

WORDS AND MUSIC IN TIME :  
the poet's voice and song , a study  
of texts , tunes and criticism .

A dissertation  
by  
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presented for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
at the  
UNIVERSITY OF YORK  
in the  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND RELATED  
LITERATURE  
NOVEMBER 1982.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I am grateful to the staff of the York University Library who have always provided smiling assistance in difficult circumstances. I extend my thanks to the Australian National Library, Canberra, especially to those who administer the important collection of David Nicol Smith.

Without the assistance, both physical and spiritual, of Dr. Norman Gardiner this thesis would not have been written.

A great many teachers and friends have influenced the development of the ideas contained herein. They will, should they read this dissertation, recognize outlines of argument which emerged in their company.

Professor Bernard Harris has patiently listened and suggested amendments. Professor Jacques Berthoud kept the Devil away in the important final stages of preparation of the manuscript. Professor Wilfred Mellers offered musical inspiration and some scope to try ideas on his students.

I thank Dr. C. Watson, La Trobe University, for reading through odd bits which were in their isolated state more inchoate than they need have been. Mr. Bob Jones has been especially helpful to colonials who straggle in from the outposts of the Empire. Mr. David Foster of Heslington Hall has been cheerful under some duress.

Finally, to my wife I owe a special debt, not only for patient understanding of an insatiable appetite for books and records, but also for her dedication to typing a script from my excited notes!



## ABSTRACT.

This dissertation examines the setting of words to music and music to words. It proceeds, after an examination of verbal and musical meaning, to consider the variety of voices which constitute particular poetic style. The emphasis falls primarily on lyrics and ballads and not operatic modes, and especially on the songs which result when various English verse is set sympathetically.

The thesis is constructed in such a way as to begin with songs which evince a complex personality and to work back (chronologically and in spirit) towards more impersonal productions. Songs of this first kind are taken to demonstrate the central awareness of the humanist's position, his own mortality. At the other end of this sequence are ballads and singing which serves particular functions such as liturgy; these are generally missing the impress of the individual voice. The dissertation discovers intermediate stages between these two extremes and offers a structure which reveals some basic connections between musical and verbal language. A structured and accepted meaning, both conceptual and emotional, in the words of a song is taken as an important guide to articulating meaning where words and music combine to form another art.

The method which I have selected to pursue these ideas is to isolate a number of individual poets' work or groups of anonymous poems and propose for them a place in my hypothetical scheme. The songs which stem from these poems are examined with an eye to the evident personality of the poet (or the lack of it) and the environment out of which they have grown. A literary critical approach to words is shown to be able to be made to reflect on the composite art of song.

## PREFACE.

### Musical Examples:

These range from full songs, words and melody, to odd bars. The discography at the end of the dissertation refers to recordings of most items which are included in the text. I have excluded some larger works, assuming that they are well-known and easily found - symphonies, song cycles and the like, as well as familiar individual songs.

### Texts :

Where the poem to which I refer is, for any reason, obscure I have included a full text so that the reader is not confronted with a perplexing search. Glossarial notes are included in general Notes and References for each chapter.

### Abbreviations :

The following abbreviations are used :

Ballads which have been conveniently numbered by Professor F. Child are given a Child Number in my text. For example, "Sir Partick Spens" (C58).

Professor B. Bronson has supplied an exhaustive list of known ballad tunes in his Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads (Four Vols) Princeton, New Jersey, 1959. These will be indicated with their Child Number (C 140) and a Bronson Number (B 15). (There are up to forty tunes listed in some variants.)

References to Burns' Songs are given with a Kinsley Number (K 159) taken from The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns, editor Professor J. Kinsley, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968 (Three Vols).



INTRODUCTION.



Although this dissertation is of its nature tentacular, embracing lines of enquiry which grow out of the main issues which it raises, it also follows two quite specific ideas. These might be described as currents which flow in opposite directions. The first of these deals with the growth of the poet's voice, as it occurs in song, ranging from the most private and personal concerns to the other extreme where anonymous voices present a vivid, but disinterested narrative. I propose to begin with the former and work towards the latter. The second current is concerned to develop the idea that private voices generally take as their subject the more commonplace experiences, while anonymous narrative tends to deal with specific and particularly noteworthy incidents; the individual speaks, out of his place in humanity, for what he shares, while the corporate voice isolates distinctive particularity. The first idea might best be summarized in the notion of a song being expressive of individual personality or conversely, corporate impersonality with intermediate stages tending towards either extreme. And this is clearly a consideration of the poet/composer's voice. The second, succinctly, is an examination of the relevance of the variety of subjects to distinct voices. Both, of course, imply a context, the history out of which the subject grows and the environment into which it is delivered. Songs, because they require performance to live, depend on the agency of fickle tastes to sustain an interest in their existence. Poetry, although it is equally susceptible to taste, can thrive in individual minds and amongst dusty shelves without, necessarily, needing to be vocalized. It is a tricky distinction, and begs too many questions to be disposed of satisfactorily here. However, in the interest of making a start, poetry is often a bookish experience. Song, I contend is a variety of vibration in the air, a quality which is at once limiting, but also



part of its attractiveness. Poetry is rarely a vocal experience, except in the mind's ear and a reader can pace himself. Song happens in an instant - recordings make it repeatable - and occupies a grey area between the worlds of musical and verbal expression. I intend to take the side of "words", but having declared that, will attempt to proceed with impartiality as a song implies at least one line of music, and there are really no songs without words.

For too long now poems which are the words of songs have been treated to the intensities of literary critical scrutiny without allowances being made for the addition of music which is often vital to a consideration of what the poet has made. That is not to say that only such poems as a poet writes, exclusive of the thoughts of possible settings, are susceptible. Donne, for example, or Blake both composed "songs" with only a nominal interest in music. Conversely, there are many fine poems which, because of the complexity of the experience they offer as poetry, suffer at the hands of composers. But to continue with the first assertion, do literary critics make appropriate perceptual adjustments in a consideration of the songs of Robert Burns or the traditional ballads? I think not, and the result is a misunderstanding of what sort of words we are dealing with in a song text. Little satisfaction will result from a fine piece of descriptive prose where, for the sake of convenience or brevity, a high proportion of the adjectives are omitted and the work committed to print so neutered. Song texts without their music are similarly mutilated regardless of how fine they might be in such a state. As poems they might even present a different face, as strong as that of any other "normal" poem.

Equally important is the tendency to winkle a song out of context into which it was conceived to fit. It is most often composed to be performed and in manuscript is effectively dead; it presupposes



performance and its very being depends on symbols' being translated into sounds. The same can, of course, be said of poetry, although because it operates in a written/verbal sphere it does not usually imply performance in its manuscript state. Because songs are written to be performed they require conception, realization, transmission, performance and reception by a listener who understands not only the verbal significance, but also what the musical gestures mean. His discriminatory powers are not foregone, rather he listens in a manner different from that in which he would read or listen to a poem. Of course a poem might exhibit, to a degree, incantatory half-song, or even Sprechtstimme technique which elevates it above ordinary speech. That too, is a matter of the poem's function. A charm or riddle, sung or recited, serve a special purpose. Words delivered in any manner over a corpse or at a wedding have appropriate tonal settings which are consonant with the occasion. To sing Purcell's splendid duet, "Lost is my quiet forever" at a nuptial celebration could cause alarm. The words are clear and the musical setting, regardless of its beauty, is doleful. Nuptials are conventionally joyful, and musical symbolism has a remarkably stable nature in specific cultures. The fiddle tunes at an Irish wake are comprehensible as a particular cultural manifestation and their function obvious. Ideas and emotions might be freely translated from language to language. Something is always lost - the peculiar sound of the tongue - but meaning remains intact where there are corresponding words for the same ideas. The cultural context into which poems and songs are born leaves a mark on them, and often they are continuous with traditions in a convention of language.

If conventional or traditional modes of expression exist, and they clearly do, then poems and songs might grow out of environments which are temporally and spatially localised. For this



reason it is always necessary to keep a weather eye on just the sort of place and time into which a song is born. T.S.Eliot writes of the "birth" of verse exacting from the poet the most stringent care and consummate effort to get the things right, and doubtless for him and poets of his generation this is true. It is a matter for speculation whether all poets would choose quite that metaphor. The accidental alterations which occur during transmission of oral poetry are perhaps evidence of a more easy going, natural birth for verse, multiple-mothered and fostered in perpetual change. Eliot's works are not so flexible. Neither indeed are those of most of the acknowledged "named" poets of our culture. Equally Burns' "folk-songs" in which he added significantly to items which he collected, are generally seen as belonging to his works and are forever fixed as such. Burns is demonstrably and inescapably a child of his time, not a great innovator but with an appropriate combination of sympathies and abilities at the right moment in history to undertake a task which established his place in the canon. And many apologetic prefaces have been written where an editor has realized that song texts are only half of the story! This is also true of the traditional ballads, although they have a narrative strength and rhythmic drive which makes them appealing to the modern sensibility as verse. For taste is a constant problem to the critic as the ground of acceptable limits of, say, emotional openness shifts and changes. But it is a problem only if an acceptable experience in art is dictated by minds which are closed to the variety and nuances which characterize the different approaches, intensities and even functions which an artist sees himself as addressing.

Criticism inevitably produces yardsticks with which works of art are measured. The discoveries which are made are usually applied either as rules to which poems, for example, can be seen to conform,



or as hypothetical models which might become archetypes if they are sufficiently generalized. Historically this seems to have been the case for thousands of years. After all, the sprawling world of "letters" must justify its position beside neater utilitarian disciplines like medicine or engineering. For Plato and Aristotle this division was not as pronounced, though doubtless a practising Greek physician or road builder had the benefit of a wealth of practical experience to support his more cerebral studies. Empirical science was probably the hammer which drove a wedge between utilitarian and non-utilitarian disciplines. The appearance of horses on wallpaper and flowers on carpets - and Sissy Jupe's avowed enthusiasm for them - evince the suppression of an aspect of the human spirit which is perhaps entitled to a little freedom! Such non-utilitarian studies, in order to rationalize their existence, have needed rules to regulate and order the material of their respective domains. Usually they succeed, but what is justified is already a generation old and like all immediate pasts, subject to at least diminished interests and more likely, hostility. (Theorizing for the future would be a type of witchcraft!) So critics because of the need to produce evidence to support assertions, like the disciplines which are more given to empiricism, impose a structure on what they know. Several times in literary history the magical (and holy) number "three" has appeared to produce the structured framework which gives credence to the poet's task.

T.S.Eliot in "The Three Voices of Poetry"(1953) settles for a three way split. He tells us that "lyric" poetry is characterised by the poet talking to himself. If he addresses an audience as in the narration of an epic he fulfils another function and likewise, his third division encompasses dramatic verse as it is performed in a theatre. The unsatisfactoriness of this definition is quickly



demonstrable by considering the nature and variety of "lyric" voices in verse and particularly, the poet's choice of an easily identifiable persona or his decision to allow the poem to speak for him more directly. Long before Eliot wrote his essay Aristotle distinguished three types of poetry which correspond to the modern definitions of lyric, dramatic and epic. The classification is not the same as Eliot's, but they are, usefully, in three divisions which account I think for the poet's eagerness to be in agreement. The arbitrariness of easy formulae however cannot be overlooked. Perhaps such divisions have been viable organizations, both in Ancient Greece where poetry was closer to religion, and in the modern world where poets would like it to be. Happily the scheme which I propose has three main subdivisions, but I am less concerned with form than either Aristotle or Eliot, neither of course, being strictly "wrong".

John Wesley made the following observation in what is perhaps his most read sermon, "The Nature of Enthusiasm". He begins by asserting that overt displays of "enthusiasm" are evidence of a disorder of the mind; they are possibly the result of foolishness or madness. Wesley, true to the eighteenth century, sees such abandonment of reason as dangerous, especially when it is initiated and cultivated by men;

(enthusiasm) may, therefore, well be accounted a species of madness; of madness rather than of folly; seeing a fool is properly one who draws wrong conclusions from right premises; whereas a madman draws right conclusions, but from wrong premises. And so does an enthusiast.....

We might add that a madman does not know that he is wrong and can only ever be right in his own mind. If the world which he inhabits is peopled by his own fancy then it will be informed and structured in the only way in which it can possibly be, as a product of his



imagination which is inviolably true to itself. The introduction of other realities does not change the aptness of his world for him. He must exclude the "reason" of others which he can see only as an imposition. The worlds of Aristotle, Eliot and any number of folk who expose their ordering principles to the world, like Wesley's madman, are more or less vulnerable to the interference of other realities according to the premises upon which such perceptions are formed. Wesley leaves no possibility for a compromise with the enthusiasts, of whom he is often taken to be "saint" and main exponent. Either they are fools or madmen. They are not fools, therefore..... This syllogism leaves no crevice through which there is an escape. Judgements of the sort, indeed the selection of critical ammunition against the enthusiast, fix the Wesleyian position. He suspects that there has been human inspiration for apparent divine possession. That is objectivity at work and it must have been hard to achieve. His Journals note occasions when whole congregations quivered and fell about. Good sense seems to prevail and Wesley discounts such possession. But his madman remains clear in his perception of the world. It is not difficult to see where others have gone wrong! And for the literary critic there is always the spectre of empiricism. The answer is justification by imposing an order which is as watertight as Archimedes' bath, as impregnable as Wesley's logic and as demonstrably hard-won as Eliot's verses.

(ii)

The song which follows is surrounded with problems which ought to suffocate it! It was written in an unknown year, by an unknown scribe. The words are anonymous and the music is not known in other places. The meaning of the words has been the subject of



debate and the music, as it is written below, is an interpretation by a modern scholar. Where or how it was performed in its time is open to speculation, but it is without doubt the best of the thirty-three secular songs which have survived in English from before 1400.

Brid o—ne bree—re, briht brid o—ne trew—e,  
 Kynd is co—me, of lo—ve lo—ve to cra—ve:  
 "Blith—ful bir—d, on me—, on me— thu  
 rew—e; or grei—th leef, grei—th thu me—, thu  
 me— my— gra—ve."

Ich am so blithe so briht brid one breere  
 Whan I see that hende, hendest in halle.  
 He is whit of lim, of lim and leere;  
 He is fayr, and flur, flur of alle .

Mihte ich hire, hir at wille have,  
 Stedefast of love, loveli, trewe  
 (Of mi sorw he may, he may me save),  
 Joy and bliss wer er, wer er me newe .

This translation into Modern English gives the sense of the thing more clearly:

1. Bird on a briar, bright bird on a tree, Nature has come to beg for love from Love: 'Gracious lady, on me, on me have pity; or prepare, beloved, prepare for me, for me my grave.'

2. I am as happy as a bright bird on a briar when I see that gracious one, most gracious in hall. She is white of limb, of limb and face; she is fair, and the flower, the flower of all.

3. If I could have her, have her at will, steadfast in love, lovely, true (from my sorrow she can, she can cure me), joy and bliss for me would be ever renewed.

It is a startling survival, conventional of course, but not without a quality which is in evidence in the songs of Dowland or Vaughan Williams. A single line of melody and the erratic remains of a courtly poem are the simplest type of song, technically, but that does not mean a diminution of expressive power. The most interesting observation to be made here is that the musical language is comprehensible and continuous with a tradition which is still in evidence. The musical and verbal symbols catch and fix a melancholy which is seemingly forever repeated in song, suggesting the universality of the experience and the tenacity of the language in which it is conveyed. Musical and literary scholarship have placed the song as having been noted, on the back of a Papal Bull in the late thirteenth century, when the Church held an exclusive monopoly on musical theory and education more generally. The vicissitudes of history have taken all of its fellows, so the sad lilt of this little tune is an elegy for all those other songs which must have been sung and which have disappeared.

The recognition of fellowship which transcends time is instructive. If we can endorse the proposition that "Brid one Breere" is melancholy and that this is the product of the combination of textual ideas and the disposition of musical sounds, then there are several important questions which it raises. The first few are historical. Why is this unlike the Church music of its time which is preserved, for



example in The Historical Anthology of Music ? Why is it unlike the ballads and their tunes which, although they might have sprung from the fifteenth century, are types of song which would appear to have been sung at least as early as Homer and even before him? (There is a Cycladic harpist in the National Museum in Athens and cave painting shows men dancing and gesticulating. Stone Age man certainly played on bone flutes.) Why has so little song survived from the Middle Ages? Have modern scholars inflicted an interpretation, especially in transcribing music, which is cogniscant of what is to follow the thirteenth century in the development of secular music? For whom was the song intended, and why was it committed to vellum in such a place? All of these are fair questions and some of them might be answered with some confidence. It seems fair to say that given its provenance, a Papal Bull, it is the work of an ecclesiastical copyist who was also one of the few likely candidates to possess the necessary musical literacy. Vellum deteriorates and ink fades and time, more generally, decays so that begins to dispose of the problem of paucity, physically. It was doubtless helped by a religious attitude which relegated such secular stuff to its proper place, hence the furtive placement on the back of a more significantly religious document. But what we cannot overlook is the rightness of the tune for the words and their clear and comprehensible emotion which has survived intact. There is a temperamental affinity with Dowland which might be unexpected, and which brings into question the novelty of what he wrote. Equally, it adds weight to a theory of the endurance of common themes.

Dowland's melancholy, as Professor Mellers has shown is a manifestation of "a medieval inheritance (fused) with all that was most creative about the humanist belief in the personal consciousness." I have removed this from its especial reference to William Byrd, but



can we see it as applying to Dowland? Or is there a reworking of the same human dilemmas in any age, the expressions of which are preserved only if they find a medium which fixes them for posterity? The answer must be that both survivals of conventional modes as well as individual expressions from humanist roots which are of universal currency find their place in song. And so another question suggests itself, just how do these conventional and more private aspects become worked into an essentially aesthetic and emotional experience? This can best be answered by examining a variety of songs which exemplify a number of dissimilar approaches to texts. The range is vast, from the most urgent and private voices to the practical applications of singing to everyday tasks, like making religious observances or getting "a cow out of a bog". My enquiry in this thesis is to do with this broader notion of song, to chart a passage through the main characteristic types of singing.

(iii)

Perhaps poetry like music appropriates to itself emotional significance. Music with an associated programme depends, in varying degrees, but none the less depends on the listener's understanding of what the composer has added to his music. Such programmes are external to the music's life so we probably lose very little if we have not read notes about individual movements of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony. But we would lose something, perhaps only confirmation of what we impute to the sound patterns. A written programme often inspires a musical work, but it can only be a description. Music can serve the same function, describing what a composer reads, but more usually a song offers more. That is because a composer is not simply interested to describe



verse but to demonstrate a lively sympathy for what the words say or imply. So a song text is usually not a programme which describes what we hear. Neither is it an extension of the sound patterning of music where it departs from the world of verbal comprehension. Two extremes can be discerned in English songs (and of course those from other cultures). The ballad music, although it might reflect the disinterestedness of a text, offers no comment on the narrative. It might, as it tends towards folk-song, begin to catch the dramatic differences between the voices of the poem which move in theatrical orchestration, but it is never indicative of private feelings which might be ascribed to poet or singer. The music of songs which are written for specific texts by specific composers generally aims at capturing a conscious similarity between individuals and is, broadly, empathic. The result of this liaison is as much a psychological phenomena as an artistic one. A listener recognizes a three way affinity where the thoughts and emotions of a poet are sympathetically transformed or interpreted by a composer, whose work is performed (interpreted again) for the delectation of a listener. An ideal listener who is presented with a performance of a song should also be well on the way to an understanding of the poem from which it takes its inspiration.

CHAPTER ONE: "SHADOWS AND IMAGES OF VOICE";  
the languages of poetry and music .

"..while poetry attempts to convey something beyond what can be conveyed in prose rhythms , it remains , all the same , one person talking to another ; and this is just as true if you sing it , for singing is another way of talking . The immediacy of poetry to conversation is not a matter on which we can lay down exact laws ."

T.S.Eliot The Music of Poetry

"I have two or three times in my life composed from the wish rather than the impulse , but I never succeeded to any purpose!"

Robert Burns .

" Man is both a poet, and a musician by nature. The same impulse which prompted the enthusiastic poetic style, prompted a certain melody, or modulation of sound , suited to the emotions of joy or grief, of admiration, love, or anger. There is a power in sound, which, partly from nature, partly from habit and association, makes such pathetic impressions on the fancy, as delight even the most wild barbarians. Music and poetry, therefore, had the same rise; they were prompted by the same occasions; they were united in song; and , as long as they continued united, they tended, without doubt, mutually to heighten and exalt each other's power. "

Hugh Blair



What is it that composers do to poems? Can we discern any general rules which apply to the literature which a composer chooses to interpret musically? These sorts of questions are rarely asked, perhaps because men of some musical stature have so readily dismissed the possibility of poetry's for example, remaining unravished in any setting. Indeed they often go as far as imputing to music a voraciousness which swallows up all traces of verbal significance. Here is Sir Michael Tippett who says uncompromisingly that the composer

"destroys our appreciation of the poems as poetry and substitutes an appreciation of this music as song. (He has).... the ability to destroy all the verbal music of the poetry.... and to substitute the music of music." 1.

In the broadest terms he covers his ground well. After all it is self evident that a composer must impose a new sound structure on the words but is this essentially destructive? The meaning of the words, the sense does not alter. At least the discovered meaning that the composer finds in the poet and chooses to set does not alter. The metaphysical speculations of Humpty Dumpty, when he is introduced to Alice, are surely a parody of the pedantry of linguistic philosophers who unlike Mr. Gradgrind suspect that two and two might be something other than four. "What does 'Alice' mean?" Humpty Dumpty asks. Alice answers with the practical voice of common sense. 2. She is only a visitor to the nebulous dreamworld where there is time for such games. Words which do have meanings and which by Humpty Dumpty's standards are susceptible to definition are the visual stock in trade of poets. But that is not to deny that complex associations, ambiguity, irony and the like do not make the meaning

often obscure and sometimes inaccessible.

And the problem is exacerbated where there is a voice other than that of the poet, if we can ever be sure that what we have is as direct as "the poet's voice". The eponymous characters, the varied voices in the tortuous realm of fantasy might offer only fleeting access to an achieved meaning. The complexity of dramatic poetry can be daunting but I think even the most tantalizing obscurity is subject to laws of definition and can be deciphered with adequate attention to the difficulty. One example from Shakespeare is instructive and demonstrates the way in which a symbolic language can operate.

When Macbeth describes the scene in Duncan's bedchamber after the old king has been murdered, he is made to use the following words;

"Here lay Duncan

His silver skin laced with his golden blood," (Act 2, Sc.3

It is a pregnant image and indicates the complexity of Shakespeare's<sup>113</sup> - 114 )

language. But can we say exactly what we are meant to perceive in it? I think so, and more than one level of significance is obvious. What is perplexing is the momentariness of the thing. "Silver skin" and "golden blood" are clear indications of quality and value, with blood given primacy. Immediately the resonances are set up in any mind which knows the play; "Blood will have blood", spots of blood, blood to wade through. Recollections of "golden opinions" and the very "crown of life" appear. What Macbeth sees, he describes, and the language which he chooses far from being precise description, using words in their established meaning, is loaded with the significance of the event which he has perpetrated.<sup>3</sup> And so Macbeth becomes the poet-king and his poetic virtues "shine through" him in scene after scene where the playwright manufactures the symbols which echo with



significance. Clearly the depth of knowledge necessary for such a complete cross-indexing of images and resonances requires a thorough knowledge of the play and lines such as these necessarily disappear in performance, especially for the uninitiated. This is an uncontroversial argument. It does, however relate to the problem of understanding a song. The ideas are presented, orchestrated as it were, in poetry. Happily they are unambiguous. The performer determines his tone of voice, his delivery, and they are either lost or numinous.

It is clear in such an example, just what the poetry is. Duncan's skin is metaphorically "silver" and similarly his vast quantities of blood (as Lady Macbeth later observes) are not literally "golden". By the use of such images Shakespeare establishes important insights into the character of his usurper as well as endorsing the order of things which Macbeth has so violently disturbed. Duncan becomes quite literally "history" like a piece of silver jewellery which is "laced" with gold; a cold reminder of the living flesh which is now a reliquary of earthly growth, the spirit having departed. His body is a monument to his kingship laced into his inviolable right like a knight in armour, the very network of blood which drains across his body a defensive barrier which no man can remove. Shakespeare gives Macbeth a potent imagination. He can see the nature of his crime before he has committed it and in one line can encapsulate the essence of Macbeth's regret. I am either correct in this interpretation in which case I have followed what the poet offers, I am partially right or, perhaps he means something quite different. T.S.Eliot said somewhere that the creative artist cannot exist by himself. Like the inventions of the script called "Linear-B" organized symbols are only relevant, meaningful, when they are interpreted and understood by a receptive reader.

If with the aid of dictionaries, historians and critics, we can be assured that indeed we are on the right track in our understanding of the literal and metaphoric meaning of words, we are still faced with Tippett's assertion that "all verbal music of the poetry is destroyed". The short answer to that claim is I think that no such "verbal music" exists in an ideal form. Consider simple lines of verse,

"I had written to Aunt Maud,  
Who was on a trip abroad "

The verbal music of these lines can only exist if we are sure of the sounds of the poet's voice. (This might seem a trite consideration but it does indicate a fallacy which is frequently voiced.) The lines can be "translated" with phonetic symbols to show how different varieties of English might present them. A North American, for example, would probably produce a sound for the fifth word in the first line which would approximate the "home-counties" English "ANT". Similarly a Scot might roll the "r" in "written" producing a very different sound, "rrrretin", from that of a Cockney. The meaning would remain constant but the "verbal music" is by no means fixed without a phonetic script which effectively sets down each sound. Under these circumstances a composer, like the poet, has no control. (Joan Sutherland, it is rumoured, once met Poulenc and greeted him with a broad, nasal "Hello Mister Pooh-lunk".) He cannot destroy what, without being fairly pedantic, does not exist.

Poetry, in any act of reading, exists only in the mind of the reader who articulates it in his particular dialect. A composer like any other reader begins with his reading of a meaning. But what of the "moan of doves in immemorial elms"? Early gramophone recordings of Tennyson are quite surprising and rather like Yeats' bardic tremolando. Was Shelley too similarly inclined? We are not likely to



know. "The Isle of Innisfree" in Yeats' performance is singularly monotonous, scooping up to one pitch at which most of the words are intoned. It is neither musical nor prosaic. It carries a somewhat forced intensity. The acceptance of printed dissemination condemns a poet to being read. Any performance, even his own, is essentially interpretation. The sounds inherent in the written symbols are too indistinct to allow Tippett his "verbal music".

The problem of fixing the timbre of sounds in any written source is not restricted to the poet. No two flutes can produce precisely the same tone quality at an identical pitch. The embouchure of the player, the state of his sinuses, the temperature and the quality of his instrument are just a few of the variations. Similarly a flute in Mozart's day, although it has certain common features with a modern make and is presumably equally as correct as the soloist's instrument in either of Mozart's concertos, would not produce the same sound. Musical notation is a method of fixing some, but by no means all, of the musical meaning. Between the cold notes on the page and vibrations in the air, the essential performer brings with him his own notion of the ideal performance. This might be the same as the composer's, and is more likely to be so when what the composer has actually managed to say in his score is intelligible.

Exactly what does a composer have to set to his music? A short answer is "words", which are the symbols of more or less precise meaning. If that were clear, understood and accepted perhaps there would be little more to say, but meaning is a rather more venomous word and inclined to wriggle its way from under the firm foot of reasonableness. The meaning of words is subject to change so there is an historical dimension to the problem, which at its simplest, might be indicated in another line from Macbeth. In the first act a messenger is

greeted with the following question,

"What bloody man is that?"

( Act 1 Sc. 11. line 1)

In the bowdlerized Shakespeare the word "bloody" is changed to "bleeding" to assuage the blenching of Victorian maidens, for in effect, although the Bard intended no impropriety, grammar and common usage had misplaced his original emphasis.<sup>6</sup> The oath is an "oath of the mind", hardly a considerable challenge to moral standards and decorum. The second aspect of the historical dimension of "meaning" is more difficult to describe.

In a celebrated essay John Dryden explains why opera necessarily excludes poetry of any quality;

"vocal music, though it often admits a loftiness of sound, yet always exacts an harmonous sweetness; or to distinguish yet more justly, the recitative part of an opera requires a more masculine beauty of expression and sound; the other ..... the songish part, must abound in the softness and variety of numbers; its principal intention being to please the hearing rather than to gratify the understanding."<sup>7</sup>

The terms in which the criticism is offered are of course common places in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They express the aesthetic preoccupations which are hallmarks of a particular period. Whether they remain relevant is not an important question because they are evidence of a reasonably well defined aesthetic. If the "principal intention" of vocal art is to "please the hearing" and if indeed the "songish part" must abound in "softness and variety of numbers" then such observations are probably based in fact. Dryden's experience is paramount in fixing in his mind the broad general precepts which describe a style. "Loftiness of sound" and



"harmonious sweetness" are no longer the criteria by which an opera might be judged to be successful, if indeed they ever really were. (There is considerable evidence which suggests that "new " music in any age is seen by the reactionary as an affrontment to customary modes and a degradation of the art.) But both music and poetry are subject to the rules of taste which are neither arbitrary nor (generally) amorphous, and there are usually voices to justify and rationalize preferences. The vital relationship between the environment in which art is produced and the actual product cannot be overlooked, and this dimension of history can be seen to affect the production of song.

In the determination of precisely the influences which shape the song we must consider the role of the aesthetic theories affecting both words and music, contemporary mores and even the political climate which affects not only the artist (Eliot's "transmitter") but also audience (the receiver).<sup>8</sup> Both are equally susceptible to the artistic environment which is in turn placed in a broader historical perspective. The great "Makers" have a responsibility to past, present and future and are always in a continuum of time without which they could not be understood and could not contribute to their art. William Blake doubtless exaggerated both his visionary powers and his more general peculiarities. That is not to say that he was not "mystical" but there are aspects of the strange habits which he cultivated reported by, for example, Crabb Robinson, that bring into question the poet's sanity.<sup>9</sup> However much of the oddness of Blake can be seen as an extension of his background in the eighteenth century and quite in keeping with conventional ideas. The druidical mystery plays performed in Cornish quarries are surely the Romantic conclusion of both the Gothic taste as well as the

remnants of the first Celtic revival when Ossian (James McPherson) flourished and Stonehenge was interpreted. Blake sang his poems to improvised tunes, but there is no report which suggests that he maintained one melody for a particular text. Was this Blake's recognition of an affinity, his lyric form<sup>10</sup> ("Songs of Innocence and Experience"), with those others of the type whose text were published with a tune, Robert Burns and Thomas Moore. Certainly, and by Blake's admission, his energetic reaction to Swedenborg informs at least part of his mystical element. Or perhaps Blake did work on the credulity of that arch-snooper, Crabb Robinson, and exaggerated his foibles. (I think that there is too much evidence to suggest this is not the case !). Blake's vision of himself led to his books of prophecy which fuel the academic fires from time to time but which seem singularly reluctant to yield up anything as succinct and as permanently valuable as the earlier works. Perhaps Wordsworth was right in this case,

"...Poets in our youth begin in gladness  
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness".

However an examination of say "The Sick Rose" and Issac Watts'"The Rose" is suggestive. It not only demonstrates Blake's debt to the past-<sup>11</sup> both literary and religious - but also the astounding originality which propels poetry into a new area of experience; to a new frankness and concern for human misery.

Blake and the social reformer Wilberforce are children of their time and closer to the roots of the social injustice which resulted after the Industrial Revolution. Dickens, by comparison, is of another generation and his reforming zeal is tempered by his middle class origins. He is not, like Blake, one who would thump a



table and cry out on behalf of the oppressed. Rather he observes, collects and organizes his material into acceptable, drawing room fictions which are masterpieces of their time. The difference is instructive and may be extrapolated backwards to say Dryden, where a relatively stable hierarchy and clear division of classes who knew their place would not have allowed the voices of the menial any congress with gentle folk.

Critical perspectives are difficult to achieve in any one art. They are even more problematic when two arts unite and form a third which is essentially neither of the two original parts. I now propose to turn Sir Michael Tippett's observation inside out, and suggest that poetry essentially surrenders nothing to music but in fact that the reverse is the case. Music is severely limited by the addition of words. Words cannot lose their meaning. The allegiance to the sense of the words might detract from the essentially musical ! I have already indicated how they might change in time and subject to the normal historical processes. "Cat" and "hat" and "mat" represent fixed and well known objects which are not in themselves ambiguous. Logically this particular "cat" might be a member of the class of animals which share common characteristics, but is nonetheless a cat. Plato might have preferred the observation that this is a mere shadow of the idea of a cat. Platonists might "interpret" that as indicating a divine blueprint to which our tabby conforms but it is, by general agreement, a tangible beast which could be described. The difficulty with music is that it is not susceptible to the laws of verbal language, or if it is, then only in a dangerously subjective way. Musical sounds are not tangible objects. We can of course describe them, perhaps with a degree of precision unheard of in the world of cats and nouns. How



exact can we be in any description of feline temperament? Modern physics can produce a dossier on pitch, timbre and the like which is startlingly precise. But man is usually (or has been in the past) content to accept the products of the human spirit as a series of tabulated sound events. He has rather attempted to express in the language of his emotions the effect which those sounds have upon him. It is not music's fault that this is so, but clearly the emergence of the idea of language in music has driven a neat, scientific set of vibrations through the shoals and by rocky shores of interpreted significance. And, of course; composers have accepted that they are speaking to their audience in comprehensible units of sense.

Hugh Blair in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres (1783) catches a general feeling in evidence in his time which expresses the unhappiness of the division being created by the popularity of instrumental music.

"When instrumental music came to be studied as a separate art (separate from vocal music) divested of the Poet's song, and formed into artificial and intricate combinations of harmony, it lost all of its ancient power of inflaming the hearers with strong emotions; and sunk into an art of mere amusement, among polished and luxurious nations."

12

Divested of its words, the critic suggests, all definite meaning departs and music becomes decorative (artifice). James Beattie, who is absolutely central in his influence on the musical aesthetic (and partially the nationalism) of Burns, is similarly effusive.

"It is in general true, that Poetry is the most immediate and most accurate interpreter of Music. Without this auxiliary, a piece of the best music, heard for the first time, might be said to mean something, but we should not be able to say what. It might incline the heart to sensibility; but poetry, or language, would be necessary.



to improve that sensibility into a real emotion, by fixing the fancy upon some definite and affecting ideas..... all uncertainty vanishes ( in song ) : the fancy is filled with determinate ideas, and determinate emotions take possession of the heart. "

13

Beattie allows for some more abstract capabilities in instrumental music. It "might be said to mean something" but he retreats from this position quickly; "but we should not be able to say what". Language is necessary to "improve" the sensibility to which music inclines the heart. There is a mysterious alchemy whereby the words change the more effete "sensibilities" into "real emotions". These are achieved by the determination of "definite or affecting ideas" and these tangible concepts "take possession of the heart". The ideas which the music contains are brought into focus only through the intercession of the words which interpret it. The "heart", the emotional centre, and the brain, which is the seat of reason, can then be seen to be concordant. Presumably, "sensibility" or the predominance of the emotions is an inferior state, and Beattie would not have approved of "art pour l'art". But the value of musical expression, indeed its very nature, were already under review, and the lives of Beattie and the Classical and Early Romantic composers overlap. It was the music of these composers which demonstrated without doubt, that music could assert its independence of a text and be a comprehensible language of emotion. Ironically, the composers of Lieder offer the most striking instances and the most accessible examples of the nature of musical language.

What then is musical language and how is it related to poetry? The highly specialized forms of the latter provide some insight into this question and poetry is quantitatively more "written about". More recent critics offer no real solutions which



might be called definitive, but we might take direction and heart in a consideration of their work.

Like poetry, music must be judged by the effect it produces and not by the way it is composed. But music criticism seems more prone to technical exegesis than would normally be acceptable in a literary commentary. The primary aim of a poem must be to communicate some aspect of human experience in a form from which an active reader can recreate something of the apprehension which the poet wishes to share. A small pamphlet by Professor Marsh offers a useful precis of this process.

A great work of literature does not simply offer a report of the intellectual and emotional aspects of existence, but a new experience with intellect and emotion fused into something like the texture of everyday existence, though heightened and made comprehensible by a patterning element of aesthetic detachment, by a specifically aesthetic pleasure.....If this heightened awareness is to be produced then the artist must have both created a situation that incorporates his perception of the particular aspects with which he is dealing, and have done so in such a way as to control the reader's responses, to bring him to a similar perception.

15

It is not possible to reduce literature to such a formula without losing or excluding things of value which a short definition ( or generalization ) cannot embrace, and there is a sense in the passage quoted of the difficulty of articulating what it is that gives literary study its special value. Professor Marsh does however offer a raison d'etre for poetry and fiction which suggests the important aspects and central concerns of literature. I intend in this chapter to explore the relationship between words and music with reference to the categories outlined by Professor Marsh, and to discover the extent to which musical language can be discussed, as a



poem or novel can be, without constant and primary importance being placed on structural technicalities. My main aim therefore shall be to discover what a song can communicate by examining the relationship between words and music as a listener and not specifically with problems of harmony, metre and form as they occur in a score. I shall begin with the major problem of musical meaning, and also explore the possibility of isolating some of the central human emotions. I do not intend to offer a specialized study of a period, or a strict chronological scrutiny of English song but will, rather, gather groups of songs of different periods and styles under the head of a common emotional experience which they share. Also, I must make it clear at the outset that I am not principally concerned with the more abstract tasks of definition which are the province of philosophy. The precise meaning of my use of problematical words ( emotion, meaning, style ) will be clear from the context in which they are used.

Professor Mellers commands the respect of the two disciplines which study separately the raw materials of song ; words and music. He is emphatic about the nature of song.

One can have intensity of poetic or musical experience but not both simultaneously. There is a limit to the human mind's powers of assimilation.

16

And immediately poems spring to mind which could not be set; almost any really great poem in fact. "The Nocturnal Upon St. Lucies Day", for example, is so entirely dependent for its life on the variety and subtlety of speech rhythms that any imagined setting, regardless of the composer's sympathy and skill, would obliterate the unique experience which is a sensitive reading of the poem. And to some



extent this must always be so. The composer can, at best, offer to re-frame the experience of the poem so as to heighten what he sees as being central and important. In this way settings become evidence of a composer's reading of a poem; they are a tangible act of criticism. Britten's setting of Blake's "Sick Rose" is an instance of this failing to happen. The Blake poem is cryptic, but contains a wealth of suggestion. Britten reduces the poem to a tired sleaziness and drooping inevitability which immediately limit the suggestiveness and offer in its place a fixity which devitalizes. This loss of vitality and energy purges the poem of its most striking characteristic. The "Wake Dirge" is similarly neutered by a somewhat hysterical setting which is monotonously repeated in a way which is deadening rather than cumulative (It offers scope for some actrobatics on the horn, which is a prime impulse of others of this setting.) Britten has not added anything to the "Sick Rose". The musical experience of the poem is slighter than a proper attentive reading. It would seem on the evidence of this song that there is truth in Stravinsky's railing against achievement of any sort of balance or harmony between the contributions of words and music to an integrated whole.

From the moment song assumes as its calling the expression of the meaning of discourse, it leaves the realm of music and has nothing more in common with it.

17

My conviction that this statement is wrong was seminal in my choosing to write at length, and it is possible to see in others of Britten's songs the beginning of an answer. In Winter Words, settings of some poems of Hardy, Britten is more successful and for just the reason which is implicit in the Mellers statement. The Hardy poems are simple, with occasional weak sting in the tail.



None of them are great in the sense of the best poems of Donne, Wordsworth or Yeats. "The Choirmaster's Burial" exemplifies the possibility of an indifferent poem's transformation into a tolerable song. The setting manages to subdue the sentimental suggestions and to mildly dramatize the slight irony of the "old tenor man". The nervous ( even ponderous ) suggestion in the accompaniment when the Vicar speaks, the melismatic choring passages, and the recitative introduction and conclusion all underpin the sense of the words. There is nothing profound or greatly moving in the poem, but what so often seems mechanical in Britten in relating sound to sense is not obtrusive. Words and music contribute equally. "Midnight on the Great Western" doesn't represent any advance on "Erlkönig" or "Gretchen" and has the power of neither of these. The train noises seem obligatory and forced unlike their counterparts in Schubert's picture-painting. But my concern here is not to make a catalogue of musical mimics of natural style, rather to suggest ways in which music can communicate more subtly.

Musical meaning has formed the basis of a well documented antagonism which has tortured out a vexed and anxious search for a standard cipher for the "language of music". The exchanges have been most creative when they have involved the need to justify an artistic innovation. The exchanges continue but have not fundamentally changed since Hanslick and his opponents tried to be definitive in the mid-Nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> The core of Hanslick's case can be found in the following assertion.

Since music as an "indefinite form of speech" is..... incapable of expressing definite ideas, is it not a psychologically unavoidable conclusion that it is likewise incapable of expressing definite emotions ? For the definite character of an emotion rests entirely on the meaning involved in it..... the definiteness



of an emotion (is) inseparably connected with concrete notions and conceptions, and to reduce these to a material form is altogether beyond the power of music.... There is no casual nexus between ideas (wrath, love or fear) and certain combinations of sound.<sup>19</sup>

Hanslick realizes that the situation is not as simple as this statement alone would suggest and his book is largely concerned with qualifications. Something of the same assertiveness, verging on the cranky, can be seen in his essay on Tristan and Isolde in which the opera is seen as a failure as a tragedy because the love that is celebrated involves no conscious choice. The motivation is due to a chemical stimulant and so the protagonists are neither responsible or knowing. Hanslick clearly was not engulfed by the surges which accompany Isolde's final declaration. His antipathy and attendant need to expose "the Wagnerian" results in contorted judgements and extreme conclusions. But that is not to deny Hanslick the credit for initiating an intelligent investigation of the musical aesthetic, given that "beauty" is no longer a fashionable excuse for inarticulate responsiveness. Alan Walker's aphorism ;  
<sup>20</sup>

Criticism is the rationalization of intuitive musical experience.  
<sup>21</sup>

although "intuitive" seems escapist, still stands as a partial reply to Hanslick's Tristan judgement. Hanslick is blinkered in his task of decrying the tendency to programmatic music in which his age excelled; leitmotiv, idee fixe and the tone poems of, say, Liszt are clearly in Hanslick's mind when he formulates the famous stance in The Beautiful in Music.

But Hanslick raises the question of the possibility of musical meaning outside the motion of melodic and harmonic tensions



which are in his opinion to be judged beautiful in themselves and independent of emotional connections. Again Alan Walker has a somewhat mystical statement which helps to point up the limitations of Hanslick's position.

No musician needs to be told that the intuitive musical experience is a vehicle of truth far superior to that of rational thought.

22

But "truth" for Walker is clearly not the same "truth" which is implied in Hanslick.

The potential aim of a great composer is to communicate a universal artistic truth.

23

For Hanslick "artistic truth" means a formalist excellence, but Walker is pointing to an emotional validity in terms of an amorphous psychology; ("What we cannot accept unconsciously we cannot take seriously.")<sup>24</sup> Roger Sessions comes even closer to an insight into the emotional content of formal music structures.

What music does is to animate the emotion; the music in other words, develops and moves on a level that is essentially below the level of conscious emotion. Its realm is that of emotional energy rather than that of emotion in a specific sense.

25

Sessions, largely evasive with regard to any precise location of meaning, chooses to ascribe the "specific emotional content" to music with an "associative program". He too opts for a generalization, drawn from Artur Schnabel ;

The process of artistic creation is always the same - from inwardness to lucidity.

26

37

seeking to move the actual creation of music into the realms of mysteriousness and the inexplicable. Sessions' interest in the parallel between musical turbidity and emotional significance is of most use in conjunction with perhaps the most important single commentator whose aim has been enlightenment as to the significance of the intervallic structure of melodies, Deryke Cooke. His major contribution has been the discovery of some culturally <sup>27</sup> stable, objective musical equivalents for general areas of emotional experience.

Cooke's delineations are most important in that they point to a constant similarity in the implied meaning of tonal intervals in Western music. The character of the notes of a major triad, for example, have a persistent connection with "looking on the bright side of things". His examples are drawn from works spanning Byrd to Bill Haley, and are all connected with sorts of feelings expressed by Mozart's three ladies as they rescue Tamino from the serpent. It needs to be quoted that there is also present in many of Cooke's quotations a strong dotted rhythm which contributes to the quality which he ascribes to the intervallic rhythm. Others, the Morely for example share the skipping rhythm so the brightness can be partly ascribed to the rhythmic quality of the tune. I shall pursue this at greater length later when dealing with the Dies Irae. ( The destruction of the original rhythm of the poem is often the consequence of a musical setting, and I shall examine that at some length in another context.) Suffice it to say here, that music is somehow expressive, that this is universally acknowledged and that Cooke's book is a step towards beginning to articulate something of the effect of music.



I shall begin with what I shall describe tentatively as rhetorical gestures in music. It is necessary to isolate what and how music communicates to be able to suggest that it is a language in the sense that it can convey meaning. Susanne Langer has written extensively on the subject of meaning in art. I have lifted the following precis from Samuel Bufford's article. It is of course too short to be offered as a serious attempt to encapsulate all that Langer's two early articles and two later books offer.

(Langer claims) that works of art are expressions of human feeling in a sensuous form that presents them for our perception and contemplation.

30

This is in accord with Cooke's position as regards musical content and at its simplest, the hypothesis could be stated as follows.<sup>31</sup> Certain aural stimuli, dynamic and harmonic combinations of tones in certain relationships, produce a predictable response in a listener, within a vague generalized area of emotional awareness. The often lachrimous feel of a tune in a minor key, the depressed sadness of "Fortune My Foe", for example, or so much of Dowland's melancholia can be cited as evidence. More subtly "Ich Habe Genug", Cantata No. 82 is comprehensible emotionally to those who have no German without the aid of a translation of the words. The serene resignation and supreme confidence are amply conveyed in the music. Another example, "Frere Jacques" the minor key treatment in the second movement of Mahler's First Symphony, is ominous and sinister rather than sad; I think partly due to the regularity and tauntness of the rhythm and the scoring for low strings and bassoon. Still, a large percentage of musical statements of lacerated feelings are in a minor key. The Mahler points up to the difficulty of any generalization, especially



of general principles adduced on the basis of tonality alone. However, the apparent impossibility of generalization does not discount the validity of interpreting with some confidence a gesture made within a rhetorical system which we understand. An extreme extension of this knowledge forms the basis for Wagner's mode; establish and advertise the symbols and then use them with complete confidence that you are comprehensible. And this observation can be extended to all forms of art. A Western listener needs to learn the expressive system of Chinese music, just as the early Twentieth century concert-goer has had to assimilate Serialism, and is currently grappling with the exploitation of Aleatoric music making. The dangers of intrepid subjectivity may be quickly isolated by a consideration of Finnegan's Wake; the logical cul-de-sac extension of linguistic individuality out of the realm of what can be readily understood. Symbols are not an end in themselves. They serve only as a means to something which the artist needs to articulate. The difficulty in music arises with the demand that an individual interpretation is what the composer meant to convey and, in a sense, this is a useless enterprise in as much as he has chosen to express himself in a language which is operating independently of the relatively fixed meaning of written expression.

Three examples will suffice to show that a degree of meaning can be isolated in a simple sense in a musical composition which has no stated program. In the first movement of the Eroica we recognise tensions developing which culminates in a dissonance which surprises and, in its time, shocked listeners who found it a bizarre entry of chaos and ratification of their antipathy towards the "moderns". It stands out certainly from the body of the symphony because of the boldness of the dissonance. But, what is also striking is the absolute rightness of it; the titanic release



followed by relaxation. It is not beautiful in any way which the nineteenth century aesthete would find congenial, but involves a listener almost physically in a climactic experience which could have its origin in a number of possible sources. That is, I think it unnecessary to interpret the passage as a chronicle of sexual experience, the result of frustrated passions of a less specific sort, or even simple accumulated anger which explodes as it is realized in musical form. All of these things are too specific, but they do help to describe the effect of the passage; and that effect is generally agreed upon regardless of the different attempts to make the lived experience of the music, in a sense its sources, articulate.

I offer the following reading as an exercise in discovering the emotions which Beethoven has so carefully formalized. The first movement of the Eroica is filled with aural signs of tension. The opening chord with its strong, determined assertion of key and purposefulness, establishes with remarkable economy the tautness of mood. The tension is elaborated in the nervous quavers in the middle strings, and is further defined by a sinuous, almost writhing tune in the 'cellos. But after only four bars the stability of the tune and the accompanying figure are modified by the introduction (crescendo) of a long C sharp and a syncopated violin part. I could go on to demonstrate the harmonic importance of the inclusion of C sharp, but I think the effect is felt sufficiently in any hearing. Similarly, the syncopations at bars 7 and 8 are prominent and pertinent, and are followed by a broader statement of the same basic material with elaboration of the rhythmical pulse, fuller orchestration and different tone colours ( flute at bar fifteen for example). Yet again the relatively relaxed theme ,





(relaxed in that its gently undulating outline is contrasted with heavy chords of the opening and twitching violin part) is interrupted by an orchestral tutti reiterating and elaborating the syncopation of bars 7 and 8. It is this persistent contrasting juxtaposition of powerful (usually full orchestra) masses of sound and a simpler (usually solo) theme redolent of anxiousness, but also interrogative, that is at the centre of this movement. It can be seen again in the falling figure in the oboe and clarinet (bar 220) descending in widening steps. Here we have the same musing, somewhat melancholy cast, reflected in the tune and countered by the enormous energy of an ascending tutti (esp. violin 1) at bar 248. Again the syncopated figure appears (cp. bars 7 and 8) but here it is elaborated with violin 1 struggling upwards through the thick texture of chords and percussion. The peak of this wave is signified by the horns which are spaced a semitone apart.



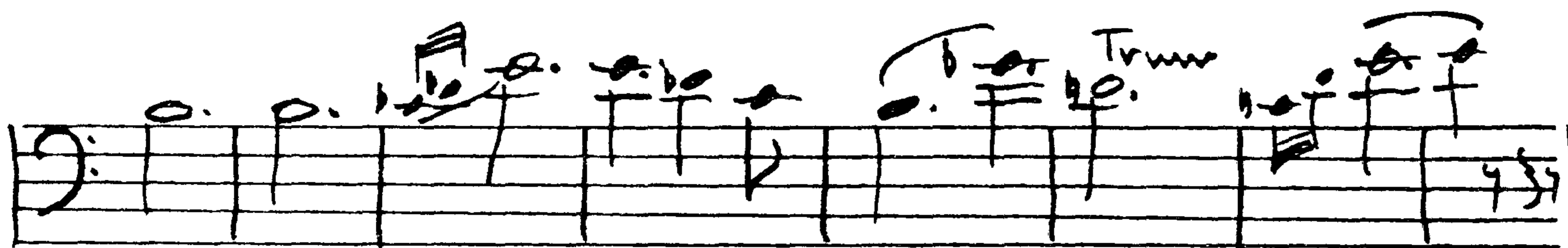
The release of energy here is massive, and the music falls back to quiescence and an oboe theme closely related in tone (mood) and outline to that which was introduced by the 'cellos in the third bar.

This is by no means a full account of the movement, let alone the symphony, but it does, I think, suggest a predominant formal arrangement which is the meaning of the work. The possibility of a more specific reading as suggested above, say in terms of a sexual parallel, is only one way of talking about the effect of the music and perhaps its motivation; it would offer to rationalize the experience which Beethoven evokes musically. What is possible however, is to state approximate emotional parallels to the musical structure. The music dramatizes a state of tension and release, and this is a pattern for a human emotional situation. A listener recognizes this relevance without the connotations of a specific situation or even a single actual emotion.

What I have written implies then, the recognition in musical form of an emotional parallel structure. I can only allude to the complexity of the interrelation and the counterpointing of emotional stimuli in a great work of art. Schubert's two late piano trios ( Op. 99, Op. 100 ) are such works and I have chosen to further demonstrate the effective power of music by examining just one small passage from the later piece. It is a characteristic Schubertian stroke and his works are full of such things.<sup>32</sup> The flexibility and invention of Schubert's modulations is one of the standard first critical observations concerning him which commentators make, but here in the Op. 100 Trio, the emotional effect is enormous. It is also usually observed that a major key following a minor one has a brightening effect, for example, any of the bright, but cold cadences involving a Picardy third in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book.



But the introduction of the major key at the very end of the Schubert brings the work to a close with great positive force. (Bars 722ff.) The dark beauty of the second movement is evoked again in the final bars of the work.



The rather stiff military seriousness of the opening of the final movement (reminiscent of the pervading mood of the Op. 99 Trio with its taut formal excellence) is suggested again, and then (Bars 713-733) the doubt and even despair portrayed in the second movement is dispelled by the forward energy and the powerfully contrasted major key. (Esp. Bars 713-716)

A page of printed musical score for piano, showing measures 710 to 720. The score is arranged in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is B-flat major. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (dim., cresc.), articulation (arco), and key signatures. The first system starts at measure 710 and ends at 716. The second system starts at measure 717 and ends at 720. The third system starts at measure 721 and ends at 720.



Many examples could be adduced with differing degrees of emotional weight to illustrate as many methods of communication. The "Dies Irae" I have already mentioned. It has neither the climactic forcefulness of the Beethoven, or the eloquent contrast or ardent lyricism of the Schubert. It is however useful both as it stands and as it became absorbed into the Romantic consciousness. The bare plainchant tune is in a minor key, but the determination of the mood which it expresses is central and problematic. Both Berlioz and Liszt have used the "Dies Irae" with idiosyncratic orchestration, and both create a Romantic picture of what the piece is. Both use it in the context of a sort of "danse macabre" with strident effects of brass and ominous low strings. The effect produced by the chanting of voices in unison is quite different and expressive of the impersonal aspect of Medieval Catholicism. Deryke Cooke quotes the theme in the Language of Music, and points to the quality of the minor third, a quality which in this music is supported by the fixed meaning of the words.

( the minor third ) has a depressed sound... Western composers expressing the rightness of happiness by means of a major third, expressed the "wrongness" of grief by means of a minor third.

p. 57.

Cooke's use of the words "tragic" or "depressed" tend to simplify the case here. The "Dies Irae" is never tragic. Cooke is nearer to an exact location of tone further on in his elaboration.

It is an undeniable fact that composers throughout the centuries, including the medieval churchmen who used the minor key to express a stern, sedate, or sober satisfaction have expressed painful emotions by bringing the minor third into prominence.....

p. 58.



But again, "painful" is the wrong word for the "Dies Irae" as we have it in plainchant. I prefer to say that it expresses sober exultation; the perfect expression of the grim eventuality. It is somberly expectant, a tune redolent of death, but not the charnel house sensibility with which Berlioz and Liszt imbue it. There is no simple fear or pain or grief in the thirteenth century tune, which was authorized in the Tridentine Missale Romanum. The frequent occurrence of Ars Moriendi,<sup>33</sup> the very nature of the detachment and confidence of Thomas of Celano, are indicative of a prominent aspect of Medieval sensibility. Briefly, they lend palpable support to what is sensed in listening to the piece. In Berlioz and Liszt there is a strong intrusion of personality, evinced in something as straightforward as a personal style, or mannerisms, but more emphatically in the emotional impetus in choice of subject. The thirteenth century tune is utterly impersonal, suggestive of neither the "city of God" nor that of men, but rather the immensity between them, the realm of death between dying and resurrection. It is impersonal but confident, and its strength comes in part from its strong even beats. It is close in this respect to Mahler's minor key Frere Jacques which is, equally, impersonally abstract.

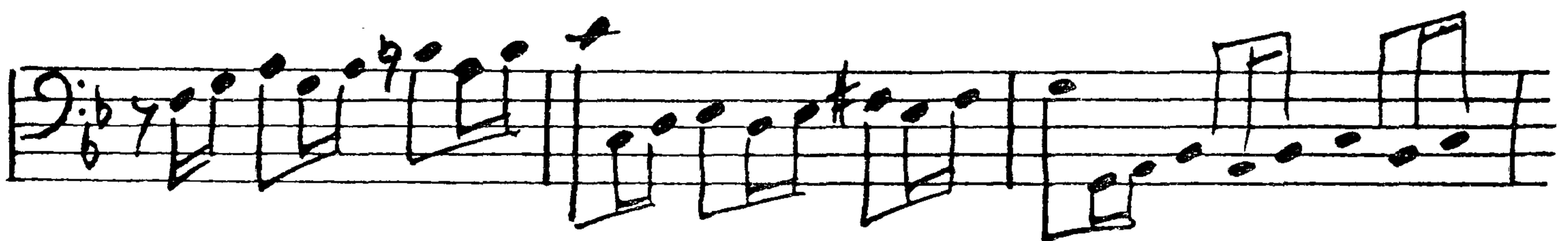
I have attempted in each of these cases to suggest in words what is naturally and non-verbally communicated, and in each example have barely broken the surface of a complete analysis. Essentially, I have tried to isolate two or three of the "objective correlatives" of music, and to find a way into an examination of musical symbolism which centres on significance of gestures. I have suggested once that personal expression was a hallmark of some works of Romanticism, and have pointed to this indirectly in the Beethoven and Schubert. The "Dies Irae" is expressive of a much



more corporate or communal sense, but that is not to say that expression arising out of the need to communicate, in the sense of the first quoted passage from Professor Marsh, is the exclusive province of the nineteenth century. Schweitzer, with reference to Bach's Cantatas, attempts to explicate Bach's "tonal language"<sup>34</sup> The following is offered as an example of the conjunction of conflicting feelings. Bach is seen to have written a falling chromatic figure redolent of suffering and grief



with a motif of joy.

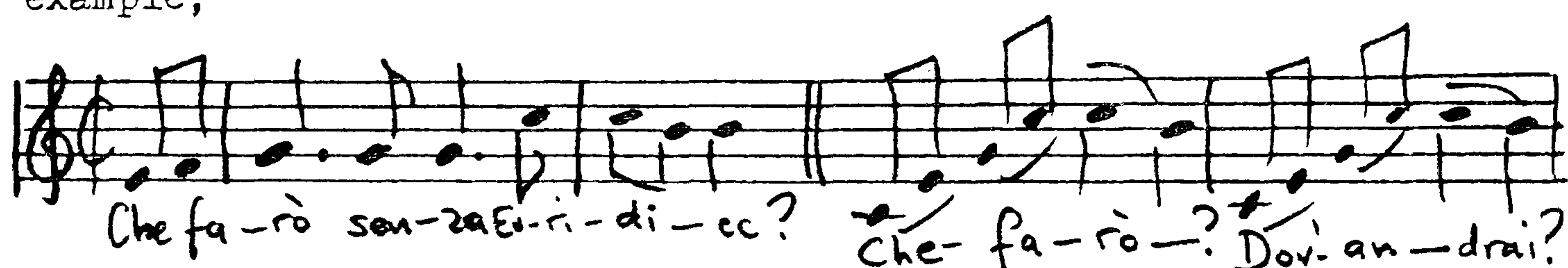


Thus incorporating feeling of grief for Christ's suffering and joy for the salvation it brings. Schweitzer is pointing primarily to a tonal feature of the first of the lines of music quoted above, although the even, slowly descending crotchet figure also suggests lamentation. The "joy" of the second figure can be ascribed largely to the rhythmic sprightliness ( in comparison to the first line above ) and the ascending line of the figure.

Both of the examples show Schweitzer's attempt to locate the musical equivalents of abstract moods, but he is concerned to demonstrate that Bach can invent pictorial themes ( or symbolical tone-painting ) which are more usually thought to be the province of the Romantics. "Auf dem Wasser zu singen", for example, can be



seen to have been anticipated in the accompaniment in the 56th Cantata (Ich will der Kreuzstab gerne tragen) of the first recitative. Schweitzer makes a more explicit connection between this Schubert and the first chorus of the Birthday Cantata Schleight, spielen Wellen. Schweitzer broaches the subject of pre-Romantic meaning in music. It is clear ( and Wagner's whole method is geared to this ) that the Liebestod in Tristan, for example, has an emotional meaning which is clearly fixed by the composer. Hanslick in his virile attack on Wagnerianism offers "Che Faro senza Euridice" as an example of passionately felt grief being expressed in an apparently contradictory, joyful mode. The melody most closely approximates what Schweitzer suggests is a rising joyful theme, for example,



Hanslick admits that "music assuredly possesses accents which more truly express feelings of profound sorrow". He doesn't expand this and has missed the sighing effect of the semitone interval between the crotchet C's and B's in the passage quoted above. This is examined at length by Deryck Cooke who answers Hanslick with a technical discussion.

When the major seventh is harmonized as a major third on the dominant, and the tonic is suspended onto it the effect is akin to that of a 4-3 suspension, and has a similar effect of pathos especially when the dominant chord takes its own minor seventh ie. a dominant seventh. The sense of pathos of 8-7 is more acute than that of 4-3 since the "resolution" is on the major seventh, which is itself a dissonance requiring resolution. (Che Faro)... achieves a purely classical pathos, by suspending the tonic on to the major seventh



as a 4-3 progression on the dominant in the essentially pleasurable context of a major key.

This type of representation of an abstract quality ( grief in this case ) is in evidence in other pre-Romantic music, and one need only turn up Cooke's examples of falling semitone intervals of a minor 6-5 progression (pp 146-151) to discover that this motif was understood in Western music as early as Arnold de Latins and Josquin. There is also ample evidence of the simpler sort of Tone-painting in music pre-dating the Romantics. The Rosenante passage from Telemann's Don Quixote Suite with its galloping horse in the dotted 6/8 rhythm, the cuckooing of "Sumer is icumen in", or the mildly dramatic music of Vivaldi's Four Seasons are indicative of the propensity to mimic, still in evidence in Messiaen. 35

I shall preface this section of my chapter with a quotation from one of the greatest literary critics. I choose this passage because it indicates the type of significance which works of literature have come to hold, largely as a result of English Literature's needing to establish itself as a discipline with a distinctive nature and purpose. Dr. Leavis has described what he saw as his fight to establish a proper seriousness in the introduction to English Literature in our Time and the University.<sup>36</sup> And the tradition to which Leavis belongs is clear enough. The paragraph which I have chosen comes from The Great Tradition. It demonstrates Leavis' particular emphasis, and although it comes from a work of criticism of the novel, its centrality to Leavis' thought makes it admissible here.

..when we examine the formal perfection of Emma we find that it can be appreciated only in terms of the moral preoccupations that characterize the novelist's peculiar interest in life. Those who suppose it to be an "aesthetic matter", a beauty of "composition" that is combined, miraculously with "truth to life", can give no adequate reason for the view that Emma is a great novel, and no intelligent account of its perfection of form. It is in the same way true of the other great English novelists that their interest in their art gives them the opposite of an affinity with Pater and George Moore; it is, brought to an intense focus, an unusually developed interest in life. For, far from having anything of Flaubert's disgust or distain or boredom, they are all distinguished by a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity.

37

The directions and interests are obvious and I do not need to elaborate on Leavis' use of phrases such as "reverent openness before life" or "a marked moral intensity". What I am concerned to establish is the extent to which a mind, steeped in this sort of concern in which literature has usurped territory more usually thought to be the province of ethics, can cope with poetry which, however lively or taut, cannot be said to exemplify the serious interest in "life"



which is the hallmark of "greatness". Donne, for example, in The Line of Wit essay is the poet who liberates poetry from musical bondage in which his contemporaries and forebears operated, to an art in which the music of poetry is that of the "talking voice". This immediacy is equated in Leavis' article with integrity, and Donne is seen as a "living poet in the most important sense". "Art" for Leavis is the natural consequence of passionately having something to say, and not a predilection for fashion or form. The prime example of what he objects to can be isolated in the word "Swinburnese", although the symptoms appear as early as Shelley. Another Aunt Sally is Joyce who exemplifies a concern with "form" and "language" which equally diverts attention from the real centre of literary activity. Doubtless Dr. Leavis smiled as he gleaned the following from Lawrence to quote in an article on Joyce in 1933;

"My God, what a clumsy olla putrida, James Joyce is !  
Nothing but old fags and cabbage-stumps of quotations  
from the Bible and the rest, stewed in the juice of  
deliberate, journalistic dirty-mindedness-- what old  
and hard-worked staleness masquerading as all new ! "

40

But the smile registered the happy convenience of that sentence and Leavis continues;

Lawrence of course, objected to the whole thing; and his objection finds endorsement in the company Joyce keeps. 41

And here more explicitly Leavis points to the quality of life actually lived being directly equatable with the acceptability of the artist's work. What Leavis inherited from Arnold, and the 19th century, permeates his whole sense of the nature of art and

the function of poetry. The seriousness of Arnold's evaluation of the task which poetry must undertake can be seen in one sentence from 'The Study of Poetry'.

More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us.

