to man, with other keen observers cuts through justification to a new pessimistic doubt. But not to primitive pessimism. That was linked with faith and led to resignation. Now the primitive paradox is broken apart, and opposing the new humanised faith (which may betray hope, as it does not always seem an accurate description of the phenomenal world) arises the new sceptical pessimism, which doubts, questions, resents, and complains. Tragedy now becomes more "tragic" in the popular sense, that is, it hurts more, but less tragic in the great sense. This is the Euripides of The Medea, building a purposeless agony, or of the Trojan Women where the Fall of Troy becomes a thing of human sentiment and disillusion.

In this last play we are closer than anywhere else in the classical world to the post-romantic exploitation of pain. Thus Andromache, in saying farewell to her child, broods over his coming death:

> How shall it be? One horrible spring...deep, deep,
> Down. And thy neck...Ah God, so cometh sleep!
> Put up thine arms and climb
> About my neck; now, kiss me, lips to lips...

And Hecuba, when she brings in the broken body, plays on the afflicting details:

> Poor little child!
> Was it our ancient wall, the circuit piled
> By loving Gods, so savagely hath rent
> Thy curls, these little flowers innocent
> That were thy mother's garden, where she laid
> Her kisses; here, just where the bone-edge frayed
> Grins white above -- Ah heaven, I will not see!

This is the new horror, and it is indissolubly tied to the new enlightenment, the realised sense that life should be rich and full. Thus Hecuba goes on:

> ...hadst thou known
> Strong youth and love and all the majesty
> Of godlike kings, then had we spoken of thee
> As of one blessed ... But now thine eyes
> Have seen, thy lips have tasted, but thy soul
> No knowledge had nor usage of the whole
> Rich life that lapped thee round...

And even the nominal return, at the end of the speech, to the primitive ground, assumes the fever of revolt, in which the old resigned dignity is gone:

O vain is man,
Who glorieth in his joy and hath no fears;
While to and fro the chances of the years
Dance like an idiot in the wind!

Both late Sophocles and Euripides, then, come at the close of tragedy, since the rationalised faith cuts off the roots of suffering, while the new disillusion cuts off the roots of purpose. But the greatest tragedy, the Oresteis trology of Aeschylus, hangs at the critical moment, on the rim; at the moment before the formulation into rational faith or rational question; when both these exist implicitly in the structure, and heighten it in the tension of suffering and triumph, waste and reward; while ostensibly and nominally the whole is still held together by the primitive bridge of energy and resignation. It is at this point that the mystery of tragedy most mirrors the mystery of life, of the universe itself.

So much for the Greeks. Look now at our own culture, the Christian, European, Western, whatever one intends to call it. The picture is far more complicated, but the evolution of tragedy is strangely parallel. As with the Greeks there was the fall of an old civilisation, the descent of barbarians, a time of troubles and a primitive age. And again there is the paradox of the cruel blind world and of faith in God. Here is a typical passage from a poem by Fredugis of the court of Charlemagne (translated by Helen Waddell):

So passes all the beauty of the earth...
O flying world! that we sick-hearted, love thee!
Still thou escapest, here, there, everywhere,
Slipping down from us. Fly then if thou wilt.
Our hearts are set in the strong love of God.

Here is another from the Anglo-Saxon poem Christ of the late eighth century (translated by Professor Spaeth):

Tis a dreary waste
Of ceaseless surges we sail across
In this wavering world, o'er wind-swept tracts
Of open sea. Anxious the struggle,
Ere we bring our barks to land,
O'er the rough sea-ridges. Our rescue is near;
The Son of God doth safely guide us.

The Christian poles are analogous to the Greek, but richer and more magical; they are spiritualised: the brittle vanity of earth and the divine mystical hope. Yet just as with the Greeks the paradox is there. Material things are given over to Fortune, a goddess as fiercely capricious as any pagan fate. How can we sustain the rift between a Christian loving God and his tormenting power? Faith supersedes reason; the question must not be asked. Dante puts it clearly enough: "State contenti umana gente, al quia," -- content yourselves mortals, with the how -- the effect, that is, since you cannot know the cause.

The whole age from Charlemagne to the Renaissance is dominated by this surrender and by the sombre world-view it involves: "The life of this world is ruled with wind, weeping, darkness and suffering." As

with the early Greeks that is a tragic view, and yet no great tragedy came from those centuries. If the world is a blind waste, and life after death the only good, if the individual, wihtout question, must surrender to this belief, how can there be tragedy? Great tragedy arises from some sort of conflict between the titanic individual, the individual believing in earthly life and its validity, and this resigned grey ground of primitive wisdom. In the Middle Ages the pain which would otherwise build tragedy serves resignation and faith; it becomes in a spiritual sense trivial. Chaucer has a long poem on Troilus and Creseyde, showing the beauty of their love and the poignance of its ruin. At the close Troilus rises far above the earth and sees its littleness. The closing counsel is for penitence:

> O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
> In which that love up groweth with your age,
> Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee,
> And of your herte up-casteth the visage
> To thilke god that after his image
> Yow made, and thinketh al is but a fayre
> This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre.

Like the tragic personalities of Dante's Divine Comedy, the whole poem melts back into the medieval frame. Its very poignance is inconsequential: This is the world; what more can you expect; cast up your eyes to God.

But suffering can never become wholly trivial in a human sense, however much we assert the vanity of earth and hope of heaven. It is on a relative scale, and can only partake in part of resignation. Already in a primitive age, with the root of speculative philosophy and science, the root of tragedy begind to form. Then with the unfolding of the new culture comes a new freedom, both to dare and to suffer, and the daring and suffering alike assume titanic validity. In the dangerous adventure of this time, a new humanity is born, bold and individual, sensing its power, in the words of an Elizabethan:"free, stout, haulte, prodigall of life and blood," coursing over the world, remaking the solar system and universe, creating science, re-examining dogma in the light of confident reason.

As with the Greeks, the final result of this process was the rationalisation and humanism of the primitive paradox. God was no longer left outside the universe, nor the sphere of matter given over to blind fortune, but reason took the concept of a benign creator and worked it through all things. That is just what Milton attempted in Paradise Lost, justifying the ways of God to men, and the hoped-for Commonwealth had been a political adventure of such kind. This movement had actually two peaks, the cosmic rational optimism which Voltaire parodied in Candide: "All things are for the best in this best of all possible worlds," and the transcendental romantic faith which inebriated the Germans, with Emerson, and Thoreau: "There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star." In short, the humanistic and benignly positive faith of the aged Sophocles, of Socrates -- and transcendentally of Plato -- was born again, but in a more radical way, and superimposed on a new liberated personality. For the West has done everything more wildly and radically than any other civilisation, as one might guess from Gothic, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Beethoven, our wars and atomic science.

And again, as with the Greeks, the mind, having rationalised faith, could proceed to undermine it. Rationalised faith is always a splendid liability. And it is natural that, having pushed the humanistic hope farther than any other people, we should also be more racked by the new sceptic doubt which succeeded it. The history of tragedy in the West is intimately tied up with this sequence: from the Medieval pessimism of earth and divine faith, through the humanistic faith and its disillusion, back to the affirmation of waste, but the new fevered waste of the romantic and frustrated heart.

Cultures cannot be laid side by side as you would yardsticks. What happened spiritually in Greece during the hundred years from early Aeschylus to late Euripides, seems to have spread itself in Europe over three centuries from the Renaissance to modern, and was greatly complicated by the blending of Xhristian and Classical, the cultural rise of successive nasions, the French, Italian, Spanish, English, German. Still, the time from Milton to Goethe could be called our Age of Confidence. The resemblance between the Samson Agonistes of Milton and Sophocles' Oedipus Colonos is abvious and intentional. Samson also in suffering and blindness achieves his apiritual destiny.

> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

And the chorus dismisses us "calm of mind all passion spent." As in Sophocles we feel that the delicate tension in which the greatest tragedy is formed has somehow been passed. Rationalisation absorbs pathos. Yet it is a rationalisation always more required as the human emotion and protest deepen with the temporal faith. Racine has been compared with Euripides -- a largely fortuitous parallel -- yet already here (under the patterned histrionics of a baroque classicism) the pre-romantic heart is formed, intensifying the pathos until it would tear the structure but for the heroic heightening and massibe control of the rationalised form. This shell has only to break for sentiment and grief to pour out like blood from a wound. But still this increasing burden of personality and pain is borne along on a tide of confidence, which shifts now from its rational to its intuitive and post-Rousseaunian ground. Thus Goethe, where the tragedy when admitted leans inevitably to the unbearable dwelling on the heart's waste -- the humanized pitiableness of Gretchen in prison -- Goethe, more radically than Milton, puts affliction aside, or rapturously soars over it, in a perilously Western and trancendental way. In contrast to the resigned earthly pessimism of the Middle Ages, here we have a glowing belief in the brave new world. Let Traherne speak, a seventeenth-century contemporary of Milton, who long before Goetge or Wordsworth or Thoreau were born, expressed many articles of their ideal faith, the faith on which democracy and especially America were predicated. In a poem called "Ease," he wrote:

> That all the Earth is one continued globe,
> And that all men therein are living treasures,
> That fields and meadows are a glorious robe
> Adorning it with smooth and heavenly pleasures.
>
> That all we see is ours, and every one

Possesor of the whole; that every man
Is like a God Incarnate on the Throne,
Even like the first for whom the world began;...

That all may happy be, each one most blest,
Both in himself and others; all most high,
While all by each, and each by all possest
Are intermutual joys beneath the sky.

We cannot read the authors from the Italian humanists and Platonists down to the age of Revolution, or look at the art, without feeling, recurrently, this battle cry of the new life; and the advance lies on two fronts, toward a new universe of law and beauty, and a new man of innate power and good.

But the greatest age of tragedy, as with the Greeks, came on the rise to rational formulation, when all this confidence was held paradoxically in the primitive frame of life, an earth of temporal waste, of which King Lear preaches: "We came crying hither; thou knows't the first time that we smell the air, we wawl and cry." And it is just by contrast between the new universe of humanist man and the old vanity of fallen Adam that Shakespeare expressed the melancholy of Hamlet:

> ...this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

The faith of Traherne and the humanists, though it forms here one pole of the tragic tension, is implicit only, and builds with the old, but paganly transformed, pessimism, the titanic struggle of tragedy.

To Shakespeare and his age, therefore, it is no surprise when the brave new world crumbles, the giants and demi-gods fall, like Prometheus and Icarus and Phaethon, their old prototypes, when earth returns to its native ruin: and the writers of great tragedy could stand it; they could stand anything. For when humanistic belief is shattered, they can still fall back to the old ground of acceptance, the timeless out of time. Goethe, as he implied to Eckermann, could not let Faust be damned; it would have undermined the creative world he believed in, that he had to believe in. But Marlowe, though a kind of Renaissance Faustian himself, could let Faustus be damned, and do it with as much energy as if the damnation were some strange triumph:

O it strikes , it strikes: now body turn to ayre,
Or Lucifer wil bere thee quicke to hel: (Thunder and
O soule, be changed into little water drops, Lightning)
And fal into the Ocean, nere be found:
My God, my God, looke not so fieree on me: (Enter diuels)

Adders and Serpents, let me breathe a while:
Ugly hell gape not, come not Lucifer,
Ile burne my bookes, ah Mephastophilis. (Exeunt with him)

And then the chorus enters and Marlowe is able to return to a medieval resignation:

Cut is the branch that might haue growne ful straight,
And burned is Apolloes Laurel bough,
That sometime grew within this learned man:
Faustus is gone, regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise,
Onely to wonder at unlawful things,
Whose deepenesse doth intise such forward wits,
To practise more than heauenly power permits.

It is not in the plot of a play or the outline so much as in the whole feeling that it must be judged. No one can miss here a sense of dignity and reserve; the turmoil of human revolt and destruction occurs in a frame of balance and value and repose. The tragedy is sharp but it does not sob or wail, it does not tear life to shreds; in short, it is not neurotic, it is not maudlin.

Such was tragedy on the rise to the rational formulation. Return now to Ibsen, and contrast with Marlowe a passage from Ghosts. This is from the nineteenth century, after a formulated faith has moved into the temporal realm and has then broken to disillusion and bitterness, opposing the earthly hope with a new spiritual pessimism, in the words of Arnold, without "certitude or peace or help for pain." The play involves the case history of a promising young artist with hereditary syphilis:

OSWALD: What I am suffering from is hereditary; it (touches his forehead and speaks very quietly) -- it lies here.
Mrs. ALVING (almost speechless): Oswald! No -- no!
OSWALD: Don't scream; I can't stand it, Yes, I tell you, it lies here, waiting. And any time, any moment, it may break out.
Mrs. ALVING: How horrible --!
OSWALD: Do keep quiet. That is the state I am in --
Mrs. ALVING (spinging up): It isn't true, Oswald! It is impossible! It can't be that!
OSWALD:...To become like a helpless child again. He called it a kind of softening of the brain--or something of that sort. (Smiles mournfully) I think that expression sounds so nice. It always makes me think of cherry-coloured velvet cutains--something that is soft to stroke.

No one can deny that this is tragic in the popular sense, that is, it hurts, but not in the sense in which we have been using "great tragedy." With Marlowe as touchstone, it is easy to feel the exploitation of neurotic pain. What one may not observe is that this fevered agony and resentment springs just from the sense that life **should** be beautiful and good, from the kind of optimism about man that appeared in Traherne in the seventeenth century and spread over the world with Rousseau and the Revolution and the Romantic belief in the human heart. The contrast of the old view of life and the new is explicitly made by Oswald:

> Well, all I mean is that here people are brought up to believe that work is a curse and punishment for sin and that life is atate of wretchedness and that the sooner we can get out of it the better. ...But the people over there [i.e., in Paris] will have none of that. There is no one there who really believes doctrines of that kind any longer. Over there the mere fact of being alive is thought to be a matter for exultant happiness. Mother, have you noticed that everything I have painted has turned upon the joy of life?--always upon the joy of life,unfailingly. There is light there, and sunshine, and a holiday feeling--and people's faces beaming with happiness.