42

Couple this with a sense of man's limited time to "try to know the best that is known and thought in the world", and one has not only the vehemence of Leavis, but also a doctrine which ignores that which by the standards of greatness, demanded by what in the past might have been religious fervour, does not have the requisite moral intensity.<sup>43</sup>

The slightness of the lyric, then, and especially in the light of developments in establishment of a class of the professionally literate, has relegated smaller forms of poetry to the same museum as parlour pianos and antimacassars. My task now will be to examine the extent to which life-forces, particularly with regard to emotional strength and the elements of form, are present in the best lyrics and to discover how the lyric can be seen to be important in the hierarchy of poetry. I shall begin with a short account of recent reactions to Burns but focus on the lyrical climate from which he emerged. The 18th century is seminal in that more or less opposing attitudes towards the expression of personal emotions is a problem which grows out of the evolution from Classic to Romantic. And my aim here is to discover to what extent the "I" which is always foremost in Schumann's songs - but also discernable in a poet like Byron whose satirical urbanity and public posturing are seemingly closer to the 18th century - is indicative of self-consciousness rather than consciousness of



self, which I see as pre-eminently neo-classical. The latter implies a context into which the self is placed, a relationship to the environment which implicitly recognizes a natural, rational ordering and orientation. I want to suggest tentatively that the changes of emphasis from "consciousness of self", which carries no overtones of abandonment or spontaneity, is tantamount to a complete revision of a mode of expression. The change is gradual and not confined to literature. Critical fashions have changed accordingly and the inability of a critic like Leavis to deal with the 18th century - for he risks compromising his allegiance to Life as opposed to Art - is suggestive of the re-emphasis.

To say that "art" was peripheral to life as each individual lives it would not only be overstating a position which might be defensible in the light of Leavis' vigorous and emphatic statement of the function of literature, but would misunderstand the obvious fact that art is a minority interest. Life very clearly proceeds independent of the influence of the artist - what has T.S.Eliot done for Lewisham ? - and Leavis' plum word "quality" is suggestive of a relative and not an absolute standard. Nobody would seriously dispute that George Eliot, Conrad or Lawrence write novels which draw and comment upon the life of the times in which they were written, or indeed that they are capable of philosophical generalizations which reflect problems and issues which are "universal". These things account, in part at least, for the particular importance of each of these novelists. Clearly such fullness is beyond the scope of a lyric, regardless of Eliot's "tough reasonableness beneath a slight lyric grace," "To interpret life, to console and sustain" also seems an enormous encumbrance on literature, but more especially on those artists who possess



a different faith or speak with a voice which finds less exclusive dissemination. Burns immediately comes to mind as poet of supreme energy and vitality, a poet whose confidence in life never flagged. It is easy, of course, to accuse Burns of moral negligence and concomitantly of a lack of an intelligent concern for complexity. For Arnold this deficiency in Burns came from the impoverished society in which he lived - and I shall expand this in a later chapter. Arnold was also blind to the complexity of Chaucer - a more serious and significant failing - and he associates Chaucer with Burns with regard to their easily accessible geniality. What he mistakes in Chaucer for casual and evasive treatment of serious human problems is, in fact, Arnold being lured by the superficial impression of Chaucer's characteristic liveliness, to a judgement which is formed from a sense of the possible affrontment of moral tone; Arnold recoils from the surface of Chaucer's poetry,<sup>45</sup> The "large, free, simple, clear yet kindly view of human life" sets the tone of insipidity from which Chaucer studies have not recovered. The Nun's Priest's Tale for example, is still read as "of fox, or of a cok, or hen", but the insights which Chaucer offers to share demonstrate a clear-minded awareness of the "tragic vision" and human resourcefulness, as fully apprehended as anything in Shakespeare. But for Arnold, the Miller and the Reeve take precedence over the Franklin and the Merchant. It is not surprising then that Burns, who is more consistently preoccupied with the types represented by the Reeve and Miller should be placed low in the hierarchy and that the lyric generally should be thought intrinsically unimportant.

That Burns should suffer at the hands of critics who demand so much of literature is hardly surprising. His own century had shown no lack of critical vigour in its Dr. Johnson ( who is,



incidentally, seminal in the great tradition of criticism. )  
Johnson's observation about the ballad so enthusiastically brought  
to public attention by Addison, articulates a judgement which could  
well have come from Arnold with reference to Burns or Dr. Leavis on,  
say, pre-Donne lyricists.

"Chevy Chase pleased the vulgar, but did not satisfy  
the learned; it did not fill a mind capable of  
thinking strongly." 47

Although this criticism is specific, the general significance of  
"learning" and "strong thinking" can be seen to have wider  
implications in the context of popular art. Cowper was less exacting  
in his comments on the ballad while recognizing its proximity to  
"graver matters".

The ballad is the sort of composition I was ever fond of,  
and if graver matters had not called me another way,  
should have addicted myself more than to any other.....  
The most celebrated association of clever fellows this  
country ever saw did not think it beneath them to write  
their strength and abilities in the composition of a song.  
48

Clearly enough, Cowper is referring to the sort of ballad which Gay  
and Pepusch utilized, D'Urfey anthologized, and Autolycus sold. But  
Cowper was incapable or unwilling to distinguish between the  
grander productions which Child could wholeheartedly assimilate into  
his standard collection and another type which de Sola Pinto and  
Rodway gathered into The Common Muse. Cowper's prescription, which  
follows, does however offer, if not incisive awareness of the  
difference, at least tolerance.

The ballad is a species of poetry, I believe, peculiar

to this country, equally adapted to the drollest and most tragical subjects. Simplicity and ease are its proper characteristics. Our forefathers excelled in it; but we moderns had lost the art. It is observed, that we have few good English odes. But to make amends, we have many excellent ballads, not inferior in true poetic merit to the best odes that the Greek or Latin languages have to boast of.

49

Cowper's contemporary, James Beattie, in his Essay on Music and Poetry usefully indicates what he thought desirable in songs. The mind is more precise and articulate, the general cast being more philosophical than Cowper - even though Cowper has held a wider audience than Beattie.

Is not good music set to bad poetry as inexpressive and therefore as absurd as good poetry set to bad music, or as harmonious language without meaning. Yet the generality of musicians appear to be indifferent..... If there be a competency of hills and rills, doves and loves, fountains and mountains, with a tolerable collection of garlands and lambkins, nymphs and cupids,.....they are not solicitous about sense or elegance.

50

This is Beattie at his most typical ( and often quoted ), indicating an obvious failing in his own age which is of a more universal account. Dr. Johnson indicated precisely the same triteness of poetic effect in his parody of a ballad to which Wordsworth took vigorous exception.

I put my hat upon my head  
And went into the Strand,  
And there I met another man  
Whose hat was in his hand.

51

But then, Johnson thought the "matter" as well as the form inconsequential. Clearly Beattie found the rococo charms of the lyrics which he takes to task equally offensive, but he does allow



the possibility of a proper balance between words and music, however vague "sense" and "elegance" might be. Dryden too had expressed a concern for the unsatisfactoriness of a librettist's task in a dedication to King Arthur. He had the added complication of a dramatic context and operatic conventions; dwelling on a line or two, melismatic amplification of one syllable and other Purcellian challenges to "poetic quality".

Mr Purcel.... has compos'd.... with so great a genius that he had not to fear but an ignorant, and ill-judging Audience. But the Numbers of Poetry and Vocal Music are sometimes so contrary, that in many places I have been oblig'd to cramp my Verses, and make them rugged to the Reader, that they may be harmonious to the Hearer : Of which I have no Reason to repent me, because these sorts of Entertainment are principally design'd for the Ear and Eye; and therefore in Reason, my Art on this occasion, ought to be subservient to his. And besides, I flatter my self with an Imagination, that a Judicious Audience will easily distinguish betwixt the Songs wherein I have comply'd with him and those in which I have followed the Rules of Poetry, in the Sounds and cadence of words.

52

That is not an Eliotic disclaimer of the sort affected most pointedly in Tradition and the Individual Talent where Eliot disallows personal responsibility on the artist's part . Dryden's appeal is to Reason in his anxiousness to indicate that the addition of music to words often requires a re-adjustment of ones critical perspective , especially in a dramatic work.

Come if you dare ,our Trumpets sound ;  
Come if you dare , the Foes rebound :  
We come ,we come , we come , we come ,  
Says the double, double, double, double Beat of the  
Thundering Drum .

53

That succinctly indicates what it is that Dryden means. Nahum Tate ,



in contrast , lacked the consciousness of and allegiance to a specific Muse in providing poetry - for which he had none of Dryden's genius - which is slight and unselfconsciously subservient to a dramatic purpose , to the undoubted gain of opera audiences. But what I want to lift from Dryden is applicable to each of the critics so far cited , with the exception of Cowper and Beattie who could hardly be called critics in any case . The real challenge of writing a good song is to set poetry which is not " rugged to the reader " and which satisfies its reader as fully as Beattie requires . Of course Beattie and Dryden could appeal on behalf of those tangible qualities of " elegance " and Reason , and to the more concrete sense of numbers and proportion. The difficulty in satisfying " sense " in the lyric and ballad - I use the latter in its more general meaning - has been longer recognized . But sensible subjects for poetry have varied in different ages and good sense for Dryden would certainly embrace areas which Arnold would find abhorrent.

Each of the commentaries from which I have taken quotations in the paragraphs above has been satisfied with a general indication of the types of subjects with which song can effectively deal. Dr. Johnson's prescriptions of learned and strong thinking qualities would seem to consider only a literary experience; and the ballad presented only its literary aspect to the 18th century public. Dryden is necessarily concerned with subjects and emotions which are fit for the Restoration stage. Beattie obliquely hints at the subjects of the songs which he has in mind in the "loves and doves" rhyme. In each case the experience which the poem presents would be different and geared to the tastes and predilections of a particular age. Fit subjects for



songs are, in the broadest sense only, constant. My second chapter for example takes as its theme love and death, and particularly, these themes as expressive of personality. My final chapter will also, although less specifically, be concerned with love and death in the traditional ballad. The treatment in the ballad I take to exemplify an impersonal manifestation of the same basic themes. But what would have satisfied Dr. Johnson would not have found a place in a late-Victorian parlour. Antitheses of that sort are the natural consequences of changes of taste to which no age is immune. There is of course, a corpus of literature which transcends the implications of its relevance only to its own time being expressed in language peculiar ~~y~~ of its own age. The number of conspicuous authors who endure without the qualification of an historical or scholarly interest is small. And authors survive rather better than composers, perhaps because written music took considerably longer to liberate itself from the functions and usage of the church, with the resultant narrowing of its interests. Also musical-expressive modes, the language of music, changes even as tangibly as the extinction of timbres ( instrument ) and social functions; nobody dances the pavan any longer, and Ravel's use of it is intellectual rather than as a living and ceremonious dance.

Musical thought in an abstract philosophical sense, to do with emotional expressiveness, is also largely a post-18th century discovery ( and use ) in as much as artifice is thought of as not being an end in itself. The "passions" are usually held at one remove in the Lutanists, for example, and they don't ask for consideration with a heavy handed, post-Romantic critical method. Donald Ivey offers a brief, not invulnerable precis of Romantic ideals which will serve to suggest primary concepts: "romanticism" he writes,



as an artistic and expressive medium....attempts to capture and embody the "real living experience" that transcends all categorization and systemization . Thus all life is open to art..... romantics tended to express intangible concepts. Their poetry concentrated upon mood and the intensity of individual experience rather than upon philosophical rhetoric. The themes that attracted the romantics....Night, death, dreams unfulfilled longings, lostness, mystery.....

55

The posturing which I have in mind as an alternative to "real living experience" is also in evidence in "numbers" and "proportion", a constant preoccupation of Lutanist prefaces. Rosseter writes;

The lyric poets among the Greeks and Latins were the first inventors of airs, tying themselves strictly to the numbers and value of their syllables of which sort you will find here only in songs in Sapphic verse, the rest are of the fashion of the time, ear-pleasing rhymes without Art. The subject of them is for the most part amorous.....

56

But even Rosseter finds a need to distinguish, like Cowper's "graver matters" and Johnson's serious thinking between the amourosly fanciful and others;

who to appear more deep and singular in their judgement will admit no music but that which is long, intricate, bated with figure, chained with syncopation and where the nature of every word is precisely expressed in the note.

57

The actual settings are not as overbearingly ponderous and mechanical as Rosseter's prose-style might suggest, and in the interest of striking the right balanced attitude he concludes;

But such childish observing of words is altogether ridiculous and we ought to maintain as well in Notes as in actions, a manly carriage, gracing no word but that which is eminent and emphatic.

58



This poise and posturing in art are doubtless the reasonable qualities of sense and elegance which Beattie invokes. The 18th century might have laid more stress on the "rational" than the 17th century, but both present a unified attitude to the expressions of passion and artistic detachment.

It is not surprising that we find, if not conformity to unwritten rules of genre in any periodic style, at least tacit acceptance of suitable subjects. Propriety of this sort directs other aspects of composition. I need only cite the profusion of sonnet cycles written around the turn of the 17th century in evidence. And the sonnet cycle has the advantage, for my purposes, of satisfying established formal requirements as well as complying with the accepted norms in subject matter. But generally with subject matter the situation is less clear. Melancholy subjects can be seen to parallel an interest in decay manifested in tomb sculptures and of paramount importance in any consideration of Jacobean culture. Mannerism stands in a relationship to the High Renaissance in much the same way as Jacobean to Elizabethan. The Mannerist's writhing interest in tensions is antithetical to the High Renaissance composure. The chromaticism of Gesualdo, the perverse ( impractical ) staircase to the Laurentian Library and the Medici Tomb sculpture, all exemplify a reaction to smoothness apotheosed. John Cage concludes that in music;

It is possible to make a musical composition the continuity of which is free of individual taste and memory ( psychology ) and also of the literature and 'traditions' of the art. The sounds enter the time-space centered within themselves, unimpeded by the service to any abstraction, their 360 degrees of circumference free for an infinite play of interpretation.

Value judgements are not in the nature of this work (Music of Changes) as regards either composition, performance or listening. The idea of relation being absent



anything can happen. A 'mistake' is beside the point, for once anything happens it authentically is.

59

That is a reaction to twelve-tone as well as diatonic music; it is a fully conscious over-reaction ("The idea of relation being absent anything can happen",) to Art, offering no insight into new expressive possibilities and registering only the dissatisfaction with what has been. Similarly, the Victorians reacted against the rationality of 18th century society. The seeds of sentimentality are already present in the 18th century contemplative, but the sighing self needed to be transferred to other objects whose plight called for sympathetic awareness. Sentimentality, dangerously close in the death of Molly Farren, ( Silas Marner ) found more cloying expression in the novels of Mrs Henry Wood, or in the songs of Stephen Foster. The shamefully wronged creature who trudges with babe in arms through the snow, only to perish within sight of assistance, has become something of a Victorian archetype. ( Lilian Gish stands at the end of a line which has now been parodied out of existence and which a modern audience cannot countenance without laughter. ) The pattern of that situation, the nature of the appeal made to the reader's imaginative and emotional responsiveness is what is distinctive. When Foster's distraught protagonist sings "Was My Brother in the Battle", the composer assumes a sympathy and toleration which accompany a fashion.

Tell me, tell me weary soldier will he never come again,  
Did he suffer with the wounded, or die among the slain.

60

There is no escape from the inevitable consequences of the battle or the young ladies keening, and the composer - who is also the poet here - strings together a group of cliches which for a modern



listener could only appeal to gullable individuals of the most flaccid temperament. That such songs could have found general approval brings into question the whole concept of discrimination and selectivity, which is so central in the theory of distillation and refinement of the Traditional Ballad, or the notion of the endurance of the best of former ages. But it is also significant that so little of Foster has survived,<sup>61</sup> perhaps more especially the disappearance of even the brighter songs from school songbooks in the past decade. ( The Swanee River, Camptown Races, Some Folks Do et al. ) Their currency in the parlour has given way to other entertainment and in the case of the general populous the surrender of active participation. It would be impossible to calculate the mood and atmosphere in which there could be a Foster revival. Donne, after 250 years eclipse found a learned public of suitable temperament, but then his appeal is to a smaller audience, and even in his own time he could not have held such a scattered and diverse public. I am drawing no comparison here, of course, and concede whole-heartedly that Foster could in no way fill a "mind capable of thinking strongly", but that was part of his appeal, which was mirrored in sentimental novelists. But Foster's mode is closely related to the more serious composers, like Sullivan in his more inflated court style, the Sullivan of the parlour ballads.

The popularity, with a poet as influential as Goethe, of the Traditional Ballad and the bogus mythologies of James Macpherson ( Ossian ) produced a set of songs at the turn of the 19th century associated with ballad stories. I choose these settings because they demonstrate another aspect of cultural progression, an alternative to various degrees of reaction, and because I consider the Ballad important enough for close scrutiny later. The John Cage



which I quoted above, is the most extreme reaction to Tradition, a reaction which is of its essence more destructive than creative, while carrying something like Newton's Third Law in an inexorable pattern. What the early 19th century did with the Ballad evinces another possibility of assimilation and metamorphosis of material to make it current and more congenial to contemporary taste. Des Knaben Wunderhorn is a relatively late production when the appearance of Bishop Percy's collection and the rise of the Ossianic cult are considered. The impulse in the 18th century to collect and collate was largely archaeological, which like the interest in Ossian - who was thought to have affinities with Homer - was part of what has come to be known as Neo-classicism. But this initial impulsion gave inertia to what was to develop as the folksong movement which was more obviously evident at the turn of both the 19th and 20th centuries. The influence of folksong on the lied can be demonstrated but I am interested here in the settings like "Erlkönig", "Die Lorelei" or "Tom der Reimer". Ballads like these are metamorphosed in the hands of Schubert, Schumann and Loewe into something "like the texture of living experience" which was a principle interest of composers of Lied. One critic writes of Schubert;

When dealing with pure emotion he found that the poet had a great advantage over the musician in that he could make a sudden, even violent change of expression without departing from his metrical framework, for his medium is connotative as well as subjective. The musical equivalents of such changes are alteration of tempo, key, phrasing or time and any of these may upset the emotional rhythm and unity of the work.

63

That description of the nature of poetry to be set does not fit the Traditional Ballad; it is never pure emotion and almost always nearly pure narrative. But Schubert does not need to be revolutionary

64



in his setting of "Erlkönig" as Goethe has already provided the impetus for a dramatic psychological rendering in his casting the ballad-type tale in the form of a dialogue with various declamatory styles. The cry of the boy, the gentle but anxious father and coaxing death all elicit particular tones of voice; Schubert manages not only with explicit changes of key and rhythm, but also various tessitura which grow out of the exchanges in the poem. And it is far from being a simple ballad tale, so there is point in the complexity of the setting;

Dem Vater grauset's, er reitet geschwind....  
In seinem Armen das Kind war tot.

These lines, the only possible conclusion to the poem, are relentlessly and ineluctably achieved with a swiftness that appals; Goethe inherited that from the ballad. And Schubert's music matches the drama perfectly ! "Gretchen am Spinnrade" belongs to the same early group of Goethe settings, and it exemplifies the same dramatic emotion expressed against the unceasing activity of the spinning-wheel. This self-examining reverie, closely connected to inward passions, the psychological yearning which the poet and composer substantiate - with a force that evinces more than sympathy - is perhaps closer to the bulk of Schubert's work. The engagement with the anxious and bereaved father in "Erlkönig" is largely the same human sympathy as that in Gretchen, and illustrates the composer's ability to interpret a text by reading himself into a dramatic situation. It is something of the passionate involvement which has preserved Dido's 'When I am layed in earth' - and which is evident in the Funeral Sentences - but for Purcell it was not a natural (or habitual ) mode.



Perhaps the most obvious artistic convention which is a threat to what is so expressive in Schubert can be seen in the strophic songs. ( The Traditional Ballad is always strophic. ) These immediately imply limitations of expressive range and examples of them ( Heidenröslein ) demonstrate the slightness and usually artless simplicity. A through-composed song ( 'Abendempfindung' of Mozart, for example ) can develop and change with the intensity and mood of the verse. The opening song of Die Shöne Müllerin, regardless of Gerald Moore's variations of attack in the reiterated accompaniment, is naturally limited by the repetition of exactly the same material. However the poem does not develop as an organic or thoughtful progression, expressive of an individual psyche for which the composer feels an urgent affinity, and it is this type of engagement which is fundamental to any theory which elevates the Romantics as a high point in the development of emotional directness.

The ballad as we know it today - and we have considerably more examples after two hundred years of scholarship - is always strophic. In this respect it is closer to the first song of Die Schöne Müllerin than to "Erlkönig" or the majority of early Schubert settings, almost all of which are through-composed. "Mary Hamilton", one of the finest ballads, ( Child 173 ) is sung to the same tune in all of its 19 stanzas in Child's A text. Any variation in the performance would be slight and the result of the variability in the singer due to fatigue, a shaky feeling for a consistent key and so on rather than subtle expressive nuances. The emphasis in the ballad is always on the words, and the persistent reiteration of the tune offers no challenge to the complete attention to the narrative. But this does not exclude the possibility of a tune which compliments the words. I shall satisfy myself here with a



suggestion, only, of the relationship which I have in mind. This can best be done with reference to two performances of ballad "classics". The first is Jeannie Robertson's version of "Mary Hamilton"; the tune is close to the tune more popularly available in a collection of Joan Baez folksongs, and this has tended to make it the authorized version. The melodic outline catches something of the resignation which is almost despair, rising to its peak in the third line and then dropping away with a meaningful inevitability when coupled with the sense of stanzas like this :

Oh little did my mother think,  
The day she cradled me,  
What lands I was to travel through  
What death I was to dee.

In each of the stanzas the third line is climactic, matching the intonation of the tune;

..Mary Hamilton gangs with bairn  
..Sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee babe.  
..I'll put on my robes of white.

and the distinctive mood which I have associated with the melody supports the sustained mood of the verse. "Sir Patrick Spens" is equally eloquently performed by Ewan McColl. This ballad, at the risk of contradicting my general belief, appeals less to the heart than "Mary Hamilton." The whole situation of "Mary Hamilton", as Jeannie Robertson's performance demonstrates, is an appeal to the listener's propensity for pity for a specific plight in a world which is inescapably and unchangingly moral. The world of "Sir Patrick Spens" is more emphatically public, a sense enforced by a

more austere and less emotionally oriented tune, in which the hero's choice, and the moral point, is to do with duty challenged by reason and supernatural intuitions. The greatest sailor, although appalled at what he is ordered to do, has no alternative but to attempt the task knowing that it means his death. Mary Hamilton chooses to sin in killing her child and suffers the consequences of the act. The emotional weight which makes it subtler than "Sir Patrick Spens" comes from the suggestions of courting, which is rather more than a euphemism, followed by desperation and desertion in the face of a murder charge. The king need not jeopardize himself when the case is clear and he forgoes any responsibility. The ballad manages to suggest these complexities which are innately more personal in their appeal than a record of self-destructive obedience. Ewan McColl aims at a loftiness and grandeur in his performance of "Sir Patrick Spens." It is highly decorated and achieves an elevation which could be described as monumental; the old sailor is sung again with the reverence which has preserved his name, but which is perhaps a recognition of the enduring quality and value of his action.

It can be assumed with some confidence that it is correct to assert that the ballad is of its nature not lyrical in the way in which we normally accept lyricism. It embodies an impersonal strength, a firmness of narrative purpose alien formally and emotionally to what is understood by a lyric. Goethe understood his debt to the ballad genre even if he modified it to suit his purposes as one whose roots were bound up with the deeper significances of Sturm und drang. "Erlkönig" is on one side of the coin, the other side is antipathetic.



Über allen Gipfeln  
Ist Ruh,  
In allen Wipfeln  
Spürest du  
Nur einen Hauch:  
Die Vögelein schweigen in Walde.  
Warte nur ! Balde  
Ruhest du auch.

(Wandrer's Nachtlied 11.)

Yet here the conventions are just as obvious. "Warte nur!" is no more personal than any number of similar appeals to contemplation. Perhaps the only features which are significant in singling this poem out from those in a similar mode in the 18th century are the deftness with which an atmosphere is evoked, and the explicit impressionism, as opposed to a scientific eye for landscape. "Balde/Ruhest du auch." is evocative of a Romantic attitude embodied for example, in Die Winterreise rather than the heavy foreboding of a pointedly 18th century "Take note of this heap of dust.", the calm of spiritual peace and not of death. This small poem is not however a tired application of an old formula, the feeling so often generated by similar poems of the 18th century, perhaps most particularly, in that it is not laboured. Like the landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich it offers to share the process of creation by distributing the imaginative load so as to include the spectator in the creative experience, a policy explicitly formulated in Keats' lines

Heard melodies are sweet. But those unheard  
Are sweeter;

(Ode on a Grecian Urn.)

The poem is a catalyst which fuses the experience which the poet offers to share, with previously inanimate similar awareness in the reader. In the 18th century this usually amounted to a recognition of some Truth, Dr. Johnson having asserted that poetry in his time

could add nothing to what had already been said and written but only re-frame it with elegance and skill. The Goethe poem above, so characteristic of the new lyricism, is distinctive for what it leaves unsaid, and for its dependence on emotional sympathy rather than learning. Even the formal rhythmic structure is linked with delicacy to the emotional structure of the poem which suggests an organic growth rather than pre-determined form.

My general account of the 18th century, necessarily brief, is offered in the recognition of the fact that the environment which gave rise to 19th century "emotionalism" also produced for itself an account of its aims and functions in poetry and song. And to speak of cold rationality, of the limitations of highly formalized structures, the proper expression of an accepted and delineated tradition, is only marginally fair. Boswell records that Dr. Johnson whose temper was reputedly less than mild and delicate was moved to tears by Beattie's The Hermit.

Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn;  
Kind nature the embryo blossom will save;  
But when shall spring visit the mouldering urn  
O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave !  
11. 29 - 32.

Was it that which so moved him; was he struck by Beattie's compelling dactyl rhythm which sweeps along with an inevitability as directed as "mans lot"? Or were the tears of soulful recognition?

See Truth, Love and Mercy in triumph descending  
And nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom!  
On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are blending  
And Beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.  
11. 44 - 48

The appeal of these sentiments is dulled for the modern reader by,



for example, Keats' assault on the emotions and perhaps the general loss of religious conviction. Even a metaphor like "smiles and Roses" (or is it rococo imagery?) is rhetorical and conventional. Compare it with "a bracelet of bright hair about the bone" for weight and originality and, of course, the vast gulf in attitude. The latter strikingly sets up the image of a skull with wisps of hair and confronts death, not dispassionately, but neither is it escapist in a "smiles and roses" way. There is something of Hamlet's fascination and repulsion in the complexity of suggestion in the line from Donne. But the 18th century was not interested in the heat of the moment nor, strictly, in originality. Donne's striving for flashes of insight by fusing disparate images contains an inherent appeal to feelings whose motions are similarly various and complex. And Donne could not conceivably have upheld a theory which suggested that all we can know we do, and that what can be expressed in poetry has been. Dr. Johnson is moved, in as much as it can be accounted for in terms of his being of his time, not by the poem, but by its approximation of a general truth which demands a respectable response. He is closer to Arnold than Donne; the Arnold of the Requiescat. In this poem the experience is carefully distanced by a rhetoric which has replaced feeling. Any emotion is purged by a formal posturing, perhaps (generously) a striking of attitudes which will not allow direct or undisciplined feeling, - formal self-control. Neither is the poem overtly public, rather it is presented as a private, if somewhat grandiose, offering. "Ah, would that I did too!" gives the tone and catches the posture.

The Beattie poem is more convincingly wrought, although the sense of overriding structure and an attendant stock of images together with what seems an unsuitable metre for the sentiments, tends

to deflate any glimmer of a real interest and significantly different response. Dr. Johnson can be seen here to anticipate a fashion in his weeping. The flagrantly sentimental graveyard poetry of the later 18th century, exemplified in Young's "Night Thoughts" and at an important zenith in Gray's "Elegy," characterizes an interest leaning away from the rational and ordered world of post-Newtonian culture towards something less stable and emphatically more personal. And what the "Wandrer's Nachtlied II" demands in terms of a reader involving himself in the experience out of which Goethe's final questions will chime significantly, inducing the required apprehension, is precisely what the Romantic song writers could build on; a poetry so evocative of moments of emotional intensity, so consonant with the early 19th century world-view and most of all, so open ended in that it encouraged a creative sympathy. Dr. Johnson had sensed something of the power which music was to harness in his often-quoted definition of opera, which smacks of attraction and rejection; "an Exotic and Irrational Entertainment." But most of all, Johnson is confounded that such a thing could exist at all, perhaps failing to see in it the first stirring of the nemesis of the age of apotheosed rational order and Alberti basses. But the focus of interest was to move to Germany and result in the cultural peak which produced the most important artistic figures who were to assert their individual status as creators and relocate the emphasis of acceptable artistic experience.



Any study which purports interest in the setting of words inevitably invokes a touchstone in the German Lied. The relevance of the development of this form to the history of accompanied song has been widely and variously commented upon, and major expressive conventions are rooted in the period ranging from about twenty years before 1800 until, say, the death of Schubert in 1828. That chronology is of course random and meant only to include the roots and genesis of Romantic song. For my purposes, in making these opening gambits, I propose to examine settings by Schubert and Schumann ( primarily the major Song-cycles of each ) with an eye to their being representative of two widely divergent approaches to texts, with a resultant difference, which polarizes two of the possibilities of setting words. But first I need to outline, at least, the nature and importance of lieder; its aims and function, which can be retrospectively discerned.

The distinctiveness of lieder does not lie in any breakthrough which can be disposed of as simply as the rise of expression concomitant with the evolution of the Romantic sensibility.<sup>64</sup> I have already indicated that Bach, for example, was capable of profoundly personal, emotional utterances which stem from a deep religious feeling and which, in a sense, pre-figure the sort of expressiveness which we more usually think of as Romantic. ( pp 33-34 I place special importance on the Cantata No 82 Ich habe genug, which exemplifies the reality of assertions of Bach's capability of intensely personal statements.) But in Bach, there is never the predictable combination of components which are inevitably present in lieder; we can point to the 56th Cantata, to the watery imagery in the accompaniment of the first recitative as suggestive of what will be commonplace later. The "components" then, of the lied, are

distinguished by the attempt to create a balance between them; a balance between the poem, the voice ( melody ) and the accompaniment, each assuming more or less equal responsibility for the resulting fusion. That of course is an ideal postulate, and even Praver in his book of Lieder doesn't offer a pat definition. No commentator can cope with the diversity created over a period of almost 200 years with an aphorism. Praver notes the way in which the poem and music share the task of communication. He also writes of the importance of the emergence of the piano as a popular instrument, the advent of a new lyrical poetry and a generation of poets, who supplied what Hegel described as "poems which express tersely and feelingly, some mood or situation of the heart or else poems which are light and gay". Another of Praver's observations is that the Lied "marries the principle of recitative and aria". He continues:

In an oratorio, the narrative and the emotion it arouses tend to be presented alternatively; in a Lied they go together.

66

And it was Klopstock who as an initiator of this productive fervour - Cross writes of his "creative protest to break down the barriers of form and emotional constraint"- asserted that "the perfection of lyrical poetry resided 'in the melodious course of passion or feeling'", a definition which implicitly recognizes the possibility of union with music, especially in its sanctioning of a Wordsworthian "feeling", in the context of "melodiousness". Wordsworth's famous formulation lays stress on "recollection" and "tranquility" and the result is a specific type of contemplation of self, epitomized in The Prelude. In German and especially in Klopstock, arose something much more passionately ejaculatory, equally preoccupied with the



individual self, but finding expression in a totally different form. Closs traces the origin of the sturm und drang, for example, back to Lutheranism.

It was in particular the orthodoxy of the followers of Luther that drove the pietists to seek a more emotional form of religion. From here it is but a step to the profaner Promethean self-glorification of the storm and stress for pietism wallows not only in the sensual ecstasies aroused by the realization of divine forces in the human soul.

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But Wordsworth has behind him a tradition of contemplative poetry which is amongst many other things sensible and reasonable, and it was not his lot to espouse (what Closs ascribes to Klopstock) "the irrational and emotional language of the heart" (p160), a language of which, I think it fair to say, is eminently suited to the lyric form. Even the "Lucy" poems of Wordsworth, which formally at least are lyrics, have nothing of the stürmer und dränger about them. German passion, it seems, is more effusive and overt, and in song these characteristics are often designated as Austrian. Praver, for example, writes of Walther von der Vogelweide;

In the view of the dominant part which Austrian composers played in the history of the lied, it is not without interest to hear Walther himself confess, in a well known poem, that he learnt the arts of music and poetry in Austria. 69

The firsthand experience of Max Graf as a Viennese music critic from 1890 to 1938, support a claim to the distinctive qualities of that society still in evidence before the First War. He comments on the appropriateness of Brahms' dedication of the Liebeslieder waltzes to Hanslick and continues:



Hanslick's admiration for Brahms seems to contradict his inborn love of light, gracious and melodious music. Brahms was weighty and brooding, with no bright colours. He was a typical Protestant from northern Germany, attracted by the sensuousness and ease of Vienna, like a serious man falling in love with a light-minded and perpetually smiling woman.

70

But the champagne bubbles of the Strauss era, largely evaporated with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, marked the end of that curious mixture of Hapsburg sumptuousness and glitter, Schubertian salon music and the more robust beer halls. Vienna had assimilated these into its own peculiar frivolous texture which could accommodate the extrovert talents of Liszt and the melodies of Schubert, as well as poignant, more self-revelatory compositions of the latter. There are too the giants of the First Viennese School, attracted by patronage, who bolster the city's reputation; but Schubert's tunefulness stands unchallenged by these, supporting the assertion of a special local quality.

The extent to which Schubert's Austrian aspect and Schumann's German origin and life influenced their song styles is of marginal interest here, although I am concerned to define a difference which is instructive out of the context of these two composers. The proposition which I shall advance with regard to Schumann and Schubert is central to my thesis. Stated most simply, in order to suggest a starting point, these composers exemplify two related but quite different approaches to a text. While psychology is important to both, their individual approach to it differs considerably. The difference might be summed up in Schubert's tendency to pictorialism and Schumann's use of more abstract suggestions of mood and emotion. Both of these suggestions can be amply supported from the four Song Cycles of Schumann and the three of Schubert.

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Perhaps the first obvious difference is the lack in Schumann of anything straightforwardly pictorial; Schumann almost never resorts to the water-colouring which is so prevalent in, if not characteristic of Schubert. In the Schumann song cycles there are only four (relatively) obvious pieces of musical pictorialism. "Waldesgespräch" in the Liederkries Op. 39 has a rippling arpeggio figure which accompanies the final stanza and which evokes the deeps of the Rhine.

Du kennst mich wohl-von hohen Stein  
Schaut still mein Schloss tief in den Rhein.

There is the heaviness in the sixth song of Dichterliebe, 'Im Rhein im heiligen Strome', where Schumann suggests something of the grandness of the view, and contrasts this with the tender and gentle evocation of the picture of the Virgin. The descending march figure in the setting of the penultimate stanza of 'Die alten, bösen Lieder' uses heaviness to suggest a different sort of gravity. And finally, again in Dichterliebe, there is the obvious ( and splendid ) dance accompaniment to 'Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen'. There are other instances of the accompaniment conveying a meaning independently of the words, notably in the Frauenliebe und-Leben, where there is a wedding march at the end of the fifth song and a coy announcement which follows these lines in the sixth song.

Komm und birg dein Antlitz  
Hier an meiner Brust.  
Will in's Ohr dir flüstern  
Alle mein Lust.

It is the supreme artistry of Kathleen Ferrier, or Elizabeth Schumann, coupled with the convincing passionate intensity, which



understood that 'puzzlement and bewilderment' can be supported musically with this harmony. What Sams indicated is that the motifs he defines have a paraphrasable verbal meaning, of the type which depends on vertical and progressive harmonic relationships or, of the rhythmic sort (the wave arpeggios in 'Die Lorelei'). I want to take this a step further and suggest that it is Schumann who weds the notion of the formal musical possibility of conveying intense and convincing emotional meaning with a directness not previously seen in such profusion. It is also important to add that this is achieved without constant recourse to tangible and concrete symbols of movement or say, musical onomatopoeia. The motions of emotions are suggested more abstractly than they are in Schubert.

I shall take one small example which seems to me to embody Schumann in a characteristic treatment of a text amplifying and extending the mood of the verse and enriching its slightness.

In wunderschönen Monat Mai,  
Als alle Knospen sprangen,  
Da ist in meinem Herzen  
Die Liebe aufgegangen.

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,  
Als alle Vogel sangen,  
Da hab'ich ihr gestanden  
Mein Sehnen und Verlangen.

Dichterliebe, Song 1.

Martin Cooper writes "Heine was the ideal poet for Schumann not only because of certain spiritual affinity that existed between them, showing itself in the deliberate cultivation of sharply contracted moods within a single lyric, but also, because of the conciseness and point of his style." 'Sehnen und Verlangen' gives Schumann the clue, not that there is any real depth in the poem which needs to be arduously fathomed. But the contrast is there; the outgoing effusive



seems to have grown out of the composer's own experience of love, which makes such tolerably crass verses a vehicle for real expressiveness. And it is the intensity of Schumann's commitment to an experience which the poem fails to wholly realize that makes them suitable for addition of music. In this case the entire cycle gains its emotional weight from the music. My justification of "psychological" importance of Schumann's settings is based in the sort of expression which he achieves here. His music is perfectly suited to the suggestion of states of mind and emotional experience. Eric Sam's important examination of Schumann's songs is concerned with deciphering the motifs which he sees Schumann as having used persistently. He numbers these and applies his number system to the songs to support or amplify what can already be seen to be there. For my purposes it is interesting to note the correspondence between the implied biographical meaning and the connotative sense along with the lines of Cooke's emotional symbols. Motif 41, for example, the diminished seventh 'Schumann considered tonally uncertain and difficult to classify' and 'serves as his general expression of puzzle and bewilderment.' Motif 40 is the juxtaposition of two unrelated tonalities and is said to give 'the idea of mystery'. Both of these prescriptions are predictable within the constant meaning of rhetoric, which I proposed earlier as being central to understanding musical meaning. Motif 40 is clear enough in the context of relationship of keys. Motif 41 too, is that sort of fixed symbol which Cooke takes as exemplifying a common reaction. When the Commendatore offers his hand to Don Giovanni.... 'Eccola' and Giovanni takes it, the shock at the cold and its implications are registered in a cry.... 'Ohime!' which is accompanied by a diminished seventh chord. Certainly Mozart



quality of the first stanza the mood of which is clarified (qualified) by the last two nouns. The composer further indicates the mood in his designation of tempo; *Langsam*. And each of these instances make it clear that Schumann is giving the lyric a context which is only hinted at by the poet. Hence the pervading atmosphere of brooding melancholy, heightened by thoughts of Spring and love, contains the elements of love sought after, found and lost again, and as such is a paradigm of the cyclical aspect of Dichterliebe. The song ( and the Cycle ) begins in F sharp minor, hardly a portent of unsullied love or peaceful celebration of fulfilment. It finishes with a dominant seventh chord left unresolved, the effect of which has already been noted. But all of this is importing into the poem a significance which, although it might be appropriate and relevant, is none the less a twisting of the poet's words. Where for example is the melancholy in the poem; the wistful sense of love lost which is so important in the song ? It is a poem about love's growth and the open-endedness of breaking off after the confession means that the reader is buoyed along with the joyous implications of Spring flowers and bird song. Schumann gives us the beloved's (her) answer, as a tone of voice, the languishing autumnal cast of the lover who reflects on anticipated joy and now, almost desparingly, re-vivifies the experience with pervaded muted tones of rejection, colouring his recollection. In this way the meaning of the poem is specified and fixed and essentially made stronger. The poem might contain a hint of rejected love, but would commentators have been as sure if it had not been primarily remembered in the setting in Dichterliebe ?

The compactness of 'Im wunderschönen Monat Mai' is another hallmark of Schumann's songs. He is never guilty in these of the



empty re-iteration which spoils the finale of the Symphonic Studies. There is rarely that bravura and somewhat laboured vitality in the 1840 songs. In short there is more frequently found in the songs that diminutive element of one-to-oneness arising from a deeply felt need for expression and more usually thought of as peculiar to poetry. Schumann often succeeds in catching the inflection and rhythm of speech. The accented beat of the first bar of the song in question, for example, catches the emphatic 'wunderschönen' and again ( more powerfully ) the 'Liebes' of the first stanza, and 'Sehnen' of the second. The rhythmic emphasis is made more pointed with the last two of these examples by the introduction of B flat into the accompaniment, achieving in both cases a poignancy and a leaning upwards ( taken over by the voice part ) heightening the despairing with something close to sighing. All of this then, seems to stem from a reading of the poem which imposes on it certain predilections of the composer, which in the context of a class of practical criticism could be seen as perversity. But, what is not in question is the status of what Schumann achieves and the integrity of the emotions. What is satisfying in the song comes from a sense that the feelings which it represents are not being indulged in a sentimental or maudlin fashion but are strikingly evoked with deftness and economy. And that sort of account would seem to be representative of many of Schumann's songs.

For Schumann the choice of texts seems to have been guided by immediate emotional needs rather than by a deep critical sense. Few of the poems in the four great song cycles could be called first rate works, and the Adelbert von Chamisso are singularly undistinguished as poetry. Yet that in no way inhibits the creation of something fine, and with an integrity which is at the seat of



what is ultimately satisfying and convincing in the composer. For it is not only as an index of an individual romantic psyche that we value the settings, but something striking deeper into the heart of musical expression. Beethoven, whose songs are more closely related to Schumann than to Schubert, wrote in response to some song texts which he had been sent;

(The) texts you sent me were really the least suitable for singing. The description of a picture belongs to painting. And in this respect too, whose sphere in this case is not so restricted as mine, may consider himself more favoured than my Muse. On the other hand, my sphere extends further into other regions and our empire cannot be so easily reached.....

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This is an explicit invocation of spirit or the "soul" as critics of Schumann more usually put it, and it is offered in commentaries on Schumann's songs as a reason for a tolerance which the poetry alone might not reasonably expect; a simple passionate intensity delivered "without self-consciousness therefore without offence". But he does not as is often suggested, work from inside the poem. Bedford wrote that "his ..... songs profoundly express the inmost spirit of the poems.... identifying himself with the viewpoint of the poet, in weaving into his re-utterance of the poem the poet's beauties of diction, and his subtleties of expression." The following appalling translation is given in the Lea Pocket Score of the first of the Dichterliebe songs. It gives some indication of the terrors of translation, evinces a complete lack of discrimination in choices in suitable words, but most of all suggests that the reading of the poem which I offered in my analysis was correct. The translator clearly has no idea of the subtleties of the musical setting, which as I indicated are external to the poem as a text, but integral to

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the song in its place in the composer's personality.

In beautifullest month of May,  
When all the buds are breaking,  
Within my heart a wonder-  
Was love also waking.

In beautifullest month of May,  
When all the birds were trilling,  
I told her my heart's secret,  
My yearning and my thrilling!

This English ( or is it American?) tremulous evocation of Heine exemplifies the wrong dimension of soul. The spirit of the translation is clumsily without fibre, obliterating the delicacy and simplicity of the original. But the concept of the heart, passion, "soul" and the like are commonplaces of the mode in which it is operating. The final line both in Heine and the music of Schumann, are infinitely stronger than 'yearning and thrilling', and Schumann reads the line as the most important in the poem; Heine's and Schumann's feelings are consonant but significantly different.

I shall briefly turn to an English anthologist for an assessment of what a lyric can be. It comes from an important contemporary of Schumann, Palgrave, whose Golden Treasury was published in 1861. The prefatory essay outlines Palgrave's principles of selection, which are instructive in an attempt to locate the special quality of lyrical poems.

Lyrical has been here held essentially to imply that each poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation.....That a poem shall be worthy of a writer's genius,- that it shall reach a perfection commensurate with its aim,- that we should require finish in proportion to brevity,- that passion, colour, or originality cannot atone for serious imperfections in clearness, unity or truth,- that a few good lines do not make a good poem,- that popular estimate is servicable as a guidepost more



than a compass,- above all that Excellence should be looked for rather in the Whole than in its Parts,- such and other such canons have always been steadily regarded.

74

This suggests several related directions of interest. With reference to the preceding section of this chapter, the difference between this and Arnold is clear enough and the difference from Leavis even more marked. Palgrave's insistence is on form and the spirit of the passage derives from a Keatsian aesthetic. The word "truth" above is comprehensible in terms of Keats' Ode ("The Grecian Urn"), which Palgrave does not include in his selection, and this word as much as any other in the passage sets the tone, asserting unquestionably the value of the lyric, both form and content. But the exclusion of the "Grecian Urn" is important in that it was probably thought to be too didactic, but perusal of the Golden Treasury reveals that it is a mixed bag of shorter poems and this, more than any other criterion, was most important. Palgrave's prescriptions, however laudable and sincere necessarily suffer from, the lack of poets, like Goethe or Heine, or a host of German romantics who write lyrics of the sort seen in Dichterliebe. Conversely perhaps England has suffered from a profusion of major figures ( Wordsworth, Keats. Byron, Shelley et al ) whose major talent overshadows poets whose work can be more readily compared with continental contemporaries. But then, Thomas Moore is of limited interest, except perhaps in his relation to folksong, and can hardly be considered as central to English poetry as Heine is to German. What Palgrave writes is however applicable to the German poets whose work is set by Schumann, the "wholeness", smallness and concentration of feeling being generally applicable.

The sustained mood of 'Wundershönen monat Mai' fits perfectly into the delineations of Palgrave, the deftness and tight formal



structure turning on an idea of love's awakening and quickening in Spring. The repetition of the first line elicits a strophic setting and I shall elaborate on the limiting implications of this with regard to the tightness of the song structure. I have noted that 'Sehnen und Verlangen' is taken as indicating a specific mood of still present longing as the protagonist speaks. This mood is imported into the first stanza giving 'liebes aufgegangen' an almost painful sensation. It is not like 'April the cruelest month', with its attendant bitterness, cynicism and misanthropy, however, but rather a recognition that the fullness of the impending relation also contains the possibility of loss. The song is sung with the loss of reality realized in the music alone, but changing the inflection of the words. But curiously the probable weakening of "feeling" which usually accompanies a strophic setting is allayed by brevity and intensity. Once again, the first of the Schöne Müllerin songs can be adduced as exemplifying the limitation. And here too is what is possible when a song follows the prescriptions of the verse to the letter! 'Das Wandern' could well have been an anthology piece in a German volume which followed Palgrave's principles. The poem suggests that to be restless is to take a cue from nature and from the ceaseless activity of the millwheels. Like Schumann, Schubert has taken his sense of the mood of the poem from a line in it. The key to Schubert's interpretation is in his use of the repetition of 'das Wandern, das Wandern,'. But he fails to catch the only complexity, although a very slight complexity, in the second stanza.

Das hat nicht Rast bei Tag und Nacht,  
Ist stets auf Wanderschaft bedacht,  
Das Wasser.



The song dramatizes ceaseless activity, which could in these lines be seen as a counter to indolence and languishing, although it never allows for more than one level of response. It is unambivalent in its somewhat joyful reverie and contemplation of the freedom of the road, and Schubert chooses to set it rather in the style of a folksong than as a deeply suggestive art song, which he consummately achieves in the spare setting of 'Der Leiermann'. The sprightliness of the setting out is as thoughtless and blithe in 'Das Wandern' as the persistent footfall is relentless and directed by despairing in the rhythms of the songs of Die Winterreise. What we have in 'Das Wandern' is a simple setting of a poem which lacks complexity, and in turning on 'a single thought' encourages the 'four-square' setting which energetically catches the spirit of folk-like joy, and determination.

It would be grossly unfair to take 'Das Wandern' as characteristic Schubert, and would misrepresent the range and expressiveness of which he is capable. And there is no need to invoke Die Winterreise to discover an alternative to the artlessness of 'Das Wandern'. Schubert was prone to re-using material for which any enthusiasm was shown, and it is to this tendency that we owe the Trout Quintet, and the D minor Quartet Op 161. But he also reworked one of the songs from Die Scöne Müllerin and produced a fine set of variations for flute and piano Op 160. The melody which is used is 'Trokne Blumen', the eighteenth of the Miller songs, and its popularity would appear to stem from the appeal it makes the listener's susceptibility to being stirred by despairing about rejection in love. The success of Winterreise depends absolutely on the music's being able to convince and to overcome sentimentality in the words. The text of 'Trokne Blumen' is not unlike Campe's poem 'Abendenfindung', which is so eloquently set by Mozart, the main



difference being the more abstract nature of the Campe. The persona of 'Trokne Blumen' is the same as that of 'Das Wandern' and Schubert can cope equally well with a wide variety of emotional sympathies. Einstein, who basically disapproves of the re-use of such a fine song in order to demonstrate the gymnastic ability of a flautist, writes that the song evinces 'unique intensity and restraint'. For Arthur Hutchings it would be one of those songs 'wherein the brook hardly murmurs and wherein that side of Schubert's nature which is more obviously manifest in the later songs, deals with the emotional misgivings of his journeyman-lover'. Hutchings also disapproves of the flute Variations. But to what extent is the song impelled in the sense that so many of the 1840 Schumann songs are by a pressing and omnipresent personal motivation? In 'Abendenfindung', for example, there is no doubt that the feelings which the music expresses are Mozart's own. The problem with Schubert is the dramatic context. Schumann at his best is utterly, convincingly first-person, and the validity and reality of the emotions even when he transfers them to a woman, is unqualifiedly embodied in his music. The same can be said of Schubert, but there is a difference.

I have already indicated that Schubert often attempts to picture the dramatic context suggested by the words and the situation of the character who delivers them. Winterreise abounds in such imagings. There is the plodding leave-taking in the first song which is taken up in the others which follow, and constitutes a sort of *idée fixe* in the cycle. The arbitrary response to gusts of wind is mirrored in rising semi-quaver figures and the undulating quavers in the opening of 'Die Wetterfahne', reflecting the inconstancy of the beloved. Frozen tears are heard to drop in the staccato chords of 'Gefrorne Tranen', and the heat with which they



spring is indicated in the growing volume of sound; the crescendo which advances with the sense and poignantly off-sets the final drops in the penultimate bar. ( pianissimo ) The triplet figure of 'Erstarrung' accompanies a quickening of remembered delight and happiness, but the vital movement is qualified by the minor key which places the joy. 'Der Lindenbaum' juxtaposes a simple folk-like melody, somewhat wistful and gently contemplative, against an evocation of rustling leaves. But the 'süßen Traum' gives way to a more turbulent mood when 'Die kalten Winde bliesen'. This type of pictorialism continues throughout, and I will now turn to the last song 'Der Leierman' which exemplifies the same treatment of the text. What is important is to discover how it is that Schubert manages to engage the emotional response which he achieves.

'Der Leierman' is, not surprisingly given the place it occupies in the song cycle, one of Schubert's bleakest settings. The piano part is the re-iterated drone and little tune of the organ which the old man turns. Each bar is built above the same A minor drone which with an equally persistent crabbed melody, little more than a token tune, is crisp and frosty as the day. This spareness carries over into the voice part which is little more than a repeated arpeggio whose rhythm still catches the forward intention of the rejected lover, perhaps beginning to falter in the dotted quaver and semi-quaver of the last eight bars. There is no doubt of what this song achieves but neither is there any doubt about how it is achieved; and this is where it is important to discover the difference between Schubert and Schumann. In Schubert there is an intellectually conceived narrative quality, usually evident in the approach to the accompaniment which endeavours to give the words being set a context. This virtually frees the melody to follow an emotionally related, but



none the less independent course which usually is not geared to speech rhythms but to an overriding melodic shape. This shape is rarely irregular either in shape or in rhythmic structure; 'Die Krahe' for example, demonstrates the wonderful power of Schubert's melodies while re-stating the notion of the wandering course which the traveller is taking. The melody too in this case is pictorial, or perhaps narrative in its intention, meandering downwards against a persistent triplet accompaniment. Schubert never relies on abstract and intangible representations of emotional qualities. Perhaps in this respect he is more classical than Schumann, imaginatively following on from the sort of musical description which Haydn rather naively utilizes in the "sinuous worms, the limpid brook, larks and doves", in The Creation. For each of these Haydn has a brief instrumental sketch, but his aim is primarily descriptive. There are no undertones of psychological significance.

It would be convenient for the purpose of my argument if Schubert did no more with his description than Haydn; using musical pictures in the service of a narrative. That however is obviously not the case, or at least the impetus and meaning of these descriptive passages come across as more deeply seated than those in The Creation. Schubert stands at an important juncture in the history of song, in that he is at once forward-looking to the songs of Schumann or Wolf, while retaining something of the folk and classical elements of his immediate predecessors. The impulse to pure narrative and pictorialism is strong; 'Das Wandern', for example, gains its main psychological interest retrospectively in the context of the songs which follow it in the cycle, which is uncompromisingly dramatic. So too, the weight of 'Der Leierman' is determined by its position in Die Winterreise. In isolation it



would retain the bleak and sterile atmosphere, the nihilistic monotony; but its special meaning comes from these qualities in relation to the sequence which it culminates. What I am suggesting is that pictorialism has one set of connotations in isolation, which are not as complex or meaningful as the same qualities in their context, and that these things inevitably limit the directness of a personal statement.

At the outset I stated that the variety of possible approaches to texts is as infinite as the number of texts which could be set; there is no such thing as general meaning and we can only expect specific instances of importance and implication. Yet the shared qualities of groups of songs, without invoking a theory of genre with presupposed rules and likeness to archetypes which is inevitably limiting, can be usefully sorted out to clarify the achievement of a composer in realizing the potential of the words he chooses to set. Faced with 'Batter my Heart' sonnet, Britten captures and fixes the total mood and individual tones of the poem, mixing a graphic narrative response to the images of the poem with an emotional sympathy. And yet what the song evinces is Britten's artistry which is closely related to the same masterliness in Schubert. Two instances in the song will make my point. But first I must establish that this is not a song in which the fullest intensity, the most visceral Schumannesque inwardness is convincingly revealed. Britten is guided by the histrionics of the poem, and he manages the tension of gathering up and releasing the triplet-figure 'battering' with characteristic skill. The singer's plea ranges over the repeated hammering rhythm and climaxes in a falling phrase, a swooning conclusion and submission to the double forte which gives the song



an ending which the poem does not have. What is so admirable in the song is the structure which makes the interpretation clear. It is the work of sensible craftsmanship which makes the interpretation clear. It is the work of sensible craftsmanship whose emotional range and richness are limited by the text. It is clear also, that the function of the words and the part they play in the imaginative conception is one of being a cue to aural images and that suggests that it be considered, like many of Schubert's songs, as a dramatic narrative.

It might be expected that a setting of 'Batter My Heart' would reveal a depth and fervour of religious feeling which so moved the composer, that something of the individuality of his need would be communicated. Perhaps it would be unfair to say that Britten had coldly calculated his setting, but it is I think, obvious that there is more of the introspective structuring mind behind the song than a spontaneous and passionate spirit. But then the coincidence of an inspiring text with an immediate and pressing need is unhappily an infrequent occurrence. That profound feelings of love, both joyousness and fear which both result from loving, affected Schumann at precisely the right instant in his development is evident in the directness with which a listener feels in touch with the exact feelings of the composer. Words in Schumann's case serve only to clarify what is already manifest in the music, and this is a different stimulus. But, that is not to say that Schumann is devoid of the craft of music, or that Britten is incapable of demonstrating emotional expressiveness which overrides considerations of formal technique. Neither am I implying a value judgement which precludes the utterly formal as a valid approach to song. Schumann's love motivated a creative energy, the sole purpose of which was to

find a way of expressing itself, or even simply of singing itself. Schubert similarly finds the prospect of his impending death, the impetus for expressions of profound despair, in Winterreise with the nominal excuse of failure in love, and strenuously achieved hope ( Op 100 Trio ) In the case of emotions as central and inescapable as these, words are peripheral to the musical experience. The strength of these emotional reactions, specifically to love and death, is not surprizingly proportional to their ability to vitalize and galvanize an artist into expression. Whether the result is to celebrate and advertize conjugality, bemoan unfaithfulness, distance loss or comprehend immensity, man has sought to express his relation to these in what he writes or paints or sings. The common experiences, to anticipate Dr. Johnson as he is cited in the following chapter, are timeless; and experiences of love and death, for example, can be gathered under one head, when a concern for related types of experience is considered as exemplifying fixed bearings in language. I shall begin in the next chapter, with the most immediate personal concerns, and work towards the meaning of public expression in words and music.



Schubert and Schumann exemplify aspects of the same voice; they are individuals to the extent that the accessibility of their personal voices is not obscured by the type of formal presentation (the medium) with which they convey their particular senses of the world. But Schubert died young, having mastered his fear only in the sense that in his music emotions, however strong they might be, are ordered and distanced. He never achieves serenity, rather a seriously qualified gaiety, a crisp but subdued precision or gloomy reflection. Schumann lapses into unproductive despair, attempts suicide and wastes the last years of his life in an asylum. The seeds of this final withdrawal into the self are probably always there in his music. The intensity of his response to love in 1840, which gave rise to a vast number of songs, is symptomatic of the power of that part of his mind which was susceptible to emotional stimulus, and which could be excited into production. Perhaps the very potency of a response to life evinced in his reaction to it contains a fundamental flaw; the impossibility of being selective about things in life to which one responds! But Schumann and Schubert had for a time, found ways of expressing themselves in an art where their personality, which is conditioned in any individual by the whole life, dictated a selection of texts and a musical fabric in which to dress them. Time and madness arrested their development and we can only speculate as to how they might have grown. But the testimony of their songs is witness to differing self-awareness that in exceptional individuals is highly productive.

This idea of artistic personality is one of the perplexing formulations of criticism which is inescapable in a consideration of what an artist has achieved. It can be approached in several ways. We might consider the philosophical or quasi-philosophical approaches of essayists. In such a case the degree of impersonality might be a



likelier subject. Equally we might begin to make definitions and to compare them. I prefer to take a fine poem, one of many by modern poets, which addresses itself to the problem of sorting out the impersonality/personality contraries. W.B. Yeats attempted to fix a satisfactory perspective with regard to both words. Briefly, he tries, like Eliot, to discover how it is that a poet can be sufficiently detached to achieve the impersonality which both see as desirable. There are differences of course, as extreme as those I examined in Schubert and Schumann, but both men seem to wish to describe the poet in terms which might better be applied to their poems. If a poem presents a verbal account of feelings which are passionately felt, it is unlikely that the poet will be capable of the distancing of self that he would achieve, for example, in giving instructions in verse. And passion can be taken to mean any number of intense feelings, from spleen to despairing. Baldly stated, like this, the concept sounds Romantic, but poems are rarely composed to accompany the installation of a new washing machine. That requires a functional prose. The claim that I make for poetry, then, is that it is a specialized use of language and that it is, generally, expressive of passions or emotions which are the poet's - setting aside for a moment the implied opposite extreme.

78.

These lines are from "Lapis Lazuli", a late poem of Yeats, which is a particular favourite of mine:

Two Chinamen, behind them a third,  
Are carved in lapis lazuli,  
Over them flies a long-legged bird,  
A symbol of longevity;  
The third, doubtless a serving-man,  
Carries a musical instrument.

Every discoloration of the stone,  
Every accidental crack or dent,  
Seems a water-course or an avalanche,  
Or lofty slope where it still snows  
Though doubtless plum or cherry-branch



Sweetens the little half-way house  
Those Chinamen climb towards, and I  
Delight to imagine them seated there;  
There, on the mountain and the sky,  
On all the tragic scene they stare.  
One asks for mournful melodies;  
Accomplished fingers begin to play.  
Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay.

79

I don't believe that Yeats has achieved what he sees orientals as having attained, although to be "aware" in quite this way of an intellectual position which is presented in the poem, is perhaps to share the position at least partially. What has the poet glimpsed (or created) in those stone Chinamen? The insights started considerably earlier than 1935 when "Lapis Lazuli" was written. He managed to free himself from the early self-indulgent reverie of the Celtic rapturousness, working his way steadily towards the sparkling, but brittle mozaics and stilted singing school of Byzantium, carefully selecting and rejecting images which symbolize his artistic philosophy. The arrival at the archetypal, inscrutable Chinamen is not an accident. Herakleitos is always evident, but the pinnacle which the stone figures are ascending supplies the credentials which are necessary if Yeats is to make them credible symbols. They are far removed from "the still sad music of humanity" or anything in Blake's world. But they are Yeats' intellectual symbols which are somehow always qualified by that adjective. The poet is speaking about a state, an achievable state perhaps, but one which is not entirely convincing. What is it that the old men have to glitter about? They listen to a musician, a servant to their needs, who accompanies their quiet deliberation, looking across the clouds and mountains beyond the realm of the lapis lazuli. And it is detachment which singles them out; they are removed from the world. Annie Besant, Madame Blavatsky and Krishnamurti had laid the ground work in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but Yeats does not invoke their



Eastern mysticism here, He also goes further than Byzantium and attempts  
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to enliven the hackneyed image of the wise sage; or rather, to re-  
interpret that image. Detachment is the wisdom of age, an acceptance  
of mortality and a tranquil ordering of life which in its calm and  
stillness transcends the fear implicit in mortality.

Yeats is surely aware of the 'willow pattern' obviousness of  
his symbols. Every accidental crack or dent might be evocative, but the  
plum and cherry blossom are a gratuitous addition added, of course, by  
the poet's imagination. Imagination is critical to the poem. Both  
tragedy and gaiety are in themselves evasive symbols without a context  
of actuality. Yeats attempts to firmly locate them by moving from a  
present in which a more pressing consideration of war places artistic  
"gaiety" as being irresponsible, at least to a populous characterized  
by hysterical women. The voice of a universal dramatist fixes the  
proper response to violence, while increasing the credibility of the  
real position which the artist makes accessible to those who are  
responsive enough to accept his propositions, the tragedy being more  
carefully focused as pertaining in a multiplicity of situations where  
Shakespearean characters embody the variety. The position is further  
focused by considering Callimachus, who lives only in reputation and  
who, Yeats suggests, would have accepted his fate. Perpetual rebuilding  
of the same potent images is at once a vital (gay) enterprise and  
also one which recognizes that it is ephemeral. But if the fabric is  
constantly destroyed, where is the survival and how can man take heart  
in a world where dissolution is inevitable? There is imagination - the  
power of the mind to seize upon, to hold and to create significance  
for itself, a happy recognition of a pattern which is invulnerable to  
physical human interference. So the object on which the poet's mind  
pauses, and in which it finds inspiration, has no real value outside



its power to inspire. The stone itself is inert, but Yeats ascribes to the figures upon it a knowledge of the order of the similar endowment which Shakespeare makes to his characters. Like Callimachus they all share the gaiety which evinces understanding. It is not an understanding of suffering. Once again the problem is that of mortality, at once more urgent and immediate than any war and more pressing. What the poet does is to create symbols of the transcendence of that knowledge and fear, symbols which in a created world offer no hope of escape. In the face of such inescapable forces the most we can hope for is detachment which precludes weeping.

In "Lapis Lazuli" Yeats does not claim to have achieved this evacuation of personality. He does not claim to have overcome his basic humanism which contains as its first premise, a sceptical approach to the possibility of immortality and a real escape from being alive. The solutions are a matter of choice and individual character. Recognition of this type is an intellectualizing perhaps, in the hope that it will result in belief, either orthodox or self-created. Sadly, for Yeats, his solutions always smack of the gaudy toy which is gathered into the "artifice of eternity". What he seeks is the impersonality of art which is non-human! The "dying animal", that part of him which makes the quest so urgent, cannot be escaped, so the "sensual music" must stand as a valid and essential interpretation of life as it might be lived.<sup>82</sup> The word which he surely wants to rise out of such considerations; like Eliot's confidence in "redemption"; and a Christian solution, is a demonstrably practical impersonality, and escape from self. It is<sup>83</sup> already there in the detached, quietly smiling Chinese who are, of course, made of stone. The problem is unresolved in Yeats. Art objects are generally open to accusations of being non-human (this is tacit in "Sailing to Byzantium"), created in man's image, perhaps, and



ultimately a shadow of reality. Reality, when confronted, is uncompromising and ineluctable. That might be the satisfactoriness of Yeats. He vigorously aspires towards a statement which defines impersonality as it is related to an artist. What he achieves is the ability to make a poem which intellectually defines the possibility of such an achievement, indeed which purports to have achieved it! But it is a position which also sees through itself, even offering the deflating strokes in the self-same poem. By this means Yeats' personality is made paramount in his poems and evident both in intellect and spirit. The music of his verse, the symbols and the rhetoric are of the intellect; the aspiration, of the spirit. In this way personality and relative impersonality are exemplified in his work. He recognises the latter, but is fastened to the former. The bird which sings to the Emperor of Byzantium is miraculous and mechanical. The Chinamen contain in their very conception a justification which, while it recognises that they are clichéd, looks beyond the necessity of such symbols to art and discovers the active imagination at once liberated by them. but doomed to fail both as satisfactory symbol and an adequate end in itself.

It is inconceivable that Yeats could have written in any other way. The gestures are consistent and, at risk of making an even more unsatisfactory generalization, part of a progressive growth in his poetry. The usefulness of his example, however brief my exposition of his achievement is here, cannot be overlooked. It is complex and logical and addresses itself to an investigation of the poet's voice. And even if the result is only to create questions, they are questions which are of universal account. If Yeats cannot escape from his contemplation of perpetual change, worms and skulls included, he does attempt to discover a pattern, which although it is not an answer, is not apathetic. The achievement of poise in an ordered voice amounts



to some success. Yeats cannot be objective. He has leaned too heavily on his soul for that, so his verse is always controlled by his personality. Even Crazy Jane is a splinter of his character and he makes no excuses.

I have made this long excursus because I am always working on Yeats, and carry a good many important private images and ideas which are articulated in my mind in his words. He as much as any other poet I have read, makes the effort <sup>to</sup> find a satisfactory position with regard to that perplexing word "Art" and its relation to individual lives. He is the natural heir to the Keats of the "Grecian Urn". Keats was not given the chance, like Yeats, to try to be articulate and to fail. Beethoven's "Muss es sein?" and "Es muss sein!" and the Opus 135 String Quartet contain no answer either. The last movement (after the questions of the introductory bars) is <sup>85</sup>carefully choreographed pugilism, but the question is answered by tampering musically with the rhythmic emphasis. That is evasive. And in Beethoven we are confronted, I think, with something like Yeats' retreat into the structures of art and imagination in an attempted resolution. A humanist is vulnerable, precisely because he takes as his subject his own mortality, and this forges a link with anyone else who is prepared to listen. In all art <sup>86</sup>of the type there is a reaching out to an audience and an attempt to lay bare the apprehensions which are the peculiar property of personality.

A poet then, makes an order with his chosen symbols, subject to an emphasis dictated by imagination. Writing to Dorothy Wellesley in 1935, Yeats made the following observation.

I notice that you have much lapis lazuli; someone has sent me a present of a great piece carved by some Chinese sculptor into the semblance of a mountain with temple, trees, paths and an ascetic and pupil about to climb the mountain. Ascetic, pupil, hard stone, eternal theme of the sensual east. The



heroic cry in the midst of despair. But no, I am wrong, the east has its solution always and therefore knows nothing of tragedy. It is we, not the east, that must raise the heroic cry.

37

The clues to interpretation of the poem need not necessarily be here, but we can discern an attitude which helps to define the gaiety which is at the centre (and the end) of the poem. Yeats detects an "eternal theme" as well as the "sensual east", and it is the ever present solution which precludes an acquiescence in tragedy, philosophical detachment in mysticism which is a cultural norm in the East and rarely achieved in Western civilization. Hence the "heroic cry" of the ongoing confrontation which refuses to adopt, perhaps cannot adopt, a stance which evinces impersonality. Yeats had written earlier in the letter of "heroic ecstasy" which is unavailable to those who are pre-occupied with morality. "Bitter and gay", that is the "heroic mood" and he continues,

When there is despair, public or private, when settled order seems lost, people look for strength within or without. The lasting expression of our time is..... in a sense of something steellike and cold within the will, something passionate and cold.

88

The paradox of passionate coldness implies both intensity of feeling and detachment and must, in Yeats' case, be treated with some caution. While such qualities might be attainable in verse, the poem from which this speculation springs is demonstrably musically and tonally various with different uses of poetic voice. The "steellike and cold" could hardly be taken to be applying to the poem and lines like these:

... and I  
Delight to imagine them seated there;



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

(Lapis Lazuli).

Rather, the letter suggests that there is a difference between intention and result, between intellectual and philosophical structuring and the purpose to which that structuring might be put. But where does that leave the poet and his voice, especially where he demonstrably speaks for himself through the poem. (This is as clearly seen in "Lapis Lazuli" as in any other poem I can think of which might be taken to demonstrate the same process.) The actual stone, as I have said already, is worked into a complex argument which settles for the permanence of images, ideas, values, art and the like, in the mind; a permanence which is as enduring as the individual who has created the significance for himself.

This is the apprehension which is the motive force for all of the quasi-metaphysical considerations of time in Four Quartets, and usefully, Eliot arrives, initially at least, at a symbol which is closely allied to Yeats' piece of lapis lazuli. Consider the conclusion of Burnt Norton, remembering that it comes at the end of a series of "movements" which include some quite alarming images.

Garlic and sapphires in the mud  
Clot the bedded axle-tree.

Modernity is gained in juxtapositions of disparate symbols, resonant in themselves and related to the animal decay which is the reason for the obsessive examination of time and the apparent attempt to transform it (or perhaps understand it.)



Time and the bell have buried the day,  
The black cloud carries the sun away.

A transposition of images which are mundane - perhaps diurnal - into the lamenting form and rhythm of the "Corpus Christi Carol" catches at both past and present, while the verb (carries) suggests a continuous present extending into the future. The answers to the questions are given as a conditioned response which is related to their symbolic and ominous associations;

Will.....  
Fingers of yew be curled  
Down on us?..

We arrive at the last section with these (and other) considerations ringing in our minds, and are confronted with this:

Words move, music moves  
Only in time; but that which is only living  
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach  
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,  
Can words or music reach  
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still  
Moves perpetually in its stillness.

Implicitly the potency of the forces of life equate themselves proportionally with the intensity of the loss which is dying. This is given in an assertion which leans heavily on the word "only",

.... that which is only living  
Can only die.

and attempts to distance the prospect with an easy and rather liturgical aphorism which, in its very hollowness, reveals its brave face. It is a



feeling informed by these lines from the previous section:

Internal darkness, deprivation  
And destitution of all property,  
Desiccation of the world of sense,  
Evacuation of the world of fancy,  
Inoperancy of the world of spirit;  
This is the one way, and the other  
Is the same...

Yeats had written about the same intention, more directly perhaps in his "sick with desire / And fastened to a dying animal." And like Yeats, Eliot fixes upon an art object which he sets up as embodying a desirable permanency. The coincidence that the jar is Chinese should not interfere with the fact that it is offered as "art". The associations are surely the same as they are for Yeats, a conscious invocation of the East, not for any mystical significance, but rather that the Chinese are seen in the West to have gathered their earthly life into a calm contemplation of its totality. The jar of course cannot in itself manifest a human attitude, but it can evince cultural mores which in their very "otherness" seem to present a more structured and less emotionally demonstrative approach to existence. But this is only the symbolic meaning and Yeats, at least tacitly, acknowledges both the attractiveness of the theory and his enthusiasm for it, while regarding it as an imposition of meaning for reasons of a deficiency in Western man, rather than for any understanding exclusive to orientals.

I am not sure that Eliot's position is as flexible. He wishes to settle on the word "stillness" which will become more important in the whole philosophy of the Quartets, and which will chime as a profound discovery in the context of "strained" words, and perplexed contortions of logic, active language opposed to a desirable impersonal calm. And language in this sense is always personal. It is thrown into sharp



contrast by such a comparison, but always the urgency of the individual voice working through its complete vocalizing of a simple dilemma is contrasted with an impersonality which is observable in things that are not human. So any answer which is sought can hold little hope of a satisfactory conclusion outside something which is conventionally religious or which defines a possible survival in supernatural terms. Eliot settles for intellectual gymnastics, but both poets try to ensure that a retrospective assessment of their work will consider, as a major achievement in their poems, the attempt to attain impersonality, to create in the very confrontation of the end of human life something which will endure.

The extent to which "impersonality" assures the survival of a poet's work is questionable, mainly because the very value of what he has made comes from its reflecting his voice which is peculiar to him. This quest in Yeats and Eliot is surely for detachment, even if Eliot writes essays which claim for the poet the aspiration to a purgation of self. I can best demonstrate what I mean with a simile. For Eliot especially, "impersonality" is like a mirage in the desert of his complex reaction to life. It is tantalizing because, like the Chinese jar and Yeats' "something steellike and cold", it must always be beyond reach. Detachment is a shadow of "impersonality" - the real a pale copy of the unreal - and is thrown by experience which schools unimpassioned observation. And it offers only relief, not salvation. Yeats knows this<sup>91</sup> and says as much in "Lapis Lazuli". Eliot too, understands his position and works it out without the agnosticism of Yeats and perhaps is finally a little suspect, but the colossal effort of working it through carries its own value.

"Personality" and "impersonality" then, like "subjective" and "objective", are words the use of which carries certain responsibilities.



They are all in some ways evasive, as unsatisfactory as any generalization and yet they are, equally, a species of shorthand. The use to which I put them is not idiosyncratic but quite close to the words' actual meaning. I take "personality" to imply evidence of an individual voice, while "impersonality" is to be found where a personal voice cannot be detected. When Donne writes (says!) "Batter my heart" there can be no doubt as to who is speaking. Similarly in these lines,

I cannot tell what flowers are at my feet  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs  
But in embalmed darkness guess each sweet...

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we are not confronted with a persona, which distances the experience. Conversely these lines have no detectable individual voice,

The king sits in Dunfermline town  
Drinking the blood red wine;  
Oh where will I get a skeely skipper  
To sail this ship of mine.

(Child 58.)

Even the verb tense helps to detach the lines from any possible personalizing. They operate in a simple and immediate present, and complexities of time do not intrude. The very absence of the detectable individual, with his more or less individual voice, does not of course mean that no opinion or attitudes are communicated. Take this stanza from the "Dowie Dens of Yarrow":

And there they flew and there he slew  
And there he wounded sorely  
Till her brother John came in beyond  
And pierced his heart most foully.

(Child 214.)



Once again, the words evince no personality. They certainly convey a moral position. Brother John comes, cowardly, from behind, but it is all inescapably public, even the moral stance which gives us the collective opinion manifested as a reaction to uncivilized behaviour. Communities depend on rules which govern the social fabric. Violation of the rules is reprehensible as it disturbs the order. So the foulness of the deed expresses two attitudes; firstly, the barbarism of stabbing in the back in any combat where rules are observed. The incidental "foulness" is a recognition that the "ploughboy lad" from Yarrow has indeed been slain. An individual dies, but at this point he is only the victim of a non-observance of those codes which bind a feudal society. It is very explicit tragedy, and of course, quite impersonal.

I am conscious that I have proceeded without having acknowledged, at least, that there is more to Yeats' sense of "gaiety" than just the use to which I have put it! How, for example, are we meant to interpret these important lines, lines which are inextricably linked to the poet's sense of the world?

There, on the mountain and the sky,  
On all the tragic scene they stare.

The difficulty is presented by the word "tragic". It is I think an imposition which, while it purports to summarize "life" is, rather, based in a world view which has wider significance. At its simplest it is the two-fold life from which the Chinamen have escaped; the chaotic world apparent to the sense and also the complex sphere of individual imagination which embraces not only essentially private thought, but also the interpretation of the visible (real) world. How is "tragedy", then, imposed on these? The interpretation of the



disasters of the external world, which might of course be an environment in which an individual must operate, suggests one particular meaning. Another, is the very sense of personal mortality, of which the process of ageing and ultimately death are the inescapable contemplation of the old or the threatened. A satisfactory position with regard to mortality and self is surely the detachment to which Yeats points here. The difficulty of finding a satisfactory way of using the word "tragedy" is the result of the erratic use to which poets and critics have put it since the time of Aristotle. Individual tragedy, in a Shakespearean sense - the result of flaws in characters which often result in chaos in their immediate world, self-destructive violence and probably self-awareness which is taken to be an enduring value - elevates the "tragic" individual above the common man. These are troublesome concepts and not given to easily yielding up their special meaning.

Perhaps W.H.Auden has found a more satisfactory attitude which is manifest in these lines from a well known poem;

About suffering they were never wrong  
The Old Masters; how well they understood  
Its human position; how it takes place  
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just  
walking dully along;  
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I wonder if "suffering" would not have been better than "tragic" in Yeats' poem? The answer is clearly "No!" because something would be lost which fixes the transcendence that the Chinamen are seen to have achieved, that individual acceptance which distances the dangerous and chaotic world and which amounts to a profound self-knowledge. But Yeats also means the "suffering world"! Auden finds a relationship between "life" and "art" which settles for the ongoingness of things,



the mundane rhythms taking precedence over the attempts of those like Icarus, who aspire to feats beyond the common realm. The failure of a glorious try is of momentary import to the ploughman and the sea-captain, who have more pressing business. And Breughal is seen as endorsing that position. It is all very practical, the torturer's horse attends to the itch which, in another poem by Yeats, "The Long Legged Fly", would be seen as distraction enough to interfere with the development of civilization! And Auden's approach is more practical, for generally, suffering is the essence of tragedy and he penetrates its public aspect with characteristic urbanity. He does not, like Yeats, catch at the more private sense of the word.

How then do life and art equate to offer this solution which is, seemingly, given as an achievable position? Yeats might have suggested, in 1928, that the answer was to be embodied in the artifice which a poet makes. While that might still be implicit in "Lapis Lazuli", he has clearly gone a step further. The ascetics and their musician have not carved the stone in which they are represented, but Yeats imputes to the sculptor his own philosophy. The poet recognises an affinity, he supposes, in contact he perceives between the implications of an inert symbol and a pressing need for private expressions of an individual apprehension which becomes interpretative. Hence the exultation which is the tone of those last few lines of the poem. I don't think the poet believes what he says, but then recognition of someone else's apparent solution is heartening and offers hope, if nothing else!



CHAPTER TWO : " ASHES UNDER URICON ";  
mortality and self .

When ya live , live in clover  
'Cos when yar dead , ya dead all over

( 'Squizzie' Taylor...Gangster, Melbourne c.1930 )

We waited while she passed ;  
It was a narrow time ,  
Too jostled were our souls to speak ,  
At length the notice came.

She mentioned and forgot ;  
Then lightly as a reed  
Bent to the water , shivered scarce ,  
Consented , and was dead.

And we , we placed the hair ,  
And drew the head erect ;  
And then an awful leisure was ,  
Our faith to regulate.

( Emily Dickinson )

My temptation is quiet.  
Here at life's end  
Neither loose imagination,  
Nor the mill of the mind  
Consuming its rag and bone,  
Can make the truth known .

( W.B.Yeats )



There is no single theme which so engrosses the human mind as death. Often writers of many descriptions combine it with "love" and find in both the basis for an organization of their observations on life. Yet love, of its nature and in the usual sense of the word, is necessarily something which involves sharing. Beatrice, who is oblivious of the affections of Dante is surely an exceptional case, and love conceived in such terms is, like Romeo's infatuation for Rosaline, if not shallow, then rather pointless as the foundation for a meaningful relationship. No, love must take second place to the most personal of feelings, the grapplings of an individual with his own mortality! The urgency and intensity of any such inquiry is a matter of relativity, but death is without question, the only single fact of which we can be sure. For this reason each tribe and each Age has found its own peculiar way of dealing with the experience both in physical and metaphysical terms. And it is this fact of death in which all men are united and which has taxed man's ingenuity from the time when he stopped being one of the simpler animals. Death-consciousness and a sense of humour seem to be the two qualities by which man is elevated above his near relations. The very shock which can kill a man proceeds from the recognition that he has been close to dying. Animals only show symptoms of shock as a physiological effect, as the result of loss of blood, for example. Man can think through the complexities of cause and effect and his own place in whatever cataclysm strikes him down. If the event does not kill him his imagination can. It seems that the more civilized he is, the more prone to such afflictions he becomes. Rationalizing does not help! The opening lines of Paradise Lost demonstrate that even a predominantly Christian outlook embraces the place of death in the world. It extends no



tantalizing goad but takes the fear of all men and herds them toward a religious solution which offers to allay the distress.

For some there can be no Christian solution, if indeed all Christians are rock-solid in their faith as the dogma would suggest they must be to be described thus. Fallen man is redeemed by Christ, God's son who died like us and for us; we can only follow rules which organized religion fixes as the path to Heaven. Significantly man is already saved from death. It would be churlish not to do the right thing in the face of such a sacrifice. Such arguments have become increasingly questioned in Western Society, especially since the eighteenth century. They do not seem to have been replaced with new explanations, except that since Darwin, many have turned to demonstrable similarities between men and other creatures. Some men, then, have been left with a dilemma twice as big as it was before religion interpreted life. Not only is the fact of death unchanged, but they have lost the rather easy comfort which faith in a compassionate God brought.

Perhaps there were more sceptics in the past than is generally acknowledged. Various inquisitions ensured that such blasphemies remained unarticulated or heavily disguised. But increasingly artists, and poets especially, have laid their fears bare for the scrutiny of all. Critics (after Freud) have suggested that such a revelation amounts to cleansing and relieving the passion which informs

such poems. The formal organization of words imposes on fears which are a stimulus to sing or write an order in which form such thoughts might be shared. Sharing acknowledges a universal problem and shows that private thoughts, far from being a personal neurosis, are commonly felt and sympathetically received by minds which



recognise the affinity. It is the ultimate personal concern which is shared by all men, a paradox which is at the centre of humanist philosophy.

My first concern in this chapter is to examine the proposition that the theme of "death" in literature, and more generally in art, is essentially a personal concern. Those works which take their inspiration from such a theme are often evidence of a highly individual responsiveness. Any art, as I have said, is of its nature an organization which imposes a conventional framework on particular ideas and is conditioned by the time in which the author lived. I have chosen firstly the works of A.E.Housman which were interpreted by Ralph Vaughan Williams and which might be characterized by their "deliberate and depressing godlessness". The sources of Housman's despair are not difficult to fix. Dowland, whose melancholy love songs form the second part of the study, is hardly godless even though he might have felt the ravages of the Reformation in late Elizabethan England. He usually provided words and music for songs which are some of the finest in English. In both of these cases, and in quite different historical contexts, I find that the highly personal responsiveness is caught and transmitted in words and music and is still accessible. Perhaps both share the same melancholy apprehension. Certainly both are highly individual and cogent responses to life. The paradox of "livingness" being somehow related to an awareness of death and a personal recognition is often divined by poets whose chosen art is a use of language at its most condensed and (usually) incisive. We might look to poets' self-awareness to begin to see where the anxiety leads and for their own estimation of how such thoughts are initiated.



Two quotations will serve to introduce the theme and interest of this chapter. The first, from Dr. Johnson concerns Gray's Elegy;

The Church-yard abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning "yet even these bones" are to me original ; I have never seen the notion in any other place; yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them.

1

The second, from a poet whose personality and life are antithetical to Dr. Johnson's, is from a letter of Emily Dickinson to Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Higginson was the only real contact with a literary institution which Emily Dickinson had, and she asked for criticism of poems which she submitted to him. He was forthcoming and inquired after some personal details. A part of her reply runs as follows:

Thank you for the surgery - it was not so painful as I supposed. I bring you others - as you ask - though they might not differ - While my thought is undressed - I can make the distinction, but when I put them in the Gown - they look alike and numb.  
You asked how old I was? I made no verses - but one or two - until this winter - Sir -  
I had a terror - since September - I could tell to none - and so I sing, as a Boy does by the burying Ground - because I am afraid. 2

I do not pretend that the apprehension in these statements are concordant, but the insights and experience which they offer, and from such diverse respectable intelligences, is indicative of the centrality of their concern, perhaps the concern which Freud came to consider under the head of Thanatos? 3

My first quotation, then, directs attention to four stanzas of Gray's poem, which contain the feelings that Dr. Johnson wishes to isolate. I am not in a position to question their originality but can summon evidence which post-dates Johnson's criticism. Obviously they



struck a chord in Dr. Johnson's breast and he "returned an echo", reverberations of mutability and mortality most evident in the sighing line,

Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

This seems to me one of the points in the poem when the elegiac, a well worn tradition of versifying, gives way to a sense of personal mortality and one has a glimpse of, say, the contemplative voice of Wordsworth. And the poem manages to incorporate this personal sense into a fabric which is, in Leavis' words, conventional "eighteenth-century meditative-melancholic". In the Gray then, we see the confrontation of the common man, as Johnson suggests, (or again in Leavis' words, "the normally and centrally human as manifested on the common-sense social surface of life") with something more deeply felt or apprehended. In a sense what begins as something impersonal, with conventional posturing, is punctuated by a convincing intrusion of self-awareness, before the "hoary-headed Swain" turns the vision of the poem towards an explicit contemplation of self and a nicely turned conclusion. So the poem embraces the traditions in which the following stanza is a commonplace;

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

while suggesting that Gray's sensibility contains the seeds of a more Romantic inwardness, which adds real urgency and force to "dumb Forgetfulness" or the conscious irony of tombstone elegys that "teach the rustic moralist to die". The interest which perpetuates the reading of this poem has not changed since Johnson wrote that "every bosom returns an echo" because it is flawed in that any specific human interest must filter through that abstract mood and detached conventionality. Another instance of an elegy, equally steeped in convention, but which



transcends the possibility that this be a limitation is Henry King's, Exequy to his Matchlesse never to be forgotten Friend. King's editor, Margaret Crum, writes;

A quality which sets the "Exequy" apart from King's other long poems is its sustained poetical intensity. Though the facts lying behind it could have been told in a very small space, much more might have been needed to convey their full meaning in the context of thought and memory and feeling;..... A condition for such writing seems to have been that he should be contemplating an aspect of death. 6

And the intensity of feeling evident in the poem which transforms King's usual mediocrity - it might be compared with any others of his elegys to make this point - is due to the strength of love for his wife, and the force of the effect of her loss. The same sort of intensity is informing The Nocturnal Upon St. Lucies' Day or Hardy's After a Journey both of which are arguably the respective poet at his best. Lycidas too, comes to mind as one of Milton's most approachable poems, even if it is a little cooler and more formal than the other three poems mentioned above. What they all share is an autobiographical response to death and it is not an accident that the last three poems take their motivation from an experience lived through, an experience of vivid personal loss, and that they are individually finer than Gray's Elegy. This again places the limitation of Gray's poem and directs attention to the latent criticism in Johnson's implication that the commonness of Gray's insight might indicate shallowness, or render it intrinsically uninteresting; and I once again invoke Lycidas as an occasional poem which escapes the implications of its public function. Johnson would not have had to press his argument much further to accuse Gray of indulging his melancholia.

I have not attempted to be exhaustive in an endeavour to outline the importance of the "elegiac" impulse, but it is clear that it is central in poetical writing. The second quotation presented at the outset amounts to a raison d'etre for that poet's work, and my reason for presenting it



was twofold. Firstly, and most importantly, it seems to me one of the best examples of a poet offering a reason for his art. Secondly, I am interested to discover the extent to which it is, more generally, a justification. There is also a third level of interest in that Emily Dickinson's poetry is concerned directly with death in many forms: the imaginative evocation of her own death, observation of the effect of death on others, and on herself, as well as a simpler elegiac lyric like "Safe in their alabaster chambers". James Reeves in his introduction to a selected edition of her poems notes the preoccupation with funerals and, although I think his persistent use of "childlike" oversimplifies the issue, I shall quote at some length:

Her apparent obsession with the physical panoply of her death on the one hand, and with death and immortality as an idea on the other, is obvious to any reader of her poems. It might seem morbid, or merely sensational, if we allow ourselves to forget two things. Emily's vision of life was essentially childlike, and to a child there is something ultimately fascinating about a funeral. A poem such as There's been a death in the opposite house is almost shocking in the primitive starkness of its detail.....But the poem is the reverse of morbid ; it is a triumphantly successful attempt to purge terror by relieving the experience poetically in all its vivid and shocking clarity. In...Safe in their alabaster chambers compassion supercedes terror. The dead are safe in their graves....while nature around them goes on indifferently, but the poet has pity....It is obvious that to anyone so intensely aware of mere life, so preoccupied with the wonder and ecstasy of simple existence the complimentary theme of death must be a major concern. 8

I cannot endorse this unqualifiedly, because it seems to me that the greatness of Emily Dickinson stems from a form of unhealthiness which provides the raw materials for poetry which is extraordinarily powerful, and which appeals to a similar less developed neurosis in her readers. Neither can I agree with Alan Tate who asserts that "she mastered life by rejecting it". Her self-imposed isolation is a symptom, not unrelated to a sense not usually elaborated by critics, that there is more of a



self-conscious artistry, more of the poet's craft in Emily Dickinson's work than they are prepared to acknowledge. It is perhaps the lack of fullness<sup>10</sup> in her life which accounts for the limited and myopic vision which at its worst amounts to a spinsterly fussiness. Her clear eyed view of death is not as simple as her letter to Higginson would imply. The real validity of it is contained in the simple observation of the distancing effect, of the tacit ignoring of what is frightening; replacing fear with diverting activity. (Hamlet overcomes an initial repulsion and disgust that the Gravedigger can sing while he works by allowing his fancy free-rein and, later, his wit.) But that is not to reject the wider implications of the centrality of the images she chooses to convey her feelings of a stimulus-response situation in her poetry or the convenience for my thesis, that singing is given a specific and important function with regard to thoughts which are, at the least, perplexing and frightening.

But this discussion has really been concerned with what might be classifiable in Freudian terms of death and "Phobos", my concern now is to discover the extent to which "Thanatos" is a viable symbol for an attitude in men more deeply seated than the arbitrary response to graveyards (doubtless stemming from this deeper sense, but essentially an occasional realization). The evidence I would marshal here - I shall<sup>11</sup> arrange it in chronological order - ranges from late Shakespeare and the pervading sense, the primary insistence on cycles of renewal, through the Holy Sonnets of Donne to say (in the interest of brevity) a poem like Little Gidding or even Ash Wednesday. I would also insist, if I had the time to elaborate, that there is no need for a chronological or periodic study. My aim would be to indicate that for each artist the problem is the same: a problem of an awareness around which whole systems of philosophy have developed. (The "Death wish" can be subsumed into any attempt to cope with imminent death in the poetry of direct experience.)



Susanne Langer, for example, makes the following (not original) observation.

Probably the profoundest difference between human and animal needs is made by one piece of human awareness, one fact that is not present in animals because it is never learned in any direct experience. That is our foreknowledge of death. The fact that we ourselves must die is not a simple isolated fact. It is built on a wide survey of facts that discloses the structure of history as a succession of overlapping brief lives, the pattern of youth and age, growth and decline; and above all that, it is built on the logical insight that one's own life is a case in point. Only a creature that can think symbolically about life can conceive of its own death. Our knowledge of death is part of our knowledge of life.

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It is this knowledge which is at the roots of the profound self-awareness evident in some of the greatest statements in literature. And it is the immediacy and privacy of a poet's response, which is not obliterated by language or literary form, that creates the problem with regard to setting such a poem to music.

The nearest equivalent problem is, I think, that of the extent and importance which is placed on the creating intelligence in Shakespeare's plays. A good many conventions of staging, interpretation of a character, the physical distance between the stage and the way in which this tends to frame the action as another world, usually passively observed - the list is by no means exhaustive - all of these considerations have a distancing effect which ought to destroy any but the broadest themes and interests, and certainly make the sort of "confessional" closeness possible in Donne's Nocturnal out of the question on stage. We never get a voice as simply autobiographical on stage. I would need to qualify this of course. For example, there is perhaps more of Shakespeare in his Prospero than there is in his Macbeth, just as there is perhaps more of Eliot as his "Prospero" in Marina than there is a similar authorial content in "Prufrock". That proposition would be difficult to prove, but I think it sufficient to say that one is convinced by the degree of



engagement one senses. It is not a matter of simple integrity or sincerity (although these are both certainly parts of the division of the illusive quality) but rather, with an emotional weight which is peculiarly enlivening and convincing, a deep feeling of the poet's humanity, which is exclusive of the form and which makes his personality accessible. I think that better locates the difficulty of the kind of communication I am thinking of, as easier for a poem off a page than for a word off a stage. Generally, reading poetry is simply more private and the barriers between what is highly personal and is needed to be communicated are fewer between a reader and his book. And what is common to song and the drama is performance, which is of course an intermediate stage which inhibits the immediacy possible with poetry, which is usually non-dramatic in the widest sense. The validity of this line of thought offers a serious challenge to the generalities presented by Susanne Langer. Of course we can endorse her abstractions about the nature of symbols and the theory of "virtual life" up to a point, but, the evidence of <sup>13</sup> much important poetry weakens the word "virtual". This is not to say that poetry is life, because it clearly enough isn't; but neither is it straightforwardly "semblance". And it is "semblance" which is behind Langer's misplacing of emphasis in her "Poesis" chapter. She writes:

The initial questions.....are not: "What is the poet trying to say, and what does he intend to make us feel about it?" But: "What has the poet made, and how does he make it?" He has made an illusion, as complete and immediate as the illusion of space created by a few strokes on paper, the time dimension in a melody, the play of powers set up by a dancer's first gesture. He has made an illusion by means of words.....But what he creates is not an arrangement of words, for words are only his materials out of which he makes his poetic elements.

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The drift is clear enough, but what emerges is the impossibility of this sort of generalization having or holding any meaning. It certainly keys



in with a whole preconception of form which constitutes this particular theory of art but is singularly inadequate to the variety of experiences which poetry offers. The passage quoted above, if applied as a rule, would work for organized non-sense syllables, as well as for any more serious attempt at communication. Surely the first question always is to do with what the artist is saying. Words have meaning which is their primary interest. Any organization of words is an organization of meaning in the service of communication. Even a poet like e.e.cummings, whose interest in visual and aural pyrotechniques is great, employs his idiosyncracies as means for sharing his insights, however slight, in his best poems. Consider the small but not insignificant poems like "I sing of Olaf" or "Pity this busy monster". The limitations are to do with sensibility, but there is nothing here of the type of virtuostic indulgence of a method which results in his innocuous "Grasshopper" poem, where the formal element is to the fore and the only interest is in the whimsy of the arrangement; what the poet has made is the only question which is relevant and the limitations are obvious without invoking Arnold and "high seriousness".

The union of the propriety which Arnold would applaud - the vital link between being and saying - and a real example of musical responsiveness and expression can be found in the Mozart song to which I have already ascribed peculiar importance. "Abendenfindung", as much as any of the larger works, catches the inflection of "late Mozart". That his last years were dogged with fears of his being slowly poisoned is well documented, but the worry ran deeper than anxiety about jealous rivals. Important evidence can be found in the Masonic Music and Mozart's turning to that brotherhood for support and a new meaning for his existence. My point is consummately summarized in the great Sarastro aria from Die Zauberflöte, "O Isis und Osiris", which contains the essence of Mozart's attraction to



the Masons. But the implied conservatism of masonic involvement is not the whole picture. It should also be noted that the aspect of the 'revolutionary' in Mozart is too often underrated, and that his departure from the Court of the Archbishop of Salzburg, so instrumental in the penury of his later life, was a gesture of Beethovenian defiance. But here is the reason for the instability and the congeniality of a classless, hierarchical company of men. The music elicited by the Masonic movement can be ranked with the great masterpieces of Western Art; the Funeral Music, the compact statements of the Cantatas and the monumental Die Zauberflöte. From the latter I take two examples, which I suggest, place the earnestness of the composer's need to confront and rationalize the end of life and demonstrate the buttressing which Mozart sought in his Lodge.

"O Isis und Osiris" is well known and justly praised for its solemnity and grave wisdom. Here is an initiation into a state of mind in which a patterning of life provides a satisfactory mental approach to death. The meaning is placed in the formal structuring of life, the quasi-ceremonial trial which stands in place of lived experience and which leads to acceptance, in much the same way as other codes of behaviour carry attendant expectation of salvation.

Lasst sie der Prüfung Früchte sehen;  
Doch solten sie zu Grabe gehen  
So lohnt der Tugend kühnen Lauf,  
Nehmt sie in euren Wohnsitz auf

But most curious, almost mystical, as an example of the attitude embodied here, is the duet of the two armed men in Act Two, Scene Eight.

Der, welcher wandert diese strasse voll Beschwerden,  
Wird rein durch Feuer, Wasser, Luft und Erden;  
Wenn er des Todes Schrecken überwinden kann,  
Schwingt er sich aus der Erde himmel an:  
Erleuchtet wird er dann im Stande sein,  
Sich den Mysterien der Isis ganz zu weih'n.



It is taut unearthly music, parallel octaves throughout over a walking bass, the prelude to the song so like Beethoven in its physical forcefulness, the accompaniment looking forward to the more abstract fugal moments of Beethoven's Late Quartets. We share 'a moment out of time' in an Eliotic sense, the strange stillness and movement of the music embodying a mystery so tangibly realized musically (and emotionally) that we cannot doubt the importance which Mozart places in it. At this point in the opera the composer and his character (Tamino) are one, and Mozart writes of something which he comprehends deeply as a need in himself. And Tamino is 'standhaft duldsam und verschwiegen' and can resolutely reply in front of the Gateway to Higher Knowledge :

Mich schreckt kein Tod als Mann zu handeln.

Masonic involvement presented Mozart with an immediate alternative to oblivion, a means, he thought, of living in memory at least. The potency of the Requiem is proportional to its composer's physical state and as such it is a statement of faith. The Masonic Music is a statement of spirit centered in the pulse of life and the solemnity at the loss of it, in a sense offering the antithesis of Catholic doctrine and offering earthly continuity.

Mozart lived in an age which was not conspicuous for its wars, famines or massive fatalities in the "civilized" world. The late Baroque, the declining Age of Reason, Augustan melancholy, all carry with them suggestions of the temper of the times. But are the characteristics of such an age consistent with an interpretation which finds environmental considerations essential to the creative approach of poet and composer? Approaching the problem from another side, what effect can be discerned when there is



a sudden amplification of the awareness of death ? Can any obvious reaction to a sudden exaggeration or heightening of the usual occurrence of disease and death ( Beubonic Plague ,for example ) be noted in the art of Western man ?

The First World War affected a larger area of the world than any other man-made catastrophe up to that time and as might be expected produced a literature which is the direct result of the War. The first hand experiences afforded Owen , Brooke and Sassoon gave them the impetus to express their tragedy. But the most enduring monument to the disaster came from the 'enemy ', in Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front . The works of the first mentioned authors are clearly and unmistakably rooted in the War , but it is also clear that none of them rises above the occasional glimmer of what we might call major status . The most important figures of the age , Yeats and Eliot ( and perhaps Lawrence ) are only incidentally affected in their writing<sup>17</sup> . This suggests the possibility that the deep particular responsiveness of (say ) Owen is also a limiting factor in his work. David Low , arguably the greatest political cartoonist of the early years of this century often used the spectre of death associated with war and revolution , but his interest is rarely simply universal and he is doomed to providing pertinent illustrations of particular events for the appropriate history texts. We are closer chronologically to the Great War than we are to any of the major outbreaks of the Plague which , because of its repeated occurrences , ought to offer more scope for insight . A comparison of the two is suggestive and relevant .At the outset I admit to having found little of the direct and particular response , which is so easy to point to in the Georgian poets , in Medieval English poetry . But that is not to say that there is no contemporary evidence of a reaction.

Huizinga , in his consistently evocative and romantic view of



the Middle Ages devotes a whole chapter to the outline of "The Vision of Death". "No other epoch" he writes "has laid so much stress as the expiring Middle Ages on the thought of death. An everlasting call of momento mori resounds through life". If this is true it interposes  
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a serious difficulty in the way of any statement which can be made about the "Black Death". Not only do we have to consider death as a common preoccupation of all time (as I have indicated above) but, we must also disentangle the particular issue of the Plague's effect on the Medieval mind from which Huizinga suggests is a predominant "spirit of the age". And indeed its heritage of images is strong. In 1250 Thomas Celano wrote a poem which, when set to its plainsong tune is one of the greatest songs; words and music are in absolute concord in the Dies Irae.  
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And to look even further behind the Catholic Ritual, the Bible sets many strong precedents and is absolutely central in its authority. In Jeremiah 17:9 we find ;

"The heart is deceitful above all things and exceedingly corrupt."

and the reason is precised by Milton.

"Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden."

Corinthians 1:15 acknowledges original sin and offers hope while recognizing corruption of the flesh.

"Now I say, bretheren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit corruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all



sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptable, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written "Death is swallowed up in Victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?"

So the Middle Ages attitude towards death, if we can assume that the Church was a primary intellectual and spiritual force, is probably bound up with the ramifications of these quotations. I think that given the length of the period from which Huizinga takes his examples, with its effect of concentrating several hundred years under one head, we must be wary of too easy a conclusion. Death and resurrection are fundamental to Christian doctrine, but not the only doctrine. The picture is not clear and generalization dangerous, certainly not as clear and generalized as Huizinga would have it.

Chaucer's main reference to the Black Death occurs in the Pardoner's Tale, a reference made without any expressed desire to document the Plague. Chaucer's concern is with the quickness and perhaps the indiscriminateness with which death strikes, and also with the consequences of sin (although the latter is almost certainly ascribable to the Pardoner himself). There is none of Defoe's eloquent journalism or the prophetic mumbo-jumbo of Lilly's Almanach which Defoe mentions. The Plague for Chaucer is a sort of objective correlative - his interest (or rather the Pardoner's) is in death, which is seen as stealthy and voracious.

"...Sodeynly, he was yslayn tonyght  
Fordronke, as he sat at his bench upright.  
There came a privee theif men clepeth Deeth,  
That in this contree al the peple sleeth,



And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,  
And wente his wey withouten wordes mo.  
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence....  
Beth redy for to meete hym evermoore...."  
11.673-683.

But that is all, and the Tale goes on to outline a reckless plan to present a series of insidious portents which point to an inescapable conclusion of avarice. The Knight's Tale most succinctly states an attitude implicit in the guiding consciousness of these Tales.

"What is this world? What asketh men to have?  
Now with his love, now in his colde grave  
Allone withouten any compaignye."  
11.2776-2779.

And both of these tales point to an apprehension which transcends specific instances. It is an attitude too clearly perceived, and too unemotionally presented to be called mystical. Troilus' speech as he looks down from Heaven is the summation of the philosophy; look to divine love, although the evidence of Troilus and Criseyde implies rather more about life, and, enough to seriously qualify Troilus' conclusion! Essentially Chaucer confirms that death is important only as it is related to life. It is not the grisly rider of Dürer's etchings, although the old man in the Pardoner's Tale carries related overtones, rather a known condition which places a special responsibility on those who are living. The comical instability of the Nun's Priest's Tale is vitally connected with the Boethian attitudes as exemplified in the Knight's Tale; the energy with which the Nun's Priest deals with Chauntecleer and his premonition of death, champions life and alertness (quickness perhaps) which temporarily averts finality.

The other instance of 'pestilence' in Chaucer occurs in the description of the Doctor, who is described in the General Prologue.



"He kepte that he wan in pesilence.  
For gold in phisik is a cordial,  
Therefore he loved gold in special."

ll. 441-444.

But again pestilence is incidental, the value of the reference being in the quantity of those requiring attention in an epidemic. But Chaucer's Doctor seems uncharacteristic if the preserved evidence of Plague doctors is relevant, and Lydgate's 'ffisision' is truer to what we can find preserved in historical records.<sup>21</sup> Guy de Chauliac was one of those responsible for a Manual which contains first hand descriptions and suggested cures. He seems not to have lined his coat with "taffata and sendal", but rather took the opportunity of a superfluity of bodies to advance the knowledge of anatomy in classes of dissection. He died of Plague in 1363 in his second bout of the disease. And this points to the fact that Chaucer is writing a work of imaginative fiction and not a volume of Social History.

Chaucer seems to have had as much contact with the disease as any other of his contemporaries. However, there is a victim who died of Plague and is sung by a poet. Laura, the subject of much of Petrarch's work died in 1348. Petrarch is the only poet I can find who had a direct connection with the Plague. The Sonnets 228, 229, 246 repay close attention. Number 229, the most famous of the three, refers to the death of Cardinal Colonna and Laura, with a delicacy and passion<sup>22</sup> inherited from the Dolce Stil Nuovo. Number 246 contains a reference to Francesco Albizzi, poet and friend of Petrarch, who died in 1348, in a major onslaught of Plague. But once again the cause of death is never stated and is never a subject of the poems. Again death means a personal loss, and for Petrarch, it is essentially a subjective, inward revelation of his own state that we see in his poems.

So far I have concerned myself with what we might call the



subjective side of the Black Death in Literature. But there is another manifestation which might be a result of the impact of mass dying on the Medieval mind: the Dance of Death. There are numerous painted examples documented. That the Dance of Death was a common subject of frescoes and painting generally is easy to establish. The one in the Church of Innocents in Paris is celebrated and is thought to have given rise to another in the cloister of St. Pauls, London. Henry VIII owned a tapestry of the subject. Dürer's teacher,<sup>23</sup> Wolgemuth, submitted an example to be printed in the Nuremburg Chronicle 1493, and Lydgate composed a poem entitled, the Dance Macabree. The latter is fairly simple-minded, undistinguished and follows a French source. The idea of "death the leveller" is mechanically amplified with perhaps a little subtlety in the treatment of individuals. A comparison with Dunbar's Dance of the Sevin Dedly Synnis points up the almost studied ponderousness of Lydgate's poem. Yet again I must point to the impossibility of making any firm statement about derivation or influence.<sup>24</sup>

Chaucer also uses a "death Leveller" passage in the speech given to Theseus in the Knight's Tale, but as early as the 12th century there is a latin poem usually called the Vado Mori which treats the death of a number of estates.

<sup>25</sup>  
The inconclusiveness of the evidence, other than the recognition of a popularity of the theme of death, is I think the most important point to make. But there may be an implication hidden in all of what I have outlined which would require another perspective but which is emerging here. Defoe ends his Journal of the Plague Years with a poem.

"A dreadful Plague in London was  
In the year sixty-five,



Which swept one hundred thousand souls  
Away : yet I live."

26

Perhaps we should look at what we do have in a poet like Chaucer or Petrarch a supreme celebration of the forces of Life.

If the European sensibility, if indeed such a thing is conceivable, can rally with good cheer after the obliteration of perhaps as much as half of its population, with no guarantee of the future being clear of plague, without a lasting effect obvious in art, then perhaps the public dimension of death has little influence on poetry and song. Dr. Johnson and Emily Dickinson exemplify essentially personal responsiveness in a sympathetic contemplation of their own death. Martin Cooper writes in an essay about the Romantic Movement;

Seasons of decadence and seasons of renewal are no more sharply defined in the arts than in nature. Natural they are, too, and no subject either for tragic lamentation or moralistic invective. Pathos they certainly have, and an individual beauty of their own.....

27

I have already written about Elizabethan vigour and Jacobean melancholy. Is it fair to suggest that there is a persistent pre-occupation in the minds of intelligent humans with the nature of life which embraces, inevitably, its loss: a combination of this natural impulse in men and the occurrence of "seasons of decadence"? There is something "stagey" about the melancholy of Dowland and his contemporaries which might be expected in an age which is frequently characterized by its enthusiasm for drama. Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster and the like, were courted by the fashionable. Closer to our own time a similar conjunction of private fear and a broader public movement produced some diverse poetry.



A.E.Housman's fin de siecle feelings were not directed into displays of lavish decadence which is often associated with the 1890's. His poetry demonstrates quite the reverse. The reverence for country living and the lot of the youth nurtured in the cleanliness of the open air is in stark contrast to the "iron lilies of the Strand". But his apprehension of the place of nature is not the same as Wordsworth's, who in the early parts of the Prelude recollects the awe of being schooled by his own conscience which is subject to an omnipotent environment which chastizes and rewards. Housman's touch is lighter. His poems are slighter and more immediate, but he does not revel in retrospective wonder at how his character (being) was achieved. Rather he muses and reflects, often making a strenuous attempt to assert a hearty vigour only to fade into gloomy reflection. This is especially true of the poems in the volume A Shropshire Lad (1897).<sup>23</sup> Mutability is a frequent focus of nostalgic reverie, evoking times past in order to contrast them with the present. And inevitably the lives of those long since and more recently dead underscore the poet's mortality.

Vaughan Williams selected six congenial poems from A Shropshire Lad and in 1911 produced On Wenlock Edge, a group of highly atmospheric and impressionistic pieces. By means of rhetorical questions :

"Where shall one halt to deliver  
This luggage I'd lief set down?"

by clear-eyed implications :

"The tree of man was never quiet  
Then twas the Roman, now 'tis I....  
Today the Roman and his trouble  
Are ashes under Uricon."

by a gentle recognition of reality and on going life in a series of



questions and answers :

"Is my friend hearty  
Now I am thin and pine...

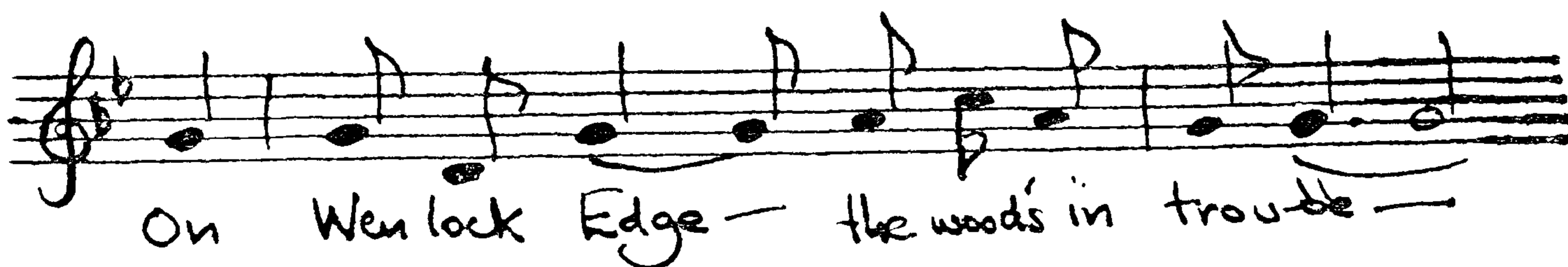
Yes lad I lie easy,  
I lie as lads would choose;  
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart  
Never ask me whose."

The poet establishes a variety of rueful situations designed to elicit sympathy in the manner of Dr. Johnson's reaction to Gray's "Elegy".

Of the six poems chosen by Vaughan Williams the setting of "On Wenlock Edge" works best. It is the most clearly argued with the gradual emergence of what significance the blustery landscape has, finally caught in the last line. The composer uses the song to establish a mood somewhat tempestuous, with elements of yearning which develop into anguish. But there is no respite. The countryside which is observed offers no anodyne for the disconsolate voice which, with its realization,

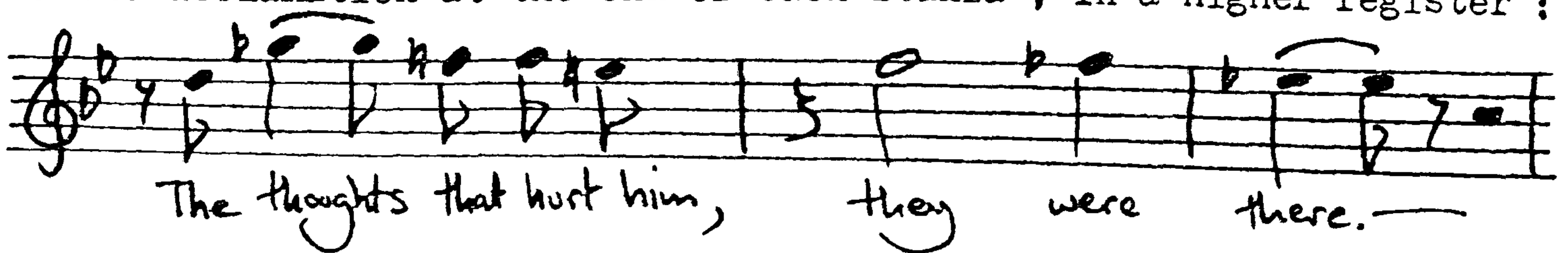
"The Roman and his trouble  
Are ashes under Uricon."

rises against the tremolando in the piano accompaniment only to be followed by the strings echo of the movement of wind-racked foliage akin to the opening of the song. The singer, too, carries a part of the weight of the words, beginning in a low register and rising in each stanza from a firm statement charged with nervous vitality :

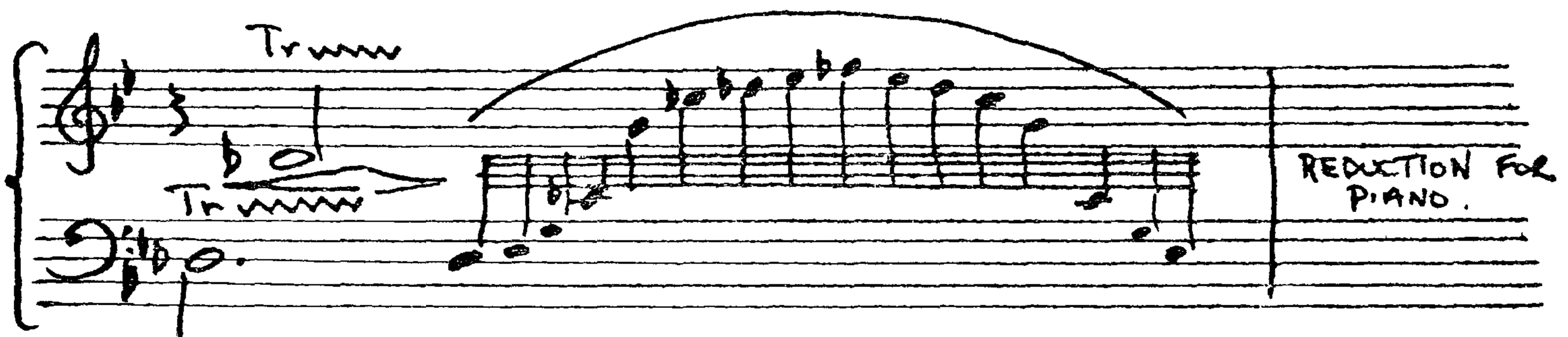




to the declamation at the end of each stanza , in a higher register :



The turbulent spirit evident in the strength , the positive force of the accompaniment extends that sense of anguished recognition evident in the rising pitch of the melodic line and the consequent intensity. The windy impressionism is obvious , but it carries a shivering tension completely consonant with the discovery which the poet makes in the last line , a discovery which one must add is there subliminally throughout the song. The gusts which shivers through bars thirty one and thirty two ,



re-occur as the subdued murmurings of the final ten bars as the song , its trouble and the melody having climbed into a key distantly related , fades uneasily ; recognition without resolution.

The most conspicuous quality of the second song , apart from its being suitably contrasted with the first , is the extremely narrow range of the melody ; G up to E on the treble cleff. Instead of handfuls of tremolando , twitching and trilling strings are apeggiated chords ringing with a solemn tranquility. The breathless stillness , like a frozen hymn , is punctuated by a middle section in which the urgency of contact in a transitory world is caught in the quickening pace.



Take my hand quick and tell me  
What you have in your heart.

Speak now and I will answer,  
How shall I help you, say ?

But once again this sorrow grows to its conclusion and the apparent tranquility is seen to be, in reality, a profound wistfulness. The alchemy is achieved, significantly, not only in the chordal modulations but also in the verbal meaning:

Ere to the wind's twelve quarters  
I take my endless way.

The preoccupation of the poet has not changed. The nature of the human contact, the bearings by which the perspective is fixed, are different, but the horizon is the same. While indulging the mood the poet is none the less evasive, even euphemistic about his situation. For Housman, the nuances which he fixes are necessarily indistinct. He knows, after all, that he can offer only a placebo, and he has not chosen to rage against 'the dying of the light'.

The musical setting of this second poem catches Housman's plangency. It is delivered in a style largely intoned rather than declaimed. Even the middle section is heightened intoning. Take for example the lines:

Take my hand quick and tell me,  
What you have in your heart.

But this is not the intonation of a chant. It is stillness, the steady, single-minded detachment of introspection. The composer's



recognition of this quality and evident sympathy , produces a welding of words and music which elevates ( improves ) a mediocre poem.

The transition from the second to the third poem is effected by a combination of elements from the first two songs. The subdued movement of the instrumental introduction is followed by a melody once again intoned over a sustained chord. The question and answer pattern of the poem is treated in an unpredictable manner. The first voice so reminiscent of the second song is the dead questioner. He is replaced by a second voice, more animated and accompanied by a vigorous triplet figure and a slightly acid 'cello obligato. The 'cello it should be noted also carries a note of urgency. The drama of the situation is enhanced by the setting throughout with the possible exception of the final "answer", which, in the dramatic pattern of the song, is a possible interpretation of the words but oversimplifies the tone. Vaughan Williams chooses to steadily increase the intensity (and volume) of the exchange unfortunately to the point of hysteria. The agitated

"Yes, lad, - Yes, lad -"

and later

"dead man's sweetheart"

are seriously at odds with the pervading tone of the final stanza. It is a pity that this simple-minded operatic interpretation is at odds with the words. Surely the key words here are "easy" and "cheer" and the tone of the last line is gentle understanding, giving a hint as to the tone of the whole stanza. Perhaps the need for variety, in this case a double forte climax, has overruled an otherwise sensitive reading ! The muted strings at the end bring the song full circle



and tranquility returns.

George Butterworth's Shropshire Lad was also composed in 1911, but the only poem common to both cycles, is "Is my team ploughing". A later composition contains a setting of "Bredon Hill", and this cycle takes its name from the poem. Several instructive differences can be noted between the Butterworth and Vaughan Williams settings of "Is my team ploughing". The first is that Butterworth does not choose to be operatic. Like so many question and answer ballads - "Lord Randal" for example - the difference enables a structural delineation with a gently questioning deadman who is answered by a firm acknowledgement that all is well. In Butterworth there is no elaborate attempt to catch the guilty alarm of the survivor who has filled the vacant place.

The most pertinent difference is in Vaughan Williams' choice of stanzas. He excludes the football playing of verses three and four. His setting gains strength by this omission. The Butterworth is essentially static, a steady working through of the emotional stasis which is evident in the poem and to which a careful reading of the final stanza is critical. But Vaughan Williams sees this setting as part of a larger design, the real complexity of which is not in evidence until the last song has faded into gloomy rumination.

The heavy-handed quartet writing in the third song is perhaps the result of the inevitable striving for contrasting sonorities. Certainly any sustained mood of detached melancholy is shattered to achieve an unnecessary emotional "peak" which is especially ill-timed when it is compared with the more efficacious and natural crescendos in "Bredon Hill" (Song 5). The fifth song departs from the "death-conscious" scenario and is a self-conscious little love-song accompanied with pizzicato strings and rippling



arpeggios reminiscent of a guitar. Its main value is that it departs from the sombre colours of the preceding songs without proving to be foolishly gay. This is its main value, a relief of some of the pressure without disregarding what has already been created. The melody has considerable charm and has a folk-song-like simplicity. The most resonant lines are ;

"And now the fancy passes by  
And nothing will remain."

The setting misses I think the heavy emphasis of "nothing", but this is perhaps pedantic given that ambiguity of the sort is open to only one interpretation in a song in which the line is not repeated. The tune is distinctly modal and in that is related to the "dead" voice, which is also approximately modal, in "Is my team ploughing". The legacy of the "English Folksong and Dance Society" is heavily in evidence here providing a convincingly rural note in the conscious summoning up of an especially English spirit.

The resonance of distant bells, the heavy air of a summer morning and plodding lethargy are carefully caught in the overlapping sustained chords of "Bredon Hill". Yet there is a transparent quality perhaps to do with the muted strings over which the initial entry of the singer floats with an easy swing and unhurried pace. In this mood the present gives way to recollections of other less settled moments. Reflection produces a winter scene complete with high frosty string sounds and a loss which is treated as personal tragedy only in as much as it calls to mind the singer's mortality and looks forward to his own death. Once again the outside world impinges on the psyche of the poet who is almost obsessive in his selection



of pertinent examples of his contact with others. Ultimately they are all turned to the same melancholy contemplation. Rhetorically we have not progressed. Emotionally the struggle is closer to Die Winterreise with its sustained mood and unrelieved pessimism than to, say, An Die Ferne Geliebte where there is a strong ongoing argument which, however slight it might be, is musically and emotionally resolved. If Schubert finishes with nihilistic grey then Vaughan Williams, by his choice of poems, seems to have opted for a less dramatic symptom of a similar despair. In this song the inherent drama works much better. The poem -and song - move from a tranquil present, to a bitter memory, to exasperation with the current vitality of others and finally to limp resignation. The success of the drama in this instance is due to the composer's having to deal with different facets of the same personality in varying emotional states. Musical contributions to the presentation of individual emotions are, perhaps, the most valuable ancillary aids to a poet's meaning when they are correctly fathomed by the composer.

The song passes from tranquility by way of agitation and despair back to tranquility once more. It is a neat patterning implicit in the poem, a poem which in its renunciation of the ongoing world, where "humming steeples" summon the faithful to worship, confronts the poet's fear and implies a solution. The consciousness of death is not entirely linked to the feelings of loss described here. They are a catalyst and are instrumental in unleashing precisely the same uneasiness about self which is the undeniable focus of each of the songs of the cycle so far considered. And once again ambiguity sets up some echoing possibilities. The



exasperation of the line ,

Oh noisy bells , be dumb !

is carried verbally with the singer loudly exclaiming at the top of his register , freed from the obligation of following the accompanying piano and quartet. The singer bends to call obligingly submissive humanity requiring the assurances of religion to assuage the deeply felt grief of the discovery of mortality . Or does the ambiguity implied suggest more ? The singer has already noted the manner in which his girl has preceded him to the grave . The composer leaves him trailing off into silence , repeating on the same note , " I will come " . And of course there is nothing more certain than that ! The only fact that any man can be sure is correct at any moment in his life is that he will some day die .

I favour this second interpretation which is , I think , what the composer intended given the baldness of the end of the song. This is more than submission to the rituals of social man . The whole cycle has prepared the listener to be able to interpret this moment . Like "Der Leirermann " at the end of Schubert's great cycle , in which numbness of melody with its stiff , stark accompaniment and minor key represent a summation of the whole work , these three unaccompanied words catch the inflection of the whole cycle . There is only one consideration left and that is weighed and acknowledged in the final song .

Are they summoning bells which are caught in the falling figure which opens " Clun " and which form a tonal bridge between this and the preceding song ? Tonally they hang somewhere between major and minor sustaining the anguished mood established in each



of these songs . When the voice enters with its smooth phrygian tune redolent of the " folksong " tunes which are prevalent in this work , the tension is momentarily dispelled in watery arpeggios and warm , rich sonorities , only to return when " trouble " disturbs the idyll . The cycle repeats itself . Suggested tranquility gives way to 'sorrow, trouble' and 'grief' , all of these being placed as burdens of growing . Now localities , like the human contact of earlier songs , the very worlds which the singer/poet inhabits become pauses on a journey . The lived experience , the luggage of life , amounts to little more than an awareness of death. Over sustained chords and in A major , effectively purged of its "folk-song " quality , even aurally stark , the singer coldly , dispassionately reveals the most important tenet of the whole cycle.

Tis a long way further than Knighton,  
A quieter place than Clun ,  
Where doomsday may thunder and lighten  
And little 'twill matter to one .

For the first time in the last words of the cycle the real basis for wistfulness appears . It is not simply death as it inevitably comes which causes the grief but the revelation of the poet's belief in utter dissolution without the conventional anodynes of religious faith. And this helps to fix the meaning of "I will come " in the penultimate song .

The architecture of the cycle is consummate , the choice of texts bringing a listener to a point of appreciation which rationalizes the grief . But the sensitivity of the composer both to the inherent qualities of the folk lyric and the trauma of a highly complex individual dealing with his particular apprehension



of the nature of life , both of which coexist in Housman's poems, gives these songs their warmth and gravity .They are treated with generous humanity and help to clarify what it was the poet meant . In that sense they are a particular critical reading which attempts to emphasize Vaughan Williams' individual response . The importance of the awareness of death , which is difficult to locate in specific places in the music but which is implied in sustained tone and local drama ,gives the work a special place amongst those others which attempt to communicate and share individual responses to the world .Neither art could have achieved quite the intensity of effect without the other . The grip of conventional religion has slowly weakened; and perhaps the most significant task of ongoing humanism since the end of the Middle Ages has been the grapple with the problemn of human fate.

The Roman and his trouble  
Are ashes under Uricon .

How resonant the word " trouble " becomes after the experience of the cycle is over and the listener can reflect. The " trouble " is clearly ,and as much as any of the multiplicity of daily dilemmas , the grief of those who cannot weave death into a tapestry of belief and confident faith. Perhaps vanishing religious codes and the discovery of man's place amongst the animals provided the impetus for varieties of scepticism ? Or is it a primary tenet of all healthy "humanism" that the span of a man's life is,inevitably ,eternity?

But what of the poet? How does he see such musical additions as a composer feels free to make? Not always happily it seems. D.H.Lawrence's perceptive observation "Trust the tale and not the



teller" is particularly apt when considering some of the prose utterances of A.E.Housman. From his professorial chair he occasionally offered some general advice. The couple of lectures of which I am thinking are entertaining pieces and contain useful insights into the poet's mind. Consider the following :

Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it. Can it then be isolated and studied by itself? for the combination of language with its intellectual content, its meaning, is as close a union as can well be imagined. Is there such a thing as pure unmingled poetry, poetry independent of meaning?

Even when poetry has a meaning, as it usually has, it may be inadvisable to draw it out. 'Poetry gives most pleasure' said Coleridge 'when only generally and not perfectly understood'; and perfect understanding will sometimes almost extinguish pleasure.....

Meaning is of the intellect, poetry is not.

30

These ideas are offered in just this baldness. To say that his position is "overstated" puts rather a weight on that word; he creates new parameters for it! And the argument goes on via madness in poets to mysticism, which is unrobed by reason. Theology too, considered in some vague Blake has its poetic elements probed and a drift towards the word "emotion" can be discerned. Poetry is ultimately "more physical than intellectual". While we can bask in the amiableness of such stuff, in the genial atmosphere of a one-off "excursion in literary criticism", it would not do to leave things like that. Poetry is left its cuffs and jabot but has suffered a lobotomy. Divine madness, ecstatic lyricism, even dull, old Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" must somewhere have their place of course. Would Housman be contented with his poetry being read to inscrutable Chinese who had no English - this is his style of argument - and expect them to understand his position which is ultimately his reason for writing at all? Euphonious noise, while it might be musical (at this another



Muse cringes) is so obviously not poetry by any definition which is based on examples of the stuff which has been produced to date. Even T.S.Eliot is selling himself down the river when he speaks of poetry being able to "communicate before it is understood," at its best. I have suspicions that Coleridge is behind this assertion.

31

If these revelations made by Housman in "The Leslie Stephen Lecture"(Cambridge,1933) are indeed anything more than erratic and off-handed utterances delivered as much to challenge and amuse as elucidate the poet's position, then they are a rather sorry memorial. However,I think that the poet has a reason to present himself in such a light. He was hostile towards attempts to set his poems to music and saw such tampering as gross destruction of his own music. Perhaps, and probably more generously than we need be, it is the alarm which composers raised in him that dictates such an extreme stance. It is inconceivable that he could have believed what he said and that his utterances could be more than an aggressive rhetorical style. If so, and he is adopting a defensive position in his aggression, then an investigation of his thoughts on this subject in other places might produce insights into the poet's relationship to song. And there are letters in which he is openly hostile.

Vaughan Williams excludes verses of "Is My Team Plowing" in the Wenlock Edge settings. Housman was outraged as this was tampering with his meaning. (I don't think he can have it both ways!) In a letter in 1920 he is emphatic :

I am told that composers in some cases have mutilated my poems - that Vaughan Williams cut two verses out of "Is My Team Plowing"(I wonder how he would like me to cut two bars out of his music), and that a lady whose name I forget has set one verse of "The New Mistress", omitting the others. So I am afraid I must ask you, when giving consent to composers, to exact the condition that these pranks are not to be played.

32



Two years later he commits some more of the same in a letter to his publisher:

I am told that Vaughan Williams has mutilated another poem just as badly, to suit his precarious music.

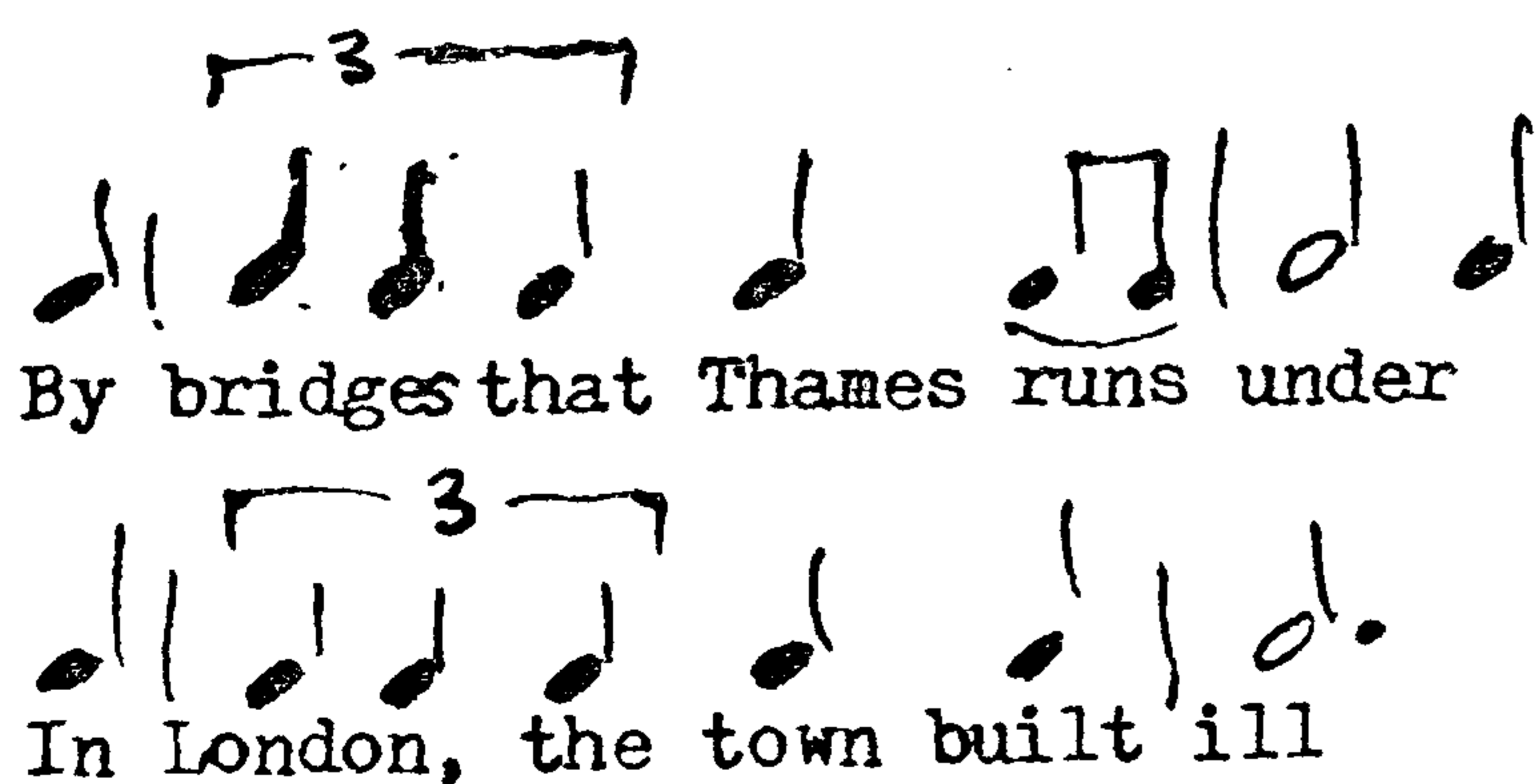
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"Mutilation" is of course a violation of sound and sense, but Housman could hardly have expected anything else. He had, for example, grudgingly allowed the composer to print words in a concert programme some years earlier. What can he have expected? The overtones of "sweetness and light" suggested in the exclusive right of words to their own music, this music being all of their substance, are sadly reactionary. Perhaps this is why tender lyricism is, for the poet, recast into the jagged melody of contemporary music and thus mutilated. Looking back from 1980 the music is consonant with the themes and interests of the poet. Of course it interprets the words (and ideas!) and organizes them into a sense carefully structured to create what might even be a new understanding of the texts. The composer can only interpret in his wisdom and with varying degrees of sensitivity, but Vaughan Williams, for all of this, does not lose the lyricism or any of the important tonal intensities which are indelible in the poems and which survive unscarred.