And it is just this beaming happiness, life, liberty and the pursuit of joy, the presumtive human good that is denied when at the close, as the mother, pulling the curtains on the sunrise, comforts her son, "Look, Oswald, what a lovely day we are going to have," the attack falls:

OSWALD (who has been sitting motionless in the armchair, with his back to the scene outside, suddenly says): Mother, give me the sun.
Mrs. ALVING (standing at the table, and looking at him in amazement): What do you say?
OSWALD (repeats in a dull, toneless voice): The sun--the sun.
Mrs. ALVING (going up to him): Oswald, what is the matter with you? (Oswald seems to shrink up ih the chair; all his muscles relax; his face loses its expression, and his eyes stare stupidly. Mrs. Alving is trembling with terror) What is it? (Screams) Oswald! What is the matter with you? Throws herself on her knees beside him and shakes him) Oswald, Oswald! Look at me! Don't you know me?
OSWALD (in an expressionless voice, as before): the sun--the sun.

The real value of this play is no doubt its treatment of the social and intellectual problem. If we wish to commend it, we must try to take it as a drama of ideas. But it employs the methods of tragedy and as such opens itself for comparison with great tragedy, a comparison in which it can only lose favour. For pain here is nervously overwrought and without catharsis , Hysteria raises a wail which obscures the intellectual communication on which the play depends . It is as if suffering in this post-romantic time had moved into a new realm. It arrogates to mean more where it deserves to mean less. What is this beside the loss and tragedy of Lear? The death of Cordelia, who is certainly worth a thousand Oswalds, the suffering of Lear and Gloucester, which would make Mrs. Alving look like a squashed bug. But Shakespeare brings it off with dignity, with a mighty rounding out and resigned reconciliation which leaves sombre peace: "The oldest hath borne most; we that are young shall never see so much, nor live so long." Considering only the tragic destruction of Ghosts, what do we have? One young man paralysed by syphilis. It is not sheer callousness to say that the hospitals are full of them, and that we kill off thousands more painfully in every war. We are now preparing to destroy the world or a considerable portion of it, and have we nerves and tears to waste on these Oswalds?

The truth is, modern life has changed the significance of personal suffering, of the whole personal existence. The individual tragedy, the heart of Renaissance faith and meaning, has, to put it bluntly, become a laughter to the gods. Whether we like it or not, that is what it is. There is only one real tragedy left, and that is the historical tragedy of man,

just as there is only one actual hope left, the organic hope of man. Everything reflects this, mus return to this. Our wars, state, life, education, dreams and fears all dwarf the personal, drown the personal in the symbol of some emergent supra-human whole. This cannot be presented in the old frame of human will and fixed value out of which grew the individual laughter and the individual pain. Painting, music, all arts, have moved into the self-c nflicting relative of an intellectual form, transcending heroic or remantic personality in the critical nuance of the modern abstract. This is already apparent in the progression from Ibsen's Ghosts to his Wild Duck, a better work for the very reason that it shifts from obvious tragedy toward the subtle suspension of ideas; and with Chekov this is made the entire design. There are many roads and many byways, from the cult of Expressionism and the poetic drama of Eliot, to the sophisticated precision of Giraudoux or significant eccentricity of Shaw, but all lead in one direction, to the intellectual transcendence, the sole victory our world-tragedy affords. These may be the best plays of our time, but they are not tragedy, and that is the subject here.

If we look for tragedy of a more traditional sort, we must descend to lesser authors or to poorer plays. Such continue to wring the romantic heart. There was considerable excuse for this sort of thing in the early nineteenth century, when romantic sensitivity and disillusion had opened fresh worlds of suffering, while the individual life had still some appearance of validity. Schopenhauer even defined this as the legitimate end of tragedy ("On Some Forms of Literature"): "We are brought face to face with great suffering and the storm and stress of existence; and the outcome of it is to show the vanity of all human effort...we are...prompted to disengage our will from the struggle of life." And that might not seem an unfair description of the Maria Magdalena of Schopenhauer's contemporary, Hebbel.

Even today the average man feels that it is enough if tragedy makes a consistent use of pathetic and harrowing details. But the later nineteenth century change in critical theory is reflected in Arnold, for whom suffering which does not reach resolution is "painful, not tragic," and the better moderns have either gone the way of the modern transcendence, or have made a conscious and forlorn effort to inform post-romantic tragedy with the spiritual triumph of an earlier time.

A child goes into the street and is struck by an automobile. Men speak of the terrible tragedy. But no literary critic would call it that, even it it were dramatised in the most pathetic way. Suffering is not necessarily tragic at all in the literary sense. The Middle Ages, before the individual formulation, often treats suffering with ironic inconsequence. Chaucer cracks jokes on marriage situations which would have to a romantic age to shreds. And the modern transcendence also has made a weird comic mockery of pain. There is the last act of Shaw's Heartbreak House, where Boss Mangan snivels off to the gravel pit, and the bombs fall in the adventurous diversion of suicide: "It's splendid: it's like an orchestra: it's like Beethoven...I hope they'll come again tomorrow night...Oh, I hope so." Flaubert, in the mid-nineteenth century, wrote of Bovary's bungling surgery, by which the clubfoot lost his leg, with a burning indignation, a sense of outrage against the implicit worth of man: "Hippolyte looked at him with eyes full of terror, sobbing: 'When shall I get well? O save me! How unfortunate I am!' But a similar scene in

Faulkner's As I Lay Dying assumes inhuman laughter. They have poured cement on Cash's broken leg, aiming "to ease hit some;" we see the whole thing through a boy's eyes:

> "Your foot looks like a nigger's foot, Cash", I said.
> "I reckon we'll have to bust it off", pa said...
> They got the flatiron and the hammer. Dewey Dell held the lamp.
> They had to hit it hard. And then Cash went to sleep.
> "He's asleep now", I said. "It can't hurt him while he's asleep."

But the grotesque pain of "laughter out of dead bellies" is no further from great tragedy (is even mingled with it in Hamlet and Lear) than the abuse of gloom and tormenting details. There was an early torture where the wall of the belly was opened and the intestine caught on a stick. Then is was slowly unrolled inch by inch and yard by yard. There is a kind of romantic music which attempts just that. I used to have friends who were fond of such music, so I told them of the torture, and afterwards I had only to look at them during a concert and make a little gesture as if I were playing it out, for them to go all to pieces. It is quite surprising how many people think all tragedy has to do is to roll your gut out on a spool. They go to Gone with the Wind and suffer incredibly for hours, come out as if they'd been through a wringer, every ounce of purpose and vigour squeezed dry, and call it a moving performance. I suppose arsenic would move them about as well.

And yet it is difficult, apart form the intuition and sense of a play, to state how great tragedy is different from this, to define the creative form of its triumph. Suppose we say it embodies redemption. This immediately suggests something of a moral kind. But we will not find it so. Goethe's Faust is redeemed, not the Faustus of Marlowe. It is not programmatic redemption that is involved, not Salvation Army blessing, but the kind of unstated tacit redemption that burns a godhead through the close of Othello and Lear. It is not that Shakespeare says life is meaningful and good and that Ibsen or a modern says it is a morbid waste. It may seem the opposite. Shakespeare may go out of his way to tell you life is a walking shadow, and Ibsen may stress that it is or should be the heart's desire. It is simple that Shakespeare can put his characters through violence and wasteful death and wring them out living souls, and that Ibsen crushes life out of his in a universe which has no value apart from that romantic span they have been denied.

It is the implicit victory which an age of great tragedy, balance between the primitive and humanistic faith, is able to bestow. Apparently it has little to do with conscious intention. Many modern authors feel the obligation to write "great tragedy" (the author of Death of a Salesman, for example); they write an introductory essay about the nobility of man; but of course they end up with waste and depression, for that is the nature of the merely individual tragedy in our age. They are like those preachers who have read Spengler and say we must create a new religion to avoid destruction. As if it were in our power, or demanding it were more than a sign of the void: "Between the motion and the act falls the shadow." Also O'Neill. Of Mourning Becomes Electra he tells us: "My chief aim was to see the transfiguring nobility of tragedy in as near the Greek sense as one can grasp it, in seemingly the most ignoble and debased lives." What emerges is waste, the drained surrender of the last bloodless wail:

"gloating over the years of self-torture..throw out all the flowers... staring into the sunlight with frozen eyes."

O'Neill may have intended triumph, but the time he wrote in was not a time of triumph (beyond that of the intellectual abstract); it was a time of Spengler and "The Hollow Men" and the lost generation, the romantic disillusion succeeding the romantic faith, and it is not surprising if that was just the greatness he achieved.

What of Shakespeare? Did he write with a programme of spiritual rise, or was it the unconscious blessing of his age? He never told us, and that in itself is significant;but the view of his predecessors was that of medieval waste and earthly pessimism. Tragedy was the fall of the great from fortune to misery at the whim of the stars, the blind turning of Fortune's wheel. And in early Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, the pair of "star-cross's lovers" afford good illustration of this sort of thing. If we consider the bare plot, nothing could seem more expressive of the waste of life. Beauty, youth, love:

> O! she doth teach the torches to burn bright...
> Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
> That tips with silver all these fruit tree tops...
> This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath
> May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet...

And then this bud, by the merest whim, is nipped and destroyed. Could there be any more purposeless futility? And Shakespeare makes no explicit attempt at "transfiguring nobility," no programme of immortality or justice. Nevertheless, this is the way that Romeo dies:

> Thou art not conquer'd: beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
> And death's pale flag is not advanced there.
> ...Shall I believe
> That unsubstantial death is amorous,
> And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
> Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
> For fear of that I still will stay with thee,
> And never from this palace of dim night
> Depart again: here, will I remain
> With worms that are thy chambermaids; O! here
> Will I set up my everlasting rest,
> And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
> From this world-wearied flesh...

So an age of Renaissance life can transmute the most futile death to its own substance. Of course, this victory may seem partly a matter of language. In a modern play it would be hard to make a character soar off in this way as he poisoned himself. It is not probable, either in action or speech. In Juno and the Paycock by the modern Irish O'Casey, Johnny is taken out to die, saying: "What do you want with me...yous wouldn't shoot an oul' comrade." That is more probably the way a man would die, but it hardly makes a great tragedy. The devaluation of language is only one phase of the devaluation of life. At a time when most people think drama should be a record of what might have been said on the street day-before-

yesterday, it is important to realise what an advantage the Greeks and Elizabethans derived from working in an age when vision automatically surpassed probability, when a plot could be a plot rather than a likelihood, and a speech could be a great poem without violating symbolic truth.

That death of Johnny in Juno and the Paycock is not at all atypical of modern death on or off the stage. Even our living actors are taught to die in evasion. They are stretched out with digitalis and oxygen, drugged each night for their slumbers, while the doctor cheers them on: "Looking better, old fellow; be out of here soon." In a few days he is out of here indeed, but in a subtler sense than was intended. Beside this death of hollowness, how does Othello die? Again, as in Romeo, one must notice that there is no explicit victory, neither in action nor words, no reconciliation, salvation, triumphant spirit or other such superimposition. A man, through misunderstanding and lies, kills the woman he loves and who loves him. He discovers the waste of his act and in shame and despair takes his own life. It seems Shakespeare could hit on nothing but plots of futility. Yet this is the way Othello dies:

> ...I pray you, in your letters,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice; then must you speak
> Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
> Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
> Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
> Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
> Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
> Albeit unused to the melting mood,
> Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
> Their medicinable gum. Set you down this;
> And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
> Where a malignant and a tuban'd Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
> And smote him, thus. (Stabs himself)

Unconquerable spirit does not have to say it is unconquerable, it breathes invincibility. But the way it does so can no more be formulated than the ultimate world-view of Shakespeare's plays, the ultimate drift of life itself. It is a property of infinite transcendence. Where the typical post-romantic tragecy involves emotional and spiritual defeat onto which may be forced a kind of explicit and programmic victory, this of the Elizabethans consumes explicit and programmatic defeat in some flame of tacit inner victory, of which no satisfactory account can be given. Naturally there are means to this end, some of which may be analysed. There are all the attributes of early tragedy: the great man, the inherited moral plot, the poetic soliloquy, the traditional improbables, fluidity of space, time, causality, everything which characterises a symbolic stage. And of course there is Shakespeare himself, the accident (if one likes to suspend problems by that word) of Olympian birth.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the plays of Shakespeare are not merely the product of the age, or that if they are, the age is also the product of these elements it produces. But just because of this organic interplay, this perpetual shuttling from part to whole and from whole

back to the part, all the elements of Renaissance theatre, including the author himself, become (not in their uniformity but in their paradox) one with the awakening spirit of the time; everything fuses in the living act which flowers in Lear. Shakespeare is Shakespeare only by virtue of becoming the blossom which the whole plant of Europe at that moment was pushing up from its synergy of cells. Every element, in fact, grows a mirror of the whole. It is for that reason we have approached the problem from above, from the history of ideas. And we may close with one particular which typically embodies and summarises it all--the stage:

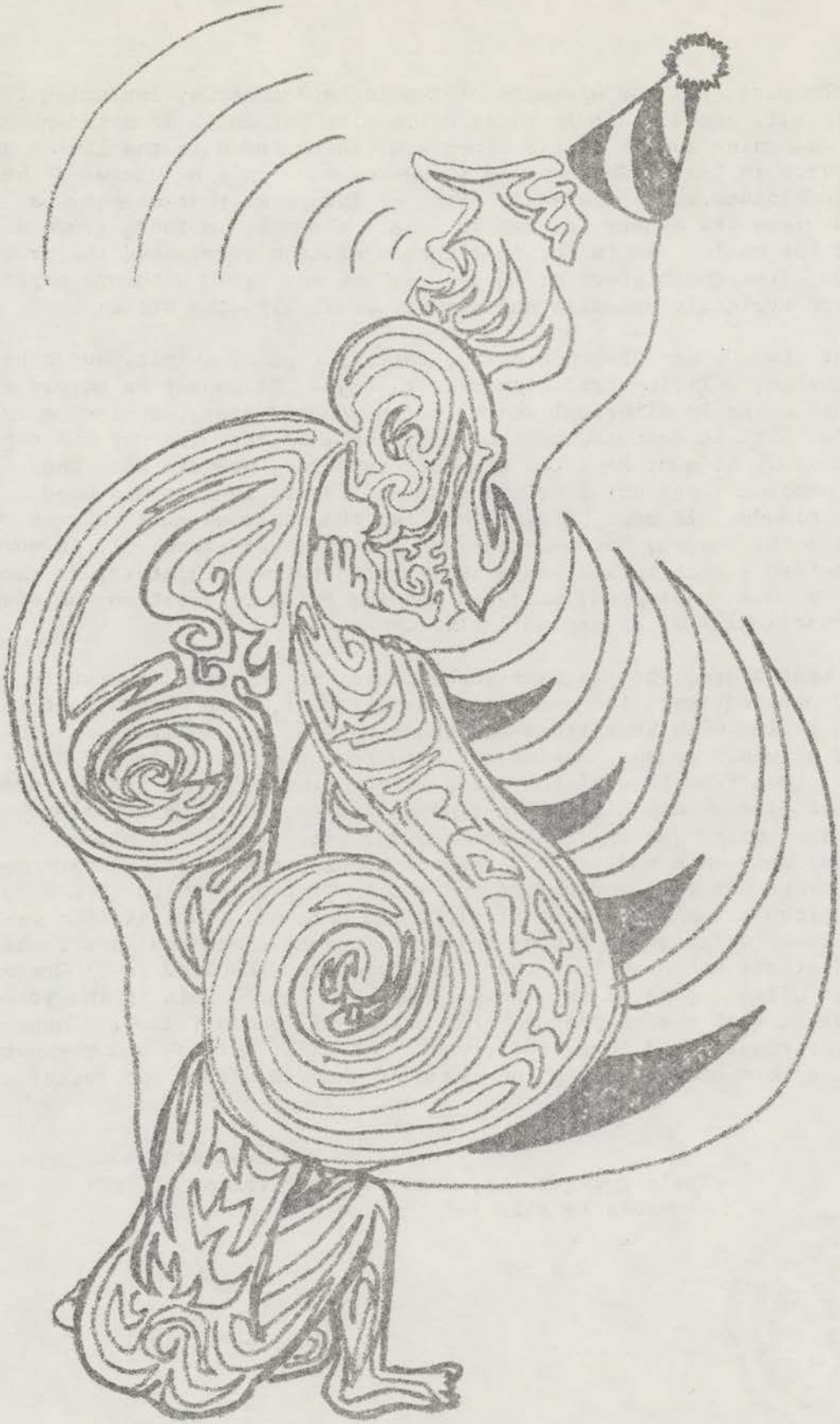
Great tragedy requires not only a certain type of spirit, but a national theatre, a living tradition of the stage. It cannot be merely a court stage or an intellectual stage, but a popular stage, springing from the people. Yet it cannot pander to the people in just the way our popular movies do. It must hold the highest standards, wrestle with the greatest problems, yet still grip and amuse. Roots in life and head above the clouds. It must bridge, that is, the enormous gulf between Oedipus and the satyrs, between Lear and the grossest clown. It is more than coincidence that such a stage has existed twice in history, in the two ages we have considered, the ages wedding faith to question, poising the irreconcilables of an expanding life.

And that stage, the stage of Shakespeare, is a type of everything else we have expressed: even the name seems significant, "The Globe." It is placed in a slum with bear rings and whore houses, but is frequented by all walks of men. As the Renaissance grew from the Middle Ages, This stage has grown from that of the old morality plays. It is not a representational window into a specific time and place, but a universal expanse of bare board jutting into the crowded pit. It is the middle earth, hung between a medieval heaven and a sulphurous hell. At any moment the traps can open and ghosts and witches rise in smoke from below or the pulleys creak and spiritual visitants descend. Thus it lies between ultimate values, but the energy which breaks there swallows those values, distorts and dissolves them, as forms are dissolved in El Greco: "None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em." This is the irreducible storm that sweeps the symbolic stage--all human folly and hope and desire, cruelty and love, their waste and fall, triumph and regeneration, and sombre acceptance in the frame of the old wisdom and faith:

> ....Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
> Ripeness is all.

Charles G. Bell
Tutor

Originally delivered as a lecture at the University of Chicago in 1949.
First appeared in printed form in the Diogenes, 1952.



We say that we hold our own strings.
But we are puppets.
dangling in delusion
Whose puppets are We. Where
are Our strings.

We have given Love and our worship
away to the funereal palace.
More like divorcees or third rate lesbians
than the widows that we are
we preclaim that we are Free Spirits.
I know that we are not in the aether.
But we nurture this conviction
as though it were adhesive
just like widows who sacrifice
their vitamins and pain pills
to the urn in the celler; distributing
everything to the void
except the nightmares between insomnias.

We are widows and grotesque children.
To smother boredom we incubate
our love's abottion in the urn-womb.
Each day we give its soundless cry a toy
or a nibble of candy or a little
taste of vomit. And we suck bitter honey
from its stagnant veins.
With tired glue eyes I watch
You linger in my doorway.

Our strings,
they are our of order
and repairs are closed
at least for the season,
and for the while we wait
and linger either frenzied
from too much over use,
frayed from the abundance
or desultory talking,
or frozen from familiar lethargy.

We are not in the aether. We hang
in the vague promise between
impossible and possible doorways,
the inflated edge.

Instead of Love you gave me
Private Lessons. Your needle
pricked somtimes wisely, sometimes
methodically, maliciously,
sometimes randomly. It has left
an index of scabs that cannot forget
their roughness.
You will abandon your loitering post
in this door-way, the urn-womb will

be purged and flushed away
but the private lessons will stay
and the calender will scratch them.

Until then I watch you loitering
with me on this bloated rim, sticking
your routine crumbs into the urn-womb;
Tardy for a lesson and absent from the mood.
My anger is mute. My face in the tin shine
of the incubator glares back with disgust.
Digust at the restrained impatience.
Impatience should scream. But it stolidly
tolerates. It observes with quiet alarm.
Its strings are paralysed.

To nourish the abortion we diseminate
words into the urn. Desultory conversation.
You tell me to pity nothing,
that to avoid all that provokes pity
and deserves it is wisest.
I look at you and I speak.
Is that why you avoid yourself.
In defance you duplicate me: No,
you say, that is why You
avoid yourself. You aim your tone
of false triumph into the urn.
But tonight I think that to starve
the amorphous bond
might be the wisest.

If love fails there remain
the possibilities of Pity
Contempt and apathy: Three
inferior griefs. Pity does not frighten me;
Comtempt is only glamour caught
in its quintessential error: A cadaver
powdering its pale pelvis.

My only terror is apathy.
Sometimes I suspect that even Terror
bores you.
Tonight I feel no worship for you.
You linger in my doorway,
you spread the edge and stretch it,
feeding it crumbs.
I whisper to myself,
asshold.

I feel no worship for you
and no pity and no contempt,
and I do not feel apathy.
For some reason I want to cradle
the cries in the urn-womb,
I write this poem for the soundless cries
and the vague promise
so that they will not die too young.

---George Coe

A SEX POEM

On the morgue floor we make our love. We Make It
On the morgue floor like medicine or noise.
With polite awkward reticence we admit our mutual
selfishness and sympathy. We make grunting laughter
to tame the quiet, the muteness and apathy: I
suck your thigh while your nipple tries to crowd
between my legs I am thinking that despite its
effort, its tenseness hardness and rigidity, it is
so small.

During an interval, an insipid moment in which
We acknowledge calmness, you tell me that earlier
in the day your past lover came wanting to fuck you
again and that when you refused he suddenly stripped
your bed of everything except a covered pillow which
he put in the center of the bareness and on the pillow he
put a round and dirty ash-tray staring up like a
cluttered eye from the dead center of everything.
And as you bite my eyelid I remark that it must have
looked like an artificial vagina grinning in the display
window of a pornography circus.
I can taste the popcorn's lurid unction: salt
and rancid butter; slime and oil; the glitter
on the trapeze star's bikini; the elephants foot
is never more than an inch from the nose in the cosmetic
smudge and its thousand pounds tremble in suspended
tension. And waiting for the drums to stop perpetually
rolling the sequined performer lies bored in the sawdust.

As we groan towards the finish I think of every
Other love affair. And I cease to hate this moment.

Retrospect reveals the cesspool. The history of my Love
is a hybrid of squalour and sterility; pornography
trying to flex its tenderness and wear romantic faces.
It is a cosmetic smudge; the elephant quivers.
Abortions lie in the sawdust and float on the cesspool's
scum surface:

From the distance they are all the same: Cesspools
Flooding the morgues.

My orgasm squirts into the ash tray.
It falls.
I forgive you.
This is no particular moment.

---George Coe

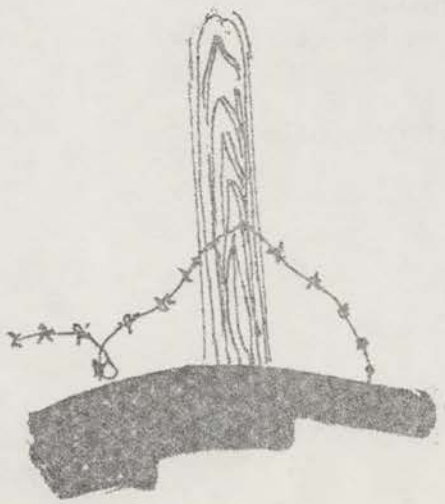
ORELBLORT STORY #4

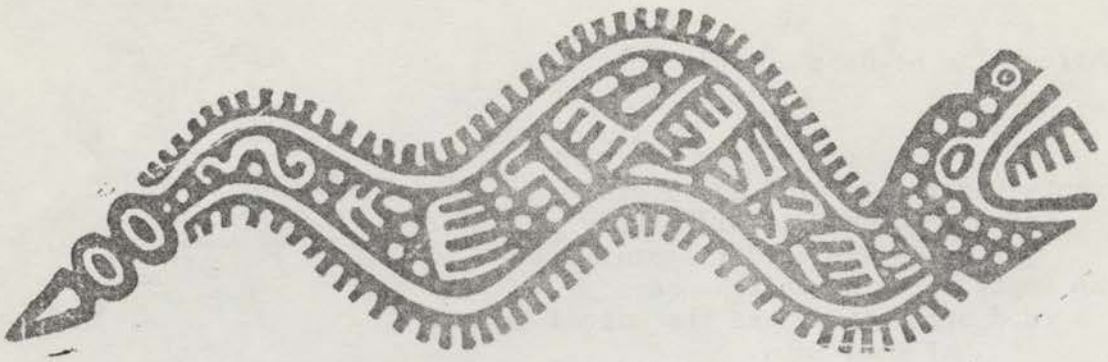
He fell down the street like a sack of asphalt, splitting with laughter, the funny noise spilling over the pavement, a sandstorm of hilarity. They lost the game the week before; it was his turn this week. It was hard to lose, with all the TV sets staring from the stands like a bunch of animated field glasses. But his place in line came, and he had to go. It was harder to go inside a TV set than to lose the game each time. The bartender had laughed at him when he told his story, peeping in the dollar beer slot of the walnut bar. "Go home and cry like a man," the bartender had told him, "it aint good to act like your losing before you lose." Mumble. I know. The game's gotta go on.

In the closing seconds he had watched the ball spiral closer. The machines never missed. He caught it, but the impact made him fall backwards, across a white stripe with a red flag at one end. The last gun sounded, the TV sets went off, the ball disappeared. He stood up and headed for the locker room to await the coach and get the traditional champagne shower accorded losers. In passing, he noticed an archaic scoreboard, a few of its lights still glowing. It said Him 6 Them 0. The reversal of the traditional order failed to penetrate his mind until he bumped into the coach on a fading concrete stairway. The coach went thump and blinked, his lights failing, meters falling toward zero. The coach had never looked that way before; he pushed him into the locker room. The lights went out. He forgot the coach and the champagne and wandered back the way to the walnut bar.

The dollar beer slot, for the first time in his life, was empty, and the bartender looked at him like a blown fuse. He went out, pushing the door open because its mechanism seemed to be stuck. Then he began to notice the TV's; they were standing like the coach, looks of electronic horror on their grey scales, fast fading like the lights. A wall fell in a few blocks away. Something appeared around the corner screaming 'He won! He won!' "So this is why I won," he said, and fell down the street laughing like a sack of asphalt.

---Warren Buckles





*

Flickering bulb: a moth,
His shadow.
Understood in name,

Shadow-passed, I swish feet
Upon a wet lawn.

Roads come as impressions
Of texture and sound piled
On passing sound,
    All

Dead now, crawling
Towards home in flashing
Spinning.

I want to sit down,
Nothing like laziness stirs
Me,
Only
A hand on a shoulder
Lurching in black.

Now tired,
Away from a need
To tie words together.
And,
Pray them to life.

--- Warren Buckles

Three Tales of Hope

I

Twenty years this wind has howled
around corners of old walls
wrapping cold fingers around
the empty halls of this house;
and still it drives the knived fingers
of snow into
the narrow chinks of my window
that break perilously through
to this other world -
lights of night-hushed cities
play hesitantly with
the wracked forms of clouds
and are themselves destroyed
by the old-troll's over-rough
hands, blustering
in heedless revel upon
the ragged-torn moors
of the surging wind
that still beats down
against these feeble defences
of any hand's strength sapped,
unwilling to let in the blast;
yet not wishing to resist
decayed in its hollow recesses
while the winds dark and raging
circle seven times
and shriek in triumph.

II

I sometimes think that I see the tall peaks that tower afar above the low ranges to the north. I know it to be the illusion of the soft rose light of the waning day playing on some trickster array of clouds near the horizon; and yet, I would still have them the great wall of ice on rock, forest-clothed raising defiant crags against the sky.

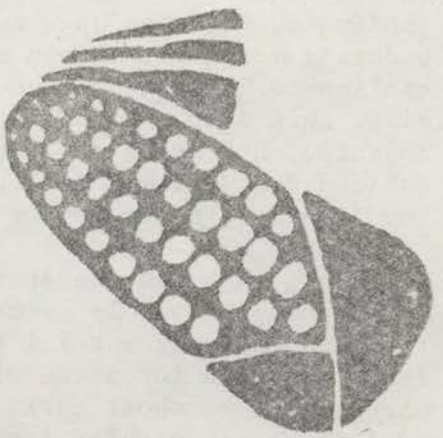
O Mountains beyond the world-edge, beckoning me to come stand at your sculpted feet and mocking me as I stand here by the window of this room.

O Mountains, some day you will scorn me no longer, O Mountains... no more.

III

In those days great songs will come from the earth;
Of grain golden in the rising sun will she sing.
Praises will laugh in the hearts of men
In company with the first fruits' plenty
And draughts of mirthy-cold water will delight
Men's dancing limbs in celebration.
Hymns to the loving Father, played
In children's games and old men's tales,
Whispering in the glades, over the wide plains,
Hymns rolling in the mountain-troll's laughter.
Psalms will lift high from the fields
Where men gather the earth's abundance,
From the mountain folds where men
Build and make living the stone.
In those days great songs will come from the earth;
I will call a welcome to the morning sun.

---Le Merle



AN HUNTING OF PYGMIES (THE ROUND)
yellow sheets, a work of young genius for our telephone book.
Arthur J. Samuelson

Below the surface, fat in beneath the smooth cruel depth of clear water, was the child, her body that blooming pregnant disease of red and blue splotched which rare flesh answers to vicious cold. Baby fat, a babe. A kind of purplish beauty. We wondered then, Susanna and I, as yet we wonder, if we might or, perhaps, should adopt. I had no knowledge of how the child had come to be in that river of such fierce November, and neither had the woman. Would run, I thought, but then no, for had we not learned some existential ethic to register for this sight of tangled blond innocent mass, the nose still barely blistering a thin line of hail-like breath to rivertop? And so we lay our blanket there, on the near frozen ground rusted over with the quick dead anti-spring lumps of vegetation. The air was of the same esoteric and liberally grey-white ash flavor that one expects from an evening with the aged, linen curtain fore dust-laden glass disclosing army greens Vermont. Where is Robert Frost when one needs a spot of cold dry? This I affront from all and to all aspects.

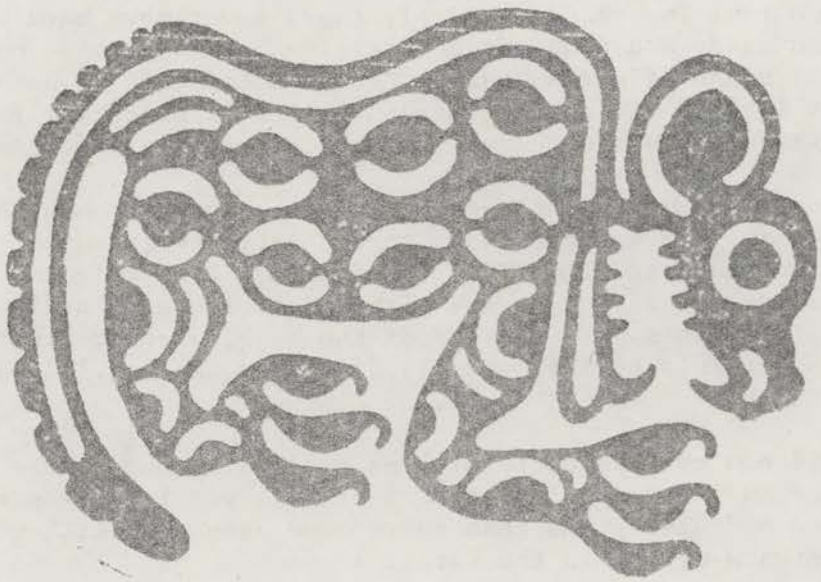
Not far nor gone long for useable wood, I returned to find Susanna in the neurotic momentum that is her wont, imperious but a-tremble with eyes upon the girl. Shaking there, Susanna made no sound but that of irregular outrush moan -- sigh. Arms akimbo, feet flat, lovely malignant skinny death-spat of a body rigid, like an ironing board. The whites of her eyes gone from glass to wake of red rivulets, as if from lack of sleep and not summit at all. I looked deep into the wrinkled blond blob, now sending up only the quiverest of drool-thread as air. Her body was securely bound with brown rope, thick and knotted so as to send me back reeling to Moby Dick. The rope was also tied to a boulder of inordinate size, this weight of shark black, and the babe's foot pointed poignantly thereto. Her dress and underpants were frilly pink. As I gazed, I noticed the dull elm reflection, zen scurvy, some need, on the face of the liquid, dimming as the ashen day folded away.

But, this was the strange thing. As the life of her gave its last silent peep (a wobbly needle gas spittle to surface that bubbled seconds, then was entirely gone) I looked beneath her curls. Susanna had moved from the scene for a sandwich, but I saw and with a splendid horror. The watery lift of short curls up and back revealed a face bloated to a fat adolescent's; no child face, but an infinitely emotional pig face. The despicable and criminal. Blue eyes moping, staying, just pickling in the liquor that surrounded. And at center, gape. A toothless religious horror of an exquisiteness I could scarcely admit. Orgasmic, but in a higher sense, in a sense of quite blessedness.

For fully ten minutes, I watched, and the waters caught lessening light. I plucked from the frozen bank a stone, an angle of shale, and primed my arm for the honors. Then, with care for the uniqueness this time, I moved well; lobbing, the stone plucked into the slight current, luck, chance. With tears and with wonder, myself inspired against the cold, I absorbed the black sharp offspring, the pinnacle of an otherwise undistinguished life, dropping home. It seeped slow between color-less

gums -- and beyond that, lips swollen to pigmeat clay almost negroid, I say foreign otherworldly lips -- and sunk to space, room, cavern, vault. Dipping silently into God knows where.

- - - Anonymous



HAPPINESS AND IDEALS

It is commonly said that men's lives are governed by the goals which they set for themselves. One man may choose to be a concert pianist; much of his time, if he is truly dedicated to this end, will be spent practicing. He will be happy in so far as he becomes a better pianist. Thus his happiness seems in the end itself. In fact, once the end is achieved, he must find a new one to give his life new vitality, new meaning. One wonders what the importance of the end is.

Don Quixote found his happiness in activity. His goal was to revive the lost art of knight-errantry. This end was governed by one more ultimate: to make the rather ugly world around himself more beautiful. He wanted to spread happiness, virtue, knowledge, love and joy throughout the world, as did the knights-errant of old. The activity of his life, designed to effect these ends, was in the imitation of these knights about whom he had read so much: Amadis of Gaul, Don Belianis, Rinaldo of Montalban, and so many others.

One may conclude, in looking at Don Quixote, that the ideal of one's life is of no real importance. Surely there never have been knights-errant, nor does running up and down the countryside bopping people on their heads seem a proper means of saving them. Yet Quixote seems to have been happy; his life was full of the sort of meaning which is so rarely found today. Clearly it was not his ridiculous myth which made his life good.

I disagree. However outlandish his myth may have been, Don Quixote's belief in its reality was necessary to the activity in which his happiness lay. He was often heard to defend the position that knights-errant did, in fact, exist. He argued boldly and with great eloquence against all holders of the opposite thesis. By the end of the book, whether rightly or not, Quixote renounced his belief. On his death bed, having laid down his arms, he said to Sancho;

> "And now my friend, forgive me foe making you appear as mad as I was myself, and for drawing you into my errors and persuading you that there have been and still are knights-errant in the world."[1]

Quixote's realization that his goal was unrealizable made the activity directed towards it meaningless, and he was no longer able to find happiness in that life. To trace in full the growth of his disillusion and its effect on his conviction in his activity is a task well beyond this paper. I will try to look at one thread: Quixote's belief that one may help others merely by wishing to do so.

This becomes a prominent theme in the final part of the novel. Sancho, by giving himself three thousand and three hundred lashes, can restore the Lady Dulcinea to her former loveliness. Strictly speaking, Sancho's power does not come solely from his well-wishing, but rather from enchanters. Yet to a certain extent, Quixote's belief in magic is but the belief in the mythical, efficient causes of his dreams. I won't push the point.

Sancho, of course, does not bother to sacrifice his hide. But Quixote

is deceived. Upon the supposed completion of the squire's whipping, his master

> "...waited impatiently for the moment when he might meet his lady, Dulcinea, in the disenchanted state; and as he went along he scrutinized every woman he met to see whether she was Dulcinea of El Toboso, such implicit faith had he in Merlin's promises, which to him were infallible."[2]

I must disagree with what I take to be Cide Hamete's interpretation of the Don's impatience. If he had implicit faith in Merlin's promises, that is, if he truly believed that through the means of enchanters our mere well-wishings may become transformed into actuality; then he would have had no reason to look expectantly at every woman. Rather he would have believed that Dulcinea was once again sitting in her glory in El Toboso. I think, rather, his once sure faith was no longer so.

I think that the episode which opens the next chapter confirms my view. Two boys are fighting in the street as Sancho Panza and Don Quixote enter the latter's village. One says, "Don't lash yourself Periquillo, for you'll never see her in all the days of your life."[3] Quixote immediately takes this as a portent that he will never again see Dulcinea. Such readiness to think this belies his earlier, supposed belief that thanks to Merlin, he will bump into her on the road. Quixote has reached the point where he no longer believes in enchanters, in the power of a man's wish, to actually effect good in the world. Such a change in the Don is not incidental; these tenets were essential to his belief in knight-errantry. Within ten days of these events, Don Quixote died, having abandoned his mad ideas.

Without his belief that the goal of knight-errantry was a real one, Quixote could not continue the activity governed by this end - trying to be one. But why not? Why not go on trying to be a knight, all the time realizing that this is impossible? Given that the activity would be the same in form, would he not be just as happy?

To answer this question I turn briefly to Aristotle. He says in The Ethics that happiness resides in the "...active life of the element that has a rational principle."[4] My understanding of man as rational is, in part, the determination of means to ends. Thus the activity in which a man may find happiness must be designed to bring about some end. For Aristotle, "end" in the context of the active life has a broader meaning than I have been using. Quixote's goal fits well within its limits.

Quixote saw that his goal was impossible, unrealizable. This is to say that there were no means which could achieve his ends. Thus his life, that activity of imitating knights-errant, became meaningless, purposeless. Happiness is not to be found in such a life.

But why not re-define his goal? Why not continue in the same activity, with the end of his own happiness? I think Aristotle would regard such an activity as non-rational in so far as happiness does not have the nature of an end. Perhaps Cervantes would agree with him, but for Quixote, such a life is lacking in another way. For him, not just any sort of goal will suffice. I can't begin to see Don Quixote de La Mancha riding around the

countryside, bopping people over the head and saying lovely, righteous things without truly wishing the best for all good people. At any rate, it seems to me that other activities are better suited to the immediate achievement of happiness.

Following his demise, Quixote lights on the idea of the Pastoral life. It is a vision of pleasant meadows, fresh springs and bountiful woods, of love-sick song and amourous tales. It is an activity for the purpose of happiness, an activity lacking the middle term, equivalent to helping others as a knight-errant, which would give it the glow of virtue. Quixote drops the plan. Again with Aristotle, happiness resides in an activity in accordance with virtue (cf. The Ethics, 1098a-15).

With Aristotle, Cervantes seems to feel that happiness for men is in an activity defined by a virtuous, apparently realizable goal. Quixote's belief in his goal, regardless of how unreal it may have been, was necessary to his activity and hence to his happiness. Still I wonder why he died. Men less driven by virtue than the Don are often seen in shepherds' clothes. But even if that life and those like it would not suit Quixote, why could he not find some other more realistic goal in accord with virtue? Quixote's old heart was broken, he had bet his very last. The fact that he considers the amoral Arcadia perhaps betrays his real disillusion - with the goal of helping others, not merely with the means of knight-errantry. Had he still believed in the possibility of making the world more beautiful, Quixote could surely have tried other means to do so. His turning to Arcadia may be Cervantes pointing to the modern world itself, where uplifting, morally-centered myths have been crumbling one after the other, and so few seem to be left.

Peter Meadow
class of 1973

Footnotes

[1]All quotes from Don Quixote are taken from Walter Starkie's translation. Published by Macmillan & Co., London 1957
--page references are to that edition
--Part II, chapter LXXIV page 1047
[2]Part II, chapter LXXII page 1038
[3]Part II, chapter LXXIII page 1039
[4]Aristotle's Ethics, Book 1, chapter 7, 1098a-2
from Random House, The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed., R. McKeon
New York, 1941

ANTI-ION

Aristophanes: Greetings, Ion! You certainly look pleased with yourself.

Ion: Indeed I am, Aristophanes, for I have been speaking to Socrates and have realized that I have been divinely inspired in my rhapsody. The wisdom of Socrates has led to this happy conclusion. Thus I have it from both the opinion of a wise man and my own conclusions that I have been specially favored by the gods. Who would not be happy under such conditions?

Aristophanes: I am quite amazed to hear this, Ion, for I thought that you held your success to be from that renowned art of rhapsody, which is learned by study. Instead you seem willing to accept the position of a mere tool of some other entity. But I cannot be surprised that you have changed your opinions, since you have spent your time speaking to one of such obvious authority in the field of rhapsody. For Socrates surely must know more than other men about this art, since he devotes his time to nothing else but speaking in public, to the public, and about the public. Yet I must wonder how it was concluded that you are indeed divinely inspired. Can you explain this change of position to me?

Ion: Certainly. Socrates made me see that I am like a metal bar that is attached through progressive influence to a loadstone. The influence is inspiration, and the loadstone is the Muse. Hence I am affected in my own emotions, and my audience is similarly moved.

Aris: The analogy is pleasing, although it does little in itself to prove that you are indeed inspired, or even to give an idea of what inspiration truly is. Nevertheless, let us agree for the moment that this explanation will give proof of the argument. To follow the analogy, then, does the loadstone affect all materials or just some?

Ion: Certainly it affects only some.

Aris: And must not these be metal?

Ion: Indeed they must.

Aris: Yet are all metals affected?

Ion: No. Some have no attraction at all.

Aris: And some have lesser degrees of attraction?

Ion: Yes.

Aris: And is any one more easily attracted than any other?

Ion: Iron, it seems, has the greatest attraction.

Aris: Then do you not see the difficulty of the analogy? For isn't there a necessary variation in men as regards the Muse?

Ion: I do not understand, Aristophanes. Please explain.

Aris: Very well. To carry out the comparison, are there not some men who do not read at all and hence cannot have any chance of being able to rhapsodize?

Ion: That is true.