Each of Housman's six poems is an independent unit and would more usually be encountered in a reading of A Shropshire Lad where they are scattered amongst others of their kind. In offering his interpretation Vaughan Williams selects and organizes his material. The organization of this first stage was probably dictated by considerations of arrangements of contrasting mood and tempo. The composer might well have selected many others so we must assume that



he has taken some care and given the matter special attention. The order in which he places them is not a random gathering subject to arbitrary whims and so the purpose to which he puts his selection can only become clear in an overview of the whole. Attractive as single settings might be they lose considerable weight, indeed their context, without their fellows. Vaughan Williams tacitly committed his critical reading to paper in the language which not only reveals his interpretation but also creates something new which is neither simply musical nor verbal. The creative act occurs when the composer's imagination, as catalyst, fuses words and music in such a way that a listener is conscious of mutually supportive aspects of the two arts. From the music comes tempo, melody, accentuation and harmonic and polyphonic support from the accompaniment. The verse provides a series of images and ideas which carry emotional weight and which find extensive clarification and interpretation in the musical setting. Some things are destroyed, necessarily. The original rhythm of the poems has gone, or rather, is reworked as an aspect of the melodic structure. And there is a frequent re-location of accent. Often the speech rhythms suggest the musical patterning;



Generally this is the case and the songs are mainly syllabic. There are occasional examples of something more operatic. I have already referred to the dramatic repetition of "Yes Lad". Vaughan Williams



is not excessively destructive of the natural rhythm however, and numerous examples might be assembled to show that the musical rhythm proceeds from a consideration of its counterpart in the verse.

Housman might have taken heart at this. His response was to keep a watchful eye on those who set his words. W.B. Yeats had had a similar trouble. After hearing thousands of boy scouts sing a setting of the "Lake Isle of Innisfree" he expressly forbade settings without his knowledge and consent. Peter Warlock's masterpiece The Curlew, which is a setting of four of Yeats' somewhat Pre-Raphaelite pieces caused a trauma which was, for Warlock, intolerable. He is reputed to have destroyed all other settings of Yeats, who was, in any case, forced to back-pedal when the Carnegie Trust adopted The Curlew for publication. The sensitivity of Warlock in this instance -  
35  
characteristic as it was - probably erased more songs than the four which form the text for this cycle. It seems a great pity that Yeats whose tone deafness must be seen as limiting his ability to judge competently, even if the settings were to his taste, was clearly overprotective. His biographer, Joseph Hone, makes several obligatory observations of Yeats' incompetence;

Forcibly as his ideas about music were expressed, he had no ear for music as it is understood in Western Europe. He could not hum a tune and his notion of pitch was wildly inaccurate.

36

But he is moved to add;

On the other hand, his ear for the sound of speech was so sensitive that it outran comprehension. His sensitiveness to the sound of words made rehearsals long and exacting. Knowing exactly what he wanted himself, he found it difficult to express because he noticed nuances which we could hardly hear. Nor was he helped by his own voice, an



instrument inadequate (when I knew him) for conveying his meaning accurately.

37

The final lines here could be shown to damage Housman's assertions about the music which is the meaning of verse. If poetry is not "the thing said, but a way of saying it" the extant recordings of Yeats reading considerably weaken the argument.

Yeats' acquaintance with Arnold Dolmetsch's psalter is of some renown and produced an essay on the subject by the poet.<sup>38</sup> Dolmetsch, one of the most under-rated figures in the music of the early Twentieth Century, finally abandoned the project of speaking to the instrument which he felt required musical sympathies not usually possessed by a reciter. Florence Farr gave a demonstration of this supposedly bardic sprechtstimme in 1903 to a group which had the following aims:

..to give performances of "plays, masques, ballets and ceremonies", with the object of bringing the stage back again to that beauty of appropriate simplicity in the presentation of a play which liberates the attention of an audience for the words of a writer and the movements of an actor.

39

The inescapable gravitation away from the "meaning of words" is once again obvious, but this time with a primitivist element about it, not demanding for poetry its own place, but imputing to such theatricals a tremulous mystery which is transcendental. These incidents are important background for The Curlew.

The verse which Peter Warlock chose is all of the quasi-Celtic variety, shades of "cloud pale unicorns", wide-eyed maidens and wispy fantasy:



.... your crying brings to my mind  
Passion-dimmed eyes and long heavy hair

Pale brows, still hands and dim hair,  
I had a beautiful friend  
And dreamed that the old despair  
Would end in love in the end.

The honey-pale moon lay low on the sleepy hill,  
And I fell asleep upon lonely Ectge of streams.  
No boughs have withered because of the wintry wind;  
The boughs have withered because I have told them my dreams.

I know of the leafy path the witches take....  
I know where a dim moon drifts

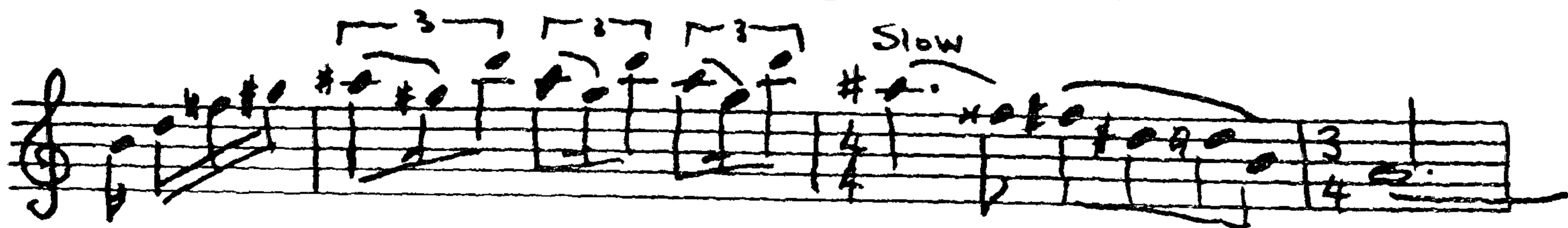
I know of the sleepy country, where swans fly round  
Coupled with golden chain.....

Overtones of Sir Edward Burne-Jones' paintings abound here, and there <sup>40</sup> is no great originality. The poems are without pressure and operate in the tired clichés of the 1890's. One would suppose that a musical treatment of them would somehow attempt to convey the dark-eyes, downcast in unspecified wistfulness and perhaps the revamped knights and damsels of the writers and painters who grow out of lilies and medievalism. What distinguishes The Curlew is that it purges the words of that purile posturing and replaces it with a convincing urgency.

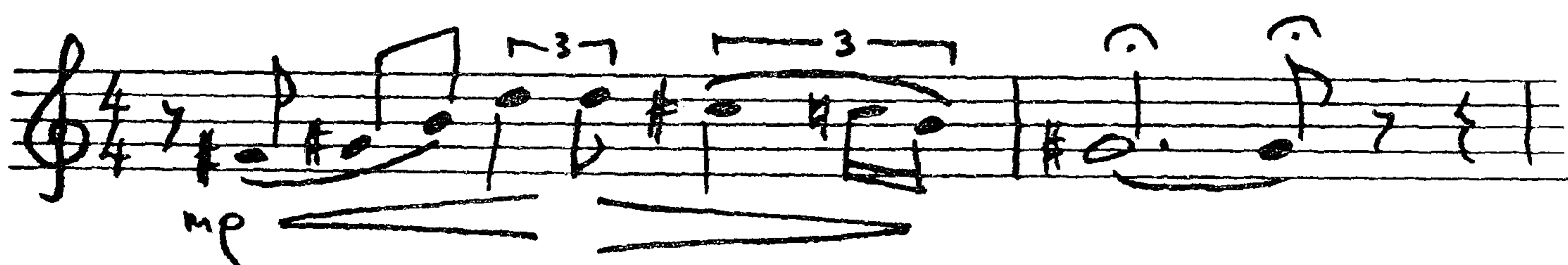
The musical forces assembled for The Curlew are suggested by a tone evident in the poems, but the composer takes his clue from the birds' call and from the ideas of the waste lands and desolation which it inhabits and has come to symbolize. The title then is the first clue to the composer's interpretation of the verse. The coranglais<sup>s</sup> is the second, this low double reed offering a timbre and range which is given to gloominess, unlike the pastoral quality of its near relative the oboe, or the velvety sound of the clarinet. A flute is added, brightening texture a little, but rarely rising out of its lower register. When it does, for the one bird-like ejaculation after its opening top E, it drops back to a series of



low A's at a pitch to which the composer ties it.



So too the strings are generally subdued with a heavy use of pedals and a conspicuous use of the 'cello and viola to provide the melodic interest, rather than the violins. The tone of the piece is captured in the lonely opening where the cor, unaccompanied, inscribes a plaintive arch of melody which drags itself up only to sigh back to rest before the viola elaborates the same feeling.



It is thin music. I do not mean this pejoratively however. Perhaps sinewy is better, and certainly better suggests why the addition of the music adds weight to the ephemeral poems. What does not get much further than sighing in the verse is transformed in an exclusively musical fashion; it is the music which takes up the sighing and transforms it into substantial melancholy. And it manages to do this as matter of carefully sustained tonalities which change and develop slowly but which never move far from the heaviness which the cor anglais catches in the very first bars.

Unlike Wenlock Edge, The Curlew is undramatic. It is a matter of delivery. The singer, a tenor, is given music which is somewhere between melody and declamation and which moves with exceptional fluidity. There are no "operatic" passages which involve extravagant or histrionic vocalizing. We feel that the singer is speaking for the composer, so internalized are the melodies and motifs (snatches of melody) which he sings. Only at the end, and without accompaniment,



does the vocal line rise above the stave, but the motifs have not changed and the intensity is not so much to do with pitch and dynamics but with the reiteration of the melodic shape which in itself symbolizes yearning and despair, effort and despondency.

Where then do these feelings come from, in both verse and music, and do they resolve themselves into a comprehensible whole? There is no need to insist upon a solution. The distancing effect of statement can be an end in itself, but the answer for composer and poet is different in this case. Yeats' dilemma, which is so plangent, is at once affectation and self-conscious artifice heavily loaded with spurious passion. There is too, a modicum of wit in lines like these, suggestive of the effort which the poet has made in making his poem:

(I).... dreamed that the old despair  
Would end in love in the end:

The childlike quality of the stuff is occasionally at odds with the powerful sensuality, or at least, the posing in guises of wan despairing where the object of desire is lost. "The Withering of the Boughs" is as vague as the content of the dreams which are so potent in the poem; it is a wintery discontent but unspecific. Perhaps these lines are pregnant,

I know of the sleepy country.....  
A king and a queen are wandering there, and the sound  
Has made them so happy and hopeless, so deaf and so blind  
With wisdom, they wander till all the years have gone by;

Is this Housman's conclusion dressed up in pantomime costume? The paradox of the loss of innocence is only touched upon, but any resonance



must come from it. There is optimism here, but it is transparent to itself. The notion of a "sleepy country" implies escape but also an awakening to reality. This happens musically with the cor anglais' return to the opening theme and consequent melancholy.

The macrocosm invoked in the final poem is witness to the poet's despair. The *idée fixe* seems to be "crying", both in the sense of calling out and also weeping;

I wander by the edge  
Of this desolate lake  
Where wind cries in the sedge.

It is a more explicit statement of the poet's position dramatizing love-despair which, in the end, is a deathly consummation. But here there is a tangible cause to which all of the emotional weight, created by the composer's organization of the verses, has been leading. The loss is quite explicitly that of the beloved who must be seen to be dead, the wind's voice in the sedge, interpreted and given quite specific meaning by the composer. It is the last line to which the whole cycle aspires both mechanically and spiritually.

The composer knows from the outset just where he is going and of course the emotional clothes in which he will travel so that arrival will not seem as alarmingly out of character. It is impossible to say just what gives rise to such emotions. We might perhaps, and in the knowledge of all that Yeats wrote, suggest that he is posturing with characteristic ninety-ish intensity, that the feelings are dramatic representations of real emotions with which the poet is able to identify and capture. Similarly, from a knowledge of the life of Warlock, we might say that he often vacillates between the gay triviality of some of his songs and the gloomy serenity in evidence here. But the most



important observation is that Warlock chose and arranged the poems and then fixed an emotional meaning to them which is exclusive of the localized limpness of the verses. What they become is part of a reverie where there can be no doubt about the importance of the discovered meaning for the composer. The music is more complex than the verse, taking its inspiration from the places in the poem but going on to achieve a starkness which is not there in Yeats. Yeats' poems are only the starting point. They are related by the composer, so that the very last line signifies what the "evil" was at the beginning.

There is enough evil in the crying of the wind.

It is unfortunate that Yeats did not leave a record of what he thought of Warlock's use of his poems, after the event. His verses are certainly changed in the setting which in its unity does not distinguish between them. Changes of pace and instrumentation create divisions, but they are movements within one formal structure which is the unifying principle.

The Curlew is uncompromisingly despairing. It does not, like the Housman settings of Vaughan Williams, allow any intrusions of even qualified joy. Warlock's private gloom is triggered by his reading of Yeats and is convincingly evoked in the music. The extent to which such things are accessible to analysis, especially when the exponents are unwilling to assist an interpretation, must be lamented. But this is at once the dilemma and advantage of any critical writing! The critic must be alive to the possibility that he is being too specific. Music, as Mendelssohn has written, is a language which is necessarily inaccessible to verbal elucidation. While that is true generally it would be foolish to suggest that The Curlew did not provide clues to



a possible meaning which are carried in the verbal skeleton that presumably gives rise to the sounds in which it is dressed! Does Warlock's melancholy spring from a specific cause or is this, like Yeats' passion, suspect? The answer must always be private, and if it is an affirmation of the rightness of the sounds, and a recognition of the composer's voice, then the music has worked. At its most limited the "meaning" is what the words say, but that is not all that is said!



John Donne vigorously avowed his faith calling on God to bully him into line. The propensity to make these excited displays of faith perhaps calls into question the strength of their writer's belief. However Dr. Donne died Dean of St. Paul's, and a painting of him confident in his shroud hangs in the new cathedral of that name. This eagerness to come to terms with dying, seemingly to go some of the way towards trying the experience was a cranky exercise which was none the less based on a firm foundation of strenuously achieved faith. John Dowland, without Dr. Donne's spurious confidence, presents a different problem, more all embracing than Housman's and closer to the roots of Humanism.

The turbulence of the late Tudor Age, with the seesawing Catholic/Protestant allegiance doubtless weakened the grip of conventional religion on some in England who were intelligent (and courageous) enough to extrapolate from the seeds of dissent. Luther had challenged the nature of the administration and ministrations of the Catholic Faith and later, the nature of man's "will". He had not seriously challenged Christian belief. Perhaps the vision of squabbling prelates, even burning archbishops, <sup>43</sup> might have given rise to certain private twinges about faith. Certainly the dilemma seems to have encouraged an enthusiastic persecution of witches, which is usually seen as evidence of spiritual insecurity. The artist in this environment, although he might profess a faith, lived with that <sup>44</sup> insecurity which might find expression in his art. It seems that Dowland's Catholicism, before his re-conversion to Anglicanism, was instrumental in his being unacceptable at the court of Elizabeth. <sup>45</sup> His continental reputation ought to have been credentials enough to have gained him a post at the English Court. Fate dealt unkindly with the lutanist in this instance. The extent to which it could



have elicited the doleful epithet "Semper Dowland, semper dolens" is not clear.

But first there is an obvious question that suggests itself and which might be asked about Dowland's time. The Solo Art songs of the period 1597 - 1622 are produced simultaneously with some of the finest verse of any age. Was there any interaction of say the poetry of John Donne and music of the major figures who provided examples from lavish masques to tiny pieces for the virginals? To distinguish two main schools or styles of poetry is convenient, if a little open to grumbling interjections. However Donne and Ben Jonson, if not "leaders" in any sense are at least characteristic of varieties of verse which are quite distinctive. Jonson together with Robert Johnson, who was not a near relation, produced the following song,

Have you seen but a bright li-ly grow, Be-fore rude hands have  
 touch'd it? Have you mark'd the fall of the snow, Be-fore the earth  
 hath smutch'd it? Have you felt the wool of bea-ver? Or swan's down  
 ev-er? Or have smelt o' the bod of the brier? Or the ward in the fire?  
 Or have tast-ed the bag of the bee? Oh, so white, oh, so soft,  
 Oh, so sweet is she so - sweet is she!

\* Usually sung *v*



The composer seems to have set only the final verse of the poem as it was published in "Ten Lyric Pieces", and to try to sing the first two stanzas of the poem strains the "numbers" of the verse beyond a tolerable limit. The selection which the composer has made is instructive.<sup>47</sup> There is a vital change in tone of the opening mood with its highly conventional, even rather pompous posturing which clearly aims at satisfying the taste which Shakespeare parodies in "My Mistress Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun". The public invitation to share the masque-like experience of an observation of Charis is cold and formal;

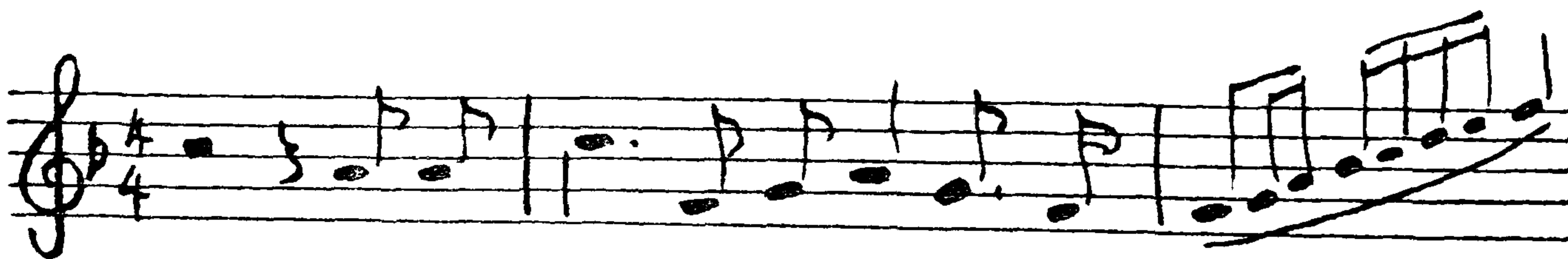
See the chariot at hand here of Love,  
Wherein my lady rideth!  
Each that draws is a swan or dove,  
And well the car Love guideth.

None of the symbols, swans, doves and chariots allow for no personal feeling to filter through. This verse is anaesthetized, the convention dictating the terms of praise uncompromisingly. But in the final stanza, there is a startling change of tone. It is as if the poet lowers his voice to appeal to the listener more intimately, and rather less in the manner of the heroically courtly.

What then is the effect of the verse which I think is the only stanza which could accompany the tune without doing considerable disservice to the song as a whole? Leavis and L.C.Knights, have asserted that in Jonson there was "an inclination towards a strong idiomatic naturalness" and "racy vigour".<sup>48</sup> This is certainly true of this song, and is seen most markedly in that rhyme word "smutched", although such stuff is hardly "racy"! And of course the verse is not entirely purged of that formality which causes the stiff conventionality at the beginning. "White lilies" and "rude hands" maintain the distancing effect which is matched in part by a degree



of musical obviousness. This was an age of great enthusiasm for mimesis and the word "grow" is treated with musical literalness;

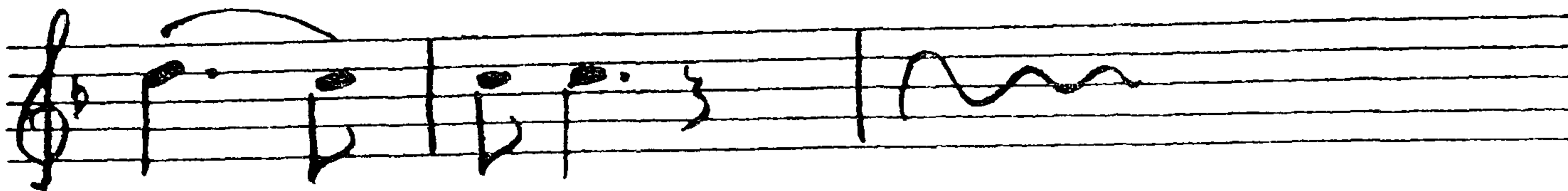


Have you seen but a white li-ly grow —

It lends support to my argument that only the last verse was meant to be sung to this ayre. "Love" and "light" are clumsy impositions on the rising scale. The music also picks up the structured nature of the poet's praise catching in its melody the series of questions and rising to an almost ecstatic height. The danger of being too pedantic in discovering these musical symbols is clear when one considers the next lines in which the same tune and rising scale are repeated. Similarly, the word "mark" hangs like a floating snowflake to fall with the melody to a gentle resolution. In setting the next quatrain the composer utilizes a purely aural symbolism. This series of questions abandons the visual for more tactile comparisons, and the music rises in fervid transport to the flattened seventh.



Have you felt the wool of bea-ver? Or swan's



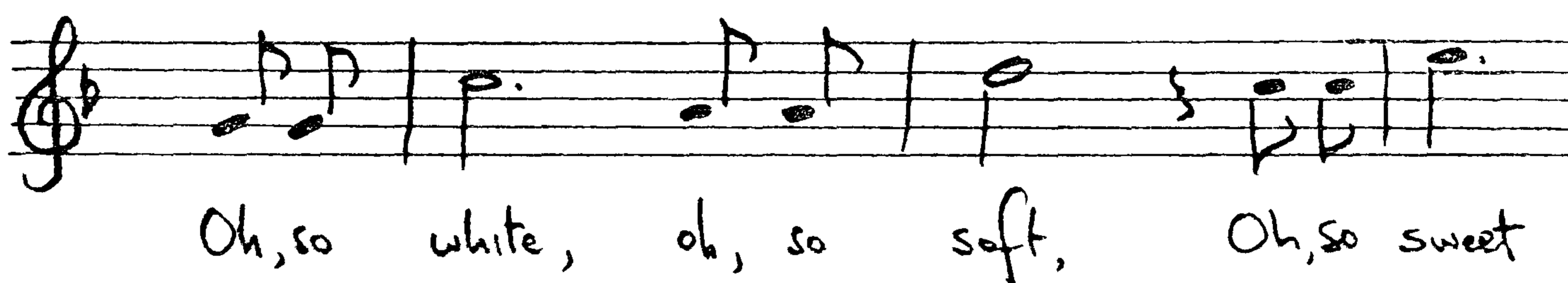
down — ev-er?



From there it settles into a more homely murmur which accompanies the fireside cosiness of a bowl of flowers and "hard in the fire" and the introduction of the experiences of other of the senses;

or have tasted the bag of the bee.

The series of exclamations which follow mirror the poet's enthusiasm and, like the ecstasy of touch, give rise to a long arching sequence which climbs upwards and comes to rest on the keynote, providing a sort of summary of the melodic shape of the song. We know from the outset that this is going to be a hushed but enthusiastic appraisal. We listen as it rises and falls and its rhetorical questions lead us to the more urgent demonstration of love.



The naturalness of the emotion which the poet wishes to express is caught in the "short, short, long" vowel sounds, and the rising pitch suggests the increased urgency, hesitating delightedly at the mistress' "sweetness".

This song is indicative of some more general aspects of music of the time. The musical symbolism in songs of this period is as fixed as the literary modes of praising a woman; there are as it were counterparts musically to the Petrarchan conventionalism. The word "down" is usually set to a falling figure in the music. The "growth" of the white lily is a characteristic touch. This can be destructive to the sense of the poem. Take for example the Campion song "When to her Lute Corinna Sings". It is by no means an

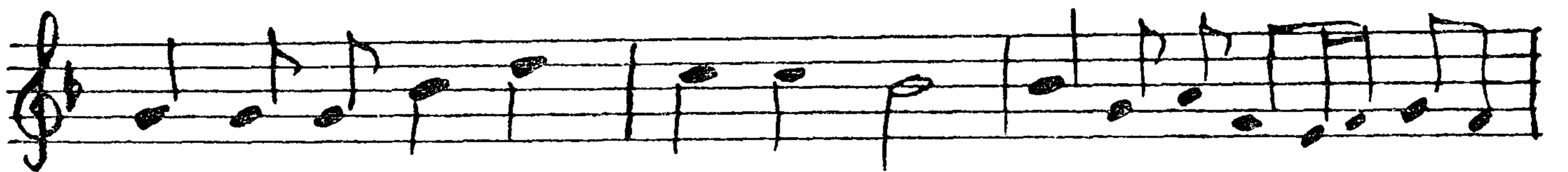


important poem but it makes a charming song.

When to her lute Corinna sings,  
Her voice revives the leaden strings,  
And doth in highest notes appear  
As any challenged echo clear.  
But when she doth of mourning speak,  
E'en with her sighs the strings do break.

And as her lute doth live or die;  
Led by her passion, so must I.  
For when of pleasure she doth sing,  
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring;  
But if she doth of sorrow speak,  
E'en from my heart the strings do break.

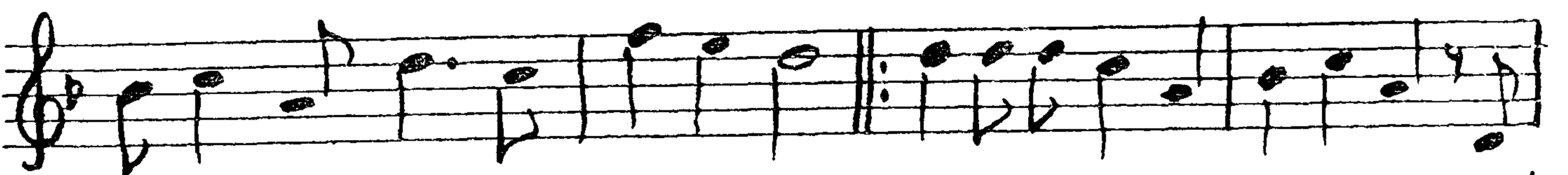
The sort of thing is commonplace. Conceits are neat and unoriginal. Leaden heart strings are excited into action only to break. In the second line the melody literally echoes the suggested revival with its decorative run. This is especially contrasted with the syllabic setting of the first line with its three long syllables.



When to her lute Co — rin — na sings, Her voice re — vives the



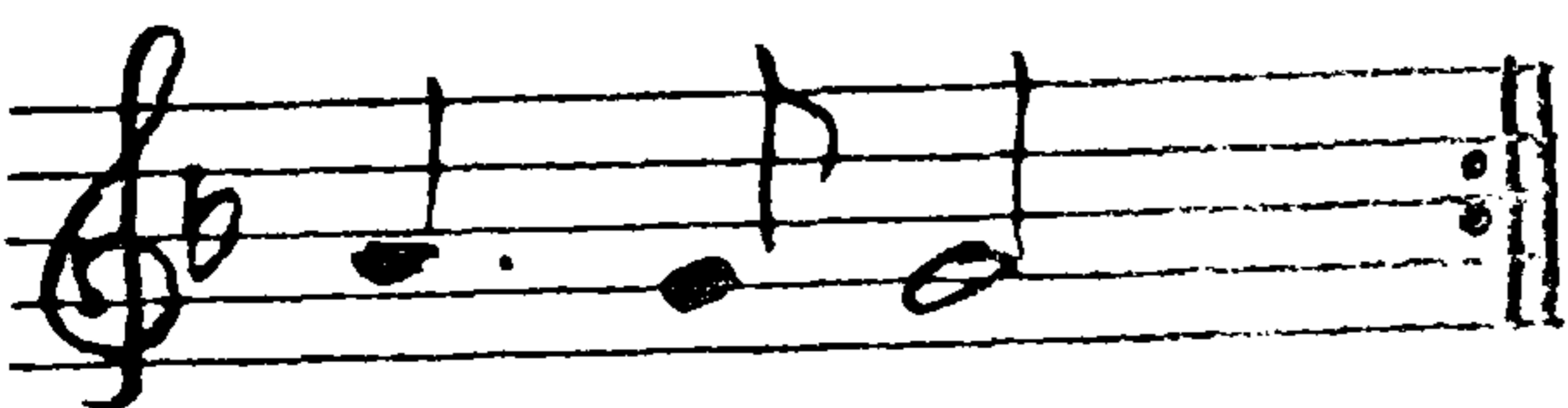
lead — en strings, And doth in high — est notes ap — pear,



As a — ny chal — lenged e — cho clear. But when she doth of mourning speak E'en



with her sighs, her sighs the strings the strings do break, the —



strings do break.



The appropriateness of this ornamentation for the word "passion" is questionable, but in a strophic setting there is no alternative. The "ayre" is inevitably strophic and the limitations under such circumstances restrict the intensity of poetic experience. As I have noted in a later chapter, it is not often a problem in Burns who does not tend to alter the emotional emphasis from stanza to stanza, his whole conception of the right words being governed by an accurate assessment of the mood of the tune. Differing degrees of emphasis are possible at the discretion of the performer. Speed and general enthusiasm might "lift" a doleful tune to a degree. And of course, once the tune is set to particular words they perform a reciprocal function fixing the particular interpretation of speed and attack. In the second stanza of the *Campion* the "sudden spring", the octave jump at the word "pleasure", is happily matched with "highest notes" at the same point in the tune in the first stanza. It is not clear if music preceeded the words in this song; however it seems that the composer, who is probably also the poet, went to some pains to relate his tune to the sense of his verse.

Movements of emotions are usually similarly charted musically, "joy" with a bright, jolly rhythm and sound, and despair with long, languishing minor key passages full of darkness and anguish. Perhaps the greatest master of the "ayre", and lute music generally, Dowland, is the finest exponent of expressions of melancholy. Bearing in mind the relationship between motions of feelings and musical ups and downs, it is useful to examine "Sorrows Stay". Dowland could transform an artificial complaint into a passionate monologue, finding the perfect musical equivalent for verbal expressions of despair; matching written presentations of pain with intense and vivid musical amplifications of the poet's elaborate grief. This is



"artifice" in true Elizabethan sense, the evocation of feigned feelings which are convincing aurally and yet which satisfy the basic rules of artistic decorum. In Dowland the tension between the conventional and the active sympathy of the composer produces songs which, while satisfying formal requirements, sound like a more explicitly personal statement. The soft dejected repetition of phrases, the sighing "alases" and the long "arise" at the end of the song which is punctured by "I never shall", closing it with a mood which carries on beyond the duration of the music - all of these are components of an intricately constructed dramatic cameo.

Sor-row, sorrow stay! lend true repentant tears To a woe-ful woe-ful  
 wre-tch-ed wight Hence, hence Despair with thy tormenting fears do not O do-  
 not my heart poor heart of-fright. Pity, pity, pity Pity, pity, pity help now  
 or never Mark me not to end-less - pain, mark me not to end le - ss pain. Al-  
 -as I am condemned Alas! I am condemned, I am condemned ev-er No hope,  
 no help there doth re-main, But down, down, down, down, I fall But down down down down I fall down  
 and ar-ise down and ar-ise I ne-ver shall! But down, down, down, down, I fall  
 But down down down down I fall down and ar-ise, down and ar-ise - I never shall.



The degree to which this convinces is a matter of personal taste. How does the composer manage to set up the vital link across the time which separates us ? The question can best be answered by a more general overview.

I have chosen Dowland because he seems to be one of the finest song-writers and, of course, because he is so persistently gloomy. It is tempting to suggest that this is his main caste, and that he suffered from unrelieved melancholy. The situation is much more complex than this, and the variety of his compositions, the sparkle of much that is light hearted and joyful, are evidence enough. The prolixity for gloominess however remains and how can we account for it ? Housman's prevailing sadness is temperamental and symptomatic of his peculiar sensibility. It is the "echo returned by each breast" which establishes the significance of the private experience that he musters. Vaughan Williams provides the sympathetic interpretation which cleverly fixes meaning without destroying the intimacy of the link between listener and poet. The musical medium is not only true to the meaning of the poems, but it does not destroy the privacy of voice which is evident in the intensity of the feeling fixed and conveyed by the composer. The public nature of Dowland's displays of anguish, the highly polished drama of the event and the language, immediately put a listener on his guard. It would be foolish to exclude this dramatic element from a consideration of the words of Housman in Vaughan Williams. The differences between the sensibilities of these two and Dowland is instructive.

I must examine  
But first <sup>some</sup> essential history which suggests a background against which Dowland's songs might be viewed. Sir Philip Sidney wrote copiously about his muse (viz. poetry), prescribing a variety of aims, methods and results for his art, well practiced. I have chosen freely



and arranged quotations from An Apologie for Poetrie which, although they are out of the particular context in which Sidney places them, do present a distinctive and observable philosophy;

I say the Philosopher teacheth, but he teacheth obscurely, so as the learned only can understande him;.....but the Poet is the foode for the tenderest stomacks, the Poet is indeed the right Popular Philosopher.... One may be a poet without versing and a versifyer without Poetry..... Music I say, the most divine striker of the senses..

50

Under the heading, "The attractive form in which Poetry presents moral lessons" is another, much quoted, assertion. The poet;

...commeth to you with words set in delightful proportion either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well inchaunting skill of Musicke; and with a tale forsooth he commeth unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner.

51

In other places Sidney speaks of the capability of poetry "to teach and to delight", but he warns that "it is the Nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires" where there is a danger of a reader being "lulled a sleepe in shady idlenes".

It is difficult to vouch for the influence in absolute authority of Sidney's work, but suffice it to say that it stands at the beginning of one of the most productive periods of world literature. Without abusing History, I think it fair to assume that it was widely read and known. There were frequent printings in the 1590's.

Sidney settles for the "Heroicall" rather than the "lyricke" as being the best and most accomplished kind of poetry. Passing references to "musicke" and the combination of lyrical poem and music leave little doubt that he had at least some affection for the art. The list of attributes and dangers, which I have made above are



not strictly applied to Dowland's branch of the Arts. However they suggest some useful labels. The poet is "Popular Philosopher", a presenter of "moral lessons" and a "divine stroker of the senses". Sidney is eager to defend the moral basis of his art against detractors and his polemical manner and narrowness of his argument are understandable. But there are none the less, lessons for his contemporary artists and to a degree a licence to proceed in the shadow of the ethical purpose which Sidney throws. Some of these could be seen as applying to Dowland, the master of the "lamenting Elegiack" and who might be

prayed,..... for compassionate accompanying just causes of lamentation.

52

Sidney is suitably vague in ascribing subjects for lamentation, but perhaps the relation between Herakleitus and his idea of perpetual and irreversable change being the lot of man and the humanistic recognition of implication of being alive fix a particular sense.

Dowland's songs do not exemplify a particular sense of melancholy. "If my Complaints", which must have been a best-seller of enormous popularity, takes its theme from unrequited love. The elaborate posturing is unselfconsciously hystronic.

O love I live and die in thee  
Thy grief in my deep sighs still speaks  
Thy wounds do freshly bleed in me  
My heart for thy unkindness breaks.

The ayre floats above a steadily moving accompaniment in the lute part which helps to prevent morbidity. These songs are frequently saved from the criticism which the text should occasion by the music.



1. Burst forth my tears, assist my forward grief  
And show what pain imperious love provokes.
2. Go crystal tears, like to the morning showers  
And sweetly weep into thy lady's breast.
3. Come heavy sleep, the image of true Death,  
And close up these my weary, weeping eyes.
4. Tears kill the heart, believe, kills the heart  
O strive not to be excellent in woe,  
Which only breeds your bounty's overthrow.

53

The most serious question which suggests itself at this point is one which is quite a challenge to answer. It arises quite naturally out of an examination of words like those above, but has wider implications. Do we lower our literary standards in a consideration of song texts ? Clearly we often do, but then that presupposes a particular fixed interest. Once again the spectre of "high seriousness" appears in snowy robes and with a levelled index finger. It is the critical spirit which produced these lines.

we read (Donne) as we read the living....And it is not any eccentricity or defiant audacity that makes the effect here so immediate, but rather an irresistible rightness.

54

A vital contact with a living voice, desirable as it may be, is perhaps best reserved for works which were designed to achieve that end. The works of Donne seem to have been circulated in manuscript for friends to read. They were not meant to be 'songs' in a literal manner and usually fail as such. Contemporary settings generally are undistinguished. Poets who provided the lyrics for songs doubtless understood the limitations of supplying an effective fifty per cent of the product they helped to make. (This of course assumes absolute equality with responsibility for a song.) The plea for special



consideration of song as song would appear to be stating what is self-evident. However, it seems that the ghost of the need to justify literary study in terms of moral purpose alone is difficult to lay. And the best songs of the age rise above "museum-piece" status. Conventions of any time determine the manner in which its apprehensions are expressed, and like any other age, the Elizabethan/Jacobean period has its especially fine moments of peculiar insight. It is to be expected that the theatre should be a predominant influence at such a time and that "drama" in the widest sense might be characteristic in its artistic style. The lines listed above are in the first place devoid of their music, and secondly they are, in this state, only a script. The addition of a performer and a lute are essential to the life of these songs.

The feelings which are conventional in such lines as I have collected above, are perhaps the tattered remnants of a Courtly tradition, a ghost which is finally laid by D'Urfey's Pills to Purge Melancholy and a distinctly different interest in women :  
<sup>56</sup>  
 Certainly there are fashionable precedents. Shakespeare pokes fun at Romeo in the good-natured and sensible questions of Benvolio, where the latter gently relieves the lover of some of his amorous burden.

Romeo:       Ay me! sad hours seem long.....  
 Benvolio:   ...What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours ?  
 Rom.:        What ! Shall I groan and tell thee ?  
 Ben.:                   Groan ! why no;  
               But sadly tell me who ?  
 Rom.:        Bid a sick man in sadness make his will;  
               Ah! Word ill urged to one that is so ill.  
               In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

(Act. 1 Sc. 11)



Is this illustration calculated to place true love into sharp contrast?  
Or is Shakespeare operating in an even more complex mode and affirming  
Juliet's apprehensive lines,

It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;  
Too like the lightening.....

(Act 11. Sc.11. 118-9)

Later, we recall, that in Friar Lawrence's cell Romeo is overcome by  
the turmoil which rages about him and is discovered weeping on the  
floor, "with his own tears made drunk!". Dowland's weeping love-songs  
are exercises in this convention. The very language which he chooses  
is cliché ridden. The essential difference between the words which  
Dowland sets and those set by Vaughan Williams is that in Dowland  
we see a predominance of conventional posturing which dramatises  
emotions, not necessarily bogus emotions. The Housman poems are  
evidence of a deeply personal neurosis closely allied to concerns  
which are universal. His lyric conventions might pale as the centuries  
cultivate or discard fashions.

I do not wish to denigrate Dowland's achievement, but I  
think it more artificial in the broadest sense and recall some words  
proffered at the outset of this thesis.

A great work of literature does not simply offer a reprint  
of the intellectual and emotional aspects of existence, but  
a new experience with intellect and emotion fused into  
something like the texture of everyday existence.

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This "new experience" is indefinable! Qualities of sincerity, the  
intensity of presentation, aesthetic considerations concerning form -  
it is impossible to be comprehensive or exhaustive - are aspects of



what a work offers. Dowland's age clearly accepted varieties of artistic presentation which are no longer fashionable. But is there any evidence of a more pervasive spirit in his work of the private or personal intensities of Housman? If Dowland's songs are allied in motivation and inspiration to the theatre then Housman, although all art is by virtue of its public aspect, theatrical, is more directly and spontaneously recording his psychological state. It is Vaughan Williams' art which encompasses the dramatic necessities of articulating emotions and which has the advantage of some emotional credibility. If the initial stimulus to record feelings has the immediacy of lived experience, if a response to the words of a song is conditioned by the detection of emotional truth before the inventions of elaborate artistry, then the chances of the translation of that emotion to another medium are considerably increased. However, if elaborate artistry, the calculated use of conventional figures and postures, is conveyed in sympathetic music perhaps some mysterious alchemy converts the commonplace into a work with impressive gravity and which touches the "universal", thereby overcoming the implications of conventionality.

Where then does Dowland overcome the limitation of conventional verses and what is the result? I have already intimated that he succeeds in "If My Complaints", but in this case the achievement is entirely musical. It is a stately measured dance and the effectiveness of the piece lies in the grave serenity which, in its repetition of measures, contains the elaborate grief. The meaning of the words is limited and fixed and the poem tamed by the setting. Thus the possibilities for melodic extravagance in lines like;

If Love doth make men's lives too sour  
Let me not love, nor live henceforth.



are limited by the setting. The piece does exist as an instrumental consort so perhaps the music came first in this instance. It would appear that the expressive relationship is such that the possibilities inherent in the words are not realized, suggesting that text might have been fitted to music. The evidence of the finest Dowland, "In darkness let me dwell" for example, indicates that the composer/poet tailored words and music together. The word "sour" in the line quoted above is set against a tonic chord. Compare this with the setting of the words "hellish jarring sounds" in "In darkness let me dwell". The second "jarring" set on the note G is accompanied in the lute part with an A aurally realizing the meaning of the word and the nature of the feeling described. But "In darkness let me dwell" is the consummation. There is ample middle ground between the essentially musical and the quintessential Dowland.

Another love-song "I saw my Lady weep" demonstrates what is fine in Dowland's settings. Firstly, notice the poem and how it cleverly turns on the typical Jacobean paradox. Even grief and its attendant signs, while they are observable in the poet's beloved, are turned into virtuous qualities, the very reverse of what might normally be expected. This is established in the first two stanzas.

I saw my lady weep,  
And Sorrow proud to be advanced so  
In those fair eyes where all perfections keep.  
Her face was full of woe;  
But such a woe, believe me, as wins more hearts  
Than Mirth can do her enticing parts.

Sorrow was there made fair,  
And Passion wise, tears a delightful thing;  
Silence beyond all speech a wisdom rare.  
She made her sighs to sing,  
And all things with so sweet a sadness move  
As made my heart at once both grieve and love.

O fairer than aught else



The world can show, leave off in time to grieve.  
Enough, enough your joyful looks excels;  
Tears kill the heart, believe.  
O strive not to be excellent in woe,  
Which only breeds your beauty's overthrow.

The third contradicts the sense of the first two and, although it is printed in Fellowes, is not performed in the one recorded version which I own, that of Peter Pears and Julian Bream. This is a creditable observation by the performers. The third stanza makes nonsense of those which precede it, or at least, means a startling change of ground! Strophic songs, of which this is one, cannot accommodate even minor changes of overall mood, let alone one which deflates the fine conceits which the first two stanzas establish. A passionate interest in

Silence beyond all speech a wisdom rare.

with its implied marble-like immobility and further the ageless beauty of a fine stature, is quite deflated if it is finally seen as "beauty's overthrow". And the fact that the conjurations and the product of the poet/singer is critical. The song begins with a sustained "I" and concludes - if we discount the third stanza- with

As made my heart at once both grieve and love.

The grief embodies the singer's sympathy. An empathic reversal is effected by his love which changes even sadness to qualities of grace and beauty in his beloved. It is in this way an inward poem registering the movement of mind which moulds an acceptable image regardless of appearances. This is not done as pointedly as Shakespeare's "My Mistress are nothing like the sun", but then, it



is essentially an introspective poem. The melancholy here is not that of lost love. It springs from a deep feeling for whatever are the roots of the transfiguring sadness, perhaps sympathetic awareness of sadness in his "lady" and similar compassion for tears.

"I saw my Lady weep" moves with the gracious ease of a pavan but how unlike "If my complaints" it is when closely scrutinized. Yet it loses nothing of musical quality for its more complicated text. Much of the melancholy is carried in the melody with the lute providing a regulated forward-going impulse over which the singer, especially in the first two strains, lingers in protracted sympathetic grief. The setting of the final four lines of each stanza with its more marked, regular rhythm is perhaps musical evidence of the heightened enthusiasm for "eyes" and "face", and later "singing sighs" and "rare silence". But any attempt to characterize the mood of the piece must confront the overall writhing sadness, the gloomy caste which proceeds from the beginning to dominate the song.

An important dilemma which faces any writer who attempts to explain just what it is that makes a poem or song great is that he is often forced to fall back on feelings "in the bones" ! That will not do, of course, and it is usually possible to get rather closer to an articulation of what it is that is of particular significance and further, how such significance is achieved. Shakespeare, apart from the extensive "clarification", made in the past four hundred years, seems relatively accessible and generally explicable. Quantities of criticism help us to find a satisfactory position and there are many words and ideas to cross-index. (and they all have been!) A reader might feel justifiably a little giddy after Dr Johnson, Coleridge, Elenor Spurgeon, A.C. Bradley, L.C. Knight, Tillyard, Rossiter, Harris, Brockbank and the like, the value of their efforts



finding sympathy and spawning accolites around the world. D.H. Lawrence's "Amletto" (Twilight in Italy), the Germans' contention that Shakespeare skilfully translated Herder, each suggests the breadth of his currency. Literary scholarship has clarified difficult words but in the end the individual close reading, suitably glossed, will be the test. Or better still an informed visit to a performance. Under such circumstances the reader's ultimate position will be based on a recognition of an authorial attitude to the characters and their relative importance. We can be fairly sure about what we are expected to feel about Macbeth and that attitude is strenuously achieved by playwright, performer and audience. Dowland ought to be similarly susceptible to a critical interpretation based on some scholarly inquiry, in the case of musical or verbal difficulties. But he is not! The obvious relationship to a more explicitly dramatic art (theatre) makes the dilemma even more pronounced. Striking postures is common enough in literature. It is equally common in song but could never be a problem because usually the composer does not speak in words directly to his audience. The accessibility of his mind to the public galleries, like Shakespeare's from the groundlings to the Gods, is determined by the degree to which an authorial position is conveyed as a predominant theme. When Dowland's songs are sung they have no context, no prevailing and continuous theme which grows and develops to emerge as the essence of the drama. His works are sibylline, fragmentary evidence of a larger context for which we have no real evidence. Biography is not helpful, in other than the broadest sense, especially when what is detected is something felt in the bones or "along the heart".

In the following letter, is it possible to detect any traits of character? We must remember that in an age when musicians entered by the



tradesman's entrance into the noble institutions which employed them, the general impression is of a rather fawning man, forced to grovel in order to survive. His life had, after all, been a catalogue of disappointments and virtual banishment from the "glorious" court of which he craved to be a part.

This small booke containing the consent of speaking harmony, ioyned with the most musicall instrument the Lute, being my first labour, I haue presumed to dedicate to your Lordship, who for your vertue and nobility are best able to protect it, and for your honorable fauors towards me, best deseruing my duety and seruice. Besides your noble inclination and loue to all good Artes, and namely the deuine science of musicke, doth challenge the patronage of all learning, then which no greater titles can be added to Noboility. Neither in these your honours may I let passe the dutifull remembrance of your vertuous Lady my honourable mistris, whose singular graces towards me haue added spirit to my vnfortunate labours. What time and diligence I haue bestowed in the search of Musicke, what trauel in forren countries, what successe and estimation euen among strangers I haue found, I leaue to the report of others. Yet all this in vaine were it not that your honourable hands haue vouchsaft to vphold my poore fortunes, which I now wholly recommend to your gracious protection, with these my first endeuors, humbly beseeching you to accept and cherish the with your continued fauors.

Your Lordships most humble seruant,  
Iohn Dowland.

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The philosophic position expressed does not change much, even into the Eighteenth Century and we find in Beattie, Blair and Harris (for example) much the same in rather more words. Music as a "deuine science" suggests the classical and medieval thought which had found its way into the Elizabethan consciousness and which is part of the received world order. That Dowland is "dutifull" might be expected and the modesty of relying on the matters left for others to report implies rather more than is stated. But the composer's real estimation of himself, if indeed this is not posturing as well, is contained in the admission of his "vnfortunate labours", his "poore fortunes"



and the need to request "continued favours". It would be quite wrong to base an estimation of character on one letter of dedication which is designed to serve a quite specific function. However, it does offer if not a picture of the man, substantive evidence of his general cast. "Yet all this in vaine were it not that your honourable hands haue vouchsaft to vphold my poore fortunes!" There is ample evidence in the songs to support that sense of himself. Certainly he is peculiarly afflicted, by comparison with his fellows; his last published song (No 10 of A Musical Banquet) bears out the conclusions we might make.

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"In Darkness Let Me Dwell" is quintessential Dowland and could be seen as a statement of where the composer has been headed in his art, musically and philosophically.

If we examine the words of Dowland's supreme song, perhaps the finest of all of the lute songs of the day, several features are immediately striking.

In darkness let me dwell, the ground shall sorrow be;  
The roof despair, to bar all cheerful light from me;  
The walls of marble black that moistened still shall weep;  
My music hellish jarring sounds to banish friendly sleep.  
Thus wedded to my woes, and bedded to my tomb,  
O let me living, living die, till death do come.

It is a remarkably disjointed, even clumsy poem. That break in the first line signifies not only a caesura in the verse, but also a sudden and violent change of interest and poetic approach. The logical relation between "ground" and "darkness" is weak even though the second line forms an architectural link with the first. The alexandrines lope along in the first three lines (and the fifth) while the fourth and last are seven stress lines. This seems to be strangely undisciplined verse for one whose musical training ought to



have fitted him out with an excellent sense of rhythm. Or is this an inclination towards a natural speaking voice which makes for accessibility and fine quality in Donne? The words are usually considered to be anonymous, but this very "clumsiness" might be evidence that they were conceived with the music, and are, consequently, Dowland's own ! There is no reason to doubt that he wrote them, especially when they present such an uncompromising front which is inextricably tied to the musical thought. Such words might distance and thus master the experience of which they speak, the organization of art being a formal means of control, but the addition of music in this case is not simply an interpretation. The natural rhythm of the verse, the very metre, is insignificant as it is obliterated by the declamatory melody line. So the logical progression from darkness, which is a broad metaphor to the tangibly actual "ground" and implications of entombment, becomes an element of a musico-dramatic movement. The song urges the verbal sense away from the metaphysical and speculative, to solid symbols of the place where being buried alive is a desirable alternative to an insufferable present. What is strained verbal sense becomes, with its inseparable music, an acceptable abbreviation of his condition by the power of the emotional experience which it immediately suggests and fosters, a dramatic logic of the sort which Shakespeare utilizes in Leontes' jealousy. But dramatic expositions ought not to inhibit the possibility of directness. The consequences for plays would be utterly destructive. Is it, then, only possible for "the private" to filter through the dramatic convention? I think not, because in a fine performance one is primarily aware of what is being performed. Lapses of concentration or an inferior performance might cause a dislocation of a proper listening! However, bones which support the flesh should be well



buried, an obscured framework, essential, but not an end in itself.

What Dowland conjures up is something akin to Hamlet's sense of uneasy death wracked and tormented with nightmares, but he does not offer a cause for his despairing. What is clear is that the emphasis of the piece is unmistakably centered in the words "my" and "me". This is better caught musically in the redistribution of the accents of the verse. Darkness, tomb-like imprisonment, the torture of sleeplessness accompanied with hideous noise amounting to a death in life, wedded and bedded not to life but "woes", such is the singer's (poet's) assessment of his existence. It is hardly great poetry, but the informing spirit seems to grow from an unstated but legitimate cause, yet it needs the addition of music to convince us that these are more than cliches and histrionic posturing.

It opens, like a dramatic piece, with a small overture which immediately establishes the mood. The lute creates a melancholy atmosphere with the melody arching up, then falling in a long sighing phrase which leaves no doubt as to the nature of what will follow. And the voice enters low and solemn avoiding the main rhythmic emphasis until the word "me" which begins on the middle stress of the second bar but is held across the bar's duration. The second part of the line follows the 4/4 more closely, marching down, reiterating "ground" and "sorrow", the latter harmonized as a consonance (e against g and b) the first time then as a painful dissonance (e against a and f ). The musical gestures are conventional and have been analyzed in depth by Professor Mellers in his lecture in Harmonious Meetings, (1965). He does not find the piece dramatic;

Fiercely passionate yet not dramatic, at once personal and with a tragic impersonality, it bears within its maturity the riches of past, present and future.....  
But the awareness of the pain of consciousness - of the



suffering that complements the joy in the sensual present - is now overt in the polyphonic and harmonic, rather than monodic, texture. As we have seen, Dowland comes almost to accept the pain as pleasure, as a good to be desired because it is an affirmation of humanity. And although he often longs for darkness - for death as a release from consciousness - he does so with a curious tragic detachment.

61

It is perhaps splitting hairs, but regardless of the paradox of life forces being engendered in the very midst of gloomy contemplations of death, the piece cannot escape the convention by which it lives. Song never can. It is a dramatic form - minuscule by comparison with The Ring - but none the less an organization of feeling in conventional languages which require performance to exist. That is not to say that what is located in the work by the quotation above is not correct and sensitive to the nuances of the song, but "detachment" and "impersonality" are hallmarks of style, descriptions of a manner of delivery and by a natural extension, descriptions of what is achieved. It is Dowland's personality which is made more or less accessible in such a work and performance can be destructive of just that! For what Professor Mellers says to be true we require an ideal performance. Essentially lines like these :

O let me living die, let me living, living die.

do not present us with unequivocal statement. Rather they emphasize, perhaps even create, the very humanity which is implied in "the will to go on living". Such concepts seem extravagant, even a little diseased, but the song leaves no doubt of their reality for the poet/composer whose presence in any performance is assumed by the powerful emotion which is there in the script.

The song is through composed. This is its most important



single technical device. The false relations, indeed all of the dissonant harmonies which, spiritually, are not entirely resolved, are transitory tesserae of a larger mosaic. Even the repetition of some words and phrases has an immediacy which is localized as the song moves on, circling back to the place from which it started.



"Dwell" tails off in silence unaccompanied and tonally almost interrogative. It is not a resolution. A question remains which is not defined. The song does not suggest that the process is about to begin again like a dog chasing its tail in an endless dizzy circling. It settles with sighing resignation unsupported now by the highly evocative sympathy of the lute and viol accompaniment, an accompaniment with a richly polyphonic texture, complex and complimentary. Professor Mellers once again:

This is an almost dramatic, if not operatic, effect :  
when will the cadence be completed, the axe fall?

62

We can endorse that sense but I think must add that the effect at the end is also a kind of imploring. (Hence my 'interrogative' above.) If the depth and potency of Dowland's despair spring from a real melancholy, and we do doubt that they do; if the song moves us then what is being said, rather more directly than by universal implications ? It is I think an invitation to share, a tentative query about the very pain which is at the source of the feeling from which the song grows. Dowland explains by demonstration, dramatizes in order to define, impersonalizes, to a degree, by the use of



conventional figures but the urgency does not come from the very real drama of symbolic language, rather from the recognition that he must always ask for corroboration. To be seen to be famous is after all a prevailing theme which artists nurture. So "In Darkness Let Me Dwell" concludes with a reaching out, with a tone at once inviting a questioning of the whole experience which the song has dramatized, while also touching on the melancholy introspection in which the composer can cast an eye backwards saying not only "Do you see?", but also "What is it that I have said?" And, of course, that makes the thing so much richer. It is a tone which is achieved both verbally and musically. The poignant repetition of the quietly depressed opening thought (which gives rise to all that follows it) becomes more than musing after the song has explored what the opening has implied. Musically the thought comes to rest, falling away from the sound of the dissonant major seventh chord, to be left hanging as Professor Mellers suggests. The archness of such a combination shows a consummate control and clear-sighted awareness of just what is being done, the final few bars enclosing but not concluding what Dowland has captured; suggestion beyond words, reaching into the centre of impulsive, inconclusive but essential statements about mortality. It is an emotional exploration partly limited by its scale, but a challenge to interpret and this invitation is probably more significant than anything that is actually stated. The inevitable sympathy might only occur retrospectively, but by that time the essence of humanism has been established.

It is intuitive sympathy for a dilemma which explains that feeling in the bones, either acceptable or open to dispute, but there is a proportional relationship between hostility and agreement. What one takes on faith, and it might be added some precise bearings in the works under consideration, are equally susceptible to the normal



processes of evidence. Richard Strauss' great cycle Four Last Songs, is another case in point and I think explores a similar theme. We might speak of the autumnal feeling of the richness of orchestration and find just that feeling in the verse which he sets, but the active, attentive mind of a listener is the essential ingredient in which the cycle lives. The audience cannot be dispensed with here or in Dowland.



CHAPTER THREE; "THE BEAST WITH SPLENDID GLEAMS ";  
the bridge to ritual.

' The next day I went for a morning walk with him (Tennyson) upon the Down. As we went through the wicket gate that let us out from the seclusion of the garden grove into the lane, I noticed that a rogue had written in chalk upon it beneath the word "Private" these other words, "Old Tennyson is a fool." I half hoped the old poet would not see it, but his eye caught sight of it, and he said, in a cheery sort of way, "The boy's about right; we are all of us fools, if we only knew it. We are but at the beginning of wisdom. "

We spoke of other poets -of Wordsworth, whom he called, "very great when he is great, but there are long barrennesses in him"; of Browning whom he said, "He can conceive of grand dramatic situations, but where's the music"; of Burns, of whom he said glowingly, "Yes, if ever man was inspired, Burns was," and at once he broke into one of Burns songs, and enjoyed himself vastly. '

Canon Rawnsley



Degrees of self-consciousness and, more precisely, self-awareness in songs begin to diminish as we move towards music which is the product of a more public sphere. Eliot likens the arrival at a satisfactory expression in poetry to the exorcism of a demon;

he (the poet) is haunted by a demon, a demon against which he feels powerless, because in its first manifestation it has no face, no name nothing.....he is going to all that trouble, not in order to communicate with anyone, but to gain relief from acute discomfort. 1

The essay then loses some of its inertia as the poet relaxes his tone to add a little humour to his discourse. The observation which he makes however, may be taken to reflect upon the verse which I have already considered. What I propose to move on to represents a considerable change. The poetry which Eliot describes here he would probably preferred to call "meditative verse".<sup>2</sup> The introduction of this category as a qualification of the lyrical impulse weakens his attempted classification, but the distinction is important. The relative weight of such things is suggestive of the place where they take their origin, and the poet's touch is light where the subject which he takes dictates that approach. And the range is vast.- the most ephemeral at one extreme and acutely felt and profoundly uttered at the other. Under such circumstances the general head "lyric" needs to be quite elastic. The Oxford edition which Eliot dismisses illustrates just how chimerical the word can be when an attempt is made to fix it!

Lyric: Now the name for short poems, usually divided into stanzas or strophes, and directly expressing the poet's own thoughts and sentiments.

The Penguin Dictionary clearly takes its direction from this but adds



an introductory qualification:

Lyric: words for a song, esp a modern popular song; short poem suitable for singing; short stanzaic poem primarily expressing the writer's emotions or thoughts.

This is rather safer, but seems anxious to assert the modern meaning at the expense of history. But all of this implies single authorship and individual sentiments. It would I think be better to work from a description of an achieved effect rather than a prescription or formula which, as a model, limits the class severely.

Some songs are delivered in a corporate voice, indistinguishable from the same voice in anonymous folk-poetry. Others, like those which are collected as the works of Robert Burns, occupy a grey area between at least three identifiable impulses to sing: the passionate, the intellectual and impersonal. Folk-songs can be mixtures of passion and intellect. They are rarely impersonal because they embody a generalized persona - Eliot uses the word which he lifts from Ezra Pound - expressing emotions which are connected with rhythms of everyday life. The more they move towards impersonal narrative, the greater the likelihood of their entering the sphere of the Traditional Ballad. Excessive intellectualizing of more mundane subjects usually suggests single authorship, and a high degree of artificiality, and produces songs like pastoral episodes designed for the drawing room; Marie-Antoinette's dairy in the Petit Trianon springs from the same sentimental source as Ramsay's The Gentle Shepherd. Some men of genius have, by an act of consummate sympathy and understanding, "assisted" folk-song, largely to ensure its survival. Burns was such a man who was able to combine innate powerful feeling for his native song with an intellectual apparatus capable of absorbing antiquarian



knowledge of his time, and to rationalize his activity in terms of contemporary philosophical opinion. The degree to which his voice is obvious in the songs varies, but they are often expressive of his own feelings, cast in the mode which he understood. Vigilance in the fields and ale houses he combined with a scholarly acquaintance with all of the printed matter he could find. And of course he was a poet in his own right. Burns then stands somewhere between the songs which I described in my last chapter and the folk-songs which are the subject of this one. It is not as simple as "chalk and cheese". He has a foot in both camps but manages to find an exclusive style in poetry which satisfies the intellect, without sacrificing the simplicity of the folk. We must not lose sight of the fact that Burns is writing songs, not poems to read, but words for singing. In adapting folk-tunes to his use he brings folk-music a step closer to composed music, the sort of thing that might have been performed in salon or drawing room.

It is essential to insist, in passing, that Burns' songs are as necessary to the poet's whole reputation as any other works in which he takes full responsibility for what is written. "Holy Willie's Prayer" for example, with its biting satire and an epigraph from Pope indicates a capability rarely glimpsed in the songs. "Tam o' Shanter" is full of verbal music.

As bees bizz out wi'angry fyke,  
When plundering herds assail their byke;  
As open pussie's mortal foes,  
When, pop! she starts before their nose;

ll. 193-196.

It demonstrates a fine narrative style as well as the poet's ear for the sounds of words. The epigraph for "Tam o' Shanter" is taken from Gavin Douglas demonstrating a consolidating of the Scots element in all aspects of the poet. And there can be no doubt that it was Burns' initial popularity with Scottish publishers which established his reputation and which led to a less parochial Victorian enthusiasm.



In 1857 W. and R. Chambers of Edinburgh and London published The Life and Works of Robert Burns. The four volumes attempted to present all of the known and relevant details of Burns' writing and in order to enlarge the authority of the edition included as its nineteenth appendix a study of Burns' skull. This appendix might raise an eyebrow amongst 'moderns', especially as it is disclosed that the cranium was taken from the grave between the 31st of March and the 1st of April! However, the enthusiasm for phrenology was common in Victorian times. Even George Eliot had her head shaved in 1844 to discover the relationship between the protruberances of her brain and the career which she followed. The conclusions of Mr George Combe, who interpreted the findings after Burns' cerebral development was measured, are substantiated by the poet's work and reputation. The areas which were most pronounced included philoprogenitiveness, adhesiveness, combativeness, love of approbation, benevolence, individuality and cautiousness. Wit, hope, tune and conscientiousness all score rather lower on Mr. Combe's rating. He is reported as having made the following summary of character and inclinations of the man whose reputation was already well established:

The brain of Burns..... possessed the two elements of power and activity, the portions of the brain which manifest the animal propensities are uncommonly large, indicating strong passions and great energy in action under their influence. The group of organs manifesting the domestic affections is large. The organs of combativeness and destructiveness are large bespeaking great heat of temper, impertinence and liability to irritation.

These assertions are supported with evidence from Burns' life and work and Combe concludes:

No phrenologist can look upon this head, and consider the circumstances in which Burns was placed without



vivid feelings of regret. Burns must have walked the earth with a consciousness of great superiority over his associates in the station in which he was placed - of powers calculated for a far higher sphere than that which he was able to reach - and of passions which he could with difficulty restrain and which it was fatal to indulge. If he had been placed from infancy in the higher ranks of life, liberally educated and employed in pursuits corresponding to his powers, the inferior portion of his nature would have lost part of its energy, while the better qualities would have assumed a decided and permanent superiority.