Aris: Aren't these men like stones that cannot respond to the magnet? And aren't those men who can read, but who do not do so enough to be able to speak poetry, like the metals that are not attracted?

Ion: That seems most reasonable.

Aris: And are not the rhapsodes like those metals that are attracted to the loadstone? And wouldn't the most attracted of these be the best of rhapsodes? In other words, you?

Ion: All of that seems to hold.

Aris: Yet man can pick what kind of substance he will be, which the elements cannot do. For a man by choice may pursue rhapsody or not, whereas iron remains in the same state unless outside forces intrude. Thus, if man controls whether he is capable of receiving this so-called inspiration, it could very well be an art that truly causes his success. Can you give a more concrete explanation of just what this inspiration is, or must we exclude it because its nature is unknown?

Ion: As Socrates explained it, inspiration is a gift of the gods that transforms men without their knowledge of what they are doing. For example, there is my own emotion onstage that seems incongruous with reason and circumstance.

Aris: Then inspiration must accompany ignorance. But in your example, surely you are well acquainted with the words the heroes speak in Homer's poems.

Ion: Of course.

Aris: And by study you know the emotions they mean to convey?

Ion: Naturally.

Aris: Yet could you convey this if you stood still as a stone with no expression and recited?

Ion: That would be a disaster!

Aris: But since you are acquainted with the characters and story is it not easy to temporarily imagine yourself there and thus feel the emotions, so that the audience might feel these with you?

Ion: Exactly.

Aris: But do you ever totally lose command of your senses?

Ion: Indeed not, for I must constantly be aware of the audience's reaction and therefore must be capable of thought.

Aris: Then it seems that this "inspiration" is a product of your own study, rather than an unthinking external force.

Ion: I must admit that in this case it seems to be true.

Aris: Then where is this divine control? Everywhere I search it seems I find only human influence.

Ion: Perhaps it must be divine because we cannot find its essence. For if all human possibilities are exhausted, what cannot be understood must be beyond man and hence divine.

Aris: Oh, it is by process of elimination that we find what is divine. Then tell me how art was eliminated from contention.

Ion: It became clear to me that since I am not capable of rhapsodizing all poets' works and since what the poets speak of is common, I had no command of the art itself. Further, no part of the work is best understood by the rhapsode. For example, charioteers understand the racing scenes better; the doctors, the medical references; and so on. And since it is absurd for an art to embrace all arts, there can be no art of the rhapsode.

Aris: This seems to be another example of Socrates' impressive logic. Yet perhaps if we look again, it will appear less certain to exclude art from rhapsody. First, it is clear that you have at least read all poets. Do you understand equally what they say, or do you understand in accordance with how much you read them?

Ion: I best understand those whom I have read most; I do not understand those I do not really study as well.

Aris: Yet you exclude art merely because you study only Homer, whom you feel to be the greatest?

Ion: Well actually, it is Socrates' argument that a man who knows what is best also knows what is least and is well qualified on both subjects.

Aris: But must a lessening of art require its exclusion?

Ion: What do you mean, lessening; I see no art at all.

Aris: Again, a man who has not studied poetry cannot see the best. But if the difference between the greater and the lesser poets is large enough, only slight study is needed to tell them apart. For example, a man with little knowledge may discern that an eagle is greater than a bumblebee. Yet if, discerning that difference, he chose only to study the eagle, he could learn much more about the eagle and might easily become the authority on the structure of the noble bird. Can we then say that there is no art of observation because it reaches its peak by choice in only one case?

Ion: I am uncertain. Wouldn't this man have only the art of observing

eagles?

Aris: Perhaps that is true, although since technique is similar and inclination is the determinant, it seems that art of the whole underlies this. But regardless, it seems that art cannot be excluded on these grounds. Do you agree?

Ion: I must, I suppose. But what of the other argument that no specific art of the rhapsode can be distinguished, but at the same time that an art must be separate by its nature?

Aris: Here again it seems to me that the truth lies deeper. Although other men know more about specific parts, do any of these know as much about the others as you do?

Ion No, not at all.

Aris: Even if they did, could they know as much about the whole work as you?

Ion: Impossible!

Aris: So your knowledge is mainly concerned with how the parts fit together and how to express the parts to give understanding of this. For this you need not master all arts, but merely believe the truth of the individual parts and understand the structure they form. Is it fair to call it no art at all to draw a house so that it may be perceived by others, because the artist does not best know the construction of bricks?

Ion: It's obviously absurd to say that.

Aris: Then the perception of a whole and its expression could be called the rhapsode's art, could it not?

Ion: It seems possible at least. But Socrates disagreed.

Aris: But isn't that because he feels that understanding determines an art?

Ion: That is true.

Aris: Did you have this understanding?

Ion: Apparently not.

Aris: Yet I have just heard you admit to knowledge that indicates that understanding is involved: in the case of the iron rings, in the stage emotion discussion, in the matter of the eagle, and just now. Why then did not Socrates realize this?

Ion: I cannot account for it.

Aris: Could it be that your failure was due to your inability to express your knowledge, rather than your lack of knowledge?

Ion: That seems possible, though hardly laudible for a rapsode.

Aris: It is understandable that one who so often speaks the words of the greatest poet whould be uncertain when using lesser words. But do you still hold rhapsody to be by divine inspiration?

Ion: I cannot say that; but neither can I call it art, for the objections at least have slid theory to account for actions, while art is being pushed in only because it is a possibility.

Aris: If both are possible, will a theory of art in rhapsody sway you, since you cannot really define inspiration and you have a broken analogy as the main reasoning?

Ion: Such an account logically developed would seem a true verification of the art of the rhapsode.

Aris: Then let me see what can be done. First we must discern that you originally read all poems. Correct?

Ion: That is true.

Aris: But the knowledge gained from this shallow sip into poetry let you discern that Homer was the greatest.

Ion: Definitely.

Aris: Thereafter you studied only Homer and grew more knowledgeable and skilled in his works. Is that true?

Ion: You know it very well.

Aris: Now, whould you come across an unknown poet's work, could you recognize whether it was greater than that of Homer?

Ion: Although that is unlikely, the answer is yes.

Aris: How could you do that? Isn't it because you have previously learned the basis of good and bad in poetry?

Ion: Why, it seems that is the case.

Aris: Then any greater work you would soon be able to rhapsodize by studying it as you did Homer and applying the techniques learned?

Ion: I imagine so.

Aris: Then if you chose, you could do the same with existing lesser poems?

Ion: I suppose so, but I just don't consider it.

Aris: Then your lack of skill is by choice, not deficiency, and the art is there to be applied as you choose. You are a man who is concerned

only with the best; that is all. Do you agree now that art does explain your case very well?

Ion: I do, Aristophanes, but the words of Socrates still trouble me, for he labeled me unjust, should I take that choice.

Aris: Wasn't he really judging your words, not your ideas, as I explained before?

Ion: You are right again. Then I do have an art!

Aris: So it seems. Now if you will tell me where you met Socrates, I will seek him out and find out who is really unjust around here.

David Maclaine
class of 1974

*

The last thing: humor hiding
Along with the dead leaves in
The park. Or compare, thick
Rome, with the titterings of
Adolph down the street.

The sun beating against those
Practical pillars would win
Some contest of time, as if
We composed for him; holocaust of
Humors.

The drone of machines in the
Graphic air, forgets the black
Award: white bones for a pittance
Piled high; stone of sound.

*

The sun beating on white birch is crisp,
The perfection of the eye is the crisp
mind,
The thought so dry that it is rubbed
between
The fingers.

What does he write to his lover in the
Rain forest? As if he could say,
"You are
Wet and cannot see the rings of Saturn."

The cold can see. A dead man's arm is
dead
And is an arm. Emotion is thought or the
Eye turned to birch. He is crisp.

--- David St. John

Falling Out Love

frozen and motionless
i stood captured by yearning.
it rushed forth like a sudden geyser:
confused
one moment everything came at once everywhere,
bigger than i could even witness
images
left me running behind
left me

i woke alone
the battle-field was full and silent
i swear i saw nothing did not hear a moan
as i staggered away

now i am older than i ever was.
the children do not mind me
as i watch them play soldiers
from my bench

they no longer ask me
how it was
i told them: i am no hero,
all i saw was fire
fire all around me

- - - Benjamin Bergery

aunt celia

morning and an aunt celia
nose
creeps around the corner
as i eat my bowl of life
she plods into the room
lifting her boated bandaged feet clumsily
and lowering them against the carpet
with blatant thuds
she faces me
arms dangling lazily
diabetic legs standing apart
and a great white head
gaping forward at my meal
the toothless mouth hangs open
the long hard nose accents her flaming eyes
glaring defiantly at me
and i turn to eyes suddenly squinting
in a dumb aggressive smile
with bulky arms extended
she wraps me in
an odorous hug

--- Stephany Lyman

*

Tree
A twisted
Twisted hand of mother;
Tree
Wound to ends
And climb in sky
Fragile winded twigs
So twisted.
Tree
Wood-line arm
That turning upward
Released the going down
And was dead.

--- Warren Buckles

DOUGLAS ALLANBROOK
Harpsichord
January 28, 1972

Twelve Scarlatti Sonatas
Five Studies in Black and White -- Allanbrook
Suite in A Minor -- Jean-Phillipe Rameau

Unlike most of today's performers, Mr. Allanbrook chose to begin his evening's performance with "twelve boring pieces," for Scarlatti is among those many composers whose compositions are commonly used for "filler" and whose style is considered to be that of a sprightly buffoon.

But it was in a real understanding of the tremendous value of Scarlatti's works that Mr. Allanbrook made such a dedication to the composer.

Scarlatti's greatness, it seems, really relies upon his originality of style and dynamism, which he kept under classical restraints. That is, he used a theory of harmony and form well worked out in his day, but went quite beyond that theory. In consequence, although he can be identified with other composers using, for example, the classical sonata form, he has successfully defied systematic analysis or classification. As an example of this, I have taken the following from Kirkpatrick's book Scarlatti:

CLASSICAL SONATA		SCARLATTI SONATA
Exposition:		First half:
First theme, subsidiary material, extensions and transitions	BASIC TONIC	Opening, central section (coninuation, transition, pre-crux)
		(Crux)
Second theme, subsidiary material, extensions, closing theme or themes	CLOSING TONIC	Tonal section (post-crux, closing further closing, final closing)
Development:		Second half:
	MODULATION	Opening (optional) Excursion
Recapitulation:		Optional restatement of pre-crux or also preceding material
First theme, subsidiary material, extensions		
	BASIC	(Crux)
Second theme, subsidiary material, closing theme or themes	TONIC	Restatement of tonal section (post-crux, closing, further closing, final closing)[1]

As generally accepted today, those who wrote the classical sonata (Hadyn, Mozart, Beethoven, and others) tended toward the form of Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation. Even if the sonata was divided in two by a double bar, this remained the case.

But with Scarlatti (considered by William S. Newman to be in the classical era of the sonata[2]) the double bar division meant something. It supplied a clear separation between two well-balanced musical presentations. This is why Kirkpatrick found its climax and termed it "Crux." He found that Scarlatti had the art of first lauching to the dominant and then modulating from it into the closing sections,

thus creating a high point at the "center" of each half. The pre-crux and the post-crux are those actual movements (modulations) which lead to and from the Crux itself. Yet these classifications are only applicable by the theorist, and then only when considering tonal structure. It does not nearly afford the listener the tools with which to listen; as do the classical classifications of Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation. In short, the Scarlatti sonata form is quite elusive to valuable classification. Even under Kirkpatrick's terms, only three of the classifications might apply in K. 544 (Opening, Pre-crux, and Post-crux).

And still, with all the differences, one can find common ground between Scarlatti and the classical. This oneness can be seen in the actual definition of Sonata. A Sonata is an instrumental composition of one to four movements which uses a basic first-movement form. The first movement form is simply that all theme continuity between the sections of the piece are based on the first movement. In Scarlatti this is the recurring altering of fragments of the first theme stated. This form of recurrence or restatement was well developed through time in various degrees of adherence to the classical Exposition, Development, Recapitulation. In a sonata for orchestra, called a symphony, or for four instruments, called a quartet, or for any group of instuments, there is an adherence to this scheme, but what makes the greatest differences are those musical groups themselves. For the group which is being composed for greatly affects the style in which the composer writes.

The same, in fact, was true of Scarlatti. His instrument, a single keyboard harpsichord, almost demanded his style. For nowhere else does one find the dynamism (freedom) of his closing modulations coupled with the folk-dance sound of the Spanish (much exemplified in K. 491). For such an instrument it was required that there be hardly so much attention paid to the fluency of the machanism as to the dynamism of the music itself. That free dynamic style of Scarlatti contrasts well with the static (strict) classical form. It demonstrates Scarlatti's greatness. The overt and boisterous attempts at dynamism today are nothing compared to the Sonatas. The forces at play, irregular bursts of new harmony, the existing melodic movement, Scarlatti's tempo control of an otherwise unwieldy musical object, etc., are only more satisfying since they are contained within the sonata form.

But in the final analysis, the feeling created by correct performance of these pieces makes or breaks them. I am truly convinced that investigation into the Sonatas of Scarlatti by any truly interested individual will provide for that person a high respect for and satisfaction in the pieces and their composer.

Placing the Sonatas in an order keyed to present the creativity of Scarlatti, Mr. Allanbrook showed recognition of the relations which each Sonata had with the other. It was also quite noticable that Allanbrook possessed the art of true musical expression, and his intentions were obviously good. However, Allanbrook failed throughout his presentation to carry out one of the most basic steps in any musical performance: playing the right notes. This case was best heard in his performance of K. 491. If one listens to the recording one will find that even though the piece is in major, the last few

notes appear to be in minor.

In addition, Mr. Allanbrook seemed to have a bit of trouble with tempo of three of the Sonatas. K. 490 and K. 544 were too slow for their real colour to show through, but the most blatant problem in tempo -- K. 491 again -- was an attempt to play the Sonata at a Cantabile 3/4 when the piece was marked Allegro 3/4.

If these had been only a few technical mistakes, one could have dismissed them as nervousmess and sat back to enjoy the music. Yet these technical errors appeared throughout the Sonatas (K. 133, K. 461, K. 492), creating not an atmosphere of musical contemplation, but an attitude of technical criticism.

It was unfortunate that many who spoke after the concert felt that the performance of twelve Scarlatti Sonatas in a row was a little too much -- a view I felt was induced by the performance and not the Sonatas themselves.

Mark Habrel
class of 1975

1 Ralph Kirkpatrick, Domenico Scarlatti (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1953) p. 254.

2 William S. Newman, The Sonata in the Classic Era (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1963) p. 261.

In an age of unrest capable of producing injustice and violence, what has a composer to do except explore the many systems of harmonic technique to find one that pleases him? In a country that invests so much toil and concern (perhaps even worship) on the young, in a world of allegiances in a state of Heracleitean flux; the youthful harmonies of the so-called atonal attitude conflict bitterly with the stable harmony of tonality. What results is the extension of tonality, harmony that makes sense to the ear but looks very odd to those equipped only with Walter Piston's harmony text, who make judgements on the basis of common root progressions.

Five Studies in Black and White, Allanbrook's own work, sustained its aural coherency. This means that despite the ambiguity of widespread dissonance, the music moved. It made sense. It fetched up to where it was aimed. In terms of compositional technique, to the extent of the use of an element most alien to music, silence, Allanbrook's pieces were a success. But like his contemporaries, Mr. Allanbrook has one hurdle left to overcome. Before I say what this last high-jump is, let me note that Mr. Allanbrook can be ranked far above more notorious purveyers of new music (John Cage, Charles Wuorinen, Eliot Carter, etc.) who produce successful non-music. Mr. Allanbrook is a true composer.

The hurdle that all except the greatest have to face is the power to capture the listener's heart and mind and hold it. This power in music is a sustained effort of dynamic handling and musical communication. It is a sense of constant becoming and perishing. The composer creates a chord only to annihilate it in the next one. This pushes our expectation to either fulfillment or continued suspension up to the tonic chord (this is negated in low quality music by the uninspired context held in the memory). In great music, we remember the melody and even the harmony because the sequence of the chordal life-cycle is clear; and this act of memory is nearly the same as the one that retains the memory of a series of causes, although it remains to be explored whether a chord can be said to cause another.

Mr. Allanbrook's Studies exhibited a subtle kind of tonality, a substructure which gave it immediate inner coherency. I maintain that it is the built-in dynamic vector of tones that gives it the sense of causation which is so memorable and that it is the occasional negation of these vectors which propels a piece to a pinnacle of greatness. Some of this the Studies displayed. But on the other hand, the Studies lacked a certain height of soul, the quality which makes music the human Dionysian endeavor that it is. That is to say, the Studies seemed a little too tightly constucted; more compositional favor was given the governing (and perhaps the generating) principle than the overall musicality which is a kind of natural effortless song flowing from the heart. But whoa! It may be objected that these are studies. But remember, studies as well as concerti, symphonies, and sonatas are music, and music should flow naturally.

Despite my cavils, the Studies are the work of coherent thinking, and any composer who can get his harmony together has his art under the requisite Apollonian rein. Mr. Allanbrook displayed his performing technique beautifully (main features: no wrist action but treatment of the fingers as little hammers allowing the weight of the keyboard action to lift them after striking a note). It is therefore my pleasure to conclude that Mr. Allanbrook's studies are beautifully organized and a credible addition to modern harpsichord literature as well as music. From hearing them, I can't help the feeling that Mr. Allanbrook is about to make a substantial contribution to music on a large scale; and feeling this, in a period of musical poverty, I am rife with anticipatory excitement.

Stephen Whitehill
class of 1972

Jean-Phillipe Rameau, contemporary of Bach and Handel (1683-1764), was for a short period the largest figure in French music. Famous in his lifetime for the stage music he composed for the spectacular opera of the French court, he also wrote the pioneering Treatise of Harmony Reduced to Six Natural Principles and the three books of Pieces de Clavecin.

Pieces de Clavecin comprimises in fifty-one works the culmination of the school of Couperin and Chambonnieres, the first great French clavecinistes. Given the disparities in era, style, and temperment, Rameau was to the harpsichord what Chopin was to the piano in his utilization of peculiar harmonic and mechanical resources of the harpsichord. It is ironic that the popularity of the works composed by the master of the expressive capabilities of the clavecin has suffered because these works are so well-conceived for his instrument that they are not suited for the piano.

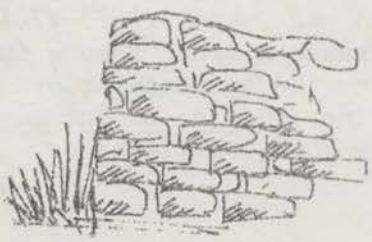
Mr. Allanbrook chose to play the Suite in A Minor from the last book of Pieces. His interpretation was wonderful in conception; he "spoke" as though he were on the best terms with the French clavecinciste tradition. His tempi were restrained and tasteful, and in areas his articulation was such that it clearly brought out the consistency of the music. Unlike many artists who sacrifice clarity for speed and flashiness, not allowing the music to speak for itself, Mr. Allanbrook played with eloquent crispness. His articulative ability, essential for the harpsichordist, coupled with such a scholarly and direct interpretation, made certain parts of the program memorable musical experiences

Unfortunately, there must be execution in addition to interpretation, and the technical realization of the Suite wanted. I was under the impression that, had the artist been more relaxed or familiar with the instument, his performance would have been difficult to find fault with.

The first three movements of the Suite, the Allemande, Courante, and Sarabande, were derived from French dance forms; both composer and interpreter showed facility and ease with them. Mr. Allanbrook displayed his articulative ability in these heavily-ornamented and expressive pieces. Les Trois Mains, the three hands, is a difficult study in crossovers. Here the harpsichordist gave musical content to what is usually a specious display of fingers.

Had Rameau had his way, the Gavotte et Doubles would have been the high point of the program. The ancient dance theme and variations builds to a sonorous climax when played properly, the variations in close succession. Mr. Allanbrook's unfamiliarity with the instrument make quick registration impossible, and time had to be taken between each double, lessening the effectiveness of the piece. The last two, most brilliant variations were performed by an able, but very nervous harpsichodist.

Gary Blanchard
class of 1975



blah blah

who is that girl i hear her talking
her voice rose thorny and monotonous
her eyes look elsewhere
away from foam of talk swelling
lids are slack in that wind
but eyes are tight aged young, she is
passing through too much fright
her tongue cuts out the details of the passing family
who steer their crippled member before them
in a chair the masthead of a ship in the desert
crippled by what went before the masthead turns
and faces the ship to cry stop
my personality has turned on me with viciousness
my soul quivers between my legs i turn and howl
or so i think, it's only the light passing wind
spinning me about with an amused whistle
who is that girl i hear her telling
that young man to go away what do you mean
she smiled at sea though she felt ugly
and dry

--- Theresa Sellers

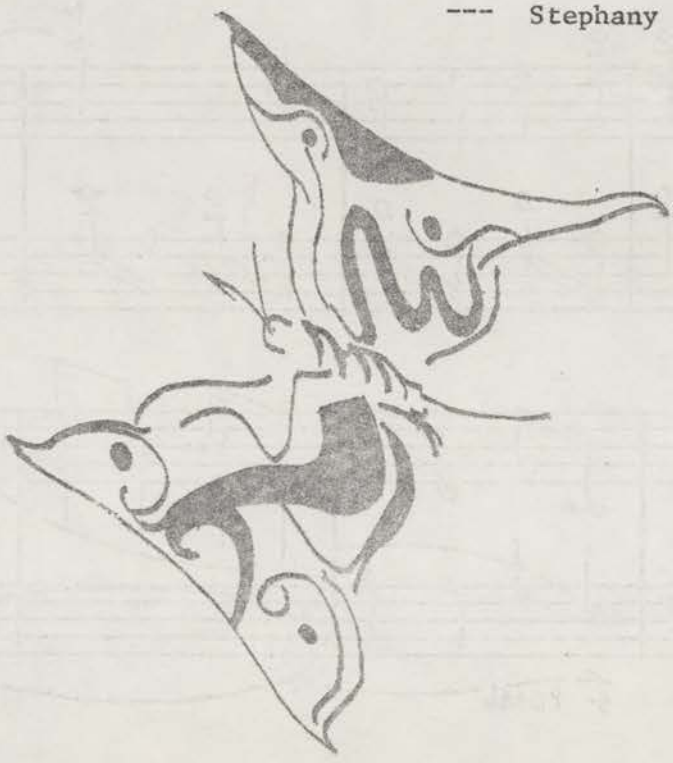
Elegy to the Sky

My demanding was meant to be gentle.
And my landing was sent to be light.
But not knowing they held the sky
as they hopelessly reached for it,
my strong, mad hands abandoned me.
When they squeezed the sun from its socket,
clenched crippled clouds in their fists,
smothered the stars and peeled the sky bloody,
they were only trying to fly.

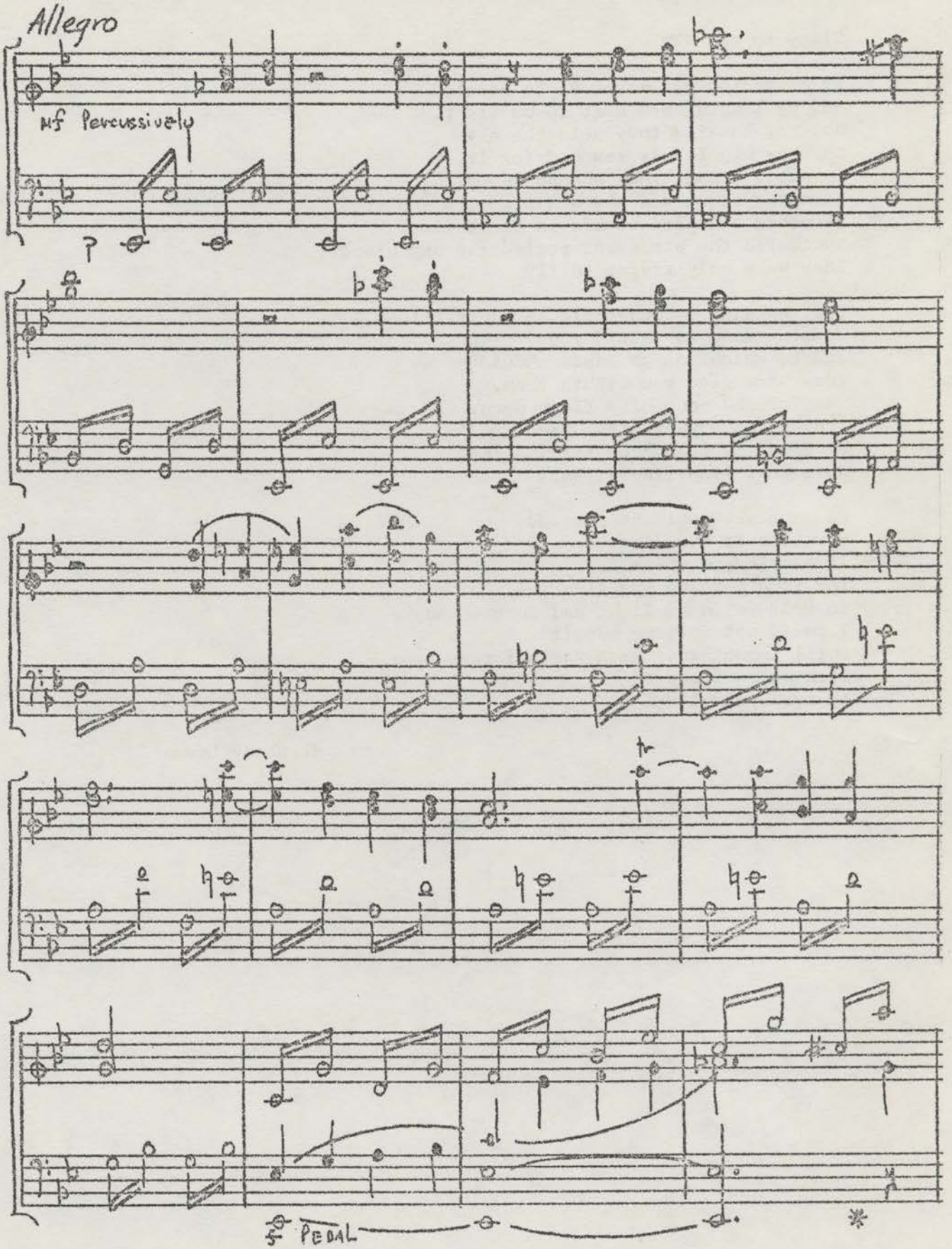
They handled you ungently in their flight.
Meaning only to enfold you
and to catch you as hands should,
they strangled you within them.
They ripped your blue flesh open.
They watched your vital face
replaced by floods of falling sky
ooze past limp fingertips.