5

The moral tone of this conclusion doubtless drew knowing nods from the comfortable Victorian matron who was secure in the knowledge of her social position, safe in her parlour with a scrupulously edited Burns and a bowdlerized Shakespeare. It is less than satisfactory in the same way that Arnold's assessment of Burns (and of Chaucer) suffers from a sureness about the relative place of poems and people. Rugby Chapel had conditioned Arnold and his reflexes were perfectly schooled. The parameters of gutter language of the lower classes and the like might be indistinct, but the publicly acknowledged reading of a gentleman from or above the middle classes could not be seen to be preoccupied with physical love. Hence the "inferior portion" of Burns' nature, which indulged in "Scotch drink, Scotch religion and Scotch manners". Arnold urges even more out of the interpretation of Burns' background in his suggestion that the poet's world is often "harsh and repulsive". 6

Perhaps Arnold knew Chambers' Burns? Perhaps he had read one of the phrenological reports and in some recess of his brain stored the conclusion which is inevitably reached? Perhaps the temper of the age was such that an opinion held by a literate gentleman could be couched in precisely the same sort of terminology, that the criticism or abuse directed towards an object of scorn could



be delivered in almost the same words. In a letter to Miss Arnold in November 1880, Arnold gives the following suggestive summary. It is surprisingly like that offered almost fifty years prior to this letter in the conclusions of Mr. George Combe.

Burns is a beast, with splendid gleams, and the medium in which he lived, Scotch peasants, Scotch Presbyterianism, and Scotch drink, is repulsive.

7

The implications of the ebbing of the "sea of faith", the intuition of "The vast edges drear/And naked shingles of the world" to this clergyman's son are condensed in his repulsion. A real interest in the folk and the manner in which they amused themselves was growing, but for Arnold a peasant was inferior. In this sense Burns directed his energies towards an inferior goal in finding his inspiration in the folk about him; and this misdirection could readily be contrasted with Wordsworth's dull morality, gleaned from the diurnal chores of simple folk. The fascination of Arnold's letter is in the unamplified divination of "splendid gleams".

In his essay "The Study Of Poetry", Arnold devotes six pages to Burns, largely to denounce any classic status which the Scot might have accrued in the early Nineteenth Century. It is here that the memorable epithets "rising to a criticism of life" and "Burns, like Chaucer, comes short of the high seriousness of the great classics", occur. But here <sup>also</sup> Arnold concurs with those who found Burns to their taste, by attempting to isolate the good from the bad. If Burns lacked "the high seriousness which comes from absolute sincerity" why was he so lauded? The answer for Arnold, in the reconstructed words of one of his accolites, could perhaps read "a slight lyric grace without the tough reasonableness beneath it"! And so he writes,



His largeness and freedom serve him so admirably....in those poems and songs where to shrewdness he adds infinite archness and wit....where his manner is flawless and a perfect poetic whole is the result.

3

What is praised here is "piercing...lovely pathos", but the awkwardness implied does not belong to the best Burns. It is hard to overlook that ringing word "repulsive", which is applied so effortlessly at least twice in the material cited above. "Splendid" and "repulsive" certainly establish extremes of response. That leaves the word "gleams" to indicate what <sup>it</sup> might have been that Arnold glimpsed. Or was he paying court to popular affections for Burns which opinions he could not, in his conscience, afford to entertain?

If the words "beast, bestial" and "animal propensities" can be taken to be inferring a closeness to the earth, or the uncivilized lot of a peasant, then clearly, Mr Combe and Dr. Arnold were not misdirected in their attempts to account for the peculiar qualities of Burns' best verse. Burns' interest was not strictly that of the antiquarian collector, or the scientific researcher who attempted to fix precise dates, places and performers and even weather conditions to any song/poem which they collected. Burns was more arbitrary, following enthusiasm or intuition in his creation of a new song, or re-working of an older one. For this reason there is no single clear sighted, moral end in what he did outside an immediate need at a local level. In this sense his aim was not high. He rarely tries to elevate the minds of those who read his works, in the manner which Arnold suggests. The product of his art has none of these sorts of aspirations. But neither can his work be neatly divided, as some have suggested, into didactic eighteenth century satires at the more heady and vindictive extreme on one hand, and the songs and lyrics on the other. This dichotomy is implicit in Arnold's qualified



approval. It is a false dichotomy which ignores not only the homogeneity of Burns' work, but also an esteemed and ancient native Scottish tradition ( Does Arnold use the word "Scotch" with calculated scorn? ) which stretches back to the Middle Ages. There can be no doubt about the feelings of "Scottishness" in the works of Dunbar, Henryson, Gavin Douglas and Lyndsay. Indeed, the 'school' seems to owe little to the English Medieval poets who precede it, and it is not until the eighteenth century that an energy equal to Dunbar's flyting poems is evident in similar poems in English. Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson retain this strong inclination to expressions of Scots feeling in a Scottish dialect of English, and Burns is the natural inheritor of a legacy which is stronger in spirit than any similar spirit which might be called 'Englishness' in English verse. Burns' work is homogeneous in the very variety of mood and attack which exemplify aspects of the Scottish character.

John Spiers makes a comparison between the lively vernacular of Burns and Elizabethan folk speech. He rightly discounts the 'English' Burns as inferior, perhaps in the way that 'late religious Wordsworth' might be best avoided. Another useful distinction which Spiers makes is to distinguish between English 'good sense' in Burns' time, and Burns' own sense of decorum. If Arnold's feelings were lacerated by what he saw as primitive in Burns, the close connection with the life-rhythms of simple folk, then he failed to understand the motivation and intelligence of the poet which eludes a limited code of ethics, and folk who will only countenance verse which presents an unambiguous statement of that ethical position. If Arnold is cold to the comedy of Burns' satires and longer poems, then perhaps his taste and breeding must be seen as hurdles which blind him to the vigour and racy energy of the best passages. Thomas



Crawford offers another useful sentence which will focus my discussion on some particular issues when he writes,

Burns' style is above all compact, and a pithy brevity is one of his main virtues.....The tension between words and music which underlies and supports the best of Burns' songs reflects the racial composition of the Scottish people, as well as that subliminal opposition between the claims of reason and passion which exists..in every Scottish heart, together with the complementary struggles between day-dreaming and narrow practicality, and between stolidity and fire.

11

Crawford manages to bring together, albeit with more than a glimmer of national feeling, the ideas and even the vocabulary used in the various critics cited above. Deeply rooted in any race, and sometimes operating to its detriment, lies what I have already called the spirit of a country which, if it is tapped by a genius who recognizes its potential value, belies accepted codes and standards. The scope of such feeling is of necessity wide spread but a genius can catch the inflection. What then, did Burns do to catch it, and fix it with such consummate skill that even now to think of Scots verse is to inevitably think of Burns and further, to think immediately of a contribution to song?

The answer is complex and obscured by the necessity of being selective for the purposes of isolating a specific contribution to song. Once again, Spiers clears some of the superfluous considerations by suggesting a context for the longer comical and satirical poems, which are the aspects of the poet's work which I will not consider at length.

It is impossible not to think of Fergusson as a predecessor of Burns. So much is Burns the fulfilment of Fergusson that it seems almost superfluous to attempt to distinguish them.

12



This immediately suggests an intellect conscious of tradition, a creating consciousness sensitive to the nuances of the Scots 'style', capable of an intelligent continuation of that style and able to expand and develop it. This consideration is vital in any preamble to an examination of what Burns did and how he did it. He was not the amiable boozier, penning inebriated verse as the whim came upon him. Like Emily Dickinson's, his attempt to convey an image of an unlettered, often isolated and hence essentially rustic, unprofessional poet, must be held lightly. And it is this very combination of an informed intelligence, steeped in the traditions of his country at a practical level, without the distractions of "Greek and Latin" and the "learning" which they imply, which places Burns in a position to fuse an antiquarian interest with something more purely poetic.

It would be convenient to be able to say that Burns was not bedevilled with considerations of theory and that, like the folk he emulated, his "heart" dictated all that he wrote. He was, however, and especially in his last years, preoccupied with theory. About the more speculative and abstruse theories we can only guess. His contact with and knowledge of Dr. James Beattie would have helped the formulation of a more general aesthetic. I will investigate this, later, having first examined the extensive correspondence which the poet had with the publisher George Thomson, between 1792 and 1796. An understanding of this contact is essential in any discussion of what Burns imagined he was doing and is especially interesting given the marked differences in the taste of poet and publisher which are obvious in some places. Thomson's is a spurious interest in preservation. Like his (later) contact with Haydn and Beethoven, his enterprise with Burns (and Pleyel) seems to have been geared to publishing drawing room editions of "Scotch" songs designed for the use of ensembles.



forte piano, flute 'cello and the like. Regardless of Burns' frequent sojourns in Edinburgh society, he could hardly countenance the extensive modification of airs which his "simpler lasses" sung. From the outset Thomson's intentions are made clear.

For some years past I have, with a friend or two, employed many leisure hours in selecting and collating the most favorite of our national melodies for publication. We have engaged Pleyel, the most ageeable composer living, to put accompaniments to these, and also to compose an instrumental prelude and conclusion to each air, the better to fit them for concerts, both public and private....we are desirous to have the poetry improved, wherever it seems unworthy of music;

14

Burns seems contented to submit to the liberties which such setting might inevitably take. There is often in these letters a tendency to near bullying, in which the poet acquiesces in varying degrees. In April 1793, Burns begins to discover that George Thomson is not entirely cognisant of his enthusiasm for preserving something of the integrity of the folk from whom he collected.

Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is, in my opinion, reprehensible. You know I ought to know something of my own trade. Of pathos, sentiment, and point you are a complete judge; but there is a quality more necessary than either in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad, I mean simplicity : now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing.

15

Thomson bristles at this, and in subsequent letters there are hints of his having been stung by Burns' gentle criticism, (24th April, 1793)

I confess there are several songs, of Allan Ramsay's for example, that I think silly enough, which another person, more conversant than I have been with country people, would perhaps call simple and natural. But the lowest scenes of simple nature will not please generally, if



copied precisely as they are. The poet, like the painter, must select what will form an agreeable as well as a natural picture. On this subject it were easy to enlarge; but, at present, suffice it to say that I consider simplicity, rightly understood, as a most essential quality in composition, and the ground-work of beauty in all the arts.

16

In July of the same year Thomson adds a postscript to this thought,

I thank you for your delicate additional verses to the old fragment, and for your excellent song to 'Logan Water;' Thomson's truly elegant one will follow for the English singer.

17

There are many occasions in this extensive correspondence where Thomson's sensitivity is questionable. In August, 1793 he writes,

Mr Allan has made an inimitable drawing from your "John Anderson, my Jo," which I am to have engraved as a frontispiece to the humorous class of songs; you will be quite charmed with it, I promise you.

18

Can the publisher have been so misled as to have included the song with those which are of the "humorous class". There is no response in Burns' letters of the same month, and as he generally notes his enthusiasm for such schemes, it is likely that he avoided the issue. But a more important failing in Thomson to which he did take exception, was the proposed amendment to what has become archetypal Burns, "Scots Wa Hae". Burns' song to the tune "Hey, Tuttie Taitie" was offered for consideration in September 1793. The tune, he notes, was popularly thought to have been Robert Bruce's march at Bannockburn.

This thought, in my yesternight's evening walk, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and



independence, which I threw into a kind of Scottish ode,  
fitted to the air,

SCOTS, WHA HAE

Scots, wha hae wi'Wallace bled,  
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;  
Welcome to your gory bed,  
Or to victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;  
See the front o'battle lour;  
See approach proud Edward's power-  
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor-knave?  
Wha can fill a coward's grave?  
Wha sae base as be a slave?  
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law  
Freedom's sword will strongly draw.  
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa',  
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!  
By your sons in servile chains!  
We will drain our dearest veins,  
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!  
Tyrants fall in every foe!  
Liberty's in every blow!  
Let us do, or die!

19

Thomson quickly offers corrections:

Now, the variation I have to suggest upon the last line  
of each verse (the only line too short for the air) is as  
follows :-

- Versel. Or to (glorious) victory.
2. Chains (chains) and slavery.
3. Let him (let him) tun and flee.
4. Let him (bravely) follow me.
5. But that they shall (they shall) be free.
6. Let us (let us) do or die!

If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think  
you will find that either the sentiment or the expression  
loses any of its energy.

20



But he is not wholly satisfied with this tampering and continues:

The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is "Welcome to your gory bed!" Would not another word be preferable to "welcome"? In your next, I will expect to be informed whether you agree to what I have proposed.

21

The doubt lingers and when he notes that Burns will not change the word to which he really takes exception, he tries again to influence the poet.

One word with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great defense to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying anything to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. "Gory" presents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them "Welcome to your gory bed," seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shewn the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice. I would suggest :-

Now prepare for honor's bed,  
Or for the glorious victory!

22

In reply, the following appeared;

"Who shall decide when Doctors disagree?" My ode pleases me so much, that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion make it tame.

23

In conclusion the poet offers his publisher the choice of take it or leave it, explaining that either way it was not likely to affect him.

Editorial intrusion must have been considerable. Burns reports his discontent about the treatment his words were given in the Scots Musical Museum, perhaps tacitly implying that the poet, who has matched words to tune ought to be the final arbitor of how the thing should go.



N.B. - In the Museum they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is d---d nonsense, Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way.

24

Given that he is dissatisfied with the final result, it is worth treating the actual products of collaboration with some caution. So often the musical texts need to be altered and arranged to achieve the degree of compatibility necessary for performance. Even Professor Kinsley's monumental edition is inclined to favour the old Scots song books rather than the spirit of the text; the text, after all, which is his justification for publishing the tune in any case!

Burns is quick to acknowledge a degree of primitiveness and vulgarity in his "taste", but his publishers show only a passing concern.

I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in many of my favorite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be showing signs of disgust.

25

Thomson's "answer" to that had occurred in a much earlier letter.

..you shall freely be allowed a sprinkling of your native tongue, as you elegantly express it; and moreover, we will patiently wait your own time. One thing only I beg, which is, that however gay and sportive the muse may be, she may always be decent. Let her not write what beauty would blush to speak, nor wound that charming delicacy which forms the most precious dowry of daughters.

26

Pleadings, either spoken or tacit, are a small part of the documentation of means and ends made in these letters. The other insights that they offer are equally valuable. Like Wordsworth,



Burns composed as he walked. Canon Rawnsley reports that amused peasants observed Wordsworth's "bummings" as he paced about Grasmere and Rydal. Burns frequently alludes to evening wanderings during which inspiration comes. His most valuable insight into his method occurs in a long letter in 1793, (and is often quoted)

"Laddie, lie near me," must lie by me for some time. I do not know the air; and until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is), I never can compose for it. My way is : I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for subjects in nature around me that are in unison and harmony with the cogitations of my fancy and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air with the verses I have framed. When I feel my Muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind-legs of my elbow chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way. What damn'd egotism!

28

If this is added to those other confessions of inspiration, a method may be adduced. But Burns should perhaps give himself away :

Do you think that the sober ginhorse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy - could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your book ? No, no! Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song-to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs-do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation ? Tout au contraire! I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented by the Divinity of Healing and Poesy, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in the regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!

29

This posturing is instructive. We must view it in the light of two



main considerations. The first is, by Burns own admission, his own feeling of being in an inferior position with regard to that most desirable of eighteenth century possessions, Taste. This is surely why these letters are dotted with French asides and bon mots, (tout au contraire, entre nous and so on) and why there is such ample evidence of reading both classical and more recent. (Shakespeare, Sterne, Aiken.) It is a curious mixture, and essentially summarized in this last letter. On one hand is the racy energy and the "ordinary", contained in the admiration of a fine woman who is more lusty than pastoral. This earthiness usually disconcerted Thomson. The other is antithetical with "the flocks of Admetus", and an avowed feeling for "proportion". There is as much of the composed and ordered world of Watteau or Claude as there is of "Scotch drink and Scotch manners". And yet, Thomson persistently reminds Burns of his place.

The second consideration is the reinforcement which Burns got from two aspects of Thomson's encouragement. Initially there was the chance to correspond with a representative of the Edinburgh literary coterie. This gave the poet the status which amplified his success with the Kilmarnock poems. He is pre-eminently the Scots Bard, hence Thomson's diffidence about what Burns might produce, and also that enduring hint that the poet is more closely affiliated with the "animal propensities" indicative of the relative lack of civilization of the "noble savage". Burns enjoys playing both roles. He anticipates his apotheosis in Wordsworth's enthusiasm for "Him who walked in glory and in joy/ Following his plough along the mountain-side", but equally he welcomed the attentions of the intellectual leaders of his declining century. The Romantic inwardness might not be fully realized in him, but the place of the common man in his thoughts was nurtured in the rational exploration of the remote and comparatively savage. In writing to Thomson in December 1792, he



had noted the following,

Duncan Gray is that kind of light-horse gallop of an air which precludes sentiment.

31

Burns, unlike the antiquarian, does not preserve inviolate the products of folk-art. So many of his best songs are expressions of sentiment consistent with "taste", and he is more usually eager to please George Thomson.

In composing his words, then, the seed of meaning must already be there in the music, and a thorough knowledge of the tune is essential to the appropriate accompanying of the words, for Burns the correct verbal accompaniment to emotions suggested by the tune. Of course there was often a clue in a title or some fragmented threads of story. And there were songs contributed to the two important collections for which Burns can take little or no credit. However, where extensive reconstruction was necessary the poet was faced with a problem of creation, quite the opposite to the usual process, a working from music to words. In Burns' case he was significantly advantaged. He had the dual experience of his moral background, as well as a voracious appetite for printed examples of his native culture, stirred on by nationalism.

(I)...sometimes imagine that perhaps, it might be possible for a Scotch poet, with a nice, judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favorite airs..... There is a noble sublimity...."buried 'mongst the wreck of things which were."

32

The appeal for a Scot to revitalize these fragments from "the wreck", catches both the national and antiquarian interest; the poet was a seminal restorer of what might have passed into deeper obscurity.



The extent of his repairs is not always known.

An example of such patching can be heard in "Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes" which is rightly celebrated. Professor Kinsley's extensive notes indicate the complexity of the task undertaken by a musical researcher who wishes to establish the prominence of the song. Burns is vague about his contribution, so any judgement must be made speculatively on internal evidence. It was collected from the Reverend James Clunzie and the music set down at Burns' request, by one Mr. Clarke. From that point its history is known, but the improvements and alterations are not. Burns wrote,

When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others.

33

The suitability of the tune to sentiment which it is used to convey, can best be seen by considering the final stanza, which is almost certainly by the poet. It exemplifies the qualities which Thomas Crawford sees as quintessentially Burns.

Burns' style is above all compact and pithy, brevity is one of his main virtues.....The tension between words and music....underlies and supports the best.

34





The stanza comes at the end of a series of verses reminiscent of the complex interests of eighteenth century poetry. The earnestness and directness evident in the final stanza are its most obvious attributes; it is "brief and pithy". The poem grows from a homely adaptation of a conventional theme where an assignation is made. The pastoral theme is not given heavy emphasis. An evening meeting is arranged to dispense with the duties of the day. "Then a fauldin let us gang, My bonie dearie," The duty is fulfilled and in a characteristic stroke the poet (singer) is gently suggestive about the meeting. In stanza four and five, shades of Gothick appear,

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;  
Thou'rt to love and heaven sae dear,  
Nocht of ill may come thee near,  
My bonie dearie.

But the conventional, silent towers and moonlight are designed not to tantalize and horrify, but rather to convince the beloved of the comparative safety, comfort and security of her lover's arms.

Such love song with its undulating melody and its gradual development of strength in a revealed position ( the final stanza is the most strongly stated and punctuates the pastoral nicities ) relies heavily on the musical suggestion of emotion. The fourth and fifth stanza, for example, on the evidence of the words, should be exaggerated. The manner of delivery is different again for the stanza which begins, "Hark, the mavis' evening sang". The song is a complex of interrelations in which delivery of the repeated tune is varied according to the tone of particular stanzas. But, the performance of the tune must always substantiate the tenderness of "My bonie dearie".



Not surprisingly, the origin of the impulse to write can be found, by the poet's own admission, outlined in a letter to Dr Moore (1787). The history of Burns' turbulent sexuality has been documented, with varying degrees of delicacy by his biographers. In this letter he describes the setting on of a passion for a girl with whom he worked in the harvest fields.

Among her other love-inspiring qualifications, she sung sweetly; and 'twas her favorite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was so presumptive as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of my father's maids.... and I saw no reason why I should not rhyme as well as he.....Thus with me began Love and Poesy; which at times have been my only, and till within this last twelvemonth have been my highest enjoyment.

35

Once again, there is an explicit reference to a method of composition, coupled with an apology for humble origins and the consequent lack of literary sophistication. But there is more here than might be initially obvious. The determined assertion, "I saw no reason why I should not rhyme", can be taken in context of those last lines from the Commonplace Book quoted above. Burns is always conscious of being the natural heir to a heritage, which was gradually emerging in the course of the archeological forays into the Scots' history. The enthusiasm for the bogus productions of James McPherson (Ossian) stem from the same source, the promptings of numerous learned academics, especially in Aberdeen and Edinburgh, who cleared the way for the salvage work. This is not to say that there was no natural ability in Burns, or that he simply followed a prescribed path to a position of bardic authority. Clearly, there is a strong association with the early Romantic movement in general. The cult



of the exotic, the bizarre, the Gothick which grew out of Augustan melancholy, extensive elaboration, especially of the Pacific region discovering new tribes who lived on apparently paradisaal islands, all gave rise to the notion of the "noble savage". Doubtless Burns nurtured this idea, encouraged by his reading of <sup>37</sup> essays like those of Dr. Beattie. He can hardly have intended the association ironically, as he introduces himself with it in several places. The resulting verse, then, is the combination of several conscious principles based on quite clear assumptions.

The first principle is to do with national allegiance at a particular social level; Burns is the Scottish Augustan peasant-poet. There are frequent lapses into a rococo stereotype where the peasant becomes arcadian shepherd; however, at his best the poems reflect a variety of moods and a multiplicity of situations which are directly based in the life of folk around him, and in his own experience. The second, is the conscious responsibility to preserve, not only actual examples of songs of the tradition, but also to encourage the maintenance of their spirit, both in substance and performances, even when this might be forced to make heavy concessions to popular "civilized taste". This was not restricted to Burns, but he clearly responds to Fergusson's challenge;

O, Scotland ! That cou'd yence afford  
To barg the pith of Roman sword,  
Winna your sons, wi' joint accord  
To battle speed ?  
And fight 'till Music be restored  
Which now lies dead.

(Elegy on the Death of Scots  
Music.)

He does not respond with essays, although on the evidence of his extant prose in letters, he might well have done, but rather by

38



participating in a process of fixing some standards based on his observations of the state of the art in his day, and the times immediately preceeding it. His work is the collection, and often invention of the raw materials for the antiquarians. Thomson's proposal of a definitive omnegatherum was enthusiastically greeted by Burns, who considered that Beattie's contribution would be a "treasure".

The number of songs which I had originally in view was limited; but I now resolve to include every Scotch air and song worth singing, leaving none behind but mere gleanings, to which the publishers of omnegatherum are welcome. I would rather be the editor of a collection from which nothing could be taken away, than of one to which nothing could be added. We intend presenting the subscribers with two beautiful stroke engravings - one characteristic of the plaintive; and the other of the lively songs; and I have Dr. Beattie's promise of an essay upon the subject of our national music, if his health will permit him to write it. As a number of our songs have doubtless been called forth by particular events, or by the charms of peerless damsels, there must be many curious anecdotes.

39

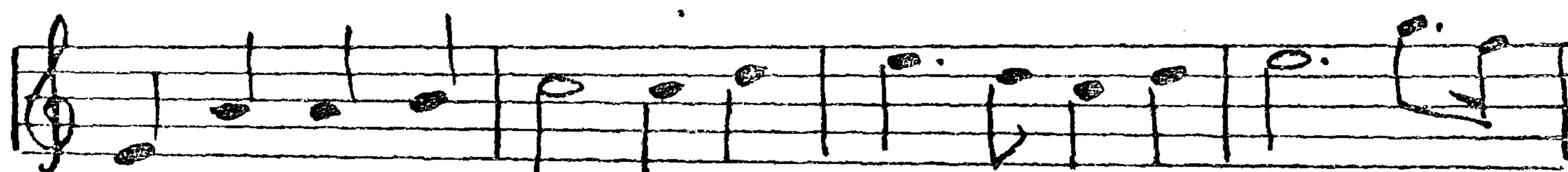
Growing out of the last principle is the necessary allegiance to the spirit of particular tunes. As far as song writing is concerned, this is Burns' most significant achievement. The adaptation of material to his purpose is often consummate, especially in more touching expressions which catch the warmth of the relationship that they describe. "John Anderson My Jo" is characteristic. The tune can be found in The Caledonian Pocket Companion of 1752; it occurs in a later collection of James Aird, and finally occurs in The Scots Musical Museum. It can be seen in manuscript as early as 1630. It also occurs in the Merry Muses of Caledonia, where it voices a characteristic complaint of a woman who is the victim of her husband's impotence, and who laments the infirmity of his age and



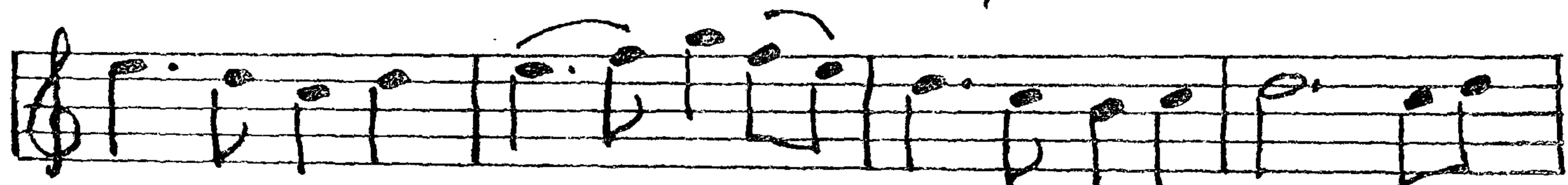
lack of interest in her. In this form, it is somewhat strident and was doubtless intended to be performed faster than the "respectable" version. What Burns does in effect is to catch the accent of gentle devotion with which the song begins. Tempo is important here, but certainly a complaint about sexual indifference is elevated to an affirmation of the endurance of married fidelity, the opposite extreme.



John An der son my jo, John, When we were first Acquaint; Your



locks were like the ra-ver, Your bo-ny brow was bent; But



now your brow is bel-d John, Your locks are like the snaw; But



ble-sings on yo-ur fro-sky pow, John An-der-son my Jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,  
 We clamb the hill the gither;  
 And mony a canty day, John,  
 We've had wi' ane anither:  
 Now we maun totter down, John,  
 And hand in hand we'll go;  
 And sleep the gither at the foot,  
 Joh Anderson my Jo.

The song begins with a feeling of proud recollection, the tune rising to the word "bony", as the woman seemingly lifts her head



in pride and fondness. The voice rises even further in the recognition of reality:

But now your brow is beld, John,

a reality assuaged by the positive movement of the last two lines of the first stanza,

But blessings on your frosty pow,  
John Anderson my Jo.

Those last assurances are carried musically, especially in the tender rising fourth to which the word "Anderson" is set. Similarly, the second stanza concludes with tenderness caught musically, as I suggest, as well as in the diminutive form of "John", the private language of a committed partner.

The contrast of youth and age in the second verse, extends the wife's revelation of her position, and, made more complex by its suggestion of sleeping together after strenuous exercise is resonant sexually. The relationship implied would not preclude the gentle irony of such a reading, and there is of course, the more usual association of the sleep of death. Regardless of the meaning, the tune will face whatever eventuates, strong in the conviction that their love is itself self-justifying and inviolable.

There is no doubt that words and music contribute equally to the final effect. The consonance of the two is essential to success, and by comparison the Merry Muses version pales. The words of the latter, when performed slowly to the same tune, produce an effect of sleezy banality. A faster setting makes for slicker banality! That is not to say that there is no "fine" bawdry. "Andrew and His Cutty Gun" works quite well, as do numerous lusty blacksmiths



and jolly tinkers. And surely George Thomson is wrong in his affirming an interpretation of "John Anderson my Jo" as a humorous poem. The tone might have the warm and humane good humour of fine emotions, but it seems quite insensitive, and offensive to commit it to a "humorous" classification. We can only trust that our reading of the words and the consequent musical sense which results in their combination is what the poet intended.

Burns was faced with frequent alarmed interjections from Thomson. Songs which satisfied the moral standards of the poet, and which he felt he could publish as his own work, often caused consternation. Perhaps his allegiance to a private ( and antiquarian ) standard of reporting is the beginning of the dilemma. (The precision attempted in the transcriptions of say, Percy Grainger, would have allowed unacceptable language and situations to find their way into print. ) Burns attempted to regain something of the vigour of the original bawdry while divesting it of offensive touches. His association with such ballads was probably two fold. The works of peasant folk frequently speak of love and sex, in a manner which is anathema to a more "refined" taste. Doubtless, the oral tradition of which Burns was a part in his early life included such material. The conscious cultivation of bawdy songs and verse in the Crochallan Fencibles Club added another dimension. The assimilation of such material is characteristic and indicative of a more general conclusion. Burns, with a foot in two camps, that of the unlettered and also that of the educated classes, achieves, at least in the public eye, a synthesis of both. What he offers is the product of intuitive sympathy, without sacrificing directness and simplicity. As a result of assiduous application and sensitivity to his task, he produces an acceptable compromise. "Green Grow the Rushes O" (K.45)



might have been a bawdy ballad first. The chamber ballad, following Burns, which Beethoven orchestrates for regency ladies could well have drawn a smile from some knowing Scot, who, if it were possible to look down on such a performance, might have recognized a tune fitted out with rather more genteel words than he had known :

Against such a background and fully aware of his place in the scheme of things, his justification rationalized as an intellectual effort, Burns worked with prodigious enthusiasm. Johnson's Scot Musical Museum, prior to the enlisting of Burns, was projected as, at the most, a two volume affair of about two hundred songs. By 1800 there were six hundred songs, and the poet had planned to proceed even further. In the letter from George Thomson a massive work is planned with Burns' songs prefaced by Doctor Beattie. It did not eventuate. It is interesting to speculate about what might have happened when Thomson, Dr. Beattie and Burns actually tried to be authoratative, thorough and compendious, given the exchange which occurred in letters late in 1787 as well as the Doctor's fastidious Christianity. Essentially, the poet makes a plea on behalf of the seamier side of the rustic Muse. "You are too fastidious in your ideas....", he writes in reply to Thomson's directive; "Let her (the Muse) not write what beauty would blush to speak, wound that charming delicacy which forms the most precious dowry of our daughters." Burns' willingness to publicly defend the legitimacy of offensive materials as folk-art has not often been realized in the past, and is further evidence of his sense of responsibility, where he might equally have adopted a much more casual and subservient approach. Although, one would expect that he might feel the strength of his position after his association with Johnson, and the vast enterprise they completed.



The diversity of Burns' subject matter, with shades of the bawdy still in evidence, can be found in two songs which are related in theme and which are rarely discussed. They give further insights into the extent to which additions and alterations not only interpret the tunes which he sets, but often change their nature. The idea of mismatches in marriage is an enduring theme in literature. January and May in The Merchant's Tale experience the particular problem of hoary age tied to a youthful spouse. In times when children suffered the indignities of arranged marriage which, initially at least, precluded love, it is not surprising to find literate men making a judgement of such arrangements, based on common sense. Burns produced two fine songs on the theme. The first is a monologue, in which the young wife quietly outlines her dilemma and suggests a solution. (What Can a Young Lassie do wi' an Auld Man; K 347). The second deals with the indignity of being possessed by a decrepit and senile old man, and is generally more defiant. (To Daunton Me . K 209 ).

"What Can a Young Lassie" is given as entirely Burns' work in the Scots Musical Museum. The tune, a lively reel, comes from the Caledonian Pocket Companion (1753) but once again, the poet by slowing the tempo, finds in the air inspiration for the situation which he develops. The lamenting voice of the "young lassie" dictates an appropriate pace for a performance of the tune, a pace considerably slower than a fiddle would play the same notes, without the association of the words.







What can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,  
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?  
Bad luck on the pennie, that tempted my Minnie  
To sell her poor Jenny for siller and lan' !

He's always compleenin frae morning to e'ein,  
He hosts and he hirpls the weary day lang :  
He's doyl't and he's dozin, his blude it is frozen,  
O, dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man !

He hums and he hankers, he frets and he cankers,  
I never can please him, do a' that I can;  
He's peevish, and jealous of a' the young fallows,  
O, dool on the day I met wi' an auld man !

My auld auntie Katie upon me taks pity,  
I'll do my endeavour to follow her plan;  
I'll cross him, and wrack him untill I heartbreak him,  
And then his auld brass will buy me a new pan.-

The unfortunate Jenny has been sold "for siller and lan'," to a man  
who is weezing and doddering, impotent and jealous.

.. his blude it is frozen.  
O, dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man !

The despairing fall of this last line in each verse, especially in  
the last three bars, catches the sighing in the first three stanzas.  
Burns probably found the inspiration for his subject here, and also



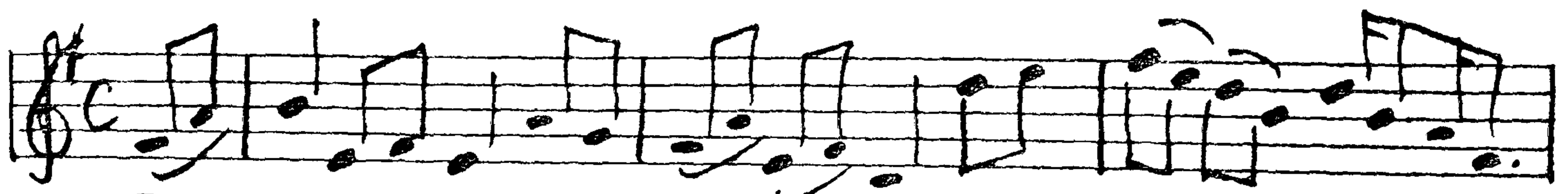
in the rising expectation of the first complete bar and the resignation which comes in the second; the symmetrical wave which, when it is repeated ( bars three and four ), comes to rest by dropping an octave. For the second part of the song, with its reiterated notes rising in steps, suggests the list of complaints, "He's always compleenin" (Verse 1) and "He hums and he hankers," (Verse 2). In the third verse, the singer reveals a confidence, where the 'listing' music is delivered with hushed determination as the plan unfolds. There is a note of triumph in the final declaration "And then his auld brass will buy me a new pan", words which are, once again, natural to the music and do not destroy the mood.

The main problem with the song is how, precisely had Burns intended it to be sung? "To Dauntun Me-" was published with instructions for matching words to the tune other than those which were finally published. In "What Can a Young Lassie", the most satisfactory arrangement appears to be as follows, although it is not obvious in any edition I have read. The first two lines are matched to the first four bars and repeated. They then become a chorus. Lines three and four are also repeated, but to the eight bars which follow the repeat. The chorus of the first two lines (repeated) is sung again, and then the second stanza of four lines is sung to the tune of the eight bars after the repeat. This arrangement seems to be more satisfactory than that in Kinsley, which is taken from the Scots Musical Museum. Burns' text is not damaged, it makes musical sense and seems logical in performance.

A similar problem can be found in "To Dauntun Me-" (K.209) Once again, I must provide a performing edition which reorganizes the material that occurs in modern printed source. In Kinsley the chorus seems extraneous and unnecessary, especially as the final



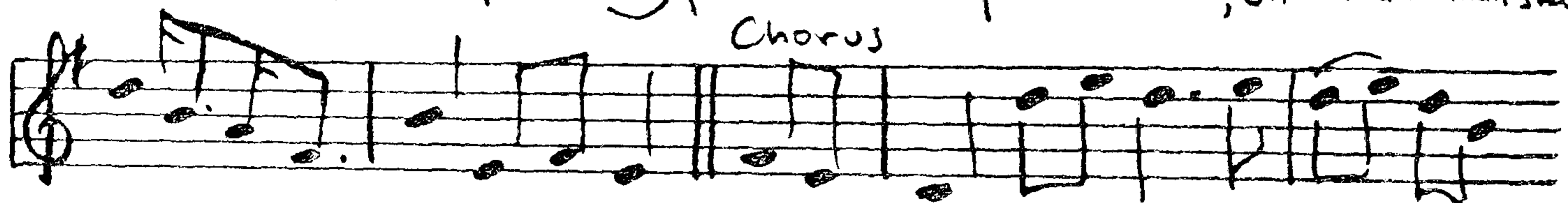
line of each stanza is simply echoed twice. In performance, I am most satisfied with the following arrangement of the song :



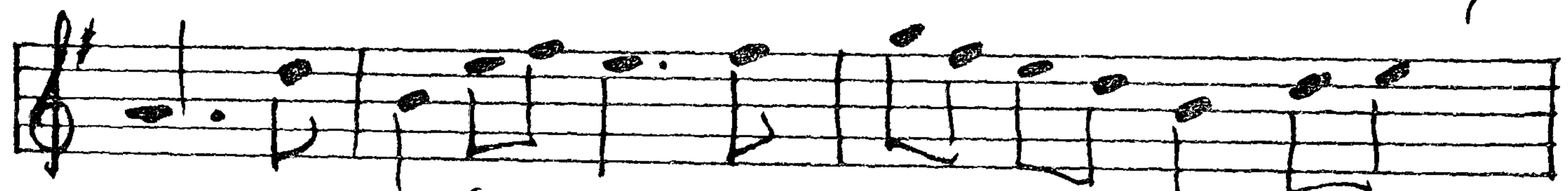
The blue-red rose at Yule may blow, The summer li-lies



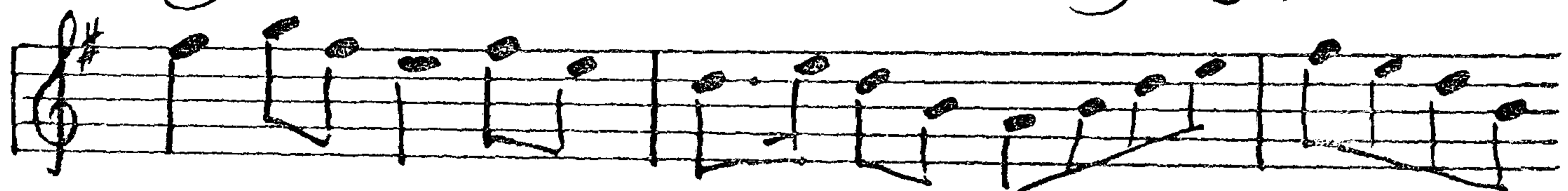
bloom in snow, The frost may freeze the deep-est snow, But an old man shall



ne-ver daunt-on me. To-daunt on me and me say



young, With his false heart and fla-ting tongue, That



is a-thing you shall ne-ver see, For an old man shall



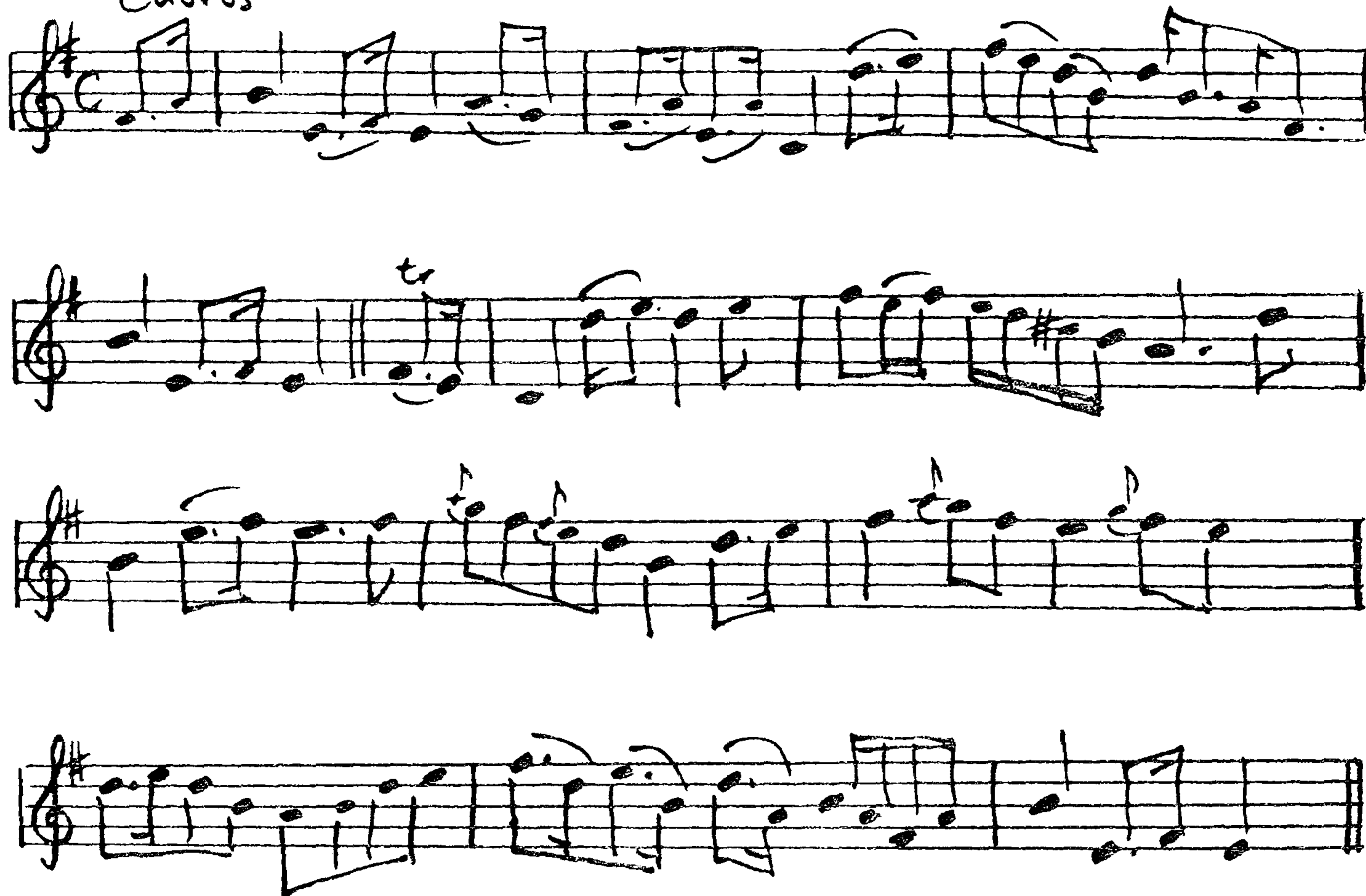
ne-ever daunt-on me.

Such an organization is not the result of a perverse need to change the actual material to make it distinctive. Rather, it is an attempt to fit the words into music. Johnson seems to have been generally careful about the presentation of material which Burns reworked for him, however, editorial discretion can override the deliberations of the creative artist, and we should perhaps trust the song and not the editor. Besides the tune, in its original form, seems hopelessly unsuited to singing. To actually sing what Kinsley prints would be



to produce a most elaborate, slightly Baroque, melody where ornamentation obscures the words. Can that be what Burns intended ?

Chorus



The blude-red rose at Yule may blaw,  
 The simmer lilies bloom in snaw,  
 The frost may freeze the deepest sea,  
 But an auld man shall never daunton me.-

Chorus-

To daunton me, to daunton me,  
 An auld man shall never daunton me.-

To daunton me, and me sae young,  
 Wi' his fause heart and his flattering tongue,  
 That is the thing you shall never see  
 For an auld man shall never daunton me.-

Chorus-

For a' his meal and a' his maut,  
 For a' his fresh beef and his saut,  
 For a' his gold and white monie,  
 An auld man shall never daunton me.-

Chorus-

His gear may buy him kye and yowes,  
 His gear may buy him glens and knowes,  
 But for me he shall not buy fee,  
 For an auld man shall never daunton me.-

Chorus-



He hirples twa-fauld as he dow,  
Wi' his toothless gab and his auld beld pow,  
And the rain rins down frae his red-blear'd e'e.  
That auld man shall never daunt on me.-

Chorus-

This, like "What can a Young Lassie", is obviously a fiddle tune. A fragmentary copy of words was found interleaved into Burns' copy of Scottish fiddle tunes, Oswald's Caledonian Pocket Companion. Could it be that Johnson and his musical advisor, thought it best to publish the tune as they had it from the old source books, making no concessions to Burns' part of the process? Under such circumstances there might not be an exact correspondence between words and music, and any performance would necessarily require a modification of the tune to suit.

In my arrangement the second verse would become a chorus. It amplifies lines four and five (Kinsley's chorus), and would carry the more florid expression of the lady's unhappiness, which is at its most intense in Kinsley's second verse. The verses would be then one, three, four and five; all of them performed with the more matter-of-fact reporting of specific complaints, to the repeated original chorus. The new chorus then, logically carries the more extravagant emotion between each verse. The efficacy of such an arrangement is easy to demonstrate. The following lines,

To daunt on me, and me sae young,

are part of a pattern of mounting feelings of indignation which carry on;

Wi' his fause heart and his flattering tongue,



The natural denouement is achieved in the peak of the melody with its simple, driving, marching rhythm.

That is the thing you shall never see...

The assertion made in the last line grows out of a determination which is caught in the movement of the melody.

In each of the other verses the flatter (emotionally) tune is used to make lists, the reiterated seasonal impossibilities in the first verse and the lists of indications of material wealth in verses three and four. The final verse is the most potent expression of disgust.

It is just this version which, contrary to Burns' wishes, Johnson published. The poet might have been compelled by this growing <sup>44</sup>allegiance to the musical text in his rigid compliance. However, I think the verse is clearly related to the approximate musical interpretation and the first edition, in this instance, has not erred. It could be that the poet changed his mind, as evidence of a single indication of his wishes is scanty when it is considered that Johnson seems to have scrupulously adhered to Burns' wishes and respected the integrity of his ear and sympathy.

There is no uncertainty about the origin of "To Daunton Me". It is based on a "Jacobite" song, circulating in chapbook form, in which political sentiment is expressed in terms of love. The singer is forced to give up her "highland lad" to marry a rich and unattractive old man, the symbolic mis-match destructive to the peace and well-being of the former. Burns removes the political implications to dramatise his sympathetic interpretation. Songs of love and patient understanding are complimented in his work with a study of the other side of the coin !



Robert Schumann, like Burns, was aware of the generic artlessness of folk productions, so much so that he tried his hand at a song in folk-style. The composer was obviously pleased with what he wrote as he offered it for inclusion in an album commemorating Mozart (1843). Perhaps Bastien and Bastienne and the slighter Mozart songs were at the back of his mind as he wrote it. It could not be taken for Mozart regardless of its being a piece of homage to the master. The musical tactics are distinctively Schumann's. It makes a useful contrast especially as I have already given Schumann an elevated place in the hierarchy of those who have made song their peculiar mode of expression. His "Volksliedchen" is instructive in as much as it demonstrates precisely those qualities which "little folk-songs" do not have. The composer chose a small poem by Ruckert, a small poem with simple emotions and a garden setting.

Wenn ich früh in den Garten geh' in meinem grünen Hut ,  
Ist mein erster Gedanke , was nun mein Liebster tut ?

All of the gestures are commonplace of folk-song. The thoughts of an absent sweetheart are shared by the artless and the more self-conscious. Burns is similarly moved by a sympathy for the notion of loved ones who are missing or distant. The historical lyric, "O'er the Water to Charlie"(K 211) transcends its origins in the Jacobite rebellion. It is a song sung by a woman dramatizing her love, a love which is rather more than allegiance to the Prince. Burns catches the same sorts of emotion in these lines from "I Love My Jean"(K 227);

I see her in the dewy flowers,  
I see her sweet and fair;  
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,  
I hear her charm the air:



There's not a bony flower, that springs  
 By fountain, shaw, or green,  
 There's not a bony bird that sings,  
 But minds me o' my Jean.

Unlike Burns, Schumann is drawn inwards to the motion of his own passions. His sympathy for the situation which he imagines is so strong that he abandons the realm of folk-song and momentarily the avowed simplicity which is his goal at the outset.

The tune to which Ruckert's words are set reflects their simplicity;



But these are supported with the harmony of a piano part which, like so many of Schumann's songs, is irresistably drawn to elaborate displays of feeling. The crescendo of the sixth bar and the modulation, underline the effervescent feeling of joy and rising spirits as the beloved is contemplated. But the staccato figure, reminiscent of a plucked instrument, returns (bar 9) and the rather eighteenth century pesante, like the opening five bars, is reinstated. Schumann shows remarkable restraint, especially in his use of rhythmic figures. There is none of the heavy syncopation or use of elaborate times here. However at bar twelve another change of key, in keeping with the expressed emotions of the singer, further weakens the credibility of the title. The accompaniment at this point follows the melody line in the style of a recitative, inclining the song towards declamation and taking it even further away from folk-song.

Am Himmel steht kein Stern ,den ich dem Freund nicht gönnte ,  
 Mein Herz gäb ich ihm gern ,wenn ich's heraustun könnte .



The musical spirit mirrors the more complex thought pattern with suggestions of a darker world, the glimpsing of which modifies the innocence. But simplicity returns with the light-hearted ending which includes concessions to the country dance.



Like the country dances of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, the composer begins with a preconception of peasant style. Unfortunately these are inevitably superficial accretions to a manner which is of its nature more inward. The ländler of Schubert are filtered through the composer's personality and because of this process evince mannerisms and musical thoughts which are ultimately distinguishable features of his style, owing only inspiration and name to external stimulation. The drama in Schumann's song gives it away, especially the heightened emotion and chromaticism of the last ten bars which are sung. This would remain the case without the piano accompaniment. The mannerisms are those of the lied and not folk-song.

What Schumann represents musically might be a natural production of what Burns must always be seen to have been. For all of the affinities with the ideal of the "noble-savage", the poet is clearly and unmistakably producing poems which qualify him to be considered an early Romantic. He was aware of this. His conscious distancing from Edinburgh "society" is a tacit recognition of his otherness. But his empathy for the "peasant" does not allow sufficient detachment from the "sentiments" which are the beginnings of Romantic introspection. But he could not violate the trust and essential mission, which was to continue not as creator of new folk-art, but in the more polished



world of middle ground which he clearly occupied. His association with Johnson can be taken as a paradigm of his situation. In the Scots Musical Museum he takes up the work where Ramsay left off. So many of the annotations to those volumes recorded by Cromek, expose the nature of his task:

340. The tears I shed must ever fall.

This song of genius was composed by a Miss Cranstoun. It wanted four lines to make all the stanzas suit the music, which I added, and are the first four of the last stanza.

327. Lord Ronald, my Son.

This air, a very favorite one in Ayrshire, is evidently the original of "Lochaber". In this manner most of our finest more modern airs have had their origin. Some early minstrel composed the simple, artless original air; which being picked up by the more learned musician, took the improved form it bears.

293. The Ewie wi' the crooked horn.

Another excellent song of old Skinner's.

290. For a' that and a' that.

This song is mine, all except the chorus.

45

The implications are clear. Burns wishes to preserve any song he hears, provided it has some intrinsic value for him. He becomes the arbitor of taste and selection, editor and most importantly the creator of songs in the only style in which he could conceivably write. The contact which he had with John Ramsay of Ochtertyre indicates his resistance to the more artificial modes. Ramsay wrote of Burns;

I not only proposed to him the writing of a play similar to The Gentle Shepherd..... but "Scottish Georgics", a subject which Thompson has by no means exhausted in his Seasons. What beautiful landscapes of rural life and manners, might not have been expected from a pencil so faithful and so



forcible as his..... But to have executed either of these plans, steadiness and abstraction from company, were wanting, not talents. When I asked him whether the Edinburgh Literati had mended his poems by their criticism, 'Sir,' said he, 'these gentlemen remind me of some spinsters in my country, who spin their thread so fine, that it is neither fit for weft of woof.' He said he had not changed a word except one, to please Dr. Blair.

46

The results speak for themselves. Neither pastoral play nor Virgilian imitation appeared, and Edinburgh's influence was more spiritual than stylisitic. His main contribution was the pressing into current use a host of compositions which might otherwise have been lost. The fact that much of the material was his own added another dimension. His good deeds for "Art" have long since faded into the shelves of learned libraries. His works have attracted a nationalistic cult and have been perpetrated as such; but they do survive and preserve intact the sentiments which he so obviously felt with an intensity which must be there in any convincing depiction of the common human feelings. Any assessment of his songs must consider this contribution where a developed sense of fashion and convention is brought into a vital relationship with country traditions, both oral and composed. In Burns' case his contribution is to interpret tunes and to fix upon them unquestionable emotions which cover a wide range of human experience.



Burns' well developed sense of his place in the scheme of Scottish letters and the kudos which he accrued as a result, were probably partly to result in his energetic application to the collaboration with Johnson and Thomson in the last years of his life. He was certainly cognisant of primitivist theories which saw in his peasant connections something close to an hypothetical past where utterances of poets were at once verse and song. By the eighteenth century the alienation of the two was beyond question and the pieces of Dryden which I have cited show that by the late seventeenth century, verse had gone its own way, and even then had been established as an independent art which occasionally sought musical aid. An "ode" for example, for a noteworthy birthday might seek the musical assistance of Mr. Purcell. But the relationship would never be as simple as Dr. Blair had suggested, and probably never had been. The independence that poets felt was real and poetry did not seek to enliven the connection again, except in isolated instances or for special occasions. Wordsworth acknowledged music's power, but to suggest that his muse should be subservient to another would probably have enraged him. Propped up and sustained throughout the nineteenth century by an extensive publishing business, and a voraciousness for "interpretations of life" which ranged from acute observation of nature to Arthurian fantasy, poets enjoyed an intellectual status which was unquestionably achieved by Wordsworth's later years. This was especially true of poets who were patronized by the state and who helped to create and establish contemporary tastes. The "lyric", has maintained its wide appeal either in collections like Palgrave's or in forms like those of Burns, Moore or Hogg, which are never far from music and which enjoyed a parlour popularity. Matthew Arnold's difficulty with such lyrics doubtless, stems from this association.



The century progressed with the parlour increasingly leaning towards sentimentality and the natural preference for gaucherie until the verbal music of Swinburne changed the nature of lyricism altogether.

But Newton's universe is predictable and the ineluctable rules of change produced an opposite music. The following few lines are unmistakably T.S.Eliot and come from his earliest published group of poems (1917); Prelude 1.

The winter evening settles down  
With smell of steaks in passageways.  
Six o'clock.  
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.  
And now a gusty shower wraps  
The grimy scraps  
Of withered leaves about your feet  
And newspapers from vacant lots;  
The showers beat  
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,  
And at the corner of the street  
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.  
And then the lighting of the lamps.

Is this impressionism, which like its counterpart in painting attempts to capture nuances of light and shade ? Perhaps, although the subject is not idyllic. But the eye is more keenly critical !

The burnt-out ends of smoky days.....  
The grimy scraps  
Of withered leaves.....

It is sensuous verse full of evocations of the smell of the place, given in stark statement rather than rich description. Palgrave's prescription comes to mind again, a lyric turning on one point, true to one subject only and hence, limited in its scope. Such a definition would fit these early poems of T.S.Eliot which he calls Preludes. Eliot would continue to attach musical titles to his verse



and at a later date, defended repetition in poetry in terms of a musical precedent. "Preludes", "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", Ariel Poems and Four Quartets are part of a carefully orchestrated development and have elicited similarly predictable responses. (Helen Gardiner writes of "The Music of The Four Quartets".) And the poems abound with musical references, ranging from Tristan and Isolde to Mrs Porter who "washed her feet in soda water" in a scurrilous popular song. 43 These are part of an intricate collage; cabbage ends of old cultures perhaps, but bric-a-brac also, carefully arranged to present a particular interpretation of the world. Eliot is steeped in many aspects of the music of his time. He uses it constantly and always with the same intent. The world of vulgar and common life can be deftly suggested with the invocation of various popular songs. Nothing better places this snobbery and the gist of his intellectual gentility, than his sniping at the lower classes as they represented themselves in their taste for songs. Sweeny Agonistes is almost nothing else.

Such heavy handed dissociation from "popular art" takes its inspiration from a well developed sense of Eliot's own intellectual position. It is strenuously achieved and evident in the very choice of title for those "late" productions, Four Quartets. Self-consciousness about the "late" works of great artists is clearly behind the title, the poet creating a stature for himself which challenges comparison with Beethoven. Old men arrive at abstractions of great wisdom epitomising their life and work. It is often the case, and Beethoven and Shakespeare and even William Blake, found distinctive modes in their declining years which proved that their creativity had not dried up; that they had been initiated into a mystery which only approaching death could make accessible to them. Essentially they managed to pass the stage where dying is an obsession. The absence of



such a vision is what is limiting in Donne as well as Eliot, and possibly even Mozart. Shakespeare's late plays take as their psychological point of departure the acceptance of mortality. They commence as it were, having transcended the negative contemplation of man's lot, and explore the metaphysical proposition of a patterning of life - mirrored in a similar patterning in art - where characters are brought to a recognition which, although it might not amount to a personal victory over physical death, asserts the primacy of continuity; the rightness of such an ordering principle. I do not yet understand the Late Beethoven. Eliot asserts in an essay on Dante:

It is a test . . . . that genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood.

This is logical nonsense when applied to the fixed meanings of words which are given their place because of their meaning, poetry being in the first instance conceptual. Eliot's proposition might better be ascribed to music, although it is highly dangerous to say such things of any art which purports to deal in "communication". We might observe, "I understand how this is done, and enjoy its decorativeness, but I do not understand what it is saying!" Can Eliot have genuinely believed that such a concept could be of any use? Late Beethoven is conceived in a spirit in which something intellectually apprehended is delivered in the symbolic language of music. An intellectual and emotional sympathy proceed precisely from what is communicated, that is, from the music which like poetry is the idea; means and the end do not have separate identities. Eliot seeks to ally himself with such an achievement having not yet passed the first major barrier of awareness, and having sought an exclusively religious answer. Religion destroys the question.



It is Shakespeare's sense of music which transforms the actual world and elevates mundane reality; the realm of art has its own life, and the catalyst of song sets the crystal growing. But this concept has its place later in my thesis. I am not concerned here with relative stature, and such distinctions are probably only limiting. However, Eliot was as conscious of the efficacy of his titles and their resonances as he was of the musical allusions which are scattered throughout his poems.

Sweeny Agonistes was set to music (for the stage) by John Dankworth and first performed in 1965. It is an entertaining piece and manages to make some of the broader Eliot themes easily accessible. The ideas encapsulated in "Birth, and copulation, and death. That's all!" might be simplistic, but Dusty and Doris, Klipstein and Krumpacker are seen to live in a world which is infected with this awareness, resulting in consequent boredom, which is not in itself despairing. The difficulty for a reader (and listener) is to discover where Eliot's sympathy is. Dusty and Doris bear a close relationship to the couple who discuss Lil and her "demobbed" husband in The Waste-land. In this poem Eliot's position is clear as he describes a world in which common folk are inescapably vulgar, without a trace of primitive innocence.

It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.

Nicities of grammar and conversation are not available to them and like another class, who talk of Michelangelo, they are doomed to innanities.

I said  
What you get married for if you don't want children?



For Eliot these folk are infectious. It is difficult to assess how much of this preoccupation is intended as humorous, but it clearly settles for ridicule and that is the impression with which "A Game of Chess" leaves one. So their culture reduces the stature of the creditable peaks of our civilization.

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag -  
It's so elegant  
So intelligent.

The juxtaposition of ragtime and "intelligence" overrides what might have been Eliot's comedy; humour which frequently leaves a sour taste. The tonal ambiguity of such passages always tends to establish a scornful assessment of enthusiasts for popular song. Their vitality, glimpsed, I think, in their language, is seriously qualified like the "young man carbuncular" or peregrinating critics of Michelangelo. Tonal ambivalence is perhaps the greatest single weakness in Eliot's verse, even in the later poems. Consider these lines which occur at the beginning of "Little Gidding".

Midwinter spring is its own season  
Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown.

In a conversation with Dr. Leavis I expressed my unhappiness about the second line. What is the tone? Some precision might be expected where a seminal point of reference is being created in the poem.  
49  
"Sempiternal" is heavliiy latinate. "Sodden" is heavy with water and definatly Anglo-Saxon, and "sundown" closer to "sodden" than the latin. And the whole thing alliterates. ("English often alliterates." Leavis said.) Is this elevation tongue-in-cheek ? If so then the lines



which surround this one, become tonally insecure and "sempiternal" punctuates and punctures them. And Eliot has such a fine ear for rhythm as well as euphony and its opposite.<sup>50</sup>

And so we get another song, of which the poet says in a footnote:

I do not know of the origin of the ballad from which these lives are taken : it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia.

Perhaps this helps to fix a universal frame of reference for the vulgarity of fallen man. Certainly the ballad is given in the context of illicit sex, amid squalor and other "testimony of summer nights".

O the moon shone bright on Mrs Porter  
And on her daughter  
They wash their feet in soda water  
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

51

It is followed by another "twit, twit, jug, jug" passage which, we recall was last associated with dirty ears and the unrelieved desert in which a forlorn nightingale finds no passionately interested Keats.

The characters in Sweeney Agonistes exemplify in dramatic action many of the themes of The Waste Land, not the least of which concerns the limitations of the modern sensibility. The parallels<sup>52</sup> are easy to draw and include, for example, reading the cards in a fruitless quest for the future and the world of mechanical conveniences, like motor cars. The Dankworth settings are curious. They manage to reflect the spirit which Eliot parodies, but they are too genuine in their musical appeal to be considered as parodies themselves. The words are innocuous:



My little island girl  
 My little island girl  
 I'm going to stay with you  
 And we won't worry what to do  
 We won't have to catch any trains  
 And we won't go home when it rains  
 We'll gather hibiscus flowers  
 For it won't be minutes but hours  
 For it won't be hours but years

And the morning  
 And the evening  
 And noontide  
 And night

diminuendo {  
 Morning  
 Evening  
 Noontide  
 Night

The sinister implications of the passage of time elude Mr Dankworth at this point, and he continues in a soft-shoe spirit which is not completely true to Eliot's cynicism. It is all cleverly done with snare drums and brushes, supporting the poet's recitative passages where the characters fritter away the time with trivia, reading the cards in trembling superstition; contemplating a "boring" paradise to which they might escape, at least in the love-games which are the trade in which Dusty and Doris deal. The "Bamboo Song" degenerates into nonsense, composed of cliches about marriage which develop into a grotesque philosophizing, which parodies a popular domestic aphorism; "Two live as one/One live as two/Two live as three."

Under the bamboo tree  
 Bamboo bamboo  
 Under the bamboo tree  
 Two live as one  
 One live as two  
 Two live as three  
 Under the bam  
 Under the bam  
 Under the bamboo tree.

It is clever verse which presents its position unambiguously in a



language which owes its life to less "intelligent" songs which evoke a tropical paradise. Lewis Carol-style juxtapositions of odd images, (breadfruit fall, penguins call) litter the thing with shadows of conventional gestures. The Dankworth music works the words into a frenzy of enthusiasm in which the question,

Tell me in what part of the wood  
Would like to flirt with me.

elicits a musical response which moves to rhythms akin to rock and roll with some energetic drumming. But the escape is momentary and dissonant brass accompanies a contemplation of what "life is" and a recollection of murder in "them bones on Epsom Heath". It is all extraordinarily vital, drawing on the energy of verses heard, and reworked in a different context.

These prostitutes are not courtesans. Blake's idea of the "marriage-hearse" comes from the same root as these "low-life" passages. Eliot objects to more than the Hogarthian squallor, suggesting that modern life is increasingly meaningless, a drift towards death. The poems are full of it and also of course the search for some sort of redemption. But that wisdom is reserved for the proper place, the writings of his aged insight in the "late" Quartets. The growth and progress are inevitable, bringing into question the elaborate preparing of the ground which will bring forth a winning solution. Musical ladders lead to significant places achieved and labelled by others. Pagan snakes are nurtured to be slid down to "proper" religious roots and finally scotched as the stuff of youth. Chances taken with combinations of language are discovered to be profound and efficacious or rejected. Eliot might have chosen to adopt the songs of the common people as his vehicle as he certainly



tried them out, but how could he embrace the enthusiasm of the "lower classes"? After all, and like his religious conviction, he saw himself as growing up rather than down, towards the aristocracy of the intellectual elite.

54



The ballad shows whom the people consider as heroes and for what qualities. To define the character and meaning of the heroic personage is the main task of the ballad study..... In different epochs the source of the struggle is different. We can hardly hope to understand our ballads fully if we do not try to define what the struggle is about.