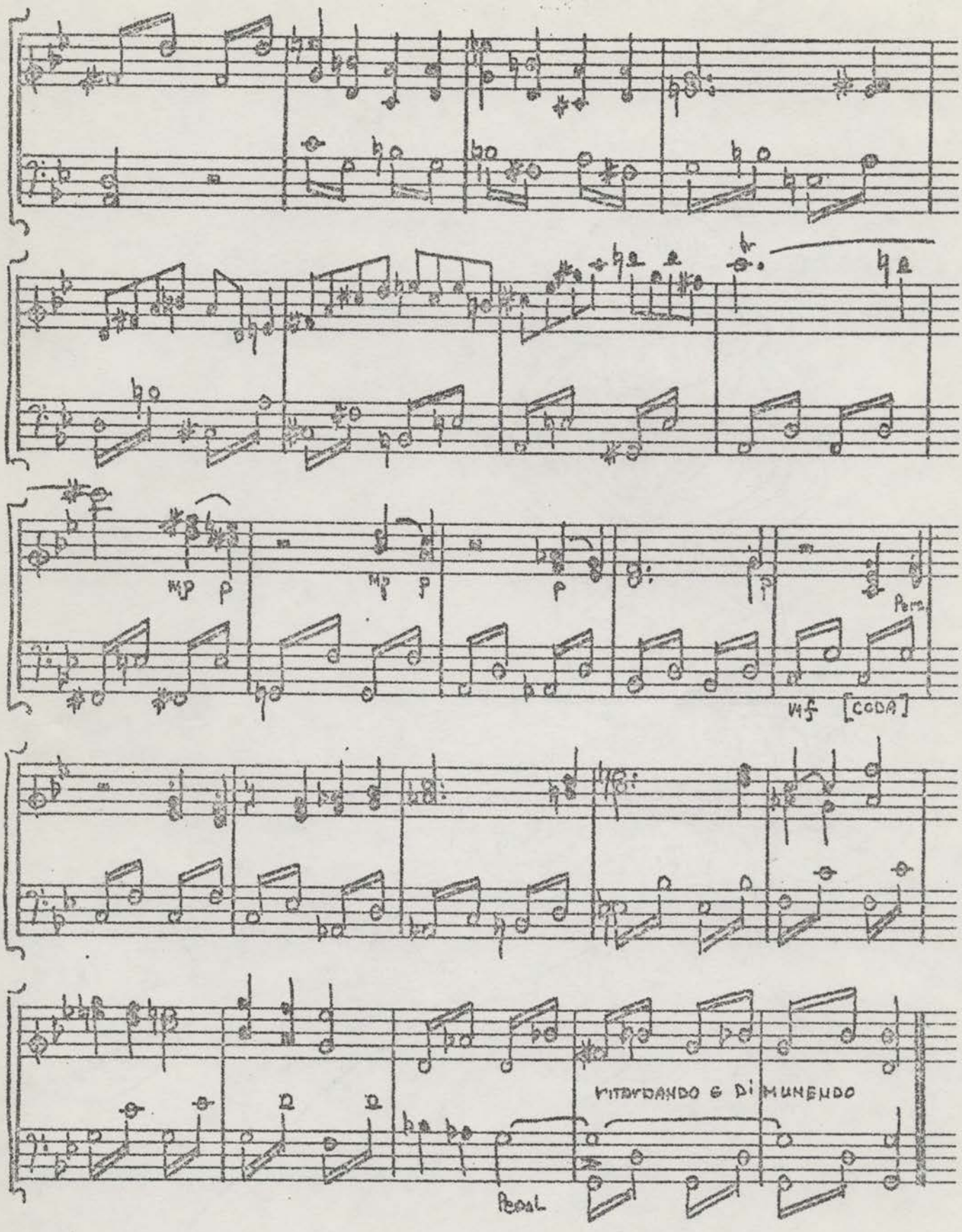
How our sky could be revived,
now that it has died,
I've tried to dream.
Yet if a morning sky did rise
to melt me in sunlight and forgive me,
I could not forgive myself
until these hands were worth forgiveness,
with palms prepared
to wear your love.

--- Stephany Lyman



SONG FOR THE MOMENT + stephen Whitehill

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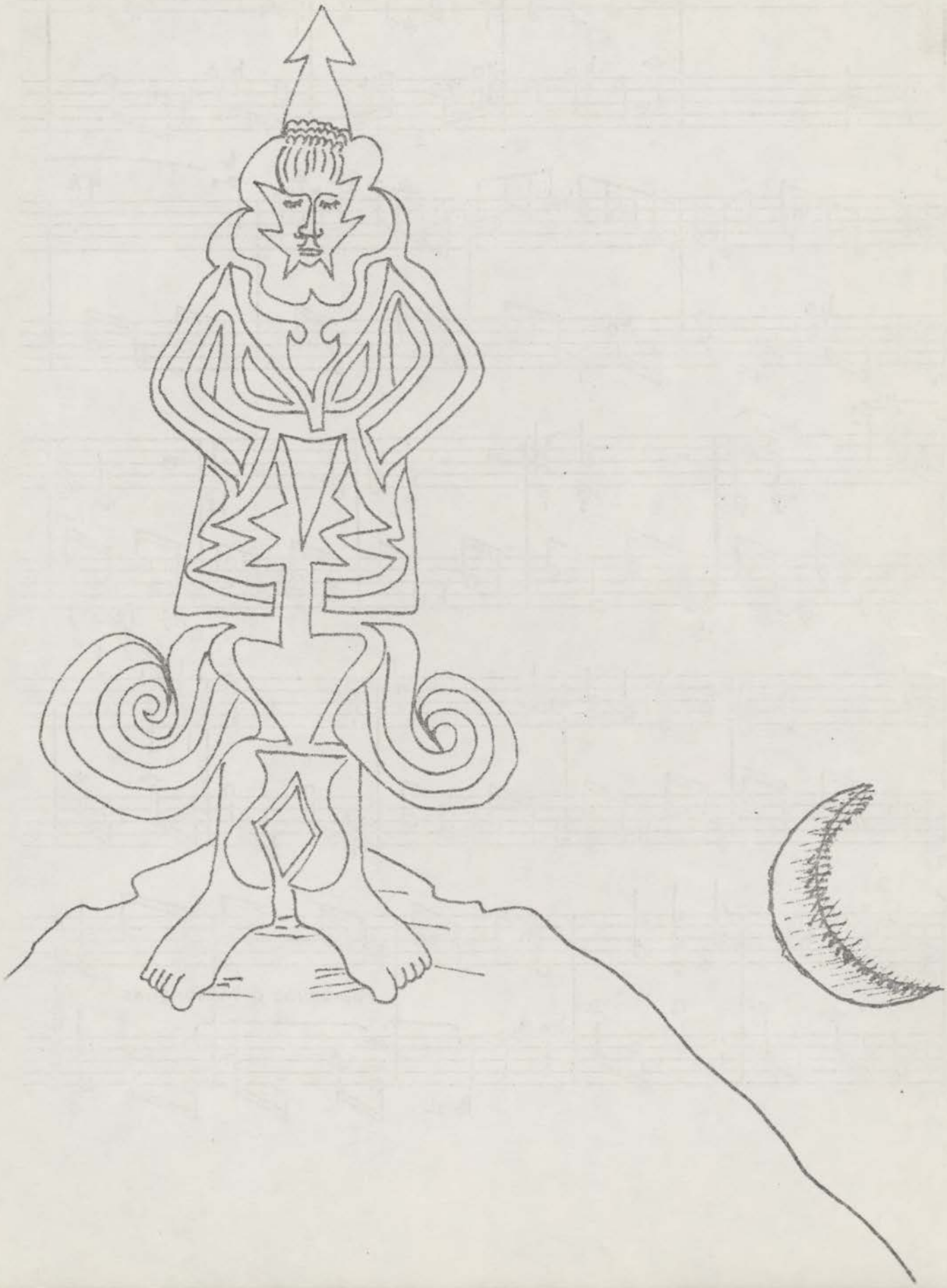

SOME BRIEF REFLECTIONS ON THE VALUE OF CLASSICAL GREEK TRAGEDY

"Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery. All human happiness and misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality."

--Aristotle[1]

". . .and when the age looses the tragic, it gains despair. There lies a sadness, and a healing power in the tragic which one truly should not despise, and when a man, in the preternatural manner our age affects would gain himself, he looses himself and becomes comical."

--Kierkegaard[2]

The mood of our present age has often been characterized as one of despair in its literary and artistic expression. Soren Kierkegaard in his essay "Ancient Tragical Motif as Reflected in the Modern" has observed that the loss of tragic expression in the literary arts is a symptom of despair. He also writes of a "healing power" contained in the experience of tragical drama. It is this healing power which I shall attempt to illuminate to some extent. Kierkegaard's essay is valuable not only in its penetrating analysis of Greek tragedy, but also in its re-examination of modern tragedy from a Christian viewpoint. It may be considered in some respects as a fragmentary Christian counterpart to Aristotle's Poetics. Kierkegaard makes what at first glance seems to be a strange distinction between aesthetic guilt" and "ethical guilt." He leaves one wondering whether tragedy is even possible within the sphere of Christian theology. By comparing Kierkegaard's views on the development of tragedy with those of Aristotle, it may be possible to better understand the difference between Greek and Christian concepts of man and human action.

To understand the spititual undercutrents wich form the character of an historical period, it is necessary to look beneath the history of that period into its architecture -- its literary, musical and fine arts. It is these arts that the moods of the period gain expression and formative power. The literary arts seem to reveal these moods more clearly, since they make use of abstract human characters involved in moral and political action. Aristotle observes in the Poetics:

> "Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history since its statements are of the nature of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By a universal statement I mean one as to what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do."[3]

In Athens, fifth-century B.C., the dramatic poet was widely regarded as a teacher of the people. In the hands of the three great dramatists whose works survive (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides), the dramatic form was used to examine and strengthen the religious and moral bond, which in large measure held the state together politically. The Greek dramatist was constantly attempting to reveal the essential driving forces which motivate moral and political action. Unlike the present age, Greek moral and political action was intimately tied to

a mystical religious consciousness. Thus classical drama was often able to expose the two forces which shape human action -- character and fate. At this level the human situation is seen through the eyes of the poet as a baffling collection of contradictions and ambiguities. At the same time these dramatists recognized, seemingly by intuition, that human action cannot be understood apart from the universal institutions of family, state, and religion, which are necessary for human survival. It is within the context of these universal institutions that the dramatists are able to make the universal statements of which Aristotle spoke. The dramatists clearly saw that there were two basic methods of regulating human affairs within these institutions, one through the use of force and the other through the use of persuasion. They also saw that neither method was alone sufficient. The result was that one of the major recurring themes in extant tragedy was an inquiry into the nature and meaning of justice.

Aristotle says that "character in a play is that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents."[4] Though action flows from character and is to some extent formed by it, happiness or misery is the result of specific actions, not isolated states of character.

> "Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions -- what we do -- that we are happy or the reverse. In a play accordingly they do not act in order to portray the characters; they include the characters for the sake of the action."[5]

Hence, character is subordinate to plot. But action is formed not only by character but also by "fate," or whatever we wish to call those external circumstances which are beyond the knowledge of control of the tragic figure. The sense of tragedy lies in the ambiguity of guilt or responsibility incurred by the tragic figure as a result of his actions. Aristotle observes that neither men of extremely good nor men of extremely evil character can arouse tragic sympathy. If the good man falls into misfortune, we feel only shocked, because he bears none of the guilt for his condition. On the other hand, the man of bad character bears complete guilt for his misdeed. The tragic figure lies between these extremes. Aristotle describes the tragic figure according to the Greek ideal as follows:

> "There remains then, the intermediate kind of personage, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity, but by some error of judgement. . ."[6]

The tragic ambiguity of guilt is and imitation of tha actual conditions of human existence, for the Greeks apparently felt in tragedy, as in life, that most men were held neither wholly accountable nor wholly unaccountable for their actions. Every man was in a sense a product of the universal institutions of family, state, and religion. Yet for the Greeks the ambiguity lies not so much in the human character, but in the conflict of institutions.

The Greek dramatists magnified these institutional ambiguities with several devices rarely found outside of classical tragedy, the most impotant being the idea of inherited guilt. When Orestes is on trial for

killing his mother, Aeschylus portrays the conflict largely as an external one between various institutions of state and religion. We see little evidence of internal conflict or remorse once the murder has been accomplished. Once Orestes makes up his mind to act, he acts with resolute single-minded purpose, come what may and afterwards freely admits the deed. This single resolving drive toward a predetermined end is typical of the action in most Greek tragedy. We see the same phenomena in such characters as Prometheus, Clytemnestra, Antigone, Oedipus, Creon, and others.

Much of the difficulty in understanding Greek tragedy seems to derive from misguided attempts to impose Christian ideas of conscience, ethical guilt, and sin upon the tragic figure, instead of seeing him from the Greek viewpoint as being cast into external forces and events. In this light the driving will of the tragic figure makes sense, because an individual would need a strong will to survive and act in a world of powerful forces and circumstances. Such a view of life would naturally tend to stress action over character. A Christian view of life, on the other hand, where conflicts are often internalized, would tend to focus more on character, and less on action.

This brings us back to Kierkegaard's distinction between ethical and aesthetic guilt. Ethical guilt is not ambiguous. It rests solely with the individual who has committed a certain act, and that act is seen apart from the continuum of his life. The action was committed not on the basis of "some error in judgement" as Aristotle would have it, but by having a clear choice between good and evil, and choosing evil. To see exactly how Kierkegaard makes this distinction it is necessary to take a rather long, but interesting quotation from his essay.

> "Hence it is certainly a misunderstanding of the tragic when our age strives to let the whole tragic destiny become transubstantiated in individuality and subjectivity. One would know nothing about the hero's past life, one would throw his whole life upon his shoulders as being the result of his own acts, would make him accountable for everything, but in so doing would transform him aesthetic guilt into an ethical one. The tragic hero thus becomes bad; evil becomes precisely the tragic subject; but evil has no aesthetic interest and sin is not an aesthetic element. This mistaken endeavor certainly has its cause in the whole tendency of our age toward the comic. The comic lies exactly in isolation; when one would maintain the tragic within this isolation then one gets evil in all its baseness, not the truly tragic guilt in its ambiguous innocence."[7]

Perhaps an example of such a play is Shakespeare's Macbeth. Macbeth murders his king not because of "some error in judgement" but out of "vice and depravity." Thus he does not fall under Aristotle's concept of "the intermediate kind of personnage." Neverthless, if we take the three witches as genuine prophets of fate, we can still maintain the ambiguity of his actions as being intermediate between character and fate. But this sounds strange because we almost end up identifying character with fate. Certainly the Greek dramatists would not, or could not, have done this to the extent Shakespeare did and got away with it in play after play. This seems partly due to the fact that

Shakespeare could not make use of the Greek devices of inherited guilt and divine external forces working directly against the purposes of the tragic figure. As a result the Shakespearean heroes tend to stand and fall more on the basis of their own actions.

External conflict remains, to be sure, but the new dimension of internal conflict has been added as well. This added factor tends to direct some of the interest from the hero's action to his character. Character is still what reveals moral purpose and the hero remains happy or unhappy through his actions, but as the emphasis shifts more toward character and away from fate the hero becomes more responsible. But does he necessarily become less tragic? Seemingly not, if the tragic ambiguity can be retained in the hero's character rather than in his circumstances, as in the case of Hamlet. In a sense the same is true for Macbeth and Othello. They are essentially men of good character who become corrupted. Unlike Antigone, Oedipus, or Prometheus, it is their characters which are inconsistent and so reveal an inconsistent moral purpose. Shakespearean heroes are all portrayed with some kind of consciously reflected choice. Choice is also present in classical tragic figures, but reflection is minimized because of the donsistency of character and the conflict of externally formative institutions of family, state, and religion often personified as gods.