55

The emergence of folk-heroes is hardly surprising in any culture where differences of social station cause one or more groups on the rungs of an hierarchical ladder to feel that they are victims of varieties of discrimination. Aspirations towards a levelling out, tacitly accepted in man's recognition of universal mortality and sung in many poems, as a religion-based plea for the superiority of a few folk, weakens. Englishmen had discovered the humaneness of kings as early as 1215, and there was no divine retribution after Louis XVI faced the guillotine. The boundaries of propriety are established by a popular morality which limits action according to an immediate and pragmatic set of standards applicable to a limited period and which change as action alters circumstances. Does Robin Hood, for example, take to Sherwood Forest to hunt the deer there and survive, as in some accounts of the reign of Edward 11 ? Does he flee from the evil machinations of Prince John who desires the throne of his brother Richard 1 who is fighting the infidel in Palestine, the rightful king finding a champion in the yeoman-outlaw who upholds values of allegiance and support ? Is Robin Hood supporting feudal custom, the world order, or does he rob the rich to help the poor in something like an initial glimmering of socialism where inequalities are balanced up by the reckoning of the mediator who takes it upon himself to make appropriate adjustments? The celebrated English outlaw is clearly all of these things, the relative emphasis being determined by the social class which cultivates its version of his



"song". It is perhaps this selective appeal which accounts for the disproportion between the actual (and exaggerated) life, and the plethora of supplementary material which propels the popular outlaw into the realms of myth and fable, albeit often pointedly more fable.

The credentials then of a potential hero of the people who is a fugitive from the establishment are clear enough in case histories and generally provide a rationale for actions taken on behalf of a suppressed group in any society. The outlaw is usually the subject of accusations which are wrongful and which discredit their perpetrators. He is therefore seen as justified in taking action against the authority which outlaws him, and can go as far as killing representative oppressors provided that these killings are in self-defense. He is after all, not strictly a criminal and any murder imputed to him must be legitimate and fair. He is helped in his task by sympathetic folk who recognise what he is doing for them, and these folk embody the fine qualities which he strives to protect. It is often an unworthy member of this group who, like Judas, betrays a trust and consequently has the hero slaughtered by those who pursue him. However before his demise, the outlaw has usually managed to correct the wrongs which he has seen as needing remedy and perhaps has ministered to the needs of the poor by passing on to them the riches which he steals. Often after he is discovered, taken and executed, the authorities (perhaps a king) recognise the validity of his actions, especially where such activity has been in response to local repression!

That histories of notable outlaws conform to these patterns can be readily demonstrated. The extent to which posthumous accretions bring the history into line with a tradition is also observable. If an outlaw has fulfilled two or three of the above prescriptions, the



generosity and eagerness of the folk seems to amplify and extend the creditable aspects of their hero's life so that he measures up to the archetype. The difficulty of sorting the factual details from the inventions of credible (and incredible) detail makes the study of the growth and development of the hero-ballads of English literature a complex and often frustrating business. It seems for example, that the deeds of Robin Hood will always be obscured by paucity of historical evidence about his actions. It would be valuable if suitable factual focuses could be established on the growth of the ballad tradition centered around the "facts" of his life. But it all happened too long ago in an age before the inventions of Gutenberg.

In the 200 years of Australia's European settlement conditions conducive to the emergence of popular heroes have developed, providing several notable examples. Ned Kelly has become a focus of the conscious creations of Australian myth. The lesser figures from Bold Jack Donahue to Bob Hawke have been variously praised and emulated. The disparity between reality and the fantasies of those in Europe, separated by 12,000 miles of ocean, can be readily demonstrated in a poem by Robert Southey. He provides not only a potted history of transportation but also some of the passions which he imagined those Britons who were unfortunate enough to steal half a loaf of bread or to poach a hare. The protagonist here is a convict who, while gazing on the foreign and inhospitable landscape into which she has been transported, is moved by a sense of the beauty of England now lost to her forever.

Oft England have myn Evening steps stole on,  
Oft have mine eyes surveyed the blue expanse,  
And marked the wild wind swell the ruffled surge,  
And seen the upheaved billows' bosomed rage  
Rush on the rock; and then my timid soul



Shrunk at the peril of the boundless deep,  
And heaved a sigh for suffering mariners.  
Ah! little deeming I myself was doomed  
To tempt the perils of the boundless deep,  
An outcast--unbeloved and unbewail'd.

Why stern Rememberance must thine iron hand  
Harrow my soul? why calls thy cruel power  
The fields of England to my exil'd eyes,  
The joys which once were mine? even now I see  
The lowly lovely dwelling! even now  
Behold the woodbine clasping its white walls  
And hear the fearless red-breast chirp around  
To ask their morning meal; - for I was wont  
With friendly hand to give their morning meal,  
Was wont to love their song, when lingering morn  
Streak'd o'er the chilly landscape the dim light,  
And through the opened lattice hung his head  
To view the snowdrop's bud; and thence at eve  
When mildly fading sunk the summer sun  
Oft have I loved to mark the rooks slow course  
And hear his hollow croak, what time he sought  
The churchyard elm, whose wide-embowering boughs  
Full foliaged, half concealed the house of God,  
There, my dead father oft have I heard  
Thy hallowed voice explain the wondrous works  
Of Heaven to sinful man. Ah little deemed  
Thy virtuous bosom that thy shameless child  
So soon should spurn the lesson! sink the slave  
Of vice and Infamy! the hireling prey  
Of brutal appetite! at length worn out  
With famine, and the avenging scourge of guilt  
Should dare dishonesty -- yet dread to die!

Welcome ye savage lands, ye barbarous climes,  
Where angry England sends her outcast sons--  
I hail your joyless shores! my weary bark  
Long tempest-tost on Life's inclement sea,  
Here hails her haven! welcome the drear scene,  
The marshy plain, the briar-entangled wood,  
and all the perils of a world unknown.  
For Elinor has nothing more to fear  
From fickle fortune! all her rankling shafts  
Barb'd with disgrace, and venom'd with disease,  
Have pierced my bosom, and the dart of death  
Has lost its terror to a wretch like me.

Welcome ye marshy heaths! ye pathless woods  
Where the rude native rests his weary frame  
Beneath the sheltering shade; where, when the storm  
As rough and bleak it rolls along the sky  
Benumbs his naked limbs, he flies to seek  
The dripping shelter. Welcome ye wild plains  
Unbroken by the plough, undelv'd by hand  
Of patient rustic; where for the lowing herds,  
And for the music of the bleating flocks,  
Alone is heard the kangaroo's sad note  
Deepening in the distance.



The passage testifies to Southey's fecund imagination but unfortunately contains factual errors which ought to be sorted out. I shall pass over the sense of England which, perhaps, is conjured from the distorting mind of the distraught convict lass whose chocolate-box evocation might have been truer to the nineteenth century in Britain. What cannot pass is the 'kangaroo's sad note'. The kangaroo is of course mute and I think Southey is too clumsy to be so devastatingly ironical about cultural prospects which had not yet emerged. The English imported the briar so the 'briar-entangled woods' so perilously wild, seems an unfortunate encumbrance on some of the safest forests in the world. But what Elinor, the sad convict maid brought with her, like so many Irish, English and Scots, and which was to become manifest in song, was not so much a flaccid nostalgia as a joyous re-creation of new stories, usually to the tunes which were more deeply imprinted and less topical than words. That is not to say that there are no laments concerning the appalling conditions of penal settlements or transportation ships. "Morton Bay", for example, illustrates the application of a convict's lot. The tune is Irish modified and carries most of the burden of pervading melancholy. The words report conditions with some attempt at personalizing, which suggests single authorship, initially at least. The learned quality of the last three verses :

Like the Egyptians or ancient Hebrews,  
We were oppressed under Logan's yoke,  
Til a native black lying there in ambush,  
Did give our tyrant his mortal stroke.

My fellow prisoners be exhilarated,  
That all such monsters such a death may find,  
And when from bondage we are liberated,  
Our former suffering shall fade from mind.



reinforces a sense of a 'learned' origin, possibly related to the popular stage.

Jim Jones seems to be more authentically the product of collaborative effort and exists in variants. One of the notable features here is the defiance of the final verse, especially when it is compared with Moreton Bay. And it is from the final verse that I want to take my direction. Southey seeks pity for his convict lass. The author(s) of Jim Jones have different intentions.

In a society composed largely of convicts whose dream was escape, over the mountains to China (so they thought) it is not surprising that escaping was a laudable enterprise, celebrated and anticipated in the fantasies of prisoners. But China was not over the mountains, and the escapee was faced with living off the bush or, when the colony had grown, making a life bush-ranging. Jim Jones hopes to join Jack Donahue, a bushranger who is variously sung. But the curious mixture of defiance and despair prevalent in the early convict songs is transmuted in the course of the 19th century into virilient disrespect for authority still in evidence by the time of the 1914-18 War. The most striking feature of Australian history in the 19th century polarized around the confrontation of proto-trade unions and repressive authority; the Eureka Stockade, the Maritime Strikes of the 1890's are the surface evidence of more fundamental claims on individual emancipation. In this pattern of emerging socialist interest, which was to culminate in the greatest conscious celebration of the people's voice in art and the politico-artistic journal The Bulletin, the lower middle class (for society as it existed then in Australia seems to have been more homogeneous and unified) found expression and endorsement of its values. And these values grew out of the attitude of sturdy independence, self-reliance and to some



extent self-satisfaction which characterized the pioneering spirit of 1880 - and the First World War can best be seen in the quantity of popular poetry, which significantly sold in large editions. This is the period of the Australian Ballad at its composed best in the work of 'Banjo' Patterson and Henry Lawson.

58

Patterson is still immensely popular and no Australian would fail to recognise 'Clancy of the Overflow' or 'The Man from Snowy River'. I shall cite 'The Man from Ironbark', not only because it is relatively brief, but because it contains a characature which is close I think to a portrait, demonstrates the sort of energy which is characteristic of the genre, and epitomizes the elevation of the bushman to a cult figure. Significantly Australia at this time was becoming progressively more urban but although the man from Ironbark was almost an anachronism when the poem was written, he can still be found in small country towns off the beaten track. Notice, especially, the lack of <sup>the</sup> refined sensibilities of Patterson's English contemporaries, notably Swinburne and Rossetti (you could hardly fail to notice), and the attitude towards city dwellers, perhaps more apparent in these verses from 'Clancy of the Overflow';

I am sitting in my dingy little office, where a stingy  
Ray of sunlight struggles feebly down between the houses tall,  
And the foetid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city,  
Through the open window floating, spreads its foulness  
over all.

And in the place of lowing cattle, I can hear the fiendish  
rattle  
Of the tramways and the buses making hurry down the street;  
And the language uninviting of the gutter children fighting  
Comes fitfully and faintly through the ceaseless tramp  
of feet.

59

#### The Man From Ironbark

It was the man from Ironbark who struck the Sydney town,  
He wandered over street and park, he wandered up and down.



He loitered here, he loitered there, till he was like to drop,  
Until at last in sheer despair he sought a barber's shop.  
"Ere! shave my beard and whiskers off, I'll be a man of mark,  
I'll go and do the Sydney toff up home in Ironbark."

The barber man was small and flash, as barbers mostly are,  
He wore a strike-your-fancy sash, he smoked a huge cigar;  
He was a humorist of note and keen at repartee,  
He laid the odds and kept a "tote", whatever that may be.  
And when he saw our friend arrive, he whispered "Here's  
a lark!  
Just watch me catch him all alive this man from Ironbark.

There were some gilded youths that sat along the barber's wall,  
Their eyes were dull, their heads were flat, they had no  
brains at all;  
To them the barber passed the wink, his dexter eyelid shut,  
"I'll make this bloomin' yokel think his bloomin' throat is  
cut."  
And as he soaped and rubbed it in he made a rude remark;  
"I s'pose the flats is pretty green up there in Ironbark."

A grunt was all reply he got; he shaved the bushman's chin,  
Then he made the water boiling hot and dipped the razor in.  
He raised his hand, his brow grew black, he paused awhile to  
gloat,  
Then slashed the red-hot razor-back across his victim's throat;  
Upon the newly shaven skin it made a livid mark-  
No doubt it fairly took him in - the man from Ironbark.

He fetched a wild up-country yell might wake the dead to hear,  
And though his throat, he knew full well, was cut from ear to  
ear,  
He struggled gamely to his feet, and faced the murderous foe,  
"You've done for me! you dog, I'm beat! one hit before I go!  
I only wish I had a knife, you blessed murdering shark!  
But you'll remember all your life the man from Ironbark."

He lifted up his hairy paw, with one tremendous clout  
He landed on the barber's jaw, and knocked the barber out.  
He set to work with tooth and nail, he made the place a wreck;  
He grabbed the nearest gilded youth, and tried to break his  
neck.  
And all the while his throat he held to save his vital spark,  
And "Murder! Bloody Murder!" yelled the man from Ironbark.

A peeler man who heard the din came in to see the show;  
He tried to run the bushman in, but he refused to go.  
And when at last the barber spoke, and said "'Twas all in fun-  
'Twas just a little harmless joke, a trifle overdone."  
"A joke!" he cried, "By George, that's fine; a lively sort of  
lark;  
I'd like to catch that murdering swine some night in Ironbark!"

And now while round the shearing floor the listening  
shearers gape,



He tells the story o'er and o'er, and brags of his escape.  
"Them barber chaps what keeps a tote, by George, I've had  
enough,  
One tried to cut my bloomin' throat, but thank the Lord it's  
tough."  
And whether he's believed or no, there's one thing to remark,  
That flowing beards are all the go way up in Ironbark.

The attitude towards elevating a sort of wholesome robustness both in manners and verse had also emerged in song. I think that two distinct varieties of song production must be acknowledged. The first is related to Patterson and the Balladists, and is the product of the town. It usually tends towards sentimentalizing of heroes and upholding nationalistic themes. The second variety is closer to the traditional sense of folksong being the product of the shearing shed and the groups of sheperds, shearers, drovers and the like who were distinctly a social group until well into the 20th century. The themes and interests of this group of songs are usually geared to the trade which concocted them, the primary subjects being shearing, pay or beer, and any combination of the three.

It will be useful at this point to comment on the songs associated with work and especially with shearing. As I am inevitably concocting patterns of significance, I am obliged to make the following points, which will provide a context for the song. Firstly, the 'work' songs are not the variety which accompany a task. Rather, they are entertainment which naturally filled the time spent after a meal in the evening, or to pass a day when work was slack and hands idle. I see the shearing songs as a distinctive group in that they offer a complete reversal of what we find in the songs about the bushrangers. The shearer as he appears in the songs which he sang about himself is stoical, pessimistic, prone to humourous self-denigrating broadsides, which almost always deflate his own posturing



and are calculated to do so; he is in fact the anti-hero of bush culture. He suffers at his own hand, the barbs of his own wit, without the slightest hint of masochism, in good natured confidence which is transparent to itself. The 'Ryebuck Shearer' is archetypal.

I come from the South and my name it's Field,  
And when my shears are properly steeled,  
A hundred and odd I have very often peeled,  
And of course I'm a ryebuck shearer.

Chorus:        If I don't shear a tally before I go,  
                 My shears and stones in the river I'll throw.  
                 I'll never open Sawbees to take another blow  
                 And prove I'm a ryebuck shearer.

There's a bloke on the board and I heard him say  
That I couldn't shear a hundred sheep a day,  
But some fine day I'll show him the way,  
And prove I'm a ryebuck shearer.

Oh, I'll make a splash, but I won't say when,  
I'll hop off me tail and I'll into the pen,  
When the ringer's shearing five, I'll shear ten,  
And prove I'm a ryebuck shearer.

There's a bloke on the board and he's got a yellow skin,  
A very long nose and he shaves on the chin,  
And a voice like a billy-goat dancing on a tin,  
And of course he's a ryebuck shearer.

60

Sex is a topic which is rarely sung, perhaps because the bonds of mateship exclude the "sheila" because she can't hold her beer, or tongue, and was never apprenticed as a shearer. The brotherhood implied in the mateship placed the female in relation to the male in an Old Testament fundamentalist position, in all but biological respects, ignored. Kate Kelly (Ned's sister) is the only woman who is widely sung, but only as a somewhat literary extra verse in a song about her brothers. But my interest here is in the decay of the egalitarian fraternalism as it is manifested in the songs which nostalgically seek to revivify aspects of a cultural pattern which



was passing or had gone. This involves the union of the ideas of solidarity in the face of repressive authority, in a society which placed special importance in individual liberty, with a swaggering self-confident chauvinism which contained the search for, and germ of a national identity.

Ned Kelly is too well known to need comment, thanks to Tony Richardson's film. Kelly was however, a late arrival. As I have already stated the history of bush ranging goes back to the late 18th century. An outlaw who is equally important in terms of the number of songs there are about him, is Ben Hall. Sally Sloane (born 1894 and still alive) was recorded by collectors of Australian folksong and gave the following history. She exemplifies what I see as the suburban hymning of a folk hero, and also the way in which details blurr into an approximation of truth which half knowingly becomes a mythology. The creative impulse is a curious mixture of reporting the incident as local news, commenting upon the moral points which can be drawn from the incident and embellishing it to make the narrator's stance emphatic.

Mrs Sloane continued, 'Poor Ben Hall, he had a property of his own, near Forbes, and all the bad deeds that used to be done were pinned onto poor Ben Hall. And he was yarding his cattle this day and they come onto him and took him into Forbes for trial for something that he didn't do, and all his cattle were left in the yard. Instead of the police pulling the sliprails down and letting them out, they were all left to perish.

And when he came out after doing a month in jail they were just carcasses in the yard. They burned his place down. His wife had betrayed him and went off with another man. And the blackfeller, he took to the bush, he had his gin.

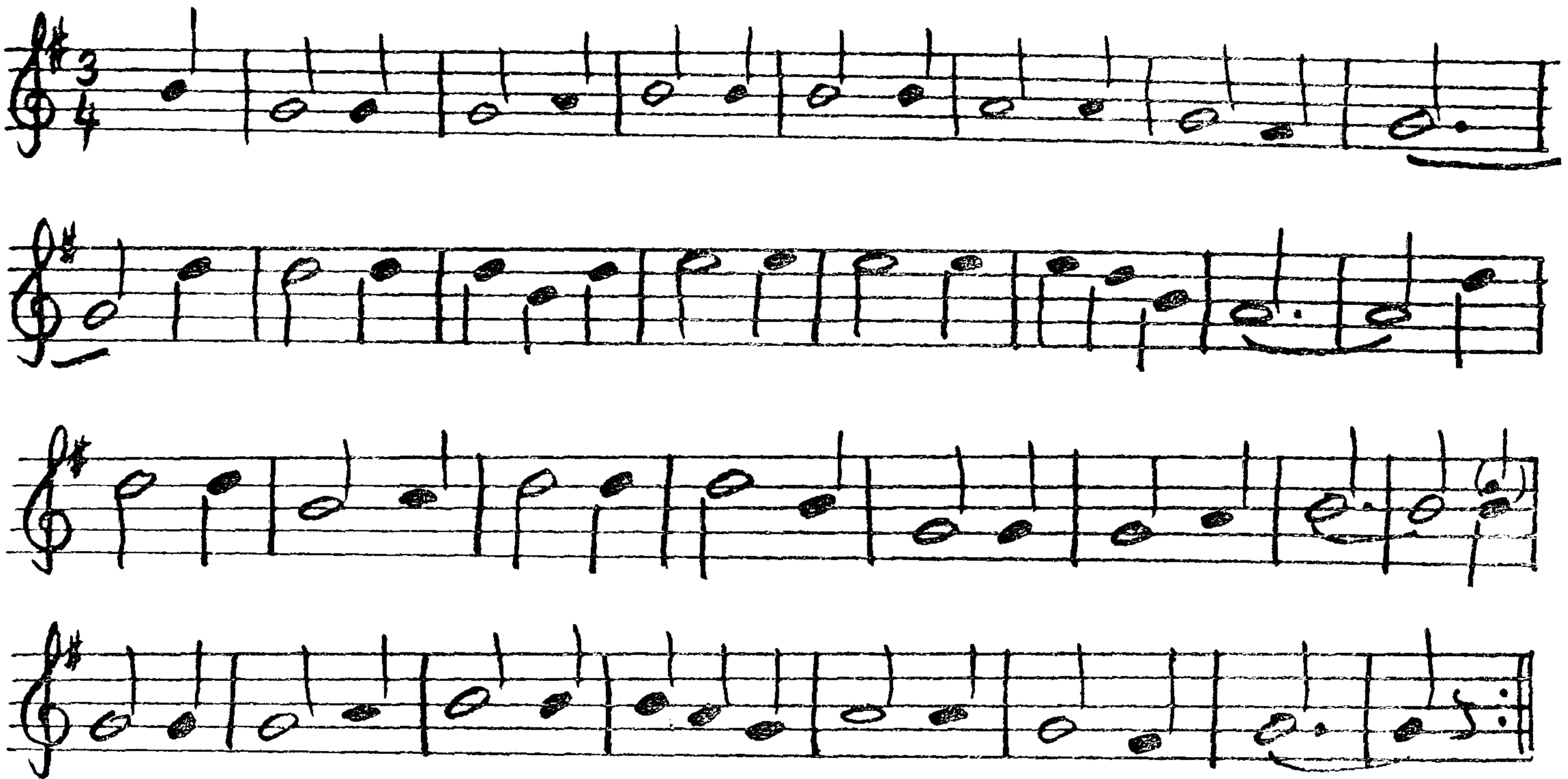
Ben took to the bush then, and turned out to be a highwayman. When he found out what had happened, his wife had gone, and his stock and everything was destroyed and he became a bushranger. 61

That story is in essence what has been collected throughout New South



Wales. The following example is one given in Paterson's Old Bush Songs published in 1898.

Ballad of Ben Hall's Gang.



Come all you sons of liberty and listen to my tale;  
A story of bushranging days I will to you unveil.  
'Tis of those valiant heroes, God bless them one and all!  
Let us sit and sing: 'God save the King, Dunn, Gilbert and  
Ben Hall'

Ben Hall he was a squatter, and he owned six hundred head;  
A peaceful, quiet man was he until he met Sir Fred.  
The troopers burnt his homestead down, his cattle  
perished all.  
'I've all my sentence yet to earn,' was the word of brave  
Ben Hall.

John Gilbert was a flash cove, and young O'Meally too,  
With Ben and Bourke and Dunn and Vane, they all were comrades  
true.  
They bailed the Carcoar mailcoach up and made the troopers  
crawl.  
There's a thousand pound set on the heads of Dunn, Gilbert  
and Ben Hall.

From Bathurst down to Goulburn town they made the coaches  
stand,  
While far behind, Sir Frederick's men went labouring thro'  
the land.  
Then at Canowindra's best hotel they gave a public ball:  
'We don't hurt them that don't hurt us,' says Dunn,  
Gilbert and Ben Hall.

They held the gold-commissioner to ransom on the spot,  
But young John Vane surrendered after Mickey Bourke was shot.



O'Meally at Goimbla did like a hero fall;  
But 'We'll take the country over yet,' says Dunn, Gilbert  
and Ben Hall.

They never robbed a needy man, the records go to show,  
But staunch and loyal to their mates, unflinching to the foe;  
So we'll drink a toast tonight, my lads, their memories to  
recall.

Let us sit and sing: 'God save the King, Dunn, Gilbert and  
Ben Hall.

62

Here then are the emotive, foremost interests of Australian folksong of what I will tentatively call the 'reflective' as opposed to 'work' songs. Firstly, there is the exhortation 'Come and listen' with an explicit appeal to national sentiment. This is usual in the Ben Hall songs (Ye sons of Australia forget not your braves!.....Come all you young Australians.....Come All Australia's Sons to me.....Come all you sons of liberty....Come.....Come Australia's sons and mourn, A hero has been slain....) all of these opening lines occur in variants of the Ben Hall story. The location of deeds is carefully established and this version is not concerned to dwell upon the actual reason for Ben Hall's revolt. We learn that he was a squatter who owned six hundred head of cattle, was peaceful and quiet until the ominous Sir Fred appears. It doesn't matter about a surname, his title clearly aligns him with those who are always potentially hostile to decent law-abiding country folk, and besides, the initial "crime" is left suitably indistinct so as to suggest that Ben Hall was seized and held without cause. The burning of his home and destruction of his cattle - the latter it seems, the unwitting result of his imprisonment - always sets the tone of the response elicited in those who have chosen to sing about him. Reason is never given for the burning of his homestead and we can only assume that it was an act of willful villainy perpetuated by those lackies of English justice, the troopers. (You will perhaps remember that the jolly



swagman immortalized in another Australian classic was hounded by troopers whose relentlessness caused him to leap to an early, watery grave in a convenient billabong!) We are invited then by the singer of the Ben Hall ballad to endorse the singer's sense that when the outlaw says 'I've all my sentence yet to earn', we can only agree and take the subsequent catalogue of outrages against society as the natural course of justified revenge. So the acts of anti-social banditry are seen by the singer as directed exclusively against the figureheads of authority. In holding up the Carcoar mailcoach the real delight is not taken in any material gain but in the degradation of troopers.

They bailed the Carcoar mailcoach up and made the troopers crawl.

Again the gold-commissioner, a figure notorious for repressive acts against mining communities of Bathurst and Ballarat, is the butt of the bushrangers' wrath.

The logical denouement does of course occur.....Ben never robbed a needy man and the invocation of 'the records' which are as unimpeachable as the law is corrupt, indicates the validity of cause and reason for the near beatification.

The concluding line perhaps more than any other points to recognition and placing of the bushranger into a context of allegiance.

Let's sit and sing 'God save the King, Dunn, Gilbert and Ben Hall.

I have stressed that quest for national identity inevitably demanded a re-focusing of sympathy and re-direction of allegiance. England



came to represent more and more the institutional organizations of the ordering of government, and the processes of law. It is hardly surprising that a colony composed of primarily English, but also significant numbers of Irish, American, German and Chinese immigrants felt no undivided loyalty to the Crown. But more than that, the emergence of a popular urban voice which sought its roots in an ethos fast vanishing was already stirring in the 1870's. And the very wealth which had attracted a variety of peoples during the gold-fever of the 1850's was farmed back into the larger suburban towns and the trading coastal cities. Ben Hall was shot by troopers near Forbes in 1865. Ned Kelly, whom I have described as 'the Brahms of bushranging', having come 'late in the succession and conscious of the weight of tradition on his shoulders,' was active long after a reliable reading public had welcomed four volumes of poetry by Adam Lindsay Gordon to take one example. And Gordon sold abroad, as a visit to any English second-hand bookshop will show. Kelly was hanged in 1880, but not before uttering those famous and memorable last words 'Such is life.' Gordon committed suicide in Melbourne in 1870, an act which helped to sell his fourth volume and perpetuate his memory. But he has not lasted with the same enthusiasm and committed support as Ned Kelly, and it is still dicey to say that he was a lout in Glenrowan Pub. Art, even as it makes the concessions to popular taste, as it had done in the Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes of Gordon, can not hope to compete with the immediacy of an attractive rebel. And to take this attitude to the conclusion which it reached in the years which followed Federation in 1901 and preceded by the Great War, we need only look at the dialect poetry of C.J.Dennis. One example will do. This comes from Dennis' chief oeuvre The Sentimental Bloke, a cycle of poems which celebrate in



unremitting energy the small and colourless rhythms of suburban life. This poem, like the others in the group, catches the peculiar wry inflection of Australian humour, but more than that it locates the anti-intellectualism by embodying in a total attitude and circumscribed range of interests, a complete lack of commitment to European traditions and values.

### The Play

"Wot's in a name?" she sez...An' then she sighs,  
An' clasps 'er little 'ands, an' rolls 'er eyes.  
"A rose," she sez, "be any other name  
Would smell the same.  
Oh, w'erefore art you Romeo, young sir?  
Chuck yer ole pot, an' change yer moniker!"

Doreen an' me, we bin to see a show-  
The swell two-dollar touch. Bong tong, yeh know.  
A chair apiece wiv velvet on the seat;  
A slap-up treat.  
The drarmer's writ be Shakespeare, years ago,  
About a barmy goat called Romeo.

"Lady, be yonder moon I swear!" sez 'e.  
An' then 'e climbs up on the balkiney;  
An' there they smooze a treat, wiv pretty words,  
Like two love-birds.  
I nudge Doreen. She whispers, "Ain't it grand!"  
'Er eyes is shinin'; an' I squeeze 'er 'and.

"Wot's in a name?" she sez. 'Struth, I dunno.  
Billo is just as good as Romeo.  
She may be Juli-er or Juli-et-  
'E loves 'er yet.  
If she's the tart 'e wants, then she's 'is queen.  
Names never count.....But ar, I like "Doreen."

A sweeter, dearer sound I naver 'eard;  
Ther's music 'angs around that little word,  
Doreen!... But wot was this I starts to say  
About the play?  
I'm off me beat. But when a bloke's in love  
'Is thorts turn 'er way, like a 'omin' dove.

This Romeo 'e's lurkin' wiv a crew-  
A dead tough crowd o' crooks- called Montague.  
'Is cliner's push- wot's nicknamed Capulet- (girlfriend)  
They 'as 'em set.  
Fair narks they are, jist like them back-street clicks,  
Ixcep' they fights wiv skewers 'stid o' bricks.



Wot's in a name? Wot's in a string o' words?  
They scraps in ole Verona wiv the'r swords,  
An' never give a bloke a stray dog's chance,  
An' that's Romance.  
But when they deals it out wiv bricks an' boots  
In Little Lon., they're low, degraded broots.

Wot's jist plain stoush wiv us, right 'ere today, (brawling)  
Is "valler" if yer fur enough away.  
Some time, some writer bloke will do the trick  
Wiv Ginger Mick,  
Of Spadger's Lane. 'E'll be a Romeo,  
When 'e's bin dead five 'undred years or so.

Fair Juli-et, she gives 'er boy the tip.  
Sez she: "Don't sling that crowd o' mine no lip;  
An' if you run agin Capulet,  
Jist do a get,"  
'E swears 'e's done wiv lash; 'e'll chuck it clean.  
(Same as I done when I first met Doreen.)

They smooze some more at that. Ar, strike me blue!  
It gimme Joes to sit an' watch them two! (see notes)  
'E'd break away an' start to say good-bye,  
An' then she'd sigh  
"Ow, Ro-me-o!" an' git a strangle-holt,  
An' 'ang around 'im like she feared 'e'd bolt.

Nex' day 'e words a gorspil cove about  
A secrit weddin'; an' they plan it oit.  
'E spouts a piece about 'ow 'e's bewitched;  
Then they git 'itched...  
Now, 'ere's the place where I fair git the pip;  
She's 'is for keeps, an' yet 'e lets 'er slip!

Ar! but 'e makes me sick! A fair gazob! (fool)  
E's jist the glarsey on the soulful sob, (see notes)  
'E'll sigh and spruik, an' 'owl a love-sick vow-  
(The silly cow!)  
But when 'e's got 'er, spliced an' on the straight,  
'E crools the pitch, an' tries to kid it's Fate.

Aw! Fate me foot! Instid of slopin' soon  
As 'e was wed, off on 'is 'oneymoon,  
'Im an' 'is cobber, called Mick Curio,  
They 'ave to go  
An' mix it wiv that push o' Capulets. (gang)  
They look fer trouble; an' it's wot they gets.

A tug named Tyball (cousin to the skirt)  
Sprags 'em an' makes a start to sling off dirt.  
Nex' minnit there's a reel ole ding-dong go -  
'Arf round or so.  
Mick Curio, 'e gets it in the neck,  
"Ar rats!" 'e sez, an' passes in 'is check.

Quite natchril, Romeo gits wet as 'ell.  
"It's me or you!" 'e 'owls, an' wiv a yell,



Plunks Tyball through the gizzard wiv 'is sword,  
'Ow I ongcored!  
"Put in the boot!" I sez. "Put in the boot!"  
"Ush!" sez Doreen.... "Shame!" says some silly coot.

The Romeo, 'e dunno wot to do.  
The cops gits busy, like they allwiz do,  
An' nose around until 'e gits blue funk  
An' does a bunk.  
They wants 'is tart to wed some other guy.  
"Ah, strike!" she sez. "I wish that I could die!"

Now, this 'ere gorspil blokè's a fair shrewd 'ead.  
Sez 'e, "I'll dope yeh, so they'll think yer dead."  
(I tips 'e was a cunnin' sort, wot knoo  
A thing or two).  
She takes 'is knock-out drops, up in 'er room;  
They think she's snuffed, an' plant 'er in 'er tomb.

Then things gits mixed a treat an' starts to whirl.  
'Ere's Romeo comes back an' finds 'is girl  
Tucked in 'er little coffing, cold an' stiff,  
An' in a jiff  
'E swallers lysol, throws a fancy fit,  
'Ead over turkey, an' 'is soul 'as flit.

Then Juli-et wakes up an' sees 'im there,  
Turns on the water-works an' tears 'er 'air,  
"Dear love," she sez, "I cannot live alone!"  
An', wif a moan,  
She grabs 'is pockit knife, an' ends 'er cares....  
"Peanuts or lollies!" sez a boy upstairs.

65

The 'Bloke' is the fragmented and tattered inheritor of the legacy of fiercely independent spirit, neutered by the disappearance of extensive frontiers, and forced to exercise the spirit of 'mateship', which by now had captured the imagination of the Australian male, within the limiting boundaries of citylife, a steady job and domestic responsibility. The man who saw himself as the seed of a bushman - Adam was deprived of his horse, and with it went the recklessness of droving where he might be required to drive a herd 2000 miles and leave the family for months. So the town, with its relative security, became a sort of spiritual stagnation; perhaps what was lost didn't amount to much, but that was all that had time to emerge before the onslaught of systems of communication. But there



were still the lingering memories of what had been possible.

The second of the Ben Hall songs is further removed from the need to report the incident in a surrogate newspaper fashion with attendant emotional interpretation. This is the Streets of Forbes perhaps the finest of bushranging tunes. I think the process of impersonalization can be seen here, mainly in the narrative structures being abbreviated and in the economy of imagery.....the imagery here often being couched in clichés, a natural result of the semi-literate origins of the song. Its peculiar power comes from the brutality which is located most firmly in the attitude revealed in the last lines. Sympathy is evident throughout the song especially in its insistence that the gang had actually reformed, but the last lines are calculated to engage an unqualified sense of outrage.

They rolled him in a blanket, and strapped him to his prad,  
And led him through the streets of Forbes to show the prize  
they had.

And these lines reflect back over the rhythm of the song, explaining the slow march or jogging pony element in it.

#### The Streets of Forbes

Come all you Lachlan men, and a sorrowful tale I'll tell  
Concerning of a hero bold who through misfortune fell.  
His name it was Ben Hall, a man of good renown  
Who was hunted from his station, and like a dog shot down.

Three years he roamed the roads, and he showed the traps  
some fun;  
A thousand pound was on his head, with Gilbert and John Dunn.  
Ben parted from his comrades, the outlaws did agree  
To give away bushranging and cross the briny sea.

Ben went to Goobang Creek, and that was his downfall;  
For riddled like a sieve was valiant Ben Hall.  
'Twas early in the morning upon the fifth of May  
When the seven police surrounded him as fast asleep he lay.



Bill Dargin he was chosen to shoot the outlaw dead;  
The troopers then fired madly, and filled him full of lead.  
They rolled him in a blanket, and strapped him to his prad,  
And led him through the streets of Forbes to show the prize  
they had.

66

The tune seems to be Australian and commentators, like John Manifold, do not acknowledge a British model.



The appeal to the listener has altered here then, and although my ordering of the songs has no support outside the internal evidence contained within them, The Streets of Forbes aims more particularly at elevation of the outlaw with only marginal interest in precise details. Once again Sally Sloane, who you will remember is still alive, exemplifies not only how recently historically, and in terms of generations Ben Hall was current news, but also how the process of blurring of details and accretion of new material takes place.

Her mother often told Sally tales of Ben Hall, some of which she, in turn, recorded for John Meredith.

'Mother knew Ben Hall's sister-in-law,' Sally said. 'Yes, she brought me into the world.'

'I saw the place where Ben Hall was killed. He lay down to have a rest this day and was ambushed. Yes, it was near Forbes, on the Lachlan Plain - he lay down to have a rest, and Coobung Mick always used to look after his money for him. He lay there this day waiting for Coobung Mick to bring food to him. Instead of bringing food he brought the cops. And when the policemen come, they surrounded him and riddled his body with bullets, and Mrs Coobung Mick knew



that her husband used to look after the money for Ben Hall and when she heard all these shots going into poor Ben Hall she put her fingers to her ears and said, "Oh, my God! Poor Ben! That's Ben," she said. "My husband has betrayed him."

'And she was carrying a child at the time (said by some to be Ben Hall's) and when the child was born it had thirty-two spots on it, and that child was exhibited through the length and breadth of Australia for show purposes (as the Leopard Boy). The spots were supposed to correspond with the thirty-two bullet wounds in Hall's body!'

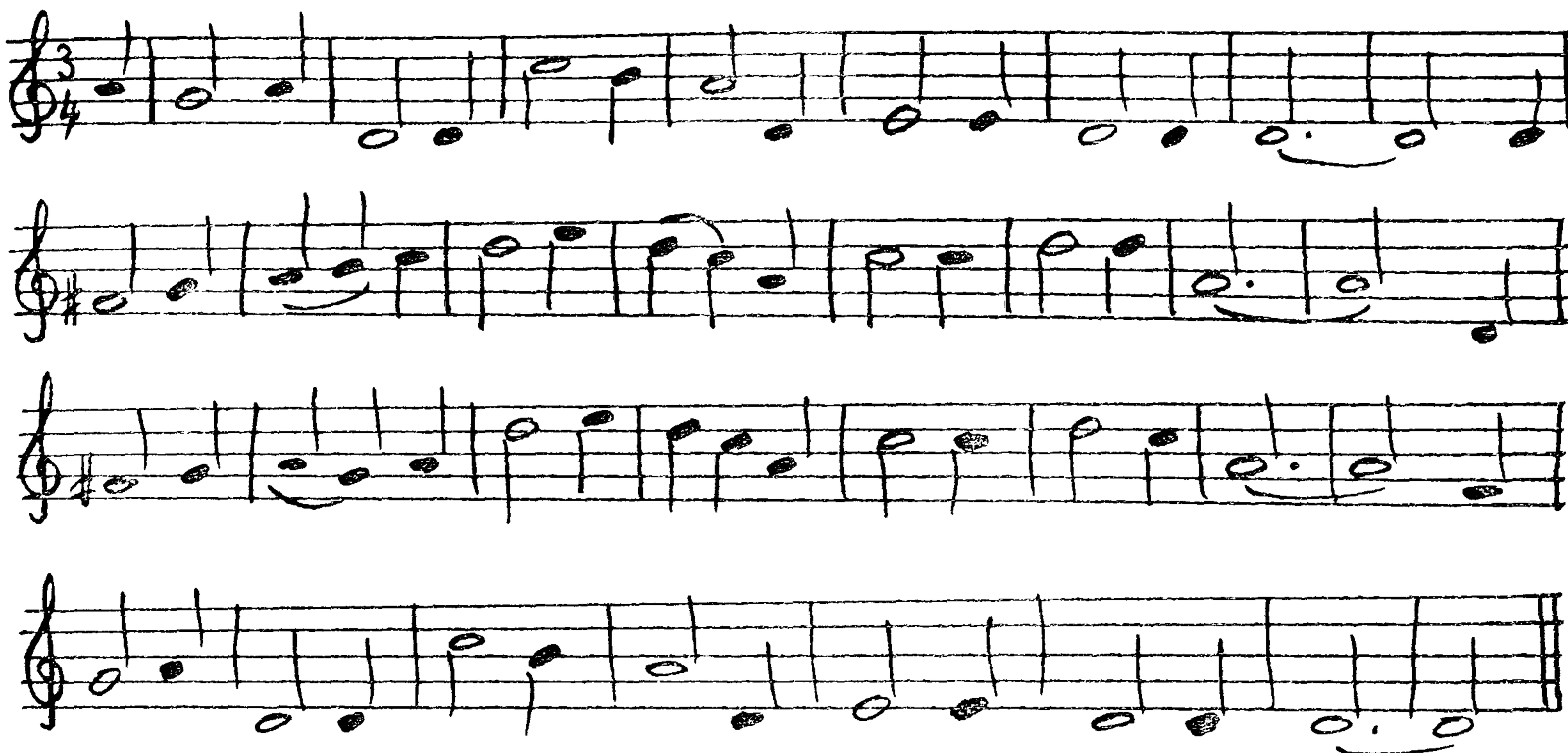
67

There is obviously some mishearing involved in this report or the song. Did Hall go to Goobang Creek where he was ambushed? Most of the songs state that he was killed on the Lachlan Plain but only the Streets of Forbes is specific. Sally Sloane has the authority of an actual connection with the outlaw's family, giving credence to her 'Coobung Mick' ( too close to Goobang Creek not to be the same thing, as there is no town of that name which might explain Mick's name.) We are not likely to know which is correct. The other useful element of Sally Sloane's recollection is the information concerning the mysterious pregnancy of Mrs Coobung Mick and her amazing progeny. This is just the sort of intrigue which adds to the accumulation of stories spawned around a figure with popular appeal, perhaps the amplified gossip which swells apocrypha and peopled Sherwood Forest.

The Death of Ben Hall takes the process of mythologizing a small step forward. Here he has become a Robin Hood, preying on 'the rich and hearty men' and scorning to 'rob the poor'. Once again, the cold blooded and unsporting troopers catch him asleep and unprovoked, gun him down. There is confusion about the actual perpetrator of the killing, Condell here as opposed to Bill Dargin in the Streets of Forbes, but the message is the same. And this song acknowledges the process of which it is a part.



The Death of Ben Hall



Come all you young Australians, and hear what did befall  
Concerning of a decent man whose name was bold Ben Hall.  
An outcast of society he was forced to take the road  
Along of how his faithless wife cleared out from his abode.

The traps persued him like a dog through every hill and dale,  
Until he faced his enemies and made them all turn tail.  
No petty, mean or pilfering act would bold Ben endure;  
He preyed on rich and hearty men, and scorned to rob the poor.

One night as he in hiding lay upon the Lachlan Plain,  
The troopers had surrounded him, his courage was in vain,  
And when he stirred to ease himself, not knowing who was by,  
Without a word of warning the bullets fast did fly.

Although he had a lion's heart, the bravest of the brave,  
They riddled him with thirty wounds, no word of challenge gave;  
And cowardly-hearted Condell, the Sargeant of Police,  
Crept up and fired with famous glee which gave him his release.

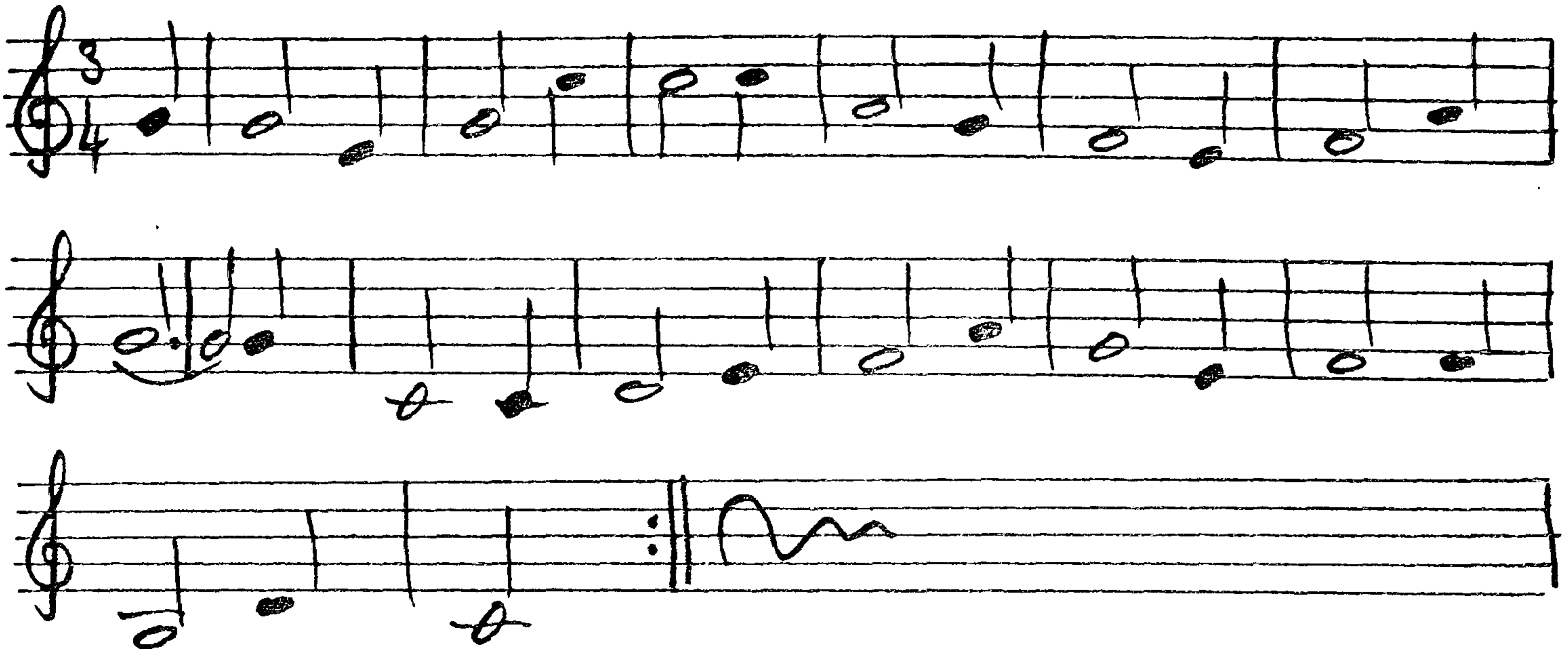
Throughout Australia's sunny clime Ben Hall will range no  
more;  
His fame is spread from far and near to every distant shore;  
And generations after this his name will yet recall  
And tell their children of the deeds committed by Ben Hall.

63

The final link in this chain demonstrates the assimilation of the story into the class of highly sentimental parlour repertoire, exclusively I think, a part of well developed suburbia.



Bold Ben Hall



Come all Australian sons to me; a hero has been slain,  
And cowardly butchered in his sleep upon the Lachlan Plains.  
Oh do not stay unmanly grief but let the teardrops fall,  
For all Australia mourns today, the fate of bold Ben Hall.

No brand of Cain ever stamped his brow, no widow's curse  
did fall,  
When times were bad the squatters dread the name of bold  
Ben Hall.

He never robbed a needy chap, his records best will show,  
He was staunch and loyal to his friends and manly to the  
foe.

Oh, and savagely they murdered him those cowardly blue-coat  
imps,  
Who were set on to where he slept by informing peeler's  
pimps.  
Ever since the good old days of Turpin and Duval,  
The peoples friends were outlaws then and so was bold Ben  
Hall.

The appeal to Australia's sons remains intact but the rhetoric and style of declamation has altered. Hall is now 'cowardly butchered' in his sleep, and the singer is required to inject real anguish into the exclamations. In fact the song feels, in as much as we can sense such things, the product of women perhaps passed on as an exclusively women's song. In evidence I can only say that it is highly unusual for a man to allow himself the extravagant emotionalism evident here. He might respond to it, but to actually



express such sentiments would be anathema. The Australian after all (and like the kangaroo) is consistently characterized as taciturn and undemonstrative. Bold Ben Hall was collected in 1956 from Gladys Scrivner who learned it from her mother, so my hypothesis seems to be true for two generations at least.

69

It could also be said, and this is an observable fact, that of late Australia has tended towards a species of domestic matriarchy. The centrality of 'mateship' has gradually perished in face of..... well Germaine Greer....no that wouldn't be entirely true or fair, but the old bastion of virile, masculine dominance faded, with rampant nationalism, as the price of civilization; a civilization which was not to discover the value of intellectual endeavour until as late as the 1950's, and only then against opposition from the powerful remnants of the old order. The articulate Patrick White, Nolan, Boyd, Keneally, Peter Sculthorpe, Richard Meale and the like often manage to incorporate into their respective thought, a pervading internationalism together with an awareness of the value of the unspoiled colonial spirit. It should also be noted in passing, that often the reaction to an hostility towards any alteration in Australia's cultural desert has encouraged rejection rather than cultivation of national themes ( which are perhaps unfashionable now in any case!) Nigel Butterly, for example, has unashamedly cultivated in his composition an interest in 17th century English mysticism, very out of key with the genial anti-intellectualism of the Australian ballad.

What will happen to the songs from this point is unclear. One thing can be assumed however, and that is that like all written expression of former ages, the songs have been 'fixed', and authoritative texts and tunes established. This amounts, in the case



of orally disseminated material, to a sort of fossilization. Ben Hall will never fade enough so as to become indistinct and so obscure as a Robin Hood. But the machinery which might have inevitably made him one is apparent in the progression which I have demonstrated. The process of evolution is intimately bound up with the prevailing attitudes and interests of the society out of which such songs can grow. The relative closeness of the origin and disasters which inspired Australian folk-song challenges a special study of the sources of what a country subsumes under the head of 'folk culture'. Equally interesting is what happens to these hero figures who grow out of that special environment in the 19th century. The absorption of the outlaw myth as a primary metaphysical tenet of modern Australian creativity is an obvious extension of what has been a less cerebral interest. In Nolan for example, the figure of Ned Kelly carries all of those qualities which made the outlaw important in the 19th century, while also becoming a symbol of more immediate dilemmas. The powerful eyes which sometimes glare from that rigid geometric helmet embody the struggle of an individual, immediately distinguishable from, but also a threat to the organised fabric of modern life. The great modern theme of not belonging is manifest here and, conversely, finding a place which is acceptable and superficially satisfying and, to continue in the same terms ultimately stultifying. The perpetual theme encapsulated in Macbeth's 'brief candles' is yet again opposed to the possibility of endless grey- a universe dominated by the ordinary in the mindless round of secure and undistinguished commonness. Nolan paints Kelly in strong vital colours with formal economy and great symbolic strength, knowing what he wants the Kelly series to express but also conscious of their being continuous with a tradition.



CHAPTER FOUR: "AN ART LAWFUL AS EATING ";  
power and the collective Will .

I then went to the funeral at John Dawson's. About 10 men and 4 women. Bread, cheese, and ale. They talked sensibly and cheerfully about common things. The dead person, 56 years of age, buried by the parish. The coffin was neatly lettered and painted black, and covered with a decent cloth. They set the corpse down at the door; and, while we stood within the threshold, the men with their hats off sang with decent and solemn countenances a verse of a funeral psalm. The corpse was then borne down the hill, and they sang until they had passed the Town-end.....

Dorothy Wordsworth



(I)

The transition from folk-song to the ballad is not effected by a discrimination of exclusive aspects of either form. It is a matter of the degree to which the poet's voice has become dissociated from those elements of a personal style which in my examination have progressively disappeared from the verses which I have considered. Each chapter must substantiate its claim to significance and the general concepts with which each begins are like any other rhetorical device, limited by their scale to indicating a direction. The songs and poems which follow are characterised as a group by their impersonality. My ordering of the parts of the chapter is not based on a conclusion that ballads are necessarily more impersonal than a similar attainment in the church; however Shakespeare does provide a bridge given that he invents a variety of rituals with which he can achieve a degree of detachment unavailable to Burns or Housman. Humanism is not a concept limited by historical boundaries or the strictures of defined philosophies. It is rather a way of looking at the world which recognizes and accepts man's fundamental mortality. Interpretations of life according to such a view might range from the coldly dispassionate to hysteria, because humanism only implies a recognition which in itself is not a solution. The inventions of men which proffer solutions turn awareness away from humanism's inert state into the realms of positive action and must always be subjective and unsatisfactory. That is why a poet who achieves stillness in a still turning world can be said to have gone beyond the realm which was moved, in the theories of churchmen, by the musica mundana.<sup>1</sup> It can only ever be a journey in the mind as realization and transcendence are of the imagination. And it is just this imaginative ascent which Shakespeare makes in some of his last plays. They offer no solution, but like a ballad, dramatize in a theatrical world, which does not pretend to be real, the



achievement of insights that are the poet's. As such the plays are not complex statements of a position, but a working out in a dance-like ritual with incisive and clear-eyed logical patterning which puts "life" into a particular perspective. The warmth and simplicity are not relegations of responsibility but the tacit recognition of the unchangingness of the insights which inform such patternings of experience, offered in the context of impersonality in which even Prospero, for all his magic, is ultimately human. The irrecoverable past suggests the progressive loss of everything. It is irretrievable. The present, one of the "two thirds" perhaps, of which Prospero speaks, is a chaotic mixture of pleasure and pain. The future, the final third, can only tantalize both in its promise of new experience as well as oblivion. The impersonality in the play is primarily the absence of one voice, a voice informed by apprehension and fear. Such an ordering of experience is possible when sufficient detachment is achieved to allow an unimpassioned exploration of common thoughts. Shakespeare chooses music and song to carry much of the ritual and to provide the magical transformations which are beyond reason. The songs in The Tempest provide an important key to the whole play.

Similarly the music of the great rituals of the Catholic Church moves without reference to the individual lives of the men who perform it. Of course that does not mean that Shakespeare is ignorant of or blind to either his own place in the world or to human death! The opposite is true. He does not attempt, like Eliot and to a lesser extent Yeats, to come to grips with personal mortality in a reverie of self-examination. That consideration is incidental. Mutability must have been accepted as a first proposition, one which steadies the hand as it were, so that the poem can move beyond himself to explore the notion of earthly continuity, in whatever form that might seem



probable. Prospero vexes himself with Eliotic metaphysics, especially with lingering, riddling asides. It is a testimony to Shakespeare's control that he can create a character who exemplifies not only super-human power, but also embodies in his melancholy preoccupation with time the very essence of the human dilemma. But Shakespeare is not giving us Prospero's anguish as the overt "voice of the playwright". (He never does, in any case, with other main characters.) Like any of the "tragic heroes", he is offered for consideration warts and all. However in this case the flaw which could lead to disaster and exemplify the "tragic view" (I continue to have trouble with this concept) is, in its most raw state, completely private. It is not jealousy of spouse, vaulting ambition or procrastination in the face of suspected incest and murder, all of which imply relationship with other folk. Prospero is given double power, earthy aristocracy and magical abilities - more than any other of the tragic heroes. He is probably more complex than any of them, especially if Ariel might be considered as an alter ego; a manifestation of another part of Prospero's being. More than any other, he embodies the anguished confrontation of what I have already called the hallmark of humanism, death, against which he is powerless. It must be borne in mind that Shakespeare has achieved the very detachment which Eliot and Yeats sought, in the creation of his character, not only because there is an obvious and natural distancing effected by drama, but also because that character's temperament is only the point of departure for the play. It goes on to examine the way in which Prospero handles and assimilates his awareness. And it is this which is implicitly impersonal; the created character makes enigmatic asides which constantly define his position. Prospero is, in the first instance, "tied to a dying animal" and Shakespeare makes time his enemy.

The complexity of the relation of an authorial voice to



character in stated or implied positions which the play exemplifies is difficult to describe clearly. Shakespeare is at once Prospero and also intellectually beyond the insight which the character attains; the playwright-creator of illusions of time and space, like the magician, is "that which is only living", regardless of his power. To speak of life with another voice would be to deny that humanity, and of course, is not possible. In this sense Prospero is Eliot and Shakespeare's exploration, an overview of humanism. The detachment in this case is evident in the capability of being sufficiently removed from the emotion (even trauma) that humanism necessitates. In a traditional ballad there is no question of such emotion. That is because the detachment of a collective voice is achieved without reference to the tribulations of individuals. But like the similar attainment in the ballad Shakespeare's is a narrative task. The action of the play and interaction of characters stem from a past which is the model or pattern for an imaginative re-creation which might bear no relation to superficial reality but which is, none the less, completely normal. It is not a working through of emotion which is purgative and results in mastery, but rather a statement of understanding exemplified in theatrical illusions of which the end is always known. The sympathy for Prospero, who is perhaps Shakespeare's finest symbol, is not however evidence of any authorial content. Shakespeare's aim is not autobiography, no matter how cogently "the creator" is evoked and unlike Four Quartets, which addresses itself to the same apprehension, the play presents a multiplicity of perspectives, complexity not available to private poetry or ballads. Yet like the ballads it is basically observation without a constant reference to "self". Shakespeare achieves the most difficult impersonality which may only be available to drama. The Tempest utilizes the whole



gamut of sensations to which theatre might resort, incorporating as I have already intimated what appear to be specially created songs.



Many years ago I read an account of music in Elizabethan England which, in recent more cynical moments, I can accept with less enthusiastic approval. The account was given in a review of a music book which had recently been released. I remember warming to the suggestion that every barber's shop had its walls lined with lutes and recorders, and to the idea that in order to occupy the time while you waited for the barber's attentions you might take down the instrument and amuse yourself, perhaps even going as far as performing a part in an impromptu ensemble. This idea was provocative. Tippy Lean, the barber in Belmont Street, Yarrawonga, a master of the short back and sides, had provided my only experience of barbers, and none of the characters who sat around his walls, yarning about horses or looking at the Australasian Post, could by any stretch of the imagination be expected to break into song, lusty or otherwise. I have grown up then with this odd dichotomy: reports of a sensitive and cultivated age where some value was placed in achievements of musical skill where Everyman could sing, opposed to an expression of the common man now largely devoid of even vague yearnings to entertain himself with active musical activity. An examination of the validity of both of these images will focus our attention on the ways in which accepted ideas can change so as to almost exclude a sympathetic assessment of achievement and value, as well as suggesting that there are also certain persistent interests and concerns which can lead to a positive enjoyment of the manner in which other folk have coped with life, and have expressed their feelings about it.

Nobody can listen to unfamiliar music or indeed unfamiliar ideas of any sort, without the prejudices which grow as an individual's particular taste develops. Open-mindedness is largely



illusory although many people who are intelligent and sensible can train themselves to be receptive and at least tolerant of the inevitable historical, racial and cultural differences which are a distinctive feature of living well up the chronological ladder of our Civilization. And it is significant I think that the very progress which we can no longer do without, perhaps never could do without, has obliterated so much of the innate musical skill which, in other places and times, has been more centrally important. Real folk music has been decimated by the arrival of radio and television. We contrive to copy and preserve but essentially the well-springs, if they havn't entirely dried up, have stagnated in a process of fossilization. We are faced with the difference between an authentic recreation and a living process of change and, alteration resulting from the absense of channels of communication, magnetic tape or well-meaning collectors who fix a standard edition of an evolving ballad.

The anonymous composer of Greensleeves penned a "hit". Equally popular folk tunes, especially dances, found their way into print to feed a growing demand for secular entertainment. Popular and composed tunes shared an equal status with more "serious" music which was finding its way into print to satisfy the growing number of amateur music-makers. The church as well as the halls of wealthier nobles had always employed composers, but now it became increasingly fashionable to play or sing; a market for music had emerged and the long track to the concert hall had emerged in the court masks which, beginning in Italy, had delighted English aristocrats in the time of the first Elizabeth. The combination of foreign precedents with indigenous influences including the healthy Medieval drama which gave birth to moral and comic masterpieces, produced an atmosphere



in which native and more "arty" music could be absorbed into a theatrical medium. A player who sang a popular song would use the associations of a particular musical spirit with the mood he was trying to convey to the audience. Mad Ophelia gives her audience snatches of familiar melancholy where words suggest loss and despair, while the music carries much of the prevailing anguish. Similarly, Mercurio's "Lady, lady, lady" summoned up the bawdy-house humour for an Elizabethan audience, who would have been familiar with his song. An unprepared modern listener would miss the full implications of his parting quip at the expense of the Nurse. 4

Shakespeare uses many songs to fix and develop ideas about the characters who sing them. Ophelia's lilting melancholy is expressed in catches of a popular aire about love and flowers, which are delivered with accents of despair and valediction. They are wisely chosen, a meet selection for the tortured mind which produces them in the agonizing which precedes suicide; bitter sweet but because of their fragmented presentation only disembodied lines and choruses. Hamlet's apparent madness is carefully orchestrated by the prince for those who believe him to be mad. Ophelia has no feigned symptoms, and Shakespeare makes a dreamworld for her, full of bitter associations which appear in a collage of tunes. They characterize the great Shakespearean tragedies; Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth revolve around significant characters who are revealed in the verse which the play-wright gives them. The exploration of "scorpions of the mind" is almost obsessive. But by the time the last plays are forming in his thoughts the psychology which had so typified earlier works was mellowing into a form much less Jacobean, if that implies bloody violence and tortuous self-examination, which look beyond the chaotic present. The exploration of the minds of those



who are susceptible to the consequences of their own actions which can be right or wrong, but which inevitably prove human vulnerability gives way to something akin to rituals which countenance fantasy unquestioningly. It was not a massive adjustment. Had Shakespeare continued in a single-minded exploration of flawed conditions, he would perhaps have written a play called Leontes. Leontes' jealousy - as well as his real love - is the starting point for The Winter's Tale. But jealousy is not given the scope for credible development because the play is headed in quite a different direction. It is inconceivable that Ophelia, Desdemona or Lady Macbeth could (or should) be miraculously brought back to life and be happily united with a repentent lover or spouse! The general direction of the development of the poet's mind would appear to encompass magic, incredible coincidence, unlikely accidents of fate, spirit-beings and a pronounced development of the significance of music and song. What is ordinarily distinct is blurred, and an audience is challenged to scrutinize the everyday reality. The popular tunes of earlier plays related to, for example, the disintegration of Ophelia's mind, give way to the inherent ambiguity of music which Shakespeare clearly finds magical.

The Winter's Tale brings into contrast the earthy vitality of folk-songs, which are hawked by Autolycus, the pastoral of the fête champêtre and the singular conjuring of music which is a life-giving ritual. We cannot be sure that Hermione is not brought back from the grave. The lingering doubt is not entirely allayed by the introduction of a story of a nunnery. Like Thaisa, dead in childbirth, buried at sea, but washed up on familiar shores in a watertight coffin (Pericles), credibility is taxed to the limits. Of course this assumes that Shakespeare is always in control of his medium and that he does



not commit errors of judgement which flaw his work. I think that the regenerative patterning of experiences offered in these last plays is too clearly conceived to be seen as rambling folly. We are left then with Hermione magically revived, with music as either the agent of revival, or the balm which supports Leontes through the inevitable crisis of joy which he must experience (or both). Ritualistically, the scene is acted out to bring the play to a warm conclusion, with only Mamillius and Antigonus the casual victims of Leontes' momentary lapse. The Hermione music is perhaps both miraculous and an anodyne. Cleopatra, in one of her more notorious moments, finds similar reassurance in the art;

Cleo.            Give me some music; music, moody food  
                   Of us that trade in love.  
 All.                            The music, ho!  
 Cleo.            ..... Give me mine angle, we'll to the river  
                   there,  
                   My music playing far off.

Act.2 Sc.5 1. 1 - 2.

It does not however produce Antony, but these lovers exist in a world more closely related to that of Hamlet and Othello. Magic is clearly out of context in this consideration of physical love whose power is so destructive and the blindness of which precludes even the ministrations of magicians. It does not seem reasonable (relatively) to allow Antony and Cleopatra the same degree of artistic licence. If we are prepared to accept the abstractions and foreshortenings of behaviour in The Winter's Tale then there is an obligation to be consistent. But the pattern of redemption does not conform to any plan which could be interpreted as strictly Christian. Macbeth's witches are surely as much extensions of his own diabolical mind when he meets them the second time, as the actual bodies he sees, with Banquo at the outset. The "powers of darkness" imply a



counterpart of "light". Resurrection and penance are good Christian virtues, but Hermione is not Christ and Leontes is hardly the embodied wickedness of Man. There is something about The Winter's Tale which is drawing on primal sources, not pagan and not Christian, of which music is seen to be a primary force. It is in Shakespeare's penultimate play that this force is given embodiment in Ariel, who conveniently plays and sings.

Robert Johnson, already the subject of an aside concerning *Campion* above, supplied the only known roughly contemporary music for the play. It is placid stuff, in fact rather without character. The first song, "Come Unto these Yellow Sands" has no known contemporary tune. The second song, "Full Fathom Five thy Father Lies" is set to the following tune.

6

Full fa-athom five thy fa-ther lies, Of his bones are cor-al made; Those are pearls that were his eyes; No-thing of him that dath fade But doth suf-fer a se-a change In-to some thing rich and strange. Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell: Hark now I hear them, Hark - now I hear them Ding-dong bell Ding - dong, Ding - dong bell Ding - dong, ding - dong bell Ding-dong, Ding-dong bell.



It is innocuous enough, drifting along mostly in the key of G, and not essentially interfering with the meaning of the words. But neither does it contribute what might have been expected, given Shakespeare's obvious confidence in the rightness of the stuff to assist in his Spirit's life. The suffering of "a sea change" is effected with a simple modulation but the tune is undistinguished, perhaps even, plain. This seems a pity where the words and the action require a particular combination of spiritual remoteness and cold impersonality. Ferdinand's speech is sandwiched between these two songs, and doubtless the first should continue into his opening lines. It becomes incantation and supported by off-stage "sprites" who add an unearthly dimension, rather like the demons in Don Giovanni (there is no similarity in style) and which create a larger context of uncomprehended and unseen beings. Ferdinand is drawn by it to this spot where, after his explanation of the circumstances of his being there, the singing begins again but this time with words which are immediately comprehensible. The language is riddling, related no doubt to the almost "nursery-rhyme" innocence of the first song. Ferdinand must be attracted enough to follow - he recognizes the danger -

..... and sure it waits upon  
Some god o'th'island.

Act 1. Sc2. 389-90

but perhaps the divinity of innocence, which Miranda recognises, allays fears as it has the fury of the Waters and natural horror of shipwreck.

The extent to which an off stage chorus is included is not clear in a play which abounds with precise stage directions. In Antony and Cleopatra strange sounds issue from beneath the



ground and in the air. Ariel's unseen supporters bark and crow, smothered in mysterious distance. A comparison with the opening lines and the professional but anxious activity of the Boatswain;

Boatswain: Heigh, my hearts! Cheerly, cheerly, my hearts!  
Yare, yare! Take in the topsail! Tend to th'  
Master's whistle! - Blow till thou burst thy  
wind, if room enough.

Act 1. Sc. 1 5-8

his scoffing at the storm's power is interrupted by the arrival of the nobles, but he anticipates the powers which are going to enter the play, hinting that he divines in the tempest more than the action of the weather.

Boatswain: If you can command these elements to silence,  
and work the peace of the present, we will  
not hand a rope more. Use your authority.  
Cheerly, good hearts!

Act 1. Sc. 1 21-23

and later,

A plague upon this howling! They are louder  
than the weather, or our office.

Act 1. Sc. 1 36-37

And with Sebastian and Gonzalo's help we see the Boatswain as embodying human qualities which might be a match for an ordinary storm. He is for them an "insolent noisemaker". The wet mariners who deserts their posts are surely responsible for the disaster and not the bawling "sargeant-major" Boatswain, who ironically recognises the nature of "his office". Amidst Gonzalo's continued optimism which is interrupted by other off-stage cries, we focus our attention on the immediately human.

Gonzalo: ...Mercy on us! - We split,



we split!-Farewell, my wife and children!  
- Farewell, brother! - We split, we split, we  
split!

Act.1 Sc.1 56-58

During the first fifteen minutes of the play, the human world is apparently destroyed as much by fire as water, as Miranda observes the sky seemed to "pour down stinking pitch", and she adds tantalizingly

Had I been any god of power, I would  
Have sunk the sea within the earth.

Act.1. Sc.2 10 - 11.

Prospero's revelation that no harm's done goes unsupported, but the mariners and nobles who take leave of wives and children certainly appear to have, in fact, drowned. And clearly all on board expect that they will drown. Prospero's conjuring (as the Duke of Milan he is the "prince of power") places him in a god-like position and he can inflict upon his victims what appears to be death. The fascination of these opening moves in The Tempest is not so much in what they contain but the manner in which they are delivered. By the end of Act 1 Scene 1, the wreck has occurred and all are apparently drowned. The text seems to indicate massive stage-craft, thunder, lightening, smoke and water. ("Enter mariners wet"). All that happens out of sight, especially those off-stage voices, establishes what will become a characteristic mannerism in the play. It is full of noises. Prospero warns a churlish Caliban,

?

If thou neglect'st, or dost unwillingly  
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,  
Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,  
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

Act 1. Sc. 2 368-371

But Caliban acquiesces and what follows in the scene in which Ariel,



invisible but dressed for Prospero as a water-nymph, draws Ferdinand to the magician.

Song:           Come unto these yellow sands,  
                  And then take hands.  
                  Curtsied when you have kissed  
                  The wild waves whist,  
                  Foot it featly here and there;  
                  And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.  
  Act 1 Sc.2 374-380

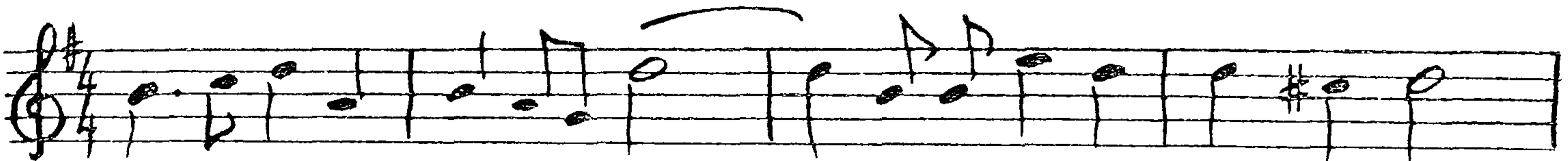
With the words of a charm the unseen voice draws on, the music hanging somewhere between air and earth; the aetherial and the daemonic. Once again it is noise in the air, quietness (oblivion) disturbed by sounds, which bears an ambiguous relation to reality. The addition of the extra spirit voices seem to emphasize the daemonic, but that quality is tempered by words which, as I have already noted, are the words of children's songs. (Bow Wow etc.) And children, by and large (and before Henry James) symbolize wide-eyed innocence. But Shakespeare, unlike Henry James, has not written about his "method".<sup>8</sup> This song however, operates in the manner which James would have understood. The very lack of explicitness generates a good many possibilities which, although unstated, are part of the ambience of such stuff. Children's song, charm, incantation are all encompassed in the general class of noises in the air, not to be accounted for as simply a stage machinery, the goad for a susceptible mortal but a pattern which only becomes evident in the ordering of the human experiences of which it is at once evidence and a cipher.

In the absence of other contemporary music, and having determined just what qualities a setting should have, I shall turn to the other Johnson setting which occurs in Act 5 of The Tempest. Unfortunately this "fairy" song palls rather in both sense and



performance; the ritualistic nature of the first two and their special function of suggesting another world are conceivable. "Where the bee sucks" is an unfortunate, lisping concession to Ariel's affinity with Puck. However he is Puck without the impishness and Ariel is indeed "dainty" and somewhat fawning. The music manages to suggest all of this in sound, right down to the swinging 6/4 for the last eight bars.

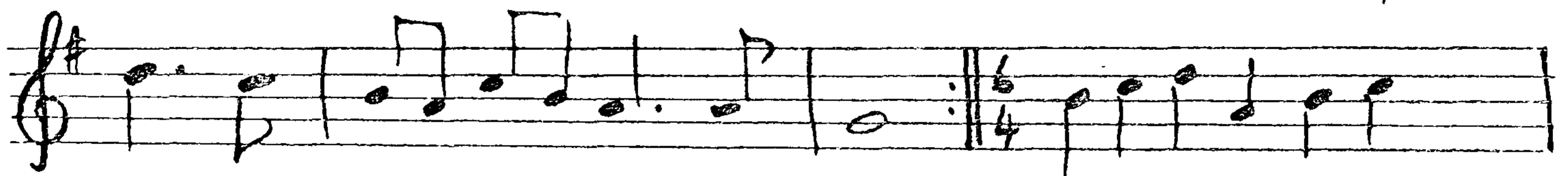
9



Where the bee sucks there suck I, — In a cow-slip's bell I lie;



There I couch when owls do cry. On the bat's back I do fly



Af-ter sum-mer mer-ri-ly Mer-ri-ly, mer-ri-ly



shall I live now, Un-der the blos-som that hangs on the bough.



Mer-ri-ly, mer-ri-ly shall I live now, Und-er the blos-som that hangs on the bough.

Like so many things in the play the audience are sometimes offered what appear to be tangible enough realities in which to establish a response, only to have their sense of what is actual disturbed by new evidence. The juxtaposition of an horrendous storm - or is it a storm in the minds of those who experience it? - with the calm domesticity of Prospero and Miranda is typical. And under such circumstances where do we take our points of reference? Can



we trust Prospero and to what extent is he really in control, and how do we assess his values ? As "prince of power" in Milan, he ought to be a force to be reckoned with. The fact that he is deposed is tricky but consistent with the idea of "white magic", where magical powers are not turned against worthy objects of terrible reprisals. If Prospero is "god of power", then he ought to be in a position to have discovered a prospect of life which dictates a response to it. But we are left with the enigma of a man who can propagandize so well, offering forlorn asides. His apprehension of "the dark backward and abysm of time" continues to underline his essential humanness. He describes Caliban in these terms;

And as with age his body uglier grows,  
So his mind cankers.....

Act.4 Sc.1. 191-192

and perhaps recognises an affinity. They are both in different ways half-mortal, Caliban the Devil's son, and Prospero, who, like Beelzebub, transcends his human origin in the "godlike" arts of magic. But his very humanness is destructive of his peace. No amount of enchantment can elevate what is base in Caliban, who in his lust, embodies not only the "deadly sins" but fallen man generally. The corresponding quality threatened by the baseness of sin is the virginity of Miranda, who in his very eagerness to protect, Prospero must immediately lose. The animal Caliban is not monstrous and Miranda is childlike. Can such polarities be gathered into a structured philosophy which can leave the mind of man whole? The answer, for Prospero at least, is yes. The canker-worm which infests his brain constantly reminds him that he puts on the cloak of divinity in his conjuring and in his dealings with the supernatural. Any contact



between the real world and the domain where spirits sing is transitory and instructive only in its ability to school the senses and enliven awareness. He is powerless against time and subject to the rhythms of magic which he has harnessed but must relinquish. He has found no Talisman, no philosopher's stone and was never a Faustus. So the mystical numbers remain, a shadow of cabalistic learning which does not appear to have proffered a solution to his mortality.

Every third thought shall be my grave.

This curious mixture of elements is there in the microcosm of Ariel's songs. There can be no miracles where such a "Spirit" force engineers the way in which mortals see the world, only transmutations effected in the brain (which is often the subject of Prospero's speeches). Like Ferdinand's father, the "sea-change" is the necessary initiation into what , the play does not make it clear, but it is like the transition from innocence to experience and is, curiously, offered as universally necessary. Even Prospero picks his way somewhat uncertainly towards the melancholy of his last speeches. The play seems to deny the possibility of wholeness when even the most powerful forces seem to leave their possessor with only two thirds of his happiness. It might be that Ariel's 'chanticleer' with all of its resonances, beginnings, betrayals and the insistence of ordered time signifies the start of yet another human's initiation into awareness. And that is why the music must be pregnant; sweet, translucent with just a small suggestion of sourness producing a suitable tension.

The bizarre transformation of a "sea-change" serves at least two purposes in the play. Ferdinand's conception of what has



happened is conveyed in the lines which T.S.Eliot utilizes.

Sitting on a bank,  
Weeping again the King my father's wrack,  
This music crept by me upon the waters.....

(Act. 1 Sc. 2 ll 390-392)

The consolation is not Christian. Alonso is, of course, alive but Ariel offers a picture of his transformation into a sub-aqueous idol "rich and strange" and non-human. Pearls and coral are beautiful, but cold and impersonal ornaments. Neither is Ferdinand consoled by this song. He recognises its import. But it is the disembodied voice which continues to hold his attention. The bells of funeral ceremony become fused with those of nautical navigation and the marking out of time. The change is compelling and in the context of whole play invites a consideration of after-life more directly than any other lines. It is however, fantasy, a curious balm utterly detached from reality. Images of decay are transformed by a sort of alchemy where death is not what is expected in the final traumas of Act 1 .Scene 1. This is more clearly perceived in the song than in any other place in the play. The disruption of organizations of sense, even in the contrived "masque" with its figures from antiquity, serve to emphasize the transitoriness of life.

...all..... shall dissolve,  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.

Act 4 Sc. 1 154-6.

Death is perceived but not emotionally transcended. Prospero must walk to still his "beating mind", his imagination excited by his eloquence.



Prospero's sudden dissatisfaction with reapers - there is no indication that they are in any way grim - is more evidence of a deep seated affliction which his "cloud-capped towers" speech delineates. "Ministers of Fate" (Act 3 Sc. 3 line 62) are ever present either with the immediacy which Ariel suggests in the Banquet Masque, or as the omnipresent force which even magic cannot dispel. The purgation of sin can only give rise to "a clear life ensuing", with the parameter of possible existence fixed in that word "life". Ensuing death, Prospero's preoccupation, leaves him hopeful of a "sea-change" which might clear his mind. He cannot regain what is lost and the future is uncertain. The present allows a little satisfaction in generous revenge. Alonso's speech, Act 3 Sc.3 lines 97 - 104, (Therefore my son i'th'ooze is bedded,..) is evidence of the "poison of guilt" working. Once again Shakespeare uses the language of music to act upon a guilty imagination. (Wordsworth's various thefts cause the same awareness.) Alonso must seek his son in the very depths where bones become coral and the human frame is transformed and significantly deeper "than e'er plummet sounded". The complex redemptive pattern binds the threads of plot but does not, as might be expected, lead to enlightenment in Prospero. He is gathered into the plan, by the end an aged father, who like Alonso sees the resolution of their discord in their children;

Let us not burden our remembrances with  
A heaviness that's gone.

Resolution, but only in one dimension. Alonso is not, like Prospero, heavily preoccupied with the implications of what he observes, or especially what it means for him.



Prospero's island is full of sounds. Caliban observes when he speaks to Stephano in Act. III. Sc. II. (l. 138 - 144);

Be not afeared; the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices  
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,  
The clouds methought would open, and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked  
I cried to dream again.

It is a momentary glimpse of the ordering principle bringing together so much that is important in the place. We know, of course, that the noises of the island are not all "sweet airs"; and what are we to make of dreaming, the ultimate human escape from reality, short of dying? Caliban's fantasy ready to "drop upon" him we can only guess at, although the play gives us some idea of what it might be. What his speech gives us is a formal organization, a cycle of sleep and waking (dreams and reality) which impose a pattern on experience. Ariel's songs are just this, the ordering principle by which noise is made music. Noise and waking reality stand opposed to music (Art) and dreams, the first placing the second, providing the essential context whereby the value is achieved. The sounds which lull Caliban come from Ariel - the spirit calming and placating the animal - it is a necessary function. The result of a division is disorder, chaos and even madness. Lear is progressively divested of everything in a world where order has ceased to exist. There is no redemption. When Lear dies all of the old order has gone and a new start can be made. For Lear the idea of "flies and wanton boys" must stand as valid and the play remains a chronicle of desolation, which is partly self-created. The human values which are endorsed smack of the same delusions as Dr. Pangloss in Candide. The



Tempest escapes from this cynicism, while recognizing that such an escape might be illusory! The circles radiate outwards from a focus in order, complementary qualities creating the emphasis which is self-interpreting and related to the observers' susceptibility to influence. It is not as simple as good and evil, although as I have said before, the closest literary counterparts are probably Blake's innocence and experience. But Shakespeare's achievement carries with it the weight of Renaissance sumptuousness, a richness unavailable to Blake who must discover in people like Issac Watts and the eighteenth century more generally the impetus to write and the language in which he will be understood. Prospero sees through the dream. His waking reality is ambivalent. He is Ariel, or perhaps, Ariel speaks for and from that part of him where practicality resides, always creating its own conditions. But he is also Caliban, the darker side of man, the practicalities of survival heavy upon him and obvious in his frame. The spirit is no stronger than the animal propensity and both are essential not to the whole man, as might be expected, but to a discovery of the pattern, the "dance" some have called it; but Blake settled for contraries. The name does not matter. The idea is implicit in ordered noise, and what is ordered noise but music. Order is the anodyne. So music is not a distraction only -- a turning away from the implications of disorder -- but the dream which accompanies essential sleep. The songs are not gratuitous additions, they are a summary as well as an exemplum of the wisdom which Prospero has achieved. The contraries are not in any permanent balance and are functional only to discovery. Prospero is left his human melancholy.



The ordering implied in my selection of material for specific discussion is, by now, clear. Although the study has been approximately chronological that is not to say that ardent personal expressions in song did not exist in that obscure world we call the early Middle Ages. Equally it would be foolish to suggest that folk-song had stopped ! I began with the complex dilemmas of individuals demonstrating in two distinctly different ages the peculiar apprehension of a theme which must be of concern to any thinking man. The confrontation of personal mortality and the death of those around fixes in us that aspect which is essentially human. The, questionably "artless" products of folk musicians with their lively narratives, garrulous seductions and domestic confrontations formed the basis for my second examination. This last one is of its nature the most difficult. There exists a vast group of vocal compositions, often a melody alone, which offer an escape from the ravages of a personal psyche, escape even from the time honoured productions of "the folk". The group includes any song which by its essentially public nature achieves the peculiar impersonality of corporate expression. Its offices are diverse, perhaps innumerable, and it might be valuable to begin with some of the adjectives which describe the experience which I wish to isolate.

How often do we hear descriptions of an "ethereal choir" or discover that a performance has been gathered under the head of "the transcendental"? A reviewer might be driven to these clichés to meet his dead-lines, and in the context of reviews of public performance they might be simply enthusiastically descriptive. There are, however, instances when a listener is invited to participate in the spirit, as it were, to be elevated and transported, often by deeply seated religious instinct. The liberation of such feelings can be effected in many ways and some of them are musical. Such states necessitate



the abandonment of precisely those qualities which we have examined in preceding chapters. As long as the rational workings of an intelligent mind distance and manipulate painful experience there is an ordering force operating which asserts a rational control. By identifying and emotionally working through the experience in the fantasy of poetry and song, (or indeed any art) the pain is mastered. Where the complexity of the creating mind is working at a different level, for example at the level of fulfilling a narrative purpose where a poet's aim is to leave a record of an important experience, the created narrative requires imaginative reconstruction. These states are not antithetical and many shades of grey occur, admixtures of the highly emotional and the coolly rational. It is the depth of the involvement which the ritualistic music I am thinking about<sup>elicit</sup> that is the focus of my study here. The progression could be something of this order. Music can instruct, move or transport. While touching and moving music require often deeply sympathetic emotional involvement, they do not necessitate abandonment to the cause of which the music speaks.

Religious rites have always employed the natural magic of musical experience, but in the case of the Christian ritual the enchantment is highly intellectual. That does not contradict what I have asserted above. It is intended to place the Christian music of the ritual chant into an intellectual context. After all the devout Christian who has done the right things in this world and fulfilled the complex duties required of him expects a place in Heaven. Such belief is beyond emotion. If there is no question of lack of faith then there is no tension, and steady vigilance should keep the Devil at bay. In the absence of tension, the prime cause of which is the profound doubt of the post-Humanist and his fleshly attachment to the world of his daily experience, the significance of life is subject to



a higher purpose. This absence of tension is consummately expressed in the plainchant wherein an elaborate stasis is achieved and according to which "ethereal", "otherworldly" and such words do justice to the creative intelligence of folk whose conscious aim was to capture just this sense. What we have in the great liturgical music of the Middle Ages is basically propaganda.

If the world is a shadow of the ideal, a hint of what is perfect and possible, then it can never be real. The yearning of the Medieval mind to achieve communion with this other world - a synthesis of faith and carefully edited reason - is the impulse which fires the imagination of those who make the signs for the road to heaven. The "stasis" then, which I have called characteristic, is of a particularly iron-clad variety. In the absence of any serious threat or challenge to belief where reason and faith are engineered to protect a rationale for man's existence, the ceremonial aspects of Christian life become an expression of a world view. Intellectual endeavour, which is carefully controlled by the Church, is as single-minded in its direction as a beam of sunlight through a monastery window. And the patristic fathers were careful to preserve the vision of the carefully circumscribed path to salvation. To this end religious ritual is used with a clear-eyed purposefulness which is calculated to preserve the status quo . The growth of the method can be compared with the parallel development in religious architecture. 11

The Early Christians inherited, in the West, the heritage of late Roman building; heavy walls, small windows and a fortress-like enclosure. As the so called Dark Ages gave way to the early Medieval period, usually delineated in architecture by the Paris church of St. Denis and its abbot, Suger, the nature of building began to change. The mechanics of the pointed arch allowed higher vaulting over



rectangular bays with more window space. This lightening continued with the development of external buttressing which permitted the further expansion of those elaborate stained glass windows which are a hallmark of the times. Similarly, the early Christians in their spacious, if somewhat ponderous Romanesque churches, used musical elaborations of the Bible texts which formed the basis of daily organization. Perhaps the earliest owed something to Rome, like the round arches of the architectural style. Certainly there is an evolutionary process active by the fourth century which will give rise to the complex liturgical ceremonies of Palestrina and Byrd. The earliest settings were probably of the syllabic variety, with a melody following the movement of syllables in the text, and serving largely a decorative or a mnemonic function. Doubtless the tendency of floating voices to considerably enhance the "other worldly" atmosphere of the basilica ensured the perpetuation of "sung" masses. The impulse is still in evidence in the azure ceilings and gilt splendour of Baroque churches.

Of all the early commentators on matters of church music, St Augustine offers the most useful insights into the minds of his contemporaries:

...those who sing in the harvest field or vineyard, or in work deeply occupying the attention, when they are overcome with joy at the words of the song, being filled with such exultation, the words fail to express their emotions, so leaving the syllables of the words they drop into vowel sounds - the vowel sounds signifying that the heart is yearning to express what tongue cannot utter.

12

and further,

if they jubilate from earthly exhilaration, ought not we to sing the jubilation through heavenly joy what words cannot articulate ?

13



The excess of joy which gives rise to "jubilation" has not gone unobserved since Augustine's time, although its main appearance in the early church seems to have become formalized into the melodic patterns which we associate with plainchant. Sargant describes "hwyf",

.. a Welsh preaching device for exciting the congregation to religious frenzy by breaking into a wild chant,

14

which he sees as closely related to the emotional intensities recorded in the early history of the Quakers. Horace Walpole who observed Wesley preaching noted,

There were parts on eloquence on it; but towards the end he exalted his voice and acted very ugly enthusiasm.

15

It is strange to find Walpole, one of the bastions of early Romantic eccentricity, decrying the passion of the great preacher. It would suggest that Walpole is more deeply rooted in the Age of Reason than might be expected. It would also suggest an affinity for the more tranquil ministrations of a "gothic" service with its theatrical dignity. By comparison Wesley must have appeared like the rabble-rousers who occasionally disturbed the feudal tranquility by challenging the customary hierarchy. No reports of the effect of Wesleyan music making survive, but then the directness of the appeal of words and consequently reason, could not be interrupted by extraneous ornament. Also the Wesleyan appeal, in the records of Wesley's own Journals (1739-40), suggests that he more usually approached the task of salvation by invoking the Devil and fright, rather than the gentleness of Heaven!

If "jubilation" implies ecstatic transportation, then it is



not the exclusive instrument of the folk who were contemporaries of the patristic fathers. It is the preserve of the Bacchanalian revels in the Roman world and their counterpart, the Dionysian mysteries in Ancient Greece. The Christian variety does not seem to have been practised with quite the ferocity of the spiritually intoxicated of earlier times, and yet the notion of being gathered into a communal state of mysterious abandon is a common feature. In fact, G.B.Chambers in his seminal work on the ancestry of the liturgy, asserts that the primacy of an impulse to sing folk-songs, was adapted to church use.

There was no printed text books to consolidate a universal method of singing (in any congregation) ... Books and documents were unnecessary since singing "in Jubilation" was common the world over amongst the folk.

16

It is also clear that in times of predominant rationalism, like the mid-eighteenth Century, the more intellectual and civilized parts of a population would suppress elements of overt enthusiasm in deference to reason. Today, for example, it would be considered indecorous to violate the sanctity of "God's house" with demonstrations of "ugly enthusiasm". But in the more remote, less intellectual and emotionally restricted places, especially amongst so-called primitive people the tendency remained.

The Christian chant, then, fulfills an essentially theatrical function. It fills a place in that encyclopedic edifice, the cathedral church, which the medieval churchmen set against the non-believer. The architecture first represented the solidity of the missionary excursions against the pagan and later mirrored a heavenward aspiration and self-confident thrust towards God. Similarly sculpture depicted the primary messages for a largely illiterate population, the very decoration subservient to a purpose. Only in lofty and obscure places



in the vast cathedrals does the medieval mason express himself in pagan bagatteles and occasional Christian wit. The timpanums above cathedral portals, carved screens and incidental embellishment, all lean towards individual didacticism, giving visual embodiment to "the word". And the images were of rigidly pre-determined iconography. The schoolmen, like St. Thomas Aquinas, practised their profession (calling) with meticulous skill to ensure the sanctity of any interpretation of scripture, to fix a reading comprehensible in the most minute detail in their endeavour to understand how God might best be served. If the resultant interpretation was sometimes irrational, then it could be relegated to that portion of belief which is the exclusive provence of "faith". The "word" must be unquestionable, inviolable and precisely glossed.

Although minor discrepancies of interpretation occured within the monastic structure of Medieval Christendom, there was a tendency to a universal style within the orders;

Cistersian houses - kept in close touch with the parent house at Citeaux through annual General Chapters, so that such matters as church design and ritual music were kept in almost complete uniformity.

17

The insistence on uniformity, both within particular orders and as the result of convocations like the Council of Trent (later Constance), went as far as fossilizing church ritual in an attempt to give a rock-like solidity, and to rationalize (justify?) its existence. This did not preclude modification and extension of the basic chant from monophony via organum to a more complex harmony, but the attitude to the text and its centrality was carefully watched.

The ultimate extension of Medieval Christian ritual saw the development of unselfconscious drama. Much has been written about the



"Quem Queritas" trope and its place in the origin of early European theatre. Historians usually trace the reaction of cathedral authorities,<sup>18</sup> who first excluded overt theatre from the church proper, shepherding it to the steps outside, and later into the churchyard. It finally became the property of secular guilds retaining its message, extending the boundaries of acceptable representation of the Bible, and probably moving towards the efflorescence of the Tudor period. The church could not justify the liberties taken with "the word" and perhaps could see the danger to its doctrine and ceremony of any enthusiastic secular acknowledgement of the theatricality of the stuff in which it dealt. After all, the stage-management of Christianity is of some antiquity. The Council of Nicea in 325 AD voted about the issue of Christ's divinity. The vote was not unanimous and in an anxious six years after the tribulation of Nicea, Constantine (331 AD) "caused to be prepared under Eusebius, fifty copies of the gospels for use in the Churches of Byzantium". It seems that discrepancies in the gospel accounts were largely ironed out, and a normalized text was made available in order to give the religion its authoratative source, free from the implications of accretions to a popular mythology. The sect's credibility had been considerably improved by the growing number of converts in the ailing Roman world and<sup>by</sup> its achieving official status in the declining state which had dominated most of Europe.

Certainly an antipathy emerged towards any overt expressions which might produce an interpretation of doctrine influenced by factors other than those of the single-minded, and hence purposeful directions of received scripture. The maximum ductility allowed a congregation some participation in the responsorial parts of the Mass. But beyond a large abstraction emotional particularities were not encouraged. The words set the tone of the supplication and reverence:



Kyrie eleison  
Christe eleison.

and,

Hoc dies, quam fecit Dominus exsulemus,  
et laetem in ea.

A translation of the latter places the lot of man in this interpretation of his existence;

This is the day which the Lord hath made;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it!

Questions and complaints are not the stock-in-trade of the Christian faithful, and this is amply evinced in the recent (1980) lifting of the heresy charges against Galileo (died 1642). The discoveries of Columbus did not seriously challenge the concept of concentric spheres, layers of perfection, the graduated degrees by which Heaven might be achieved. Besides, Ferdinand and Isabella had as a constant companion and advisor, Cardinal Ximenes, Grand Inquisitor and arbitor of the heretical. Christian strength ultimately stems from the utter inadmissability of any questions which have not been previously resolved by the authoratative consideration of Councils of Bishops, like that at Nicea, or by the custom based on scriptural dogma. For the Medieval Catholic all was cut and dried and any proddings of doubt the work of the Devil. In such a climate change was slow and ritual music characterized by a vast impersonality.

The implications of this impersonality are considerable. The first is that the congregation were spacially separated from the "sanctum" of the choir, hidden as in York Minister by the heavy rood or organ screen. It seems that the divisions of the soloist and  
19  
responsorial choir was essentially a monastic idea, and even then a select group provided a special choir in normal use. This feeling of



being a spectator with a yearning for salvation, but separated from the most "holy" ministrations, was probably partly intended to tantalize. It is also a tangible demonstration of the idea of a "chain of being"; the common man shares the mystery from one remove, a spectator in the nave listening to an exclusive ceremony in an exclusive language. The invitation to a vicarious spirituality, knowing his place on the ladder and presumably competing for God's favour in acts of private obedience, constantly emphasised the great hierarchy of created things. Knowing one's place was the ordering principle. The example was set by the exalted few who, above the common lot, administered the daily rules and did not tamper with the way things were. The Christian position was achieved, accepted and practised. God was indeed in his Heaven, and all was well with the world. To drop one's guard was to invite the Devil in! So what the Church called faith was perhaps more truthfully custom, tradition nurtured by fear.

A public service, of its nature might, as in Wesley's meetings, result in mass hysteria, but this can only occur under the influence of deeply felt private guilt. The music and words of the Mass allow no intrusion of reason to interfere with the elaborate structure which is devoid of emotion. We can sentimentalize the whole thing and ascribe to it private emotions of individual feeling, but that is essentially to destroy what plainsong is and how it was conceived. It was in fact a theatre of abstraction, lofty, grand and ringing to be sure, but these are description of physical effects within a large space. These very physical effects, like any stage management, are calculated ploys and are the essence of the songs of the Medieval Church.



Any approach to Traditional Ballads is necessarily complicated because of their obscure origin. Much ballad study is concerned with establishing authoritative texts, the collection of regional variants of old stories in up-dated forms, and with tracing their most perplexing single aspect, the ballad tune. Different responses are inevitably discernable, but the undisputed locus classicus of the work to date is the collection of ballad words by Professor Francis Child, and the equally monumental collation of Child's words with all available known tunes to which his ballads have been and are being performed, the four volumes of Professor Bronson. In many ways both of these men have their roots in the eighteenth century. Child is the heir to Bishop Percy, while Bronson has obvious affinities with Johnson and Thomson, who made seminal Scots collections of tunes. I<sup>21</sup> have already, and with somewhat qualified approval, demonstrated the debt we owe to the antiquarian aspect of Burns. There is little difference between his impulse to collect and collate, and the more scientific approach of Child and Bronson. However, I am not convinced that what we have in Bronson's collection, or indeed in any of the oral performers recorded in the past seventy years, is necessarily what might have been sung two hundred years ago. In my theory of folk-song development outlined in the last chapter, I have shown that folk-tunes (and stories) grow and develop. Such changes, even in the relatively short space of one hundred years, are not necessarily changes for the better. Neither do they result, ipso facto, in the preservation of what is fine. In folk-song in Australia we can see the opposite, and the deterioration can be accounted for in an historical context. If ballads grow by a process of accretion and distillation; by the recollection of exciting or moving passages, then we are faced with human elements in their



invention and dissemination, which might be horribly destructive of what is fine. There are I think enough debased ballads which have been found in circulation, especially in America, to indicate that distillation is a process which can obliterate distinctive aspects of what it purports to preserve. But such circulation, the very survival of tattered remnants of old stories, carries with it the suggestion that the "folk" places special importance in such things.

I have come to the ballads last because I think that they have a special place in our singing - they must be sung - and that the manner in which they should be sung is closely connected with their function. But what assumptions can we make about the validity of any tune which is caught, either in manuscript, or more accurately on record or tape ? Do such things reflect the original motivation to sing; the mood and spirit of the first impulse ? Have the words altered with times as they have been passed down through twenty generations ? Have written sources caused adulteration when an authority can be produced which fixes and arrests ballad growth ? Such questions make for a daunting inquiry. However, in the case of Burns and with Ben Hall songs, I have allowed myself a certain speculative leeway consistent with flexibilities suggested by the materials which I consider. And this is of course at the very heart of my thesis. If we cannot trust a reading which considers the link between words and music to be vital to understanding, not only the song but the place it occupies on the ladder of development which I am postulating, then critical study might be abandoned without fear for very much being lost! This is not just a matter of intuition, although conclusion which we reach intuitively can usually be supported with evidence from the song. With the traditional ballad we have no alternative other than to fix upon a function related to



social needs, historical progress and a sense of recent contemporary enthusiasm for what might be anachronistic survivals. Hence, the speculative nature of such study. But it need not be without foundation, regardless of the reconstruction which must precede comment. An ancient ballad is not without its resonances suggestive of past grandeur.

It is not my object to denigrate the folk who have been the medium of transmission, even though it appears that in recent times the losses have outweighed the gains in ballad transmission. It would be depressing to be faced with nothing but this process of gradual attrition. We can take heart, however, and make some tentative move towards a definition of the qualities which have relegated ballads to the tail-end of my study. Immediately, then, I shall say that they are examples of art which carry no stamp of personality. They are generally expressive of grander themes of love, death and magic. The Ben Hall of "The Streets of Forbes" is a close relative of "Sir Patrick Spens". The Ben Hall of "Come All Australia's Sons" is sung with the undeniably personal voice of a folk-singer, in which song is moving towards a more private and less heroic world in which smaller rhythms of life are an everyday concern.

Professor Bronson's main contribution to ballad study has been to pursue the essence of tunes which remain after the distillation and transmission processes have carried words and music far from Britain. The comprehensiveness of his study leaves no doubt as to the connection between origins in pre-Mayflower days in Britain and resultant variations. Neither does it manage to offer a convincing demonstration that what survives is the best of former times. What his collection challenges is a determination of the nature of the ballad music. If it is not expressive of the emotions



of the words - if a communal impulse is not consonant with the notion of private feelings - then what does the music of ballads actually do ? Individual words might be loaded with significance which could be taken to be emotional. "Hero", for example, is such a word. In an Australian ballad it is emotionally ambivalent;

Come all Australia's sons to me  
A hero has been slain.

23

The singer who gives it heavy emphasis must decide to interpret the musical moment in either of two ways. He can enlist compassionate sympathy for one who "has been slain", or he can choose a tone which acknowledges heroism. The first interpretation contains the seeds of sentimentality and cultivates (ultimately) extravagant emotion. The second seeks only to exonerate the outlaw. It would aim to present the idea of heroism without the inevitable insistence on the slaying. This would incline the singing towards detachment and impersonality, and away from a grief-stricken tone. If the ballads do not cultivate sentimentality, then the detached presentation in this instance might give a clue as to the nature of ballad music, although on the evidence of modern performances the two modes suggested here are usually mixed. Ballad texts generally admit only broad themes in which individual action is reported, interpreted and presented without the "voice" of the poem supplying an authorial gloss. And this is a fundamental difference between folk-song and the ballad. Here is one stanza of "Creeping Jane" which was collected by Percy Grainger in Lincolnshire in 1909.

I'll sing you a song and a very pretty one  
Concerning Creeping Jane-O,



Oh she never saw a mare or a gelding in her life  
That she valued to the worth of half a pin.

24

Compare this with the following battered stanza, for a clearly defined attitude toward the material which each song presents.

The King sits in Dunfermline Tower  
A-drinking the blood-red wine  
"Oh where will I get a skeely skipper  
To soul this ship of mine."

The second example is conspicuously more direct and less self-conscious. It is less private and does not invite the intimacy of association of the first: "I'll sing you a song and a very pretty one." The musical difference between the two is best discerned by listening to Percy Grainger's recording of Joseph Taylor singing "Creeping Jane", and to Ewan McColl singing "Sir Patrick Spens". The McColl is austere,<sup>25</sup> stark with the rhythm of the verse completely sacrificed to a melody line which is delivered with force and authoritativeness. Joseph Taylor performs his skipping rhythm with numerous flourishes and arabesques and, even through the scratchy surface of the Grainger recording, manages to convey something of the delight he takes in the song. The ceremonial gravity of the ballad can be usefully contrasted with the light and humorous touch of the folk-song. If Ewan McColl provides a characteristic performance of a ballad with the proper musical addition to the text, which suggests music of the type, then do the ballads take their music from another source or is it generated by the words?

Although any consideration of ballad music is inevitably even more obscured by time than the study of words, I think it fair to assert that the tunes which we have for ballads today can be



demonstrated to grow out of the words. They do not generally perform any local expressive function in interpreting individual words or ideas. Robert Burns familiarized himself with a tune in order to add words to it. What he used, as I have indicated in Chapter Three, was the broad, emotional sweep which the tune suggested and he kept his words within this range. This seems to be the case with ballads. They take for their overall caste a narrative impersonality for which the tune becomes an expressive medium. A comparison with other varieties of song shows them to be decorated melodies, like the melodies of the liturgy, and broadly ceremonial, a function of their origin in a narrative style and perhaps, initially, a journalistic purpose. Bronson speaks of "a traditional poetic art gradually shaping a musical vehicle to its needs". He then develops his argument by suggesting that musical rhythms might shape the rhythms of verse. 26

The Ewan McColl performance cited above, would tend to weaken this assertion. The rhythmic relation of words and music is clearly vital to an understanding of their expressive ends but, as in other places in this study, words are subject to the rhythm of the music which is inflicted upon them. The consequent destruction of strict poetic rhythm in melisma and a melodic framework is inevitable. A strict reading of the opening of "Sir Patrick Spens" would produce the following pattern of emphasis;

4

The King sits in Dunfermline town

A' drinkin' at the wine.

This is not the rhythmic pattern which McColl sings.



I do not subscribe to the dance-song theory of ballad origin. Where there is no need for words in music, then no words are added. "Mouth-music" still survives in Scotland and Ireland, a remnant of the days when pipes or fiddles were beyond the means of a crofter, or the result of his inability to perform on real instruments. The obvious narrative style should be evidence enough that ballads have something to say! Setting aside for a moment the appeals to antiquarians, consider the following piece from the Spectator:

27

An ordinary song or ballad that is the delight of the common people cannot fail to please all such readers as are not unqualified for the entertainment by their affectation or ignorance.

28

For Addison at least, there is no doubt where the ballad stood in 1711. It was the poetry of the "common people" collected together for the "reader". Even in the most dance-like of ballads there is a strong narrative element which, if it is not an actual account of love or death, could have an independent life as a poem. The incantatory rhythm and burden of "A Lyke Wake Dirge" might suggest the measured movement of traditional dance, but it is equally (and more appropriately) an organized response to death. As such it presents unequivocal challenges to disorder. It argues for those who are living, calling attention to their mortality, didacticism which could not strike as sharply or immediately without words. That listeners did not move, or sway in rhythmic sympathy we cannot say; however, the function of the ballad seems to preclude the strictly, solely terpsichorian. Such arresting and unambiguous warnings are grave and solemn because we understand the words. Bronson concludes that the significance of the name "ballad" and its connection with words like *βαννιγω* or



"ballo" proves nothing about ballad origins.

29

Bronson also sustains little hope of determining an accurate definition of "the ballad". He acknowledges varieties of attempts, but concludes;

In the end, precise definition must set limits arbitrarily; we cannot dispense with the qualifying epithet, whether it be traditional, communal, folk, vulgar or another. No more than the term Song can Ballad by itself be sharply determined as genre.

30

The variety of subject is in itself inhibiting to easy identification of the type. Sir Patrick Spens and Mary Hamilton were perhaps real folk, whose respective tragedies fired the imaginations of one or more singers who were sympathetic. "The Twa Corbies" however, is part of a courtly tradition, with perhaps a similar sensibility creating the significance of the ballad - finding the nuances of something broader in the death of a knight. "The Unquiet Grave" deals with supernatural occurrences in the world of those who are not dead, while "Lyke Wake Dirge" chants a magical and portentous charm taking death as a stimulus to speculation. Once again what is conspicuously absent is just that personal voice to which Vaughan Williams responds in the lyrics of A.E.Housman. And in this case definition by exclusion is useful.

If Housman and the variety of poem he writes stands at one end of a hypothetical sequence where the very private world of feelings of one individual are expressed in a singular, yet conventional manner; then the great ballads stand at the opposite extreme. Intrusions of authorial voices into them immediately call into question their origin and spurious examples, even odd stanzas, are conspicuous for a quality which they should not have. Child's



frequent misgivings about some of the texts which he included is evidence of the difficulty experienced by the foremost collector. His agnosticism continued to perplex him so that even his last writings are concerned with specious texts which he clearly found dissatisfying. But perhaps his most significant disquiet was to do with the impossibility of a meaningful classification into which ballads might be organized. He tried subject headings with, for example, the Robin Hood series. On the advice of Grundtvig he looked to the internal evidence of stanzaic pattern and rhythmic emphasis, hoping to establish these ballads which exemplify primitive form and hence antiquity. Finally, no real ordering principle could be adduced and his expression of earlier frustration stands;

I never pretended that the arrangement was founded on a deeper principle than convenience. Some sort of classification everybody expects.

31

In an early essay Bronson had expressed the same idea, and applied it to his chosen study.

We need look no further than the variants of Child's No 1 ..... to realize that undemonstrable assumptions must be nine-tenths of any definition of A Ballad in the group sense of the term. The question: What constitutes the identity of a ballad tune ? is even thornier and..... only soluable on practical grounds.

32

Given that these men spent their lives in pursuit of just these definitions which eluded them, it might appear rash to proffer a solution which ignores the need to generalize. After all a definition, with its consequent rigidity, would limit the range of subjects and approaches which could be included under the "ballad" head. Ballads do not so much share the common hallmarks of an



identifiable group, they rather exemplify a similar approach. Reticence and an almost impassive manner evident in the text and which is not destroyed by however earnest a performance characterize the style which they share. They are the ultimate impersonal extension of articulateness. There is no territory beyond them in words and music; narration degenerates into incomprehensible noise and music with meaningless words (sounds) enters the realm of the purely musical. Ballads can be characterized by their disinterested impersonality.

If music, like words is a definite language as I have demonstrated at the outset, then how are we to assess the relation here? I contend that it is the nature of the relationship between the words and music which forms the bond between the members of this class of songs. But this is best illustrated with some examples not of a genre but of a manner of presentation:

I suggested in my introductory chapter that "Mary Hamilton" (Child 173) is quite unlike "Sir Patrick Spens" in the form which we usually hear it sung today. The performance by Joan Baez has ensured its currency and it is her version which is generally sung in places where radio and recordings are popular. The tune is based on Number Eight of those included in the dozen listed by Bronson, and is close to that sung in a recorded performance by Jeannie Robertson.

Word has come from the kitchen, And word has come to me That

Mary Hamil to us slain her babe, And throw him in the sea.



Word has come from the kitchen,  
And word has come to me,  
That Mary Hamilton's slain her babe?  
And thrown him in the sea.

Down came the old queen,  
Gold tassels in her hair.  
"O Mary Hamilton, where's your babe?  
I heard it greet so sair.

"Mary put on your robes of black,  
Or yet your robes of brown,  
That you can go with me today  
To see fair Edinburgh town."

She put on her robe of black,  
Nor yet her robe of brown,  
But she put on her robe so white  
To see fair Edinburgh town.

When she went up the Canno' gate,  
The Canno' gate so free,  
Many a lady looked o'er her casement  
And wept for this ladye.

When she went up the Parliament stair  
A loud, loud laugh laughed she  
But when she came down the Parliament stair,  
A tear was in her ee.

"O bring to me the red, red wine,  
The best you bring to me,  
That I may drink to the jolly bold sailors  
That brought me o'er the sea.

"Little did my mother think,  
When she first cradled me,  
That I should die so far from home,  
So far o'er the salt, salt sea.

"Last night there were four Maries,  
Tonight there'll be but three;  
There was Mary Seaton and Mary Beaton  
And Mary Carmichael and me.

"Last night I washed the old queen's feet,  
And carried her to her bed;  
Today she gave me my reward,  
The gallows hard to tread.

"They'll tie a napkin 'round my eyes  
And ne'er let me see to dee;  
They'll ne'er let on to my father and mother  
That I'm far away o'er the sea.

"Last night there were four Maries,  
Tonight there'll be but three;  
There was Mary Beaton and Mary Seaton  
And Mary Carmichael and me.



Joan Baez maintains a steady, driving rhythm with the assistance of chordal arpeggios in the guitar accompaniment. The effect is charming but I think reduces the stature of the piece. That is to say that what is essentially the lofty impersonality of a ballad is reduced to something more akin to folk-song. Such a distinction is not intended to be a value judgement, but even the text of "Mary Hamilton" operates on the area between the two. Joan Baez shows great sympathy in her singing, doubtless finding her bearings in lines like these;

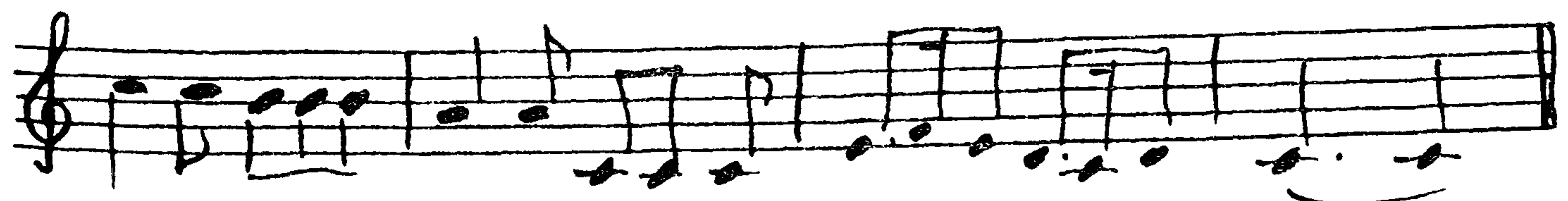
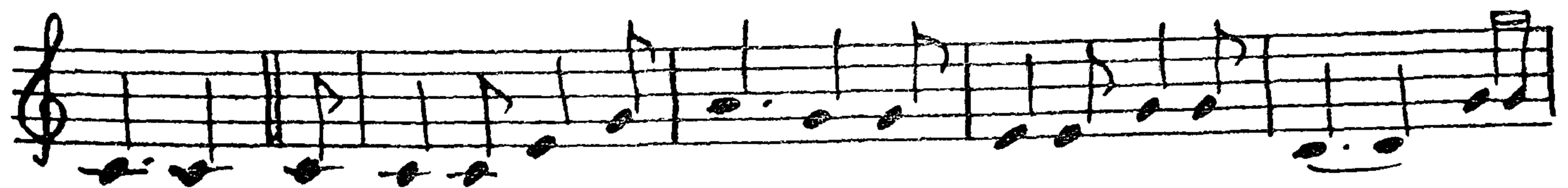
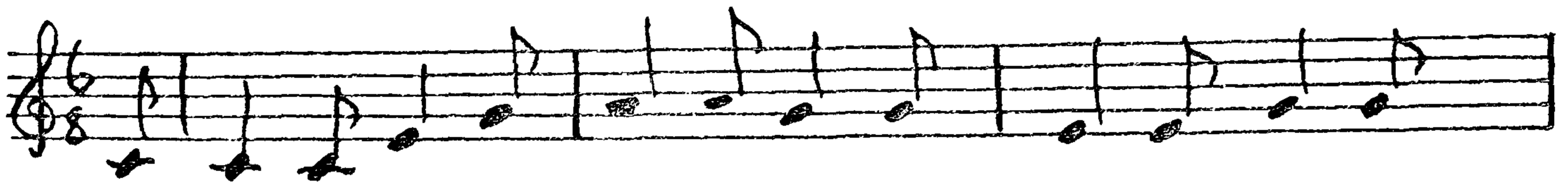
There was Mary Beaton and Mary Seaton  
And Mary Carmichael and me.

Such things are rare in ballads. This intrusion of the personal voice, and especially its canny placement at the end of the song is not usual. Even in the question and answer ballads, (Lord Randal, Edward, and so on) the singer takes both parts with equal disinterest, dramatizing the incidents which he sings; he is mother and son. And the tune cited above reveals a close affinity with a private voice. I have already indicated that the third line of each stanza rises in an arching line of melody which expresses the singer's heightened feeling and which invites sympathy in the listener. A piquant performance, like that of Joan Baez, is convincingly soulful. That of Jeannie Robertson is sparer and, I think, more conscious of the nature of ballads as opposed to folk-song. But the seeds of Joan Baez's interpretation are there in the song. 33

Dangerous as it is to depend on such scanty evidence of style -- especially where the established boundaries are so indistinct-- I think it fair to conclude that "Mary Hamilton" is close to folk-song, the invitation to personalize a performance in just this way



being rare in ballads. And the effect is calculated. Joan Baez takes a tune given by Bronson as occurring in several written and recorded instances, and combines it with a text from an American variant, altered slightly to accommodate modern listeners. All of the tunes in Bronson's Group D are closely related in their melodic structure. Most of these were collected in the late 1920's or early 1930's. Each of them follows the same melodic patterning with the words of the third line of each stanza being given the heaviest emphasis. Regardless, then, of how the Baez tune is arrived at, it shares characteristics of several of the ballads in the D Group. The most important observation about her song as a ballad is perhaps that she attempts to preserve as much of things as she can with an eye to what it is, and where it comes from. The following is Number Nine in Group D. Almost all of the historical matter has gone. The song concentrates on the emotion elicited by the "gallows tree" and a shameful death.





Oh, little did my mother think  
When first she cradled me  
That I should die so far from home  
Or hang from a gallows tree.

Chorus: Last night there were four Marys,  
Tonight there'll be but three;  
There was Mary Seton and Mary Deaton  
And Mary Carmichael and me.

They'll tie a napkin round my eyes,  
They'll not let me see the deed,  
And they'll never let on to my father and mother  
But what I have gone o'er the sea.

35

The subtleties of incident, place and a broader moral purpose have gone. It is not, perhaps, placing too fine a point on it to notice that the song was collected in Texas. Cowboy songs about hanging are common, but this 1950 fragment of a much older song hardly does justice to the original story. The tune is similarly debased, having lost precisely the strength of matching the emotional implication of the words as they are in the first example above, and replacing it with a dull and pedestrian melody. Attrition appears to be the natural process of oral dissemination: Bronson in an essay in 1945 writes of patches in time when there is a proper and natural efflorescence of ballads.

I am concerned to insist... upon... the fact that in the Eighteenth century there was enough vital energy in traditional song to put forth naturally, as flowers proper to the season, not excavated fossils, "Sir Patrick Spens", "Mary Hamilton" and the rest.... For each season there has to be a fresh re-creative effort.

36

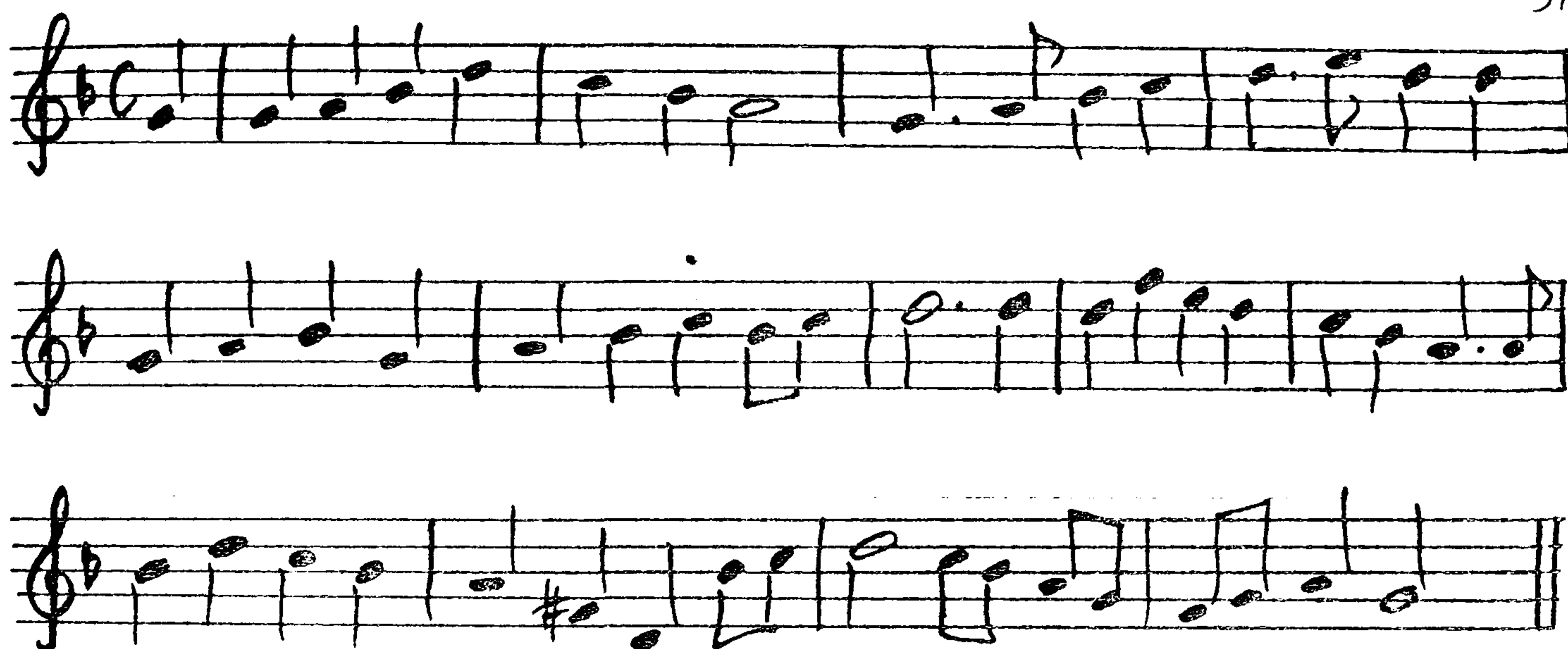
On the evidence of this second setting, the 1950's were not conspicuous for their blooms.

Continuing in the same vein, it is instructive to compare "The Twa Corbies" with "The Three Ravens". The differences here are greater than regional diction. Some editions have gone as far as



suggesting that the former is the work of Scott in whose Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border it first appears. Child argues that it is a Scots variation on "Two Ravens", and that there are others from north of the Border. He also advances a small piece of criticism. "The Twa Corbies" is to his taste "a cynical variation of the tender little English ballad". Kinsley does not include Scott in The Oxford Book of Ballads. He finds a place for "The Three Ravens" with its popular tune which was printed in Thomas Ravenscroft's Melismata in 1611.

37



There were three Rauens sat on a tree,  
 Down a downe, hay down, hay downe,  
 There were three Rauens sat on a tree,  
 With a downe;  
 There were three Rauens sat on a tree,  
 They were as blacke as they might be,  
 With a downe derrie, derrie, derrie, downe, downe.

The one of them said to his ma(k)e,  
 Where shall we our breakfast take?

Downe in yonder greene field  
 There lies a Knight slain vnder his shield.

His hounds they lie downe at his feete,  
 So well they can their Master keepe.

His Haukes they flie so eagerly  
 There's no fowle dare him come nie.

Downe there comes a fallow Doe  
 As great with yong as she might goe.

She lift vp his bloody hed  
 And kist his wounds that were so red.



She got him vp vpon her backe  
And carried him to earthen lake.

She buried him before the prime,  
She was dead her selfe ere euen-song time.

God send euery gentleman  
Such haukes, such hounds, and such a Leman.

All of the gestures are the courtly heroics which might be expected in a ballad. The tenacity of the hounds, hawk and "fallow Doe" are creditable, but a little pre-Raphaelite, and the song is weakened by the "derrie-downing" which tends to disperse any tonal intensity which might accrue and to punctuate any accumulated awe. The language in which each symbolic action is couched is also obvious and clumsy:

His Haukes they flie so eagerly  
There's no fowle dare him come nie

so it is perhaps a virtue that there is so much refrain. And it is a refrain which adds nothing to the song. In contrast, the great question/answer ballads (Son David, Lord Randal) all gain a feeling<sup>38</sup> of mounting urgency from the anxious repetition. This song seems to have verbal flourishes which stretch the words across the melody and give it the feeling of being a piece of minstrelsy. The melody bears this out with its urbane runs and carefully controlled pace. Bronson is uneasy, although he is ultimately uncommitted about the "composed" elements in the song.

The two-strain melody, while perhaps not too elaborate for pure folk-song, looks rather sophisticated in its handling of the tripartite refrain, each element of which varies in length and character. Modally, also, we should expect a pure Dorian; but the sixth is flatted once, and twice the leading note occurs. These are mildly suspicious particulars.



One can almost hear the lute accompaniment. This was to Child's taste and he obviously preferred the smoothness of the air as well as the defined moral position, which could be seen as a little sentimental, even though it is common for love to be sung in the ballads and for them to result in the surviving lover's death. If this poem was the model for "The Twa Corbies", then the impulse to strengthen it is understandable, even if it introduces an element of cynicism.

Kinsley avoids making the connection and the contrast, perhaps wisely, in that Scott would win any literary competition, if indeed "The Twa Corbies" is his! Such dilemmas are usual in ballad study. A pedigree stretching back to 1611 is no guarantee of an origin amidst the folk in the manner usually prescribed for traditional ballads. This Elizabethan working of the theme is shallow beside the Romantic one, for which I know no contemporary tune. Neither did Professor Bronson, who died before completing his magnum opus. However it does help to demonstrate the basic weakness of "The Three Ravens". Child found the poem cynical, which it is, but it is equally sinister. By implication the lady who has taken another mate is probably guilty of some involvement in the killing, although this is not stated. Now that he is dead, the knight, who ought to be heroically borne away with due pomp and caring is deserted. Like Lord Randal who is betrayed in his murder, the body of the dead man is deserted by all those who have had a close relationship with him in the past. Having demonstrated the way in which the world turns away from the corpse the poem follows up the inevitable suggestion. Do they pursue their own ends to survive now that they are unaccountable to him, or does their neglect demonstrate shallow affections and responsibility for his death in their absence? Regardless, the recognition of the fact of the on-going nature of



life is contained in the perspicacity of hawk, hound and lady fair. Having established the way in which the world is, the poem turns to the details of dissolution and decay to finish with two of the most resonant lines in the canon;

O'er his white banes, when they are bare,  
The wind shall blow for evermair.

The strength of the poem comes from such lines and from images which are perhaps more realistic than cynical.

It is obvious from my preference for "The Twa Corbies" that it better fits the scheme which I have in mind and shares sure common ground with others of the Ballads. It is part of a world which is pragmatic and unrelentingly disinterested. Individuals might be valiant and have qualities beyond the ordinary man, for which they are duly praised, but that does not change the world. Sir Patrick Spens is such a man. He might have been a real person, although nothing remains of his life (and death) in recorded history, apart from the ballad stories. These seem to have survived because they find in him a symbol of unstinting application to duty. Concepts like this one have paled, but <sup>in</sup> a world in which custom and allegiance were important, duty was probably clearer. Sir Patrick Spens does not gamble. Neither does he grumble, and what fixes him so clearly as a potent force in the "folks'" imagination is that he dies with a clear knowledge of what he is doing, and calm acceptance of his fate. He is not foolish or rebellious and his memorial is an indelible action which immortalizes bravery and symbolizes an ordering principle on which an organized society has been founded. For such a theme you might expect a tune which is majestic and somewhat ascetic. Kinsley prints the following example which he takes from Child.

40





The second tune is Ewan McColl's who learned it from his father. 41  
 This is given as eleven of the twelve airs printed by Bronson, who declares that, like a tune preserved by Campbell (Albyn's Anthology, 1818) McColl's "seems to stand by itself".



The king sits in Dunfermline toon,  
 A drinkin' at the wine,  
 And he has ca'd for the finest skipper  
 In Fife and a' the land.

Then oot it spak an auld carle,  
 Stuid by the king's ain knee;  
 Said, "Patrick Spens is the strangest sailor  
 That ever sailed the sea."

The king has screivit a breid letter  
 And signed it wi's ain hand;  
 And sent it to young Patrick Spens,  
 Was walking on Leith sands.

"To Norrowa', to Norrowa',  
 To Norrowa' ower the farm;  
 The King's dochter o' Norrowa',  
 'Tis ye maun bring her hame."



When he leukit the letter on,  
A muckle laugh gaed he,  
But ere he done the readin' o't,  
The tears blinded his e'e.

"O, wha' is it's done this fell deed  
I pray ye tell to me;  
Although it were my ain faither,  
An ill death may he dee."

They hadna been in Norrowa'  
A week but barely three,  
When a' the lords o' Norrowa'  
Did up and spak' so free.

"These ootland Scots waste our King's gowd  
And swallow oor Queen's fee."  
"Weary fa' the tongue that spak  
Sic a muckle lee."

"How can this be?" said Sir Patrick Spens,  
"I pray ye tell to me.  
The bows o' my ship are wrocht wi' gowd  
And there's twal kists o' white money.

"Tak tent, tak tent, my gweed men a',  
And mind ye be weel forn,  
For come it wind or come it hail,  
Oor gweed ship sails the morn."

Then oot it spak the weatherman,  
"I fear we'll be drooned,  
For I saw the new mune late yestreen  
Wi' the auld mune in her airms."

They hadna sailed abune an hour,  
An hour but and a half,  
When the lift grew laich and the wind blew haich,  
And the ship it was a wrack.

"O, where will I get a bonnie lad  
To tak' my steer in hand?  
While I climb up the high topmast  
To see if I can spy land."

He hadna gane a step, a step,  
A step but barely ane,  
When the bows o' our gweedly ship did brak'  
And the saut-sea it cam in.

O, laith, laith, were our gweed Scots lords  
To wat their cork-heeled shoon,  
But lang ere a' the play was done,  
They wat their hats abune.

O, lang, lang, will our ladies sit  
Wi' their fans intil their hands,  
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens  
Come sailing to the land.



Half ower, half ower to Aberdour,  
Where the sea's sae wide and deep,  
It's there it lies Sir Patrick Spens  
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

It is delivered with considerable force in the recorded performance and conforms with my idea of what the text requires. Kinsley's F major march is a trite tune beside this one, but of course, is equally valid as the correct way to sing it!

The musical tradition commences at about the opening of the last century. The record is hardly homogeneous or consistent enough to suggest a strong and continuous oral tradition.

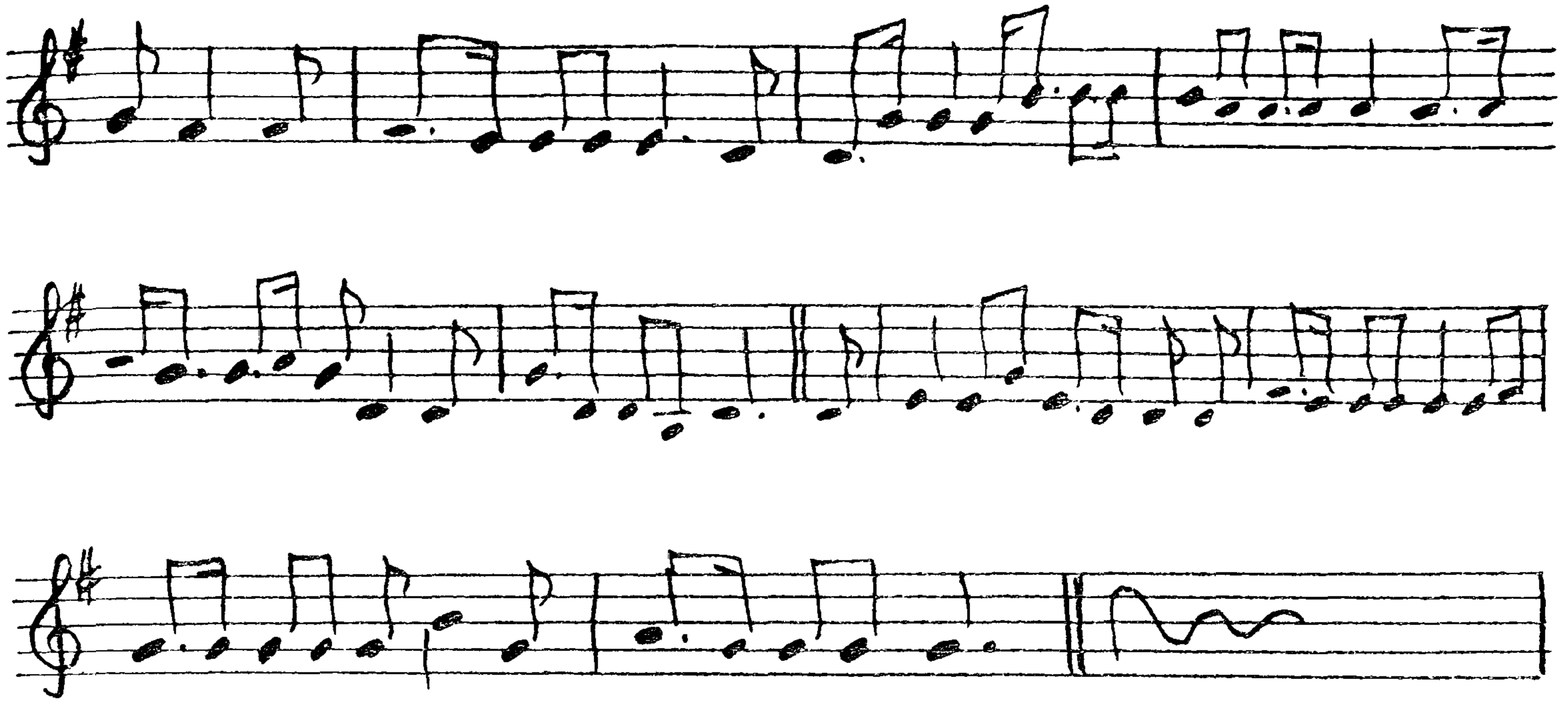
42

Once again we must fall back on the intuited rightness of the way in which McColl sings it. His performance captures just these qualities which I described above as growing out of its function as reporting of incident and human quality and a reinforcement of fundamental values which are not confined to a specific time.

Like "Sir Patrick Spens" the "Bonny Earl of Moray" has lost its ties with history, but in this case almost nothing which is of any account, apart from an archaeological interest, remains. It is not expressive of lofty themes and gives only a hint of what was probably a piece of primitive journalism. The exhortation which seems to place some blame on "Hielands" and "Lowlands" was perhaps once a plea about destruction of the type used in "The Twa Corbies", but whoever "they" were is not clear.







Ye Hielands and ye Lowlands,  
 O where ha'e ye been?  
 They hae slain the Earl o' Murray,  
 And laid him on the green;  
 He was a braw gallant,  
 And he rade at the ring;  
 And the bonnie Earl o' Murray,  
 He micht ha'e been king!  
 O lang will his leddy  
 Look owre frae castle Doune,  
 Ere she see the Earl o' Murray  
 Come soundin' thro' the toon!.