Greek literature is, of course, full of examples of household and state gods, as well as those which represent human attributes such as fear, rumor, love, and so on. Practically every human emotion, institution, and art had some patron diety. The fact that Greek literature portrays these externally points to the fundamental unity of character in the Greek world. In Christian theology this apparatus is almost entirely removed. Christ portrays himself as coming to give the external manifestations of Mosaic law new inner meaning. The responsibility for actions and even thoughts rests entirely upon the individual. So it is that we find St. Augustine confessing for the sins of his infancy. The uncontrollable nature of fate which partially absolves man of responsibility is replaced with the divine grace which totally absolves him. Without divine grace the Christian is crushed with the despair of his own guilt. This is undoubtedly why St. Augustine stresses the necessity of grace. Kierkegaard makes the following observation for the modern world:

> "In a certain sense, therefore, it is an entirely correct tactic of the age to hold the individual responsible for everything; but the misfortune is that is does not go deeply and inwardly enough, and hence its vacillation. It is self-complacent enough to disdain the tears of tragedy, but it is also self-complacent enough to dispense with the divine mercy."[8]

This is one reason why Kierkegaard so clearly saw the cause of despair in the modern world. It had rejected both circumstances and grace as means of relieving the responsibility of guilt. The other reason was that for Kierkegaard despair was caused chiefly by paralysis of the will or inability to act, a theme found frequently in modern literature, but rarely in Greek literature. Hence Achilles' retirement from battle is not inaction through division of purpose, but a deliberately willed act of non-action. Perhaps the reason for the suddem recent popularity of

Hamlet and other Shakespearean tragedies is the frustration and inhibition of the hero in actin decisively. In this sense Macbeth and Hamlet are the most modern of Shakespeare's tragic heroes. They are infected with the modern disease of melancholy and despair over the meaninglessness of action in life. When Aristotle proclaims that all human happiness and misery take the faorm of action, he might have added that all human despair takes the form of inaction. The Greeks found happiness and fulfillment in the activities of life: in athletics, politics, even war, where the individual will is exerted to its limits. By contrast Christian theology has turned the tragic dialogue inward. As moral purpose becomes more inwardly reflected, attention shifts to the ambiguities of character. In extreme cases, like that of Hamlet, one could almost rephrase Aristotle to say that action is included for the sake of character. Or is it that our present age has almost completely lost any feeling for the tragic concept; that Hamlet's apparent inability to act is merely a reflection of the frustrations of our age expounded by a whole generation of literary hacks? If tragedy, either Greek or modern, has the healing power Kiekegaard speaks of, it must lie partially in reaffirmation of the ability to act decisively and meaningfully amid the uncontrollable circumstances of life.

What has been set down thus far must serve as a rather sketchy introduction to what follows. If Christianity has tuned the tragic dialogue inward by removing the ambiguity of external circumstances, thus making the tragic figure totally responsible, then it remains to ask the only really interesting question. Is there a sense in which Christian tragedy is possible?

We might begin by constructing the case against Christian tragedy. Christian theology poses the choice between good and evil much more strongly than does Greek theology. Since human action is seen in terms of ggod and evil, instead of Aristotle's distinction of happiness and misery, the continuity of action is broken and each act is judged separately according to its worth. Christianity has, in effect, turned every action into a moral action, thus denying all aesthetic values. Aesthetic values center precisely areound the distinction between happiness and misery, whereas ethical values center around the distinction between good and evil. While the aestetic and the ethical are parallel, they are not identical. It is this Greek idea of continuity which leads Aristotle to make the following observations in the Ethics:

> "If activities are, as we said, what gives life its character, no happy man can become miserable; for he will never do acts which are hateful and mean. For the man who is truly good and wise, we think, bears all the chances of life becomingly, and always makes the best of circumstances. . .though he will not reach blessedness it he meet with fortunes like those of Priam."[9]

He also observes earlier that the happiness of a man cannot be truly judged until after his death so that his whole life is taken into account.[10] It is important to note that for Aristotle activity forms character, at least in the formative stages of a man's life. I believe this is a typically Greek view of life. Character is created by action, and not the other way. So for the Greeks, in life as well as in tragedy, character and action were surprisingly consistent. This is an idea which

we have tended to forget in the modern world of good and evil (though perhaps not because of Christianity, but because of our misunderstanding of it). By contrast Christianity introduces the idea of a divine will which gives the human will a real choice between good and evil. Certainly the Greeks also had a concept of divine will, but with two important differences. First, moral choice was not always left to the individual. The gods often intervened in human affairs, either with coercion or direct force, to produce their desired ends. This is also true to a lesser extent in the Old Testament, but there is very little evidence of it in Christianity. Second, the Greek concept of divine will does not contain the implication of sin, Original or otherwise. Hence for the Greeks guilt was attached largely guilt from extenal circumstances instead of by reflective remorse of conscience. Orestes' and Oedipus' inherited guilt is not the same as the human condition of Original Sin, but derives from family circumstances. This, again, shows the power of the Greek institutions of family, state, and religion. It is also why Aristotle says the happy man can never become miserable. St. Augustine would probably agree with this, but he would add that the best of men, even including Christ, had to constantly struggle with sin. As a result, part of the source of conflict in the tragic ambiguity of the human condition has been shifted inward, and along with it, part of the tragic dialogue. Now the individual is torn not only by external circumstances, but by internal ones besides. This internal conflict leads to division of the will and thereby inhibits action.

Now, more than ever, we feel the strength of Aristotle's claim that character is what reveals moral purpose in a play. Yet if moral purpose in the character is evil and is not influenced by divine agency or circumstances, since God is good and the will is free, do we really have Aristotle's intermediate kind of personage? In other words, has Christianity destroyed the concept of tragedy, or has it added a profoundly new dimension?

Again, outside the theatre, Christianity has replaced circumstances with the idea of divine grace as a mitigative factor in relieving the burden of human guilt. Greek theology leaves the individual the possibility of public or divine sympathy. Christianity, on the other hand, leaves the individual with the possibility of complete absolution or complete damnation. In the end the fundamental ambiguity of the human condition is resolved one way or the other, whereas Greek theology does not. This may be why the Greek afterlife is so often seen as an ambiguous gloom, a weak carbon copy of life. Dante understood this difference and it is possibly one reason he thought of his masterpiece as a comedy; for a man faced with a clear choice between good and evil cannot be tragically ambiguous. Nevertheless, Dante manages to arouse much fear and pity in the readers of his Inferno.

Here is the dilemma. If the difference between Greek and Christian views of human action are stressed absolutely, we end up saying that Christianity has destroyed the possibility of tragedy, and along with it subverted the will to action by turning every man against himself. On the other hand, the differences are so great that no Christian could accept the idea of ambiguous respinsibility without sin and still remain a Christian. It seems clear that Christianity has, to some extent,

weakened the Greek concept of unified will, and has thereby weakened the dramatic force of the tragic collision. On the other hand, Christian drama retains the tragic ambiguity of responsibility internally by portraying how men of good character became corrupted. Which mode of drama is considered to be more representative of the human condition will depend on whether or not one is a Christian. Both are valid to an extent outside of their respective theological backgrounds. Both are valuable to modern man in reaffirming the will to action, while at the same time placing certain limitations on the will.

It is not my purpose to discuss the relative advantages of either theology, but rather to use the two concepts of tragedy, especially the Greek, to look at the situation of modern man. Much of our music, art, and literature promote cynicism and despair concerning our way of life. These tendencies are found both in attmpts at comedy and tragedy. I shall leave it to the reader to think of his favorite examples. The man who is most profoundly in despair is the man who is unable to either laugh or weep, or else does so without complete honesty. In this situation, the natural expression of human emotion tends to be self-righteousness if the man is religious, or cynicism if he is not, of both if he is not sure, which is usually the case. There is one form of comedy, and not a good one in my opinion, which is mow more prevalent than ever, add is based on cynicism. Cynicism is essentially a spectator attitude. Even if the cynic happens to be nominally engaged in the activity toward which his cynicism is directed, his spirit (or should we say will?), is not actively engaged. Anyone who has had even the slightest association with modern military organizations will readily perceive this. When cynical comedy, with its spectator attitude gains wide popularity it is usually a foreboding of the imminent political collapse of the state. Witness Aristophanes in Athens and Dante in Florence. One can find many similar examples in the later Roman Empire and Voltaire in France before the revolution. By contrast the better from of Shakespearean comedy rarely expresses political dissatisfaction. The writer of cynical comedy has become isolated from what he sees as the meaninglessness of the action he is portraying, hence his spectator attitude.

It was probably this cynical form of comedy Kierkegaard had in mind when he wrote of man "in the preternatural manner our age affects" having a tendency to become comical. Kierkegaard describes this tendency as follows:

> "Every isolated individual always becomes comic by stressing his own accidental individuality over against necessary developement."[11]

For Kierkegaard this form of comedy stresses the grotesque distortions of human character as seen in ordinary life. Aristotle seem to have taken a similar view at one point in the Poetics, and it may be that Kierkegaard is making allusion to this passage.

> "As for comedy, it is an imitation of men worse than the average; worse, however, not as regards any and every sort of fault, but only as regards one particular kind, the ridiculous, which is a species of the Ugly. The ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others."[12]

The modern tendency toward despair in literature, whether comic or otherwise, seems to be only symptomatic of the deeper problem of isolation and uncertainty in life. Cynicism, loneliness, and self-rightious assertion on a large scale are, as Dante perceived an indication of the spititual disintegration of a society. One need not be a Christian to see that this dissolution is brought about by a loss of the sense of human community on the part of individuals or groups within a society. The result is always the same -- political factionalism and widespread dishonesty on the part of the public officials and private citizens. Life in such a society becomes an absurd, meaningless hell. When the man on the street can no longer trust his civic and political leaders, he magnifies his own mediocrity. The literary expression of this is the ascendency of the anti-hero, who can never participate in the greatness of the tragic figure. Could Macbeth have been written about an unknown foot-soldier or Othello have been an ordinary Venetian sailor? The anti-hero is better material for the comic than the tragic; hence the porter at the gate in Macbeth, and the grave-diggers in Hamlet.

Aristotle requires that tragedy arouse pity and fear on the part of the audience. "Pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves, " we are told.[13] On the other hand, the ridiculous form of comedy isolates the audience form the figure on the state by making itself feel superior. As men become increasingly isolated from society through inability to see others as like themselves they lose Aristotle's sense of pity and fear; they grow less able to feel the tragic effect, but more able to savor the ridicule of others. Kierkegaard puts the argument like this:

> "That which in a stricter sense is to be called the tragedy of suffering has really lost its tragic interest, for the power from which the suffering comes has lost its significance, and the spectators cry: 'Heaven helps those who help themselves!' In other words the spectator has last his compassion; but compassion is, in a subjective as well as an objective sense, the precise expression for the tragic."[14]

The real healing power of the tragic, then is that it regenerates man's sense of community with his fellow man. The essential tragic experience is that we are able once again to shed tears of compassion for the tragic figure, who like ourselves, is caught in the ambiguous circumstances of the human condition. The recognition and expression of this ambiguity is the mark of all truly great western tragedy, whether the tragic figure be a Christian, as Hamlet, or a Greek, as Oedipus. When the Christian denies the existence of this ambiguity within the human soul, he destroys tragedy and along with it compassion. The non-Christian, who sees the human condition as a ridiculous accident, rather than a tragic one, is led to nihilism. Either way, the denial of the tragic experience leads to despair, and eventually to the inability either to laugh or to weep, which are the most necessary of all human actions.

AFTERTHOUGHT

From Montaigne's Essay "Of Democritus and Heraclitus"

"Democritus and Heraclitus were two philosophers, of whom the first, finding the condition of man vain and ridiculous, never went out in public but with a mocking and laughing face; whereas Heraclitus, having pity and compassion on this same condition of ours, wore a face perpetually sad, and eyes filled with tears:

One always, when he o'er his threshold stepped,
Laughed at the world; the other always wept.
JUVENAL

I prefer the first humor; not because it is pleasanter to laugh than to weep, but because it is more disdainful, and condemns us more than the other; and it seems to me that we can never be despised as much as we deserve. Pity and commiseration are mingled with some esteem for the thing we pity; the things we laugh at we consider worthless. I do not think there is as much unhappiness in us as vanity, nor as much malice as stupidity. We are not so full of evil as of inanity; we are not as wretched as we are worthless. . . Our own peculiar condition is that we are as fit to be laughed at as able to laugh."15

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class of 1973

Notes.

1 Aristotle, Poetics, Trans., Ingram Bywater, The Basic Works of Aristotle, Ed. Richard McKeon (N.Y., Random House, 1941) chap. 6, p. 1461.

2 Soren Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Trans., David F. Swenson and Lillian M. Swenson (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Co. Inc., Anchor Books, 1959) vol. I, p. 143.

3 Aristotle, loc. cit., chap. 9, p. 1464.

4 Ibid., chap. 6, p. 1462.

5 Ibid., chap. 6, p. 1461

6 Ibid., chap 13, p. 1467.

7 Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Trans., David F. Swenson and Lillian M. Swenson (Garden City, N.Y., Random House, 1941) Bk. I, chap. 10. p. 948.

8 Ibid., p. 144.

9 Aristotle, Ethics, Trans., W.D. Ross, The Basic Works of Aristotle, Ed. Richard MeKeon (N.Y., Random House, 1941,) chap. 10, p. 948.

10 Ibid., p. 947.

11 Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Trans., David F. Swenson and Lillian M. Swenson (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Co, Inc., Anchor Books, 1959) vol. I, p. 140.

12 Aristotle, Poetics, Trans., Ingram Bywater, The Basid Works of Aristotle, Ed. Richard McKeon (N.Y., Random House, 1941, chap. 5, p. 1459,

13 Ibid., chap. 13, p. 1467.

14 Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Trans., David F. Swenson and Lillian M. Swenson (garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Co, Inc., Anchor Books, 1959) vol. I, p. 147.

15 Montaigne, The Complete Essays of Montaigne, Trans., Donald M. Frame (Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1968) essay 50, pp. 220-221.