Noo wae be to thee, Huntly,  
 And wherefore did ye sae?  
 I bade ye bring him wi' ye,  
 But forbade ye him to slay:  
 He was a braw gallant,  
 And he play'd at the ba';  
 And the bonnie Earl o' Murray  
 Was the flow'r amang them a'.  
 O lang will his leddy  
 Look owre frae castle Doune,  
 Ere she see the Earl o' Murray  
 Come soundin' thro' the toon!

43

The source of this tune which occurs in Diack's New Scottish Orpheus (1923-25) is not known, but it is credible and certainly fixes the solemn and dignified lament, in which the marching rhythm is closely allied with the metre of the verse. Benjamin Britten adapts just this tune in his splendid folk-song setting. The mysterious appearance in this century of new ballad material, although it is to



be carefully watched, should present no problem with regard to authenticity. Such manifestations have always been the way and the spurious locating of some new material is perhaps closer to the real roots of the ballad tradition than might at first be imagined.

"The Flowers of the Forest" is a case in point, a folk-song with a known author, and Ewan MacColl has hundreds of splendid modern "folk-songs" to his credit.

An earlier version of the tune, printed in Thomson's Orpheus Caledonius (1733) indicates another difficulty. The melody is clearly a pipe or fiddle tune of dubious value as a song with its athletic leaps from low to high registers, and back again. The ornaments suggest a similar conclusion. It does help to show how well the modern (?) melody from Diack suits the words, especially as the older tune is set in 3/4 time which produces a lilting but somewhat off-handed effect when the song is sung.



Ye Highlands and ye Lawlands,  
Oh! where ha'e ye been:  
They ha'e slain the Earl of Murray,  
And they laid him on the Green:  
(They ha'e slain the Earl of Murray,  
And they laid him on the Green.)

Now wae be to thee Huntly,  
And wherefore did ye sae;  
I bad you bring him wi' you,  
But forbad you him to slae.



He was a braw Gallant,  
And he rid at the Ring;  
And the bonny Earl of Murray,  
Oh! he might have been a King.

He was a braw Gallant,  
And he play'd at the Ba',  
And the bonny Earl of Murray  
Was the Flower amang them a'.

He was a braw Gallant,  
And he play'd at the Glove,  
And the bonny Earl of Murray,  
Oh! he was the Queen's Love.

Oh! lang will his Lady  
Look o'er the Castle-Down,  
E'er she see the Earl of Murray  
Come sounding through the Town.

Thomson gives another name to those which are usually heard in the ballad, that of Huntly. This adds a further splinter of narrative but the sum total of such pieces does not amount to much. The story of James Stewart of Doune (the real Earl of Murray) and his murder for supporting Bothwell in 1592 is a little closer; but the ballad is little more than a lament, a grand one perhaps, but limited by its historical character, especially as the actual story fragments. All that is left in the words is the more or less accurate reporting with some dolesomeness. And the melody requires the repetition of the final two lines of each stanza to "fit in". This repetition works quite well in the first verse with the word "slain" falling on the screeched top-note. (Kinsley in the Oxford Book of Ballads prints the tune up a fourth.) "Bad" in the second does not fit quite as well into the scheme and this points up the expressive tendency of the tune which is akin to folk-song. The poem does not express any of the universal themes which we find in other ballads, so to allocate it to a grey-area between the vast impersonal and the specific keening of a hero is perhaps best. There are however



ballads which do take an elegiac theme and manage to transcend their specific history.

"A Lyke-Wake Dirge" is a riveting poem. The steadily moving rhythm and refrain contribute to its incantatory and ritualistic manner; and it is ritual. It is remote from conviviality, but the coldness is not the pall of death. The rhetoric which it employs is utterly steady, purposeful direction towards an end which is understood and encompassed in the blessing. And the words suggest a setting.

This is a sort of charm sung by the lower ranks of the Roman Catholics in some parts of the north of England, while watching a dead body, previous to interment. The tune is doleful and monotonous, and, joined to the mysterious import of the words, has a solemn effect.

45

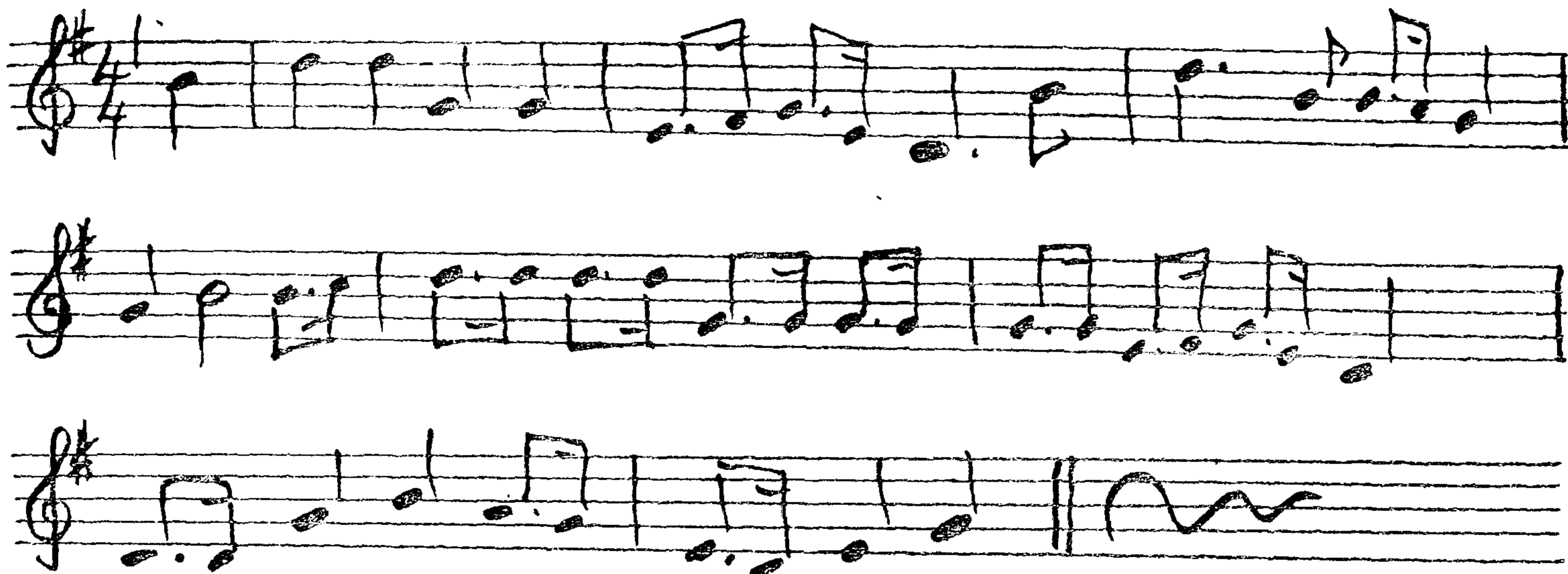
Benjamin Britten and "The Pentangle" have written modern tunes for it. Neither is doleful and monotonous, and both take their inspiration from the idea of the song being a charm. There are no surviving old tunes and Bronson does not include the song in his collection. But it is a song without the obvious ties with a particular time in the past. To have survived it must have either continued in popular use, or have found favour for the quality which I have described above as a teaching piece which managed to make the skin tingle. It would be foolish to attempt to sing these words to anything other than something ritualistic. If the singer is sensitive enough to fathom the moral position and obvious purpose of the bare words, he could not conceive of a trite melody. Such a tune would needs be as ritualistic as the text to form the essential, indivisible whole.

Bronson's collection of tunes is comprehensive but not exhaustive. "The Two Sisters"(Child 10), for example, has ninety seven variations of tune and as many different texts. (It should be



noted perhaps that this ballad is so closely allied to "The Cruel Sister" (Child 118) that it is overly careful to distinguish between them. The presence of a "singing harp" can be noted in various transformations in many of these ballads of either name.)

46



There were twa sisters lived in a glen  
 Binnorie-O, Binnorie  
 And a bonny millert laddie came a'courtin o' them  
 By the bonny mill dams of Binnorie.

47

It is neither lofty or heroic, but nether does it add emotional weight to the argument (narrative) set forth in the words. Once again the spectre of the dance appears, but that is, I think, only because the song proceeds with a sprightly lilt. It is uncertain the extent to which the tune is a vehicle which carries the words in memory.

Numerous collectors have noted that words and music are indivisible, and that a singer cannot recollect words without their tune. What is becoming clearer is that where ballad tunes attempt to mirror emotion they are considerably closer to the feeling one gets in folk-song.

In a ballad this affiliation with folk-song is inevitable, given that the extant collections lean heavily on singers who do not distinguish between ballads and other sorts of songs. Concomitantly, there is a tendency in some fine ballad singers to be especially conscious of the nature of the ballad-tune. Ewan McColl and Jeannie



Robertson are two such. Also, the arbitrary fixing of words to popular tunes in the past, especially in the Eighteenth century, has blurred the nature of the indivisibility and the precise character of the bond. A prevalent gripping story which captures the popular imagination might enjoy varying degrees of emotional assistance in any tone to which it is sung. This can be readily demonstrated with Bronson's ninety seven examples of tunes for Child Ten.

Anticipating a later conclusion Bronson wrote in 1944.

Indeed, I throw it out as an open question whether, in the decline of folk-song which we must inevitably expect as more and more of the population becomes corrupted by musical literacy, as it already has been by verbal literacy - for literacy and culture are very different - whether, I say, all folk-music will not evince the same tendency to drift toward a single, universal, indistinguishable, ultimate tune.

48

"The Twa Sisters" has a refrain, "Binnorie-O, Binnorie.....  
Edinburgh, Edinburgh" as well as other connections which grapple with the meaning of refrains and find a solution. "Binnorie" is the refrain for twenty one songs, all of them collected in Scotland, especially Aberdeenshire. Like the "down-derries" of a previous example, it is not susceptible to interpretation, the original intention being lost in time. Or perhaps the words sprang from a mishearing. There is an American version of "parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme", good herbal charms which become, "All will be well if you marry in time"! Rationality overcomes the magical and, perhaps, common sense defeats the charm. In 1934 Mrs Charles Muchler of Kalkaska, Michigan, sang a version of "The Two Sisters" of which the following is the first stanza;



Once there lived two sisters fair,  
Viola and Vinola  
A young man came a-courting both  
Down by the waters rolling.

49

She avoids rhyme in all stanzas and her tune bears little resemblance to those from Scotland. Bronson's footnote is helpful, suggesting the drift towards the "ultimate tune".

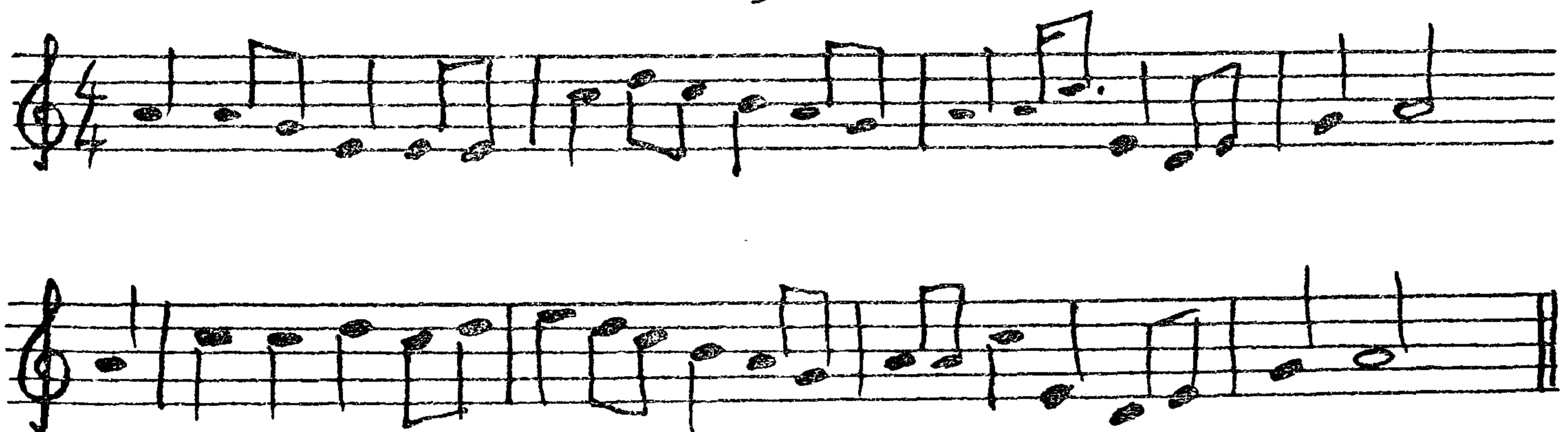
The tune here has lost some, but considerably less, of its patina than has the verbal text.

50



This can be immediately contrasted with Bronson's Number Nine, which was collected in Aberdeenshire.

51



I think this last example has qualities about it which amount to rather more than a "patina". Presumably Bronson wishes to point to antiquity and presupposes some special quality which arises solely from age or pedigree. The preference I state is based on the congeniality of the Aberdeenshire example which lacks the stark



economy in this case. But neither is complexity of melody a necessary advantage. The superiority of the latter is to do with its beauty and this is always a rather subjective quality, not given to yielding easy critical judgements which can be supported with evidence.

The American examples which Bronson musters demonstrate the prodigious popularity of the song in that country. After Number Twenty One all but seven ( 26, 49, 61, 79, 81, 82, 83) are American and three others ( 86, 89, 90) are of indeterminate origin. But the quantity produces little quality. Apart from the <sup>52</sup> occasional flashes of colloquial liveliness we are confronted with this sort of thing:

He gave the youngest a beaver hat;  
The oldest she got mad at that. (46)

She bowed her head and away she swum  
Till she came to her eternal home. (72)

All of them are innocuous, they do not bear up well in such concentrated numbers, and the weakest point in them all seems to be the attempts made at resolving the refrain into some manageable and comprehensible form. The beaver hat appears in many and the following stanza is characteristic.

Her lover he bought her a beaver hat,  
Bow-wee down,  
Her lover he bought her a beaver hat,  
Bow and balance to me,  
Her lover he bought her a beaver hat,  
The oldest one she didn't like that,  
I'll be true to my love  
If my love will be true to me.

The silliness of the refrain, which is at odds with the scheming in the verse-lines is clear, an absurd encumbrance to the ballad story which weakens it considerably. Once again the drift is towards



folk-song and the melodies which Bronson utilizes are all of that order, and are not good examples of the genre. The words would sound ridiculous set to the great abstract ballad tunes, and do not elicit such music. In essence, the words get the music which they deserve, or more organically, the type of music which is set to such words proceeds from a mind which is musically and poetically congruent. Impoverished tunes and simple-minded banalities of text hardly make for the intensity of experience of which I am thinking when I assign any work to my ballad-list.

By 1930, in Blount County, Tennessee, the tune and words have been eroded almost completely. Single lines carry the bare bones of the story and are supplemented with a four line chorus which is reverting to something like a charm. The melody, with its simple rhythm and extremely narrow compass, evince the same poverty of imagination and musical stiffness. 53



1. Was two sisters loved one man,  
Jelly flower jan;  
The rose marie;  
The jury hangs o'er  
The rose marie.
2. He loved the younger a little the best,  
Jelly flower jan;  
The rose marie;  
The jury hangs o'er  
The rose marie.
3. Them two sisters going down the stream,  
.....







perennial "rose-marie". The relevance of powerful , herbal magic  
54  
seems unrelated to a jury which by some quirk is itself "hanging".  
Such fugitive and addled notions incline the thing towards meaninglessness, and contrast with the richness that has been lost. There is a purposeful sense of ideas which gives the refrain its own compact and self-contained function.

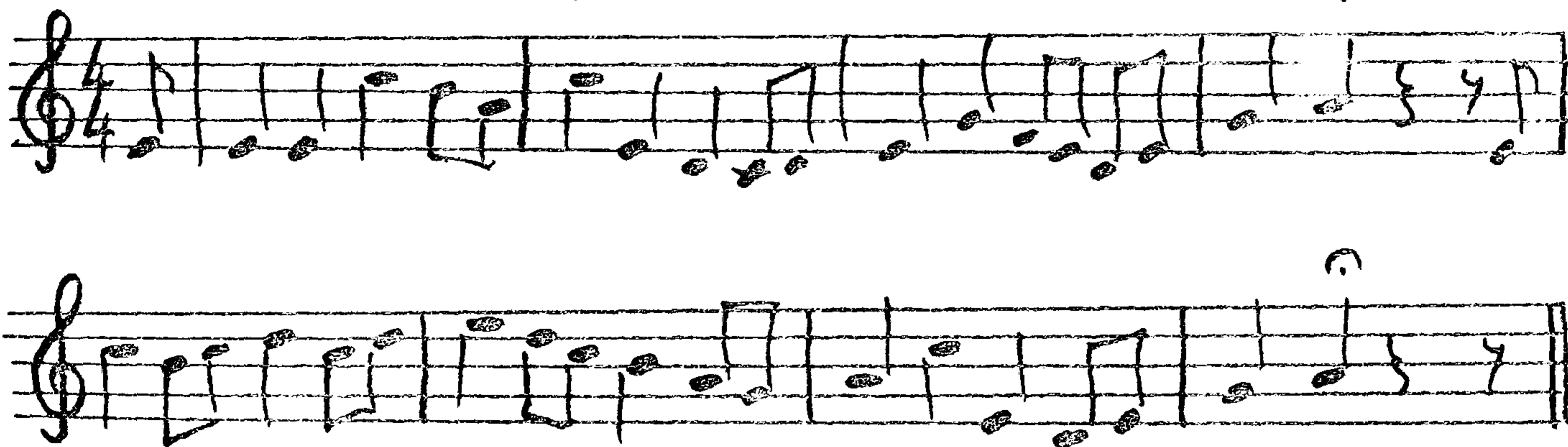
Ballad scholarship has been concerned with the collection and segregation of material, sometimes disregarding the quality of items when they contain some historical interest. One thing that such collections exaggerate is the relative quality of texts which are close to written sources in the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries. The refrain "Binnorie" occurs first in Sir Walter Scott's Minstrelsy and quickly becomes current. That the poems are most satisfactory at their most literary is obvious from my consideration of "The Twa Sisters". "The Cruel Sister" - perhaps it would be better to call both of these "Binnorie" - is a finer poem as we have it from Scott than any of the examples found in the field. And all of the field collecting occurred after the wide dissemination of Minstrelsy. We can only surmise the probable interaction of tradition and the printed word and perhaps conclude that the influence of the latter has been greater than is generally accepted. Literary sophistication in the ballads seems to proceed from a firm idea of their nature and to fulfil certain prescriptions which are characteristic of educated classes and not the peasant-folk. Musical literacy is, however, not as widespread, and the consequences for ballads are perplexing.

Having suggested that in the grander productions the perception of words is usually independent of the tune and that a suitable melody is often inflicted on them, we are forced once



again, to acknowledge that in the most satisfactory ballads success is due to a quite conscious awareness of the type of music which is best suited to the words. All critics agree that the ballads are incomplete without music, but they would equally quickly follow up that assertion with an acknowledgement of the fact that the music must be suitable. Even at the simplest level - a solo performing a ballad text - we are either satisfied or dissatisfied according to our preconceptions of style which can only proceed from the text. Of course, history provides some clues, but an ideal performance would find the singer motivated by the words and not out of a strictly antiquarian sense, when a crudely conceived, violent past colours the interpretation. The following plaintive, little tune, which has affinities with pipe/fiddle music is given as Bronson's "Binnorie", Number Six.

55



Unfortunately he only gives one stanza of the text. The tune is like so many Scottish folk melodies, but how unlike the American one last quoted. The melody has a pleasing fluidity and easy delivery without any histrionic displays, impersonal but with a strong melody which does not obscure the narrative. And the stanza given is the first of those to be found in "The Cruel Sister" in Scott's Minstrelsy. This is the finest text so, perhaps, the singer might have produced many of the twenty seven stanzas given by Scott.



It is likely that in the case of ballads like these above the singer begins with a conception of narrative and adapts and modifies what he remembers to verbal symbols before a tune is added. This would allow rather more freedom than a composer normally experiences. Any singer who has learned by listening will understand the process. One or two obscure words are "clarified" with additions which change what is heard. The same happens with learned melodies. Cecil Sharp writes of evolution occurring when continuous use results in variation by a selective process which ensures continuation.<sup>56</sup> His arguments are based on sound evidence, but I cannot help feeling that he needs to say something about the capability of the folk who take part in the process. Perhaps he lived in an age when there was a need to establish the credibility of such stuff as he discovered, and he wanted to present only the very best. All of this assumes that ballads and folk-song grow in the same way. Oral transmission would appear to have reduced the stature of the "Binnorie" ballads. There are enough gloomy asides in Bronson's work to suggest that he was less than happy that oral dissemination resulted in miraculous reworkings, and that in effect pieces produced at any time undergo a process of gradual degradation in the memories of the folk who transmit them.

It would be unfortunate to leave the ballad with a charge of steady decay levelled against it. The theory of constant recreation of the bare-bones of story with vague and uncertain relationship to the past is more palatable. In the case of a singer Ewan MacColl there can be little doubt about his part in the organization of the tunes and texts which he sings, for which he often writes his own explanatory notes. He draws material and inspiration from many sources.<sup>57</sup> One of his finest performances is of "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow" (Child 214).



This ballad has all the qualities of style which mark it out for inclusion as being close to pure balladry.



There was a lady in the North,  
 I ne'er could find her marrow;  
 She was courted by nine gentleman  
 And a ploughboy lad frae Yarrow.

These nine sat drinking at the wine,  
 Sat drinking wine on Yarrow;  
 They ha'e made a vow amang themselves  
 To fecht for her on Yarrow.

As he walked up yon high, high hill  
 And doon by the houns o' Yarrow,  
 There he saw nine armed men  
 Come to fecht wi' him on Yarrow.

And there they flew and there he slew  
 And there he wounded sairly,  
 Till her brither, John, cam' in beyond  
 And pierced his heart maist foully.

"O faither, dear, I dreamed a dream,  
 A dream o' dule and sorrow;  
 I dreamed I was pu'ing the heather bells  
 On the dowie dens o' Yarrow."

As she walked up yon high, high hill  
 And doon by the houms o' Yarrow;  
 There she saw her ain true love  
 Lying pale and wan on Yarrow.

Her hair being three-quarters lang,  
 The color it was yellow,  
 She wrappit roond his middle sae sma'  
 And bore him doon to Yarrow.

"O, faither dear, ye've sieven sons,  
 Ye may wed them a' tomorrow,  
 For the fairest flooer amang them a'  
 Was the lad I looed on Yarrow."



The effect of the music here is to remove any trace of emotion. It does not lend support to the places in the text where there could be scope for the conjuring of feelings which might be appropriate to a verse like the one which begins, "O faither, dear, I dreamed a dream". All the stanzas are gathered into a fabric which is linked by a thread of narrative which takes only passing interest in individual voices, in private feelings. So the singer must find a suitable position from which he can dramatise the incident as well as offer a commentary on the events which interprets their narrative significance. And he must do this within the confines of a tune which is repeated, with only slight and occasional changes of ornamentation for each stanza. The attack might vary. MacColl does, for example, sound more impassioned in the opening phrases of verse four, five and eight;

(4) And there they flew and there he slew

(5) O faither, dear, I dreamed a dream,

(8) O faither dear, ye've sieven sons,

in each case inclining towards the heightening which occurs naturally (and physically) eight times when he sings the second line of each stanza. The elevated pitch increases the intensity but it is not an interpretation of the words. The first three stanzas are sufficiently different to demonstrate this observation:

(1) I ne'er could find her marrow;

(2) Sat drinking wine on Yarrow;

(3) And doon by the houns o' Yarrow,

While the first could be seen as an indication of enthusiasm, numbers two and three are emotionally inert. And in stanza six, lines which



invite elaborate interpretation are contained and constrained by the normal cadence of the tune:

There she saw her ain true love  
Lying pale and wan on Yarrow.

It is evident that the tune does not exist to provide an emotional vehicle for the words as in other songs where it performs a reciprocal function; the words suggest the feeling and are then fitted out with a tune which increases their intensity. There is no attempt at such interpretation here. Even when the tune is simplified, presumably for the taste of the late nineteenth century, when Kidson collected it, the effect is the same.

Kidson's tune has impressive credentials. It was collected from Mrs Calvert of Gilnockie in Eskdale, the granddaughter of Tibbie Shiel, whose name occurs in folk-song and ballad collections in Scotland. The tune bears a close relationship to that which MacColl sings. Indeed, the text suggests that MacColl's version is Kidson pared down, either intentionally or as a matter of forgetfulness. The exclusion of Kidson's verse three (She washed his face) and verse thirteen (The fair maid being great with child) is understandable if the singer aims at lofty, heroical performance. The loss of stanzas five, seven and nine is unfortunate, especially the first two, which add to the complexity of the narrative and the power of the poem more generally.







There lived a lady in the west -  
I ne'er could find her marrow;  
She was courted by nine gentlemen,  
And a ploughboy lad in Yarrow.

These nine sat drinking at the wine,  
Sat drinking wine in Yarrow;  
They made a vow among themselves,  
To fight for her in Yarrow.

She washed his face, she kaimed his hair,  
As oft she'd done before, O!  
She made him like a knight sae bright,  
To fight for her in Yarrow.

And as he walked up yon high, high hill,  
And down by the holmes of Yarrow;  
There he saw nine armed men,  
Come to fight with him in Yarrow.

"There's nine of you, there's one of me,  
It's an unequal marrow;  
But I'll fight you all one by one,  
On the dowie dens of Yarrow."

There he slew, and there they flew,  
And there he wounded sorely;  
Till her brother, John, he came in beyond,  
And pierced his heart most foully.

"Go home, go home, thou false young man,  
And tell thy sister, Sarah,  
That her true love, John, lies dead and gone,  
On the dowie dens of Yarrow."

"Oh, father, dear, I dreamed a dream,  
I'm afraid it will bring sorrow;  
I dreamed I was pulling the heather bell,  
In the dowie dens of Yarrow."

"Oh, daughter, dear, I read your dream,  
I doubt it will prove sorrow;  
For your true love, John, lies dead and gone,  
On the dowie dens of Yarrow."

As she walked up yon high, high hill,  
And down by the holmes of Yarrow,  
There she saw her true love, John,  
Lying pale and dead on Yarrow.

Her hair it being three quarters long,



The colour it was yellow;  
She wrapped it round his middle sma',  
And carried him hame to Yarrow.

"Oh, father, dear, you've seven sons,  
You may wed them a' to-morrow;  
But a fairer flower I never saw,  
Than the lad I loved in Yarrow."

This fair maid being great with child,  
It filled her heart with sorrow;  
She died within her lover's arms,  
Between that day and morrow.

This is so much like the MacColl version that I feel there must be a connection either a common source from which both spring, or more likely, the MacColl is an adaptation of the written source, perhaps transmitted orally. If this is the case then the singer's consciousness of just what he is doing - singing a venerable, old Scots ballad - is seminal in his adaptation. The principle of selection which results in this conformation of the story is based on an acknowledgement of not only the singer's taste, but also on the new audience who might be too sophisticated to accept Kidson's final stanza without twinges of discomfort conditioned by a more cynical age.

The extent of interference with ballads in order to give them an acceptable form can be seen in Burns' version of "Lord Randal". MacColl's abbreviated "Dowie Dens" is indicative of the span of attention of his audience. Burns' "Lord Ronald" is even more alarmingly truncated. He gives two stanzas only for inclusion in the Scots Musical Museum and in the interleaved edition makes the following observation. It is, he writes,

..a very favourite (song) in Ayrshire,.....evidently the original of Lochaber. In this manner, most of our finest more modern airs have had their origin. Some early minstrel .....composed the simple artless original air, which being pickt up by the more learned modern musician took the more modern form it bears.



Kinsley tells us that the air is found in manuscript in the late seventeenth century, as "Lochaber" in Orpheus Caledonius (Burns owned a copy) in 1733 and then in Johnson's collection. This is the latter:



O where hae ye been, Lord Ronald, my son?  
 O where hae ye been, Lord Ronald, my son?  
 I hae been wi' my sweetheart, mother, make my bed soon;  
 For I'm weary wi' the hunting, and fain wad lie down.-

What got ye frae your sweetheart, Lord Ronald, my son?  
 What got ye frae your sweetheart, Lord Ronald, my son?  
 I hae got deadly poison, mother, make my bed soon;  
 For life is a burden that soon I'll lay down.-

61

Like so many of the ballad tunes Scottish folk-dance is not far away! I find Jeannie Robertson's "Lord Donald" more riveting and appropriate. The extent to which it is an imposition of a style calculated to reflect a particular interpretation of the text is not known. Burns seems to have been contented with a limited stature for the piece. Jeannie Robertson gathers it into a world of vast and impersonal grandness, where her aim is to purge the qualities with which Burns justifies his reduction; it would have sounded more "modern" in the eighteenth century. Burns settles for the pastoral slightness which places the drama, perhaps even divests the ballad of the very quality from which it would normally take its life, a subtle directness which



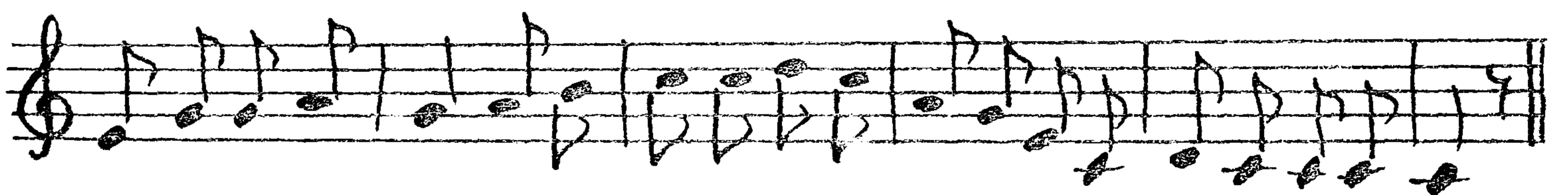
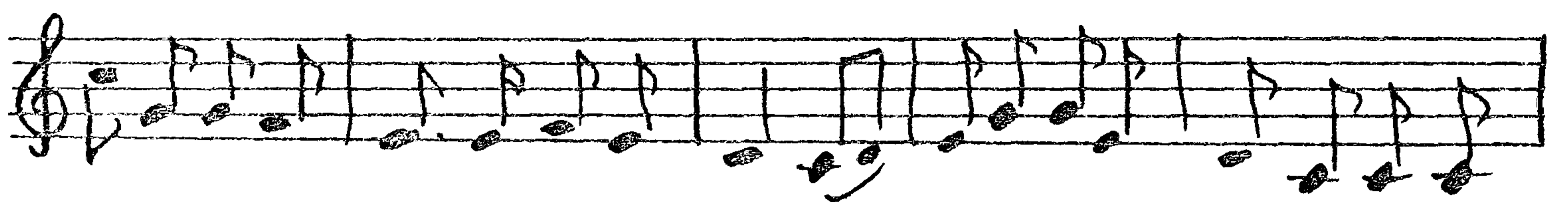
must be expansive. Both melody and text in his version are restrictive.

Ballad study, then, will always be subject to uncomfortable suggestions concerning the origin and degree of tampering evident in nay of the texts and tunes. Some judgements are possible, especially where we begin with an idea of what the finest ballads attempt to do and a recognition that there is no clear delineation between ballad and folk-song. We might assign a song to one camp or the other, but this will always be a decision taken upon internal evidence. That is the only fixed bearing which we have. I will return to Australian folk-song again, then,- repetition being as natural to dissertations as it is to music and verse - to two songs which were arrested early in their lives and which provide a summary of the nature of ballad music and texts. Both songs are about the deeds of Ned Kelly. They exemplify two basic approaches to narrative which are characteristic of the Child Ballads; a detached reporting of incident and an equally detached, imagined dialogue which dramatizes known events and seeks to engage sympathy. What is so valuable in these is the fact that they are so recent and that they are words composed for existing popular folk-tunes. Kelly was hanged in 1880.

As the Kelly legend grew so did the number of songs about him, especially amongst the Irish farmers for whom he was fast becoming a Robin Hood. There are many versions of "Stringybark Creek", but the finest one is given by Manifold in his Australian Songbook. The words<sup>62</sup> were collected from the Strathbogie Ranges, close to Kelly country, and were conceived to fit an existing tune. "Paddy Fagan" is the tune more usually added, but "The Wearing of the Green" is an equally common source of music for the song. We start then with a popular tune, a popular hero and a tale which is reported with considerable accuracy. The language is very much of the time, neither lofty or



particularly resonant but quite functional. Some words are, I think, jarring and suggest a complexity out of keeping with the rest of the poem. "Blithely" is one, and "a haunted, harassed man" seems tonally out of context, but otherwise the narrative proceeds with only occasional intrusions of interpretive comment. The singer would appear to reveal a well defined position in the idea of "cruel fate" (stanza four) and in Kennedy's gameness (stanza five). Or is fate inevitable? The threatened middle-class, who rally in the last stanza, exact their revenge after relentless pursuit which transforms the outlaws into hunted animals.



A sergeant and three constables rode out from Mansfield town  
 At the end of last October for to hunt the Kellys down.  
 They started for the Wombat Hills, and found it quite a lark  
 To be camped upon the borders of a creek called Stringybark.

When Scanlon and the sergeant rode away to search the scrub  
 Leaving MacIntyre and Lonigan in camp to cook the grub,  
 Ned Kelly and his comrades came to take a nearer look,  
 For being short of flour they wished to interview the cook.

Both troopers at the camp alone they were well pleased to see,  
 Watching while the billy boiled to make their pints of tea.  
 They smoked and chatted gaily, never thinking of alarms,  
 Till they heard the dreaded cry behind: 'Bail up! Lay down  
 your arms!'



It was later in the afternoon, the sergeant and his mate  
Came riding blithely through the bush to meet their cruel fate.  
'The Kellys have the drop on you,' the prisoners cried aloud.  
But the troopers took it as a joke and sat their horses proud.

Then trooper Scanlon made a move his rifle to unsling,  
But to his heart a bullet sped, and death was in its sting.  
Then Kennedy leapt off his mount and ran for cover near,  
And fought most gamely to the last for all his life held dear.

The sergeant's horse raced through the camp escaping friend  
and foe,  
And MacIntyre, his life at stake, sprang to the saddle-bow.  
He galloped far into the night, a haunted harassed man,  
Then planted in a wombat-hole till morning light beagn.

At dawn of day he hastened out, and made for Mansfield town  
To break the news that made men vow to shoot the killers down.  
So from that hour the Kelly gang was hunted far and wide  
Like outlaw dingoes of the hills until the day they died.

The music is peripheral only in as much as it makes no attempt to interpret the words or to convey emotional intensity (which of course, does not occur in the text in any case). It is a decorative addition which perhaps assists the recollection of incident and helps the flow of rhythm, which is in itself an aid to memory. The retelling of a popular tale in a familiar tune seems to have been the usual experience in Australian folk-song. But this is clearly a ballad in just the way that "Sir Patrick Spens" or "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow" are ballads. There is no fixed moral position. The Kelly Gang are killers. The death which the troopers die is cruel, but also the result of self-defence as the outlaws, who have not killed to this point, come to steal food. The end of the second stanza with its wry explanation of the reason for the confrontation is ambivalent, the humour tending to detract from the "facts". However, the gang become "outlaw dingoes" and the ballad does I think, want to lean towards the rightness of that. It would be difficult to prove, especially as so much of the text works through the sequence of events without adopting a stance which either defends the Kellys, or sees their crimes as necessarily heinous. It is largely



amoral seeking only to describe the incident and is subject to sublimated conventional morality. The King who sends Sir Patrick Spens to Norway is not guilty of a crime, even if the latter's death is lamentable. Ballads acknowledge individual tragedy but in a larger context which might not diminish its intensity or disallow private grief but which always deals in larger patterns.

Contemporary with "Stringybark Creek" is "Ned Kelly's Farewell to Greta". It must be remembered that we are dealing with a period, probably no more than twenty years in all, after the outlaw was hanged and with a culture which was poised between rural pioneering and urban sprawl. The usual problems of authenticity of folk-song and ballad development do not exist in this confined period just prior to the modern enthusiasm for the "people's art" and co-existent with the Bulletin which championed an Australian image. The Strathbogie Ranges are still largely unpopulated so it is difficult to assess the influence of the more learned and consciously artless poems of the Bulletin in that area. "Farewell to Greta" was collected in Brunswick by the Folklore Society of Victoria from the singing of Mrs.C.S.Peatey. There is no record of where she gleaned it, but Brunswick is a Melbourne suburb, although that should not presuppose an urban origin. The tune sounds Irish, but none of the commentators have discovered a source. Some variants, especially the one printed in Songs from the Kelly Country, have identifiable tunes, regardless of their hybrid nature. The latter is set to a variation of "Denis O'Riley". Mrs. Peatey's song has the following tune;

Handwritten musical notation for the tune of "Farewell to Greta". The music is written on two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The second staff provides the bass line, also in 4/4 time, with notes and rests. Chord symbols are written above and below the staves: C, C, G, Amin, C, G7/B, D, Amin, G7, G7, C.



NED: Farewell my home in Greta, my sister Kate farewell;  
It grieves my heart to leave you, but here I cannot dwell.  
The brand of Cain is on my brow, the bloodhounds on my trail,  
And for the sake of golden gain my freedom they assail.

But should they cross my chequered path, by all I hold on  
earth,  
I'll give them cause to rue the day their mothers gave them  
birth.  
I'll shoot them down like kangaroos that roam the forests wide,  
And leave their bodies bleaching upon some woodland side.

KATE: Oh Edward, dearest brother you know you must not go  
And risk to be encountered by such a mighty foe!  
It's duly North lies Morgan's Tower, and pointing to the sky  
South-east and East the mighty range of Gippsland mountains  
lie.

You know the country well, dear Ned, go take your comrades  
there,  
And profit by your knowledge of the wombat and the bear.  
And let no petty quarrels part the union of our gang,  
But stick to one another, Ned, and guard our brother Dan.

In John Manifold's book guitar chords have been added. The concertina was popular in Australia in the nineteenth century so there is no reason to see this as imposing a chordal structure on the song. The most interesting part of the harmonization is the A minor chord at the beginning of the fourth bar where the sense of the words dictates tonality.

The song is a development of the question and answer ballads but considerably reduced in its dramatic structure. There are vague memories of a tradition here;

I'll shoot them down like kangaroos that roam the forests wide,  
And leave their bodies bleaching upon some woodland side.

It is unusual to find a reference to "forests" and the idea of bleaching bones is reminiscent of "Twa Corbies". The "brand of Cain" is a popular allusion and like "golden gain" comes from the most familiar book in a



pioneering home. Kate Kelly councils evasion and after some geographical precision which establishes an authoratative tone and credibility for the singer's knowledge of Glenrowan, (where the Kellys lived) delivers the fatuous line;

And profit by your knowledge of the wombat and the bear.

Wombats are stupid, grovelling creatures and the koala bear rarely comes out of the trees, so quite what this means is difficult to discern. Undeterred, Kate identifies the most valuable asset of the bushman which becomes a hallmark of the Australian image, comradeship, throwing in as an afterthought - one which doubtless helped to preserve the song - the direction to guard his brother.

If we compare the "Farewell to Greta" tune with "Stringybark Creek", the sentimentality of the former is immediately obvious. This is at once suggested by the text where we find mutually supportive tones that make the whole more intensely sentimental than either of the parts. But is it a ballad? It is certainly a small piece of drama, like "Lord Randal", in which the words create the characters. There is no obvious authorial voice which constantly draws attention to itself. It is however, and unlike "Stringybark Creek", an imaginative interpretation of an incident which, although it is probable, has no foundation in fact. The contrast then demonstrates the matter of factness of "Stringybark Creek". What is most important in these examples in their very recent history and the undeniable combination of words with an established and particular tune. Sentimentality is a matter of taste, and taste changes regularly, so both songs are equally valuable records. The impulse to sing and report actual and apocryphal events, like good journalism in any age, relies on disinterestedness thus allowing a



reader or hearer to make his own judgement. Such songs might hide a high degree of subliminal lamentation stemming from value judgements made by a population which makes its own heroes. "Sir Patrick Spens" has this undercurrent, as does any hero worship. It is after all the reason for the initial interest. How many people were hanged in the Old Melbourne jail in 1880? Certainly more than one. So ballads speak from a collective will for people who perpetuate them. That their voice is not always impartial is unfortunate, but they do strive for an impersonality (if we can for a moment allow them a life apart from individual performances) which is uncompromisingly public. The individual interpretation of dramatic instances is a matter of personal taste, but we never hear a poet's voice or if we do then we suspect some interference. Such tampering in Australian ballads is easier to see than similar interference in, say, Scottish ballads in the 1820's. It is a matter of diction as much as meaning and we are closer to a received English in Australia in 1890 than to a bastardised Scots of the 1820's, and consequently more attuned to tonal clashes. When Doris in Sweeney Agonistes says:

I don't care for such conversation,

she crosses the border of a social class. Similarly the "Egyptians and Ancient Hebrews" seem startlingly academic in "Morton Bay". The ballads in Child's collection are conveniently "border" ballads; neither strictly Scots nor English. This interposes yet another difficulty given that we cannot be sufficiently sensitive to the implied regional sounds to detect variation and interference. Australian ballads demonstrate that such songs have existed, exclusive of learned sources, and that they do have that peculiar impersonality which is the mark of the very best of the Child/Bronson collections.



AFTERWORD :



Looking back, and with as much detachment as I can muster, I am a little alarmed at patches of scepticism which border on the cynical. Those occur naturally as I formulate an acceptable perspective for myself which attempts to be more than a subjective account of a few songs. I am uneasy about my overall presentation of Benjamin Britten, for example, not because I think it wrong perhaps, but because I am growing towards a less demanding interpretation or fidelity to a text, or perhaps this is mellowing with age. Or is it simply that individual musical taste changes always, and old opinions are made subject to review and a new scrutiny? My judgement of the traditional ballad material represents a reversal of a more naive position which I held ten years ago. The ballad did seem, then, to be the tattered fragments of a glorious age scrupulously reworked in an oral tradition which was always faithful to the impulse from which the songs had originally taken their life. The reality is much more complex and not as complimentary to the folk. But as Shakespeare made one of his characters say:

Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate and furious,  
Loyal and neutral, in a moment?

Macbeth Act 2, Sc 3. ll 110-111

Macbeth has, unlike me, been guilty of some gory butchery, after his master-stroke, but the point stands. A dissertation like this one is a constant discovery of one's position which although it is fixed in ink, is by no means fossilized. Ossification is a metaphorical possibility in the brain! The momentariness of critical judgements, regardless of how well they are considered, regardless of whether they are temperate or furious, will always make another reading a new discovery or an argument with oneself. Having taught Tess of the D'Urbervilles a couple of times I could not conceive of reading it again for pleasure! But



the danger of well developed theories is not so much in the formulation, as in their rigorous application especially when individual works are made to conform or else are rejected as inconsiderable and fatuous. I have not attempted to make rules or a cipher or to reject out of hand, by careful omission, for example, items which weaken my case. The dissertation is of its nature a testing of my own assumptions against a series of posited stages, the discovery of which is not the end of my study. But this is implicit in local comment especially where, as with Burns, there is some difficulty in discovering the extent to which he owes anything distinctive to the folk. And of course the folk of the eighteenth century are not the same species as their social equivalent today. Neither were the Scottish folk the same as the English in Burns' time.

The reassessment of the ideas of relative personality and impersonality is, perhaps, the single most significant feature of what I have written. They are dangerous words and very slippery when pressed into use. My formal organization demonstrates one way of fixing their meaning which does not sacrifice their usefulness. That individuals can be detached is clear enough. The extent to which their work aims at such detachment varies. Indeed, Keats or Wordsworth would hardly claim to have aimed at finding an externalized position from which to view their experience. But impersonality cannot in an individual, mean the displacement of personality. It is as unobtainable as objectivity. A degree of either might occur, but the hidden assumptions upon which judgement is made or opinion formed, disallow complete disinterestedness. I cannot think of any considerable poem which is based on foundations other than opinions and judgements except perhaps "Kubla Khan", which takes its life from a compelling musicality and its complete unwillingness to be other than a fragment of a larger



idea. Impersonality is better reserved for those poems which express no individual feelings and which are bound up with the society out of which they grow or, for which they continue to have some meaning. And what grows out of these thoughts is a consideration of the idea of poetic and musical voices, what they are and how they are related to what they present. The idea is not new in itself, but I have not found it applied to the breadth of material which I have assembled here. Neither have I seen it used to determine a critical approach to songs where words and music are taken to be contributing at least equally to what is expressed.

Any setting of words to appropriate music requires, of course, in the first instance, a sympathetic reading. Immediately the suggestions of interpretation are clear. If the composer succeeds, then his reading of the text not only clarifies the words but also makes the poet's personality obvious if not more accessible to that equally attentive interpreter, a listener. It is as if the composer becomes an intermediary who explicates. The assumption that musical language is understood is tacit in this but the union of the two arts is more complex than a one way flow of interpretive significance. What is created in song is a third species which is neither of its components, and it is as I have shown not a single entity in itself. There is no doubt that the best musical settings give life to the chosen text. If not, then the composer's principle of selection is of questionable value, and like Burns, he has composed "from the wish rather than the impulse". Or in the case of the more impersonal songs, there has been an imposition of an unsuitable tune on otherwise acceptable words which are limited or trivialized by their setting. Conversely, a fine tune can be encumbered with silly and limiting words. We must judge the individual instance on its merits.

Another relocation of emphasis occurs in my use of the word



"humanism". This word has a precise meaning in an historical sense, linking those scholars who begin to focus the "proper study of mankind". More, Erasmus, Vives come to mind and perhaps Petrarch (although if we allow him membership of the class, then why not Chaucer?) Humanism in this sense is amorphous, and like "the Renaissance" or "Impressionism", is indicative of a broad class. My use of the word "personality" clearly fixes my idea of humanism. It is an interpretation of human life which takes as its first premise the fact of death as being the most significant incident with which an individual is confronted. This need not be a morbid or sentimental consideration. It is after all the one common experience which all men share and which defines their 'humanness'. Poets, usually the sensitive interpreters and investigators of private experience, often use this awareness to articulate fear and apprehension which is at some time an important contemplation for most men. And the privacy and essentially individual nature of such thoughts tend to make them the subject of poems which are not of the public sphere. The privacy and urgency of these ideas have often found a sympathetic ear in composers who recognize their own position which a poet has managed to put into words. The sympathetic setting might manage to preserve fidelity to a text while developing the feelings which a poem expresses.

To speak of the "public sphere" is not to overlook the obvious public function of any art. There are however poems and songs (and painting, . sculpture and the like) which are generally not concerned with the private world of particular minds and imaginations. Such song is not encumbered with the often tortuous contemplation of singular beings who articulate enough to reveal their interpretations of the world and fears for self. An individual might achieve detachment in which he can examine his relation to the less private operations of an



indifferent universe. Shakespeare as much as any other poet achieves this in plays like The Tempest. In such a play what is examined is not an individual psyche in the context of a world in which it is bred and nurtured and whose rules it will soon challenge, usually to the detriment of all. Rather, the inescapable pattern of life and death is taken as the context in which individuals must find an acceptable spiritual and intellectual position. It is a masterpiece of clear-eyed interpretation that Shakespeare does not give Prospero the peace of mind we might expect to grow out of experience. He cannot, of course, and such a conclusion would be self-delusion. What he does achieve is an impersonal contemplation of the humanist position without the voice of an urgent present, so important in Yeats. The experiences which must be lived through might be similar but Shakespeare has clearly got behind his private fear and has achieved an intellectual solution which does not exclude presentation in poetry, which is perhaps more usually the vehicle of an individual voice. He effectively separates the dancer from the dance, at least enough to distinguish formal patterning, but without losing sight of the parts which compose the whole.

Incidental discoveries are inevitable and in most cases inextricable from the matrix where they occur, without extensive re-statement. Australian folk-song, for example, I have taken to demonstrate the growth and development firstly of folk-song style, and secondly to offer insights into traditional ballads. They suggest that tales of popular heroes are subjected to reworkings in a number of environments, each of which makes a selective adaptation and impression on the material, the stamp of its own feelings, the individual singer finding approval for what his society endorses. And literary figures are susceptible to such pressures. How much of Scots



style is dictated by the Romantic enthusiasm for Ossianic "bardology", which in turn is influenced by collections like those of Bishop Percy, will always be a matter for speculation; but poets in such circumstances, and like a folk-singer, work for an audience. The extent to which the purveyor of any art is effected in his production by the market on which he depends, either spiritually or materially, will continue to be a question for critic and historian. But there is no doubt, and I have demonstrated this, that the valuable examples of both folk and ballad material occur as individual instances which survive from most ages and which, on the experience of the American and Australian songs of the early twentieth century, are limited by the sensibility of performers as much as <sup>by</sup> recollection of melody and incident. It would be reprehensible to consider the ballad, for example, as offering the same experience as an intensely personal lyric by a self-conscious and articulate poet. Sensibility, in a more general sense, might apply to both when the search for quality is undertaken. But clearly such notions must be confined to a consideration of actual examples in the body of the text.

I have attempted to relate poetic and musicāl voices which are identifiable in the respective parts of a song and show how this relationship might be used to describe the work in which it occurs. Critical language evolves necessarily from a recognition of precisely what is being scrutinized, so it is important to acknowledge that songs are a special case. If the critical approach proceeds from a pre-determined set of rules, it can only be limiting. But, then, it would be foolish to pretend that objectivity can exist when individual judgements are made which are supported by one opinion. One of Eliot's most potent observations was made about his own craft but it can be taken to apply to any writing. The fifth section of East Coker, even



taken out of context, has a universality which transcends the specificity of a poet's battle with the language. And the battle goes on!



APPENDIX :

There are numerous settings of poems of A.E.Housman. They include a range of styles that stretches from simple piano/voice settings to the complex polyphony of voice and chamber ensemble. A recent recording has made some of these readily available and includes the following composers :

- a/ Arthur Somervell A Shropshire Lad (Cycle).
- b/ George Butterworth Six Songs from A Shropshire Lad.
- c/ E.J.Moeran Ludlow Town (Cycle)
- d/ Ivor Gurney The Western Playland (Cycle)
- e/ Some songs are included by Orr, Peel, Gibbs, Bax and Ireland.

The recording A Shropshire Lad (Trew and Vignoles) (E77031/2) provides useful comparisons. While many settings are suitably atmospheric - especially those of Somervell and Butterworth - none rises to the level of drama of the settings by Vaughan Williams. Neither is there an attempt to unify the poetry by musically linking the pieces with the special musical logic which is evident in the Wenlock Edge cycle. That is not to say that none of these composers impose a structure. Somervell, for example, repeats the melody for his setting of "Loveliest of Trees" in the accompaniment of the penultimate song in his cycle ("Into my Heart an Air that Kills"). The effect is touching and melancholy. But the Somervell Cycle hinges on contrasting moods and tempi.

What emerges from a consideration of such a variety of settings of the same material, is the superiority of Vaughan Williams and the appropriateness of his selection, organization and presentation of material.



NOTES AND REFERENCES :



CHAPTER ONE :

1. Sir Michael Tippett in A History of Song. (ed. D.Stevens)  
London, 1960. pp 461 - 66.
2. Through the Looking Glass in The Annotated Alice. Penguin, 1979.  
Chapter VI. "Humpty Dumpty", pp 262 - 263.

my name means the shape I am.....with a name like yours  
you might be any shape.

Alice is not prepared to become involved in an extensive and clearly insoluble series of riddling questions. She is, rather, concerned about Humpty Dumpty in a foreknowledge based on recollections of the nursery rhyme. The egg is keen to win any logical strategies in which he becomes involved!

3. The concept is more acceptable to me than it has been to others. Dr.Johnson doubted that the lines (and more especially the metaphors) were in fact Shakespeare's! A useful article which offers another perspective can be found in Shakespeare Survey (19), 1966. pp 34 - 44. The emphasis on any one interpretation of such obvious symbols is dangerous. Alchemy, however, was clearly a common subject of literary thought. Ben Jonson (The Alchemyst) or Donne's "Nocturnal Upon St.Lucie's Day" presupposes an acquaintance with the aims and jargon of the "science", so it is not far-fetched to expect a particular resonance in Shakespeare's audience.
4. T.S.Eliot. "Tradition and the Individual Talent", in Selected Essays. Faber, 1957.
5. The following are two examples of the "music" of poetry, notated in an allophonic transcription. They are basically an indication of the sound patterns of an idealized form of English and Scots and might, in places, not be true to particular ways of pronouncing words. We would need an impressionistic transcription for that, with the nuances of individual differences of vocal attack indicated. Twenty native speakers reading the same line in, say Scots, would produce twenty different transcriptions. Such evidence reinforces the notion that each verbalizing of a poem



is indeed a new performance:

R(eceived) P(ronunciation)

[ aɪ fəd ʌtŋ t<sup>h</sup>u aɪn<sup>2</sup>t mo:d hu: wəz ɒn ə tʃəp əbrɔ:d ]

Scots

[ æ fʌd rɛtŋ t<sup>h</sup>u aɪn<sup>2</sup>t mo:d h<sup>u</sup> wəz ɒn ʌ trɛp ʌbrɔ:d ]

Some composers have attempted to record precise details of spoken or sung passages in their works. Sequenza III of Luciano Berio, for example, includes carefully prepared instructions for a performer. These include the following.....

The text is written in different ways:

- 1) Sounds or groups of sounds phonetically notated;
- 2) Sounds or groups of sounds as pronounced in context:  
/gi/ as in give, /wo/ as in woman, /tho/ as in without,  
/co/ as in comes etc.
- 3) Words conventionally written and uttered: "give me a few words" etc.

6. For "Victorian maidens" read "Australian school children". The spirit is the same however. Thomas Bowdler prints "bloody". The twentieth century is equally careful about accidental swearing'.
7. John Dryden Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays. (ed. G.Watson) 1962. ii pp 36 - 37.
8. These words are my shorthand. Eliot spoke and wrote about being a poet on many occasions, but I am still thinking of "Tradition and the Individual Talent". pp 15
9. See H.Crabb Robinson Diary Reminiscences, and Correspondence.

Crabb Robinson also pestered Wordsworth and other Romantics. His "insights" are often questionable!



10. See, for example William Blake by Martin K. Nurmi esp. 47 and 48. Also pp 66 - 67. This account is totally speculative and the idea of relating the Bach 'Cello Suites , with their fundamentally Baroque qualities, to Blake's verse seems rather forced.

11. The similarities between Watts' Moral Songs and Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience suggest that the latter had an ingrained model. They share poems about lambs for example. Watts wrote "Innocent Play" which begins with the following lines.

Abroad in the meadows, to see the young lambs  
Run sporting about by the side of their dams,  
With fleeces so clean and so white;  
Or nest of young doves in a large open cage,  
When they play all in love, without anger or rage,  
How much may we learn from the sight.

Blake's poem "The Lamb" certainly shares some of Watts' impressions of gentleness. He makes a suggestion in "Innocent Play" of the nature of Blake's "Tiger". By implication dogs share the tiger's blood-lust:

If we had been.....  
... dogs, we might play till it ended in blood.

"The Rose" by Watts provides a lesson in the persistence of virtue.

How fair is the Rose! what a beautiful flower!  
The glory of April and May:  
But the leaves are beginning to fade in an hour,  
And they wither and die in a day.  
Yet the Rose has one powerful virtue to boast,  
Above all the flowers of the field!  
When its leaves are all dead and fine colours are lost,  
Still how sweet a perfume it will yield!

For Blake a rose is the victim of the consequences of its attractiveness, perhaps not unwittingly, and "dark secret love" is seen as destructive. For Blake the "virtue" might be the seat of a dangerous temptation.

It is likely that Blake knew settings of Watts' hymns and moral poems.



12. Hugh Blair Lecture on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. Edinburgh, 1820. Vol. 11 pp 221. The lectures were first published in 1783 at the end of Blair's career.
13. James Beattie Essays on Poetry and Music, as they Affect the Mind. 1778 pp 163 - 165.
14. J.S.Bach 1685 - 1750  
J.Haydn 1732 - 1809  
W.A.Mozart 1756 - 1791  
L. van Beethoven 1770 - 1827  
James Beattie 1735 - 1803.
15. D.R.C. Marsh Creativity and Control. La Trobe University Press. Inaugural Lecture. p 5.
16. Wilfred Mellers Harmonious Meeting. Dobson, 1965. p 108.
17. Igor Stravinsky. Poetics of Music. Vintage. p 46.
18. See esp. Eduard Hanslick The Beautiful in Music. The Library of Liberal Arts, 1957. Also Chapter Seventeen of Max Graf Composer and Critic. Chapman and Hall, 1947.
19. Hanslick ibid. p 22.
20. Three thousand years of persistent torturing of this word have produced as many as possible meanings, and no satisfactory fixity. Interpretations have varied according to the age which produces them. The complexity of Keats' "Beauty is truth, - truth beauty, -" has been examined at length in Cleanth Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn. Methuen, 1968. Ch. 7, p 124, and in F.R.Leavis' final essay in Revaluation. Peregrine, 1964. p 199. There are, of course, numerous other commentaries on this poem, and on other equally specific instances. Santayana, in his essay "The Sense of Beauty", reprinted in part, in Selected Critical Writings. Cambridge University Press, 1968. p 225, embodies ideas and ideals which suggest his origin in the Nineteenth



Century, but as he is writing aesthetics - I think he would prefer to write say "criticism" - he can be more expansive and definitive than Keats. The sensuousness of Keats' work at its most sensitive extension, played a part in the birth of a cult of tremulous suspension which at its apogee surrendered intelligence and indulged in titillation of the senses. Santayana is specific in his prescriptions for the "great" and beautiful"....transformation of sense and emotion into objects agreeable to the intellect, into clear ideas and beautiful things is the natural work of reason." ( op.cit. p 105) A more specific reference to the Nineteenth Century is perhaps contained in "the vagueness we are too pretentious to make accurate, we pass off as sublimity." (p 231) The following extract, written in 1894 (p 244) gives some sense of the prevailing attitude and hints at its rejection." ... in our time, a reawakening of the love of beauty has prompted a refinement of our poetical language, we pass so soon into extravagance, obscurity, and affectation. Our modern languages are not susceptible of great, formal beauty." Hanslick too shared something of this sense of formal beauty. "The beautiful, strictly speaking, aims at nothing, since it is nothing but a form which, though available to many purposes according to its nature has, as such, no aim beyond itself." (Hanslick Op.Cit. p 9) And again : "A work of art endows a definite conception with a material form of beauty." (Op. Cit. p 20). The individuals Hanslick selects to criticise exemplify a variety of emotional theories ( pp 17 - 19 ). Amadeus Autodidakatus best illustrates the philosophy of emotional flaccidity which, I am suggesting, found its most serious challenge in the championship of reason as it is embodied in Hanslick' view of form. Hanslick singles out the following as a culpable attitude. "Music has its origin and its roots in the world of sentiment and sensation. Musically melodious sounds are a sealed book to the intellect which only describes and analyzes sensation..... They appeal to the feeling..." (etc. p 18) Hanslick is finally wrong, or at least he overstates the position, but he offers an incisive and provocative challenge to passive indulgence.

21. Alan Walker The Anatomy of Musical Criticism. Barrie and



- Rockliff, 1966. p 5.
22. Walker. *ibid.* p 9.
23. Walker. *ibid.* p 9.
24. Walker. *ibid.* p 50 (footnote). See also p 45.
- 25/26 Roger Sessions The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener. Princeton University Press, 1971. p 24.
27. Deryck Cooke The Language of Music. Oxford University Press, 1968.
28. For the purposes of this discussion, the important theory was developed in the following articles and books. All are by Susanne K.Langer. See Note 12, Chapter 11.
- a. The Principle of Creation in Art. Hudson Review, 1950 No. 2 pp 515 - 534.
  - b. The Primary Illusion and the Great Orders of Art. Hudson Review, 1950. No. 3 pp 219 - 233.
  - c. Philosophy in a New Key. Mentor, 1952.
  - d. Feeling and Form. Routledge, Kegan Paul. 1963.
29. Samuel Bufford Susanne Langer's Two Philosophies of Art. J.A.A.C. 1972, Fall, pp 9 - 20.
30. Bufford. *ibid.* p 9.
31. Cooke, Op.Git.
32. Almost any commentator will furnish a suitable to sentence to illustrate this. For example, see Wilfred Mellers in Man and His Music. Barrie and Rockliff, 1964. p 668.
33. See entry in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians for the plainchant melody and its history.



34. Albert Schweitzer J.S.Bach. (Trans. E.Newman) MacMillan, 1911. p 115.
35. An interesting literary parody of musical mimic can be seen in Swift's Cantata. (Swift's Poems. Vol. 3, pp 955 - 61, Oxford University Press, 1958.) This edition also provides the music composed by Swift's friend, Dr. Echlin Beattie, who will figure prominently in the second section of this chapter, censured 'illicit imitations' and wrote that "this abuse of a noble art did not escape the satire of Swift; who though deaf to the charms of music, was blind to the absurdity of musicians."
36. F.R.Leavis English Literature in our Time and the University. Chatto and Windus, 1969. pp 1 - 35.
37. F.R.Leavis The Great Tradition. Penguin Books, 1962 p 17.
38. F.R.Leavis Revaluation. Penguin Books, 1964. pp 18 - 21.
39. Leavis. ibid. pp 170 - 194. "The effect of Shelley's eloquence is to hand poetry over to a sensibility that has no more dealing with intelligence than it can help..... it is impossible to go on reading him at length with pleasure; the elusive imagery, the high-pitched emotions, the tone and the movement, the ardours, the ecstasies, and the despairs are too much the same all through. The effect is of vanity and emptiness (Arnold was right) as well as monotony." Both Shelley and Swinburne are seen by Leavis to have sacrificed sense for sound.
40. Leavis Scrutiny. Vol. 11 No. ii. September, 1933 pp 197 - 198.
41. Leavis. ibid. p 198.
42. M.Arnold The Study of Poetry, in Essays : Second Series. Everyman, 1964. p 235.



43. I have written of a 'tradition' of criticism, stretching from Dr. Johnson through Coleridge and Arnold to Leavis. Something of this movement of literary emphasis and ethical re-orientation can be seen traced in Vincent Buckley's Poetry and Morality. (Chatto and Windus, London, 1959.)
44. Eliot is seeking to explain the special strength of Metaphysical wit and lyricism, especially in the poetry of Marvell. See Selected Essays. (Faber and Faber, London, 1965.) p 291.
45. See Essays in Criticism : Second Series. Everyman, London. 1964. pp 235 - 260. esp. p 257 for the coupling of Burns and Chaucer.  
Also Letters of Matthew Arnold 1848-1888. Macmillan, London and New York, 1895. Nov. 1880 to Miss Arnold. p 184.
46. Spectator. Dent, London. 1897 ed. G.Gregory Smith. Vol. 1 p 263 Paper 70; p 279 Paper 74. The ballad is 'Chevy Chase'.
47. Dr. Johnson's opinions concerning 'Chevy Chase' are notorious. In the Lives of the Poets, for example, (Oxford, 1905. pp 147 - 148 ) he concludes : "The story cannot be told in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind." The quotation in the body of the thesis comes from Johnson's Letters and occurs as a footnote in the edition of the Idylls noted above, p 148. It is worth noting that the line of thought continues, "The merit of Shakespeare was such as the ignorant could take in and the learned add nothing to."
48. William Cowper's Letters : a Selection. Oxford World's Classics, London. n.d. ed. E.V.Lucas. pp 139 - 140. To the Rev. William Unwin.
49. Ibid. p 140.
50. James Beattie Essays : On poetry and Music, as they affect the Mind; on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition; on the Utility of Classical Learning. Edinburgh and London, 1778. pp 122-130.



51. Wordsworth Preface to the Lyrical Ballads and other Poems. 1800. Oxford, ed. de Selincourt, 1952. Vol. ii. pp 384 - 404. The relevant pages are pp 402 - 403, where Wordsworth cites Dr. Johnson's parody and pronounces it a "fair example of the superlative contemptible."
52. Preface to King Arthur, in The Dramatic Works. Gordian Press, New York. 1968, ed. Montague Summers. Vol. 6, p 242.
53. Ibid. p 254.
54. The evidence is easily marshalled if the type of interest in the ballad demonstrated in the 18th century collections is considered. Percy, for example, publishes words only and it is not until the mid 19th century - and indeed the work of Bronson well into the 20th century (Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads....work still in progress) that the same enthusiasm and authority is applied to the collection of ballad tunes. Orpheus Caledonius and The Scots Musical Museum are not strictly ballad oriented or interested in scholarly accounts of bona fide words and music.
55. Donald Ivey. Song : anatomy, images and styles. The Free Press, New York. 1970. p 189.
56. Philip Rosseter Book of Airs. 1601. See Vol. 4, The English Lute Songs. Campian, Stainer and Bell, 1959. ed. Fellowes. To the Reader.
57. Ibid. To the Reader.
58. Ibid. To the Reader.
59. John Cage. Silence. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 1961. p 59. The article from which this is extracted is entitled "To describe the Process of Composition used in Music of Changes and Imaginary Landscape No. 4" pp 57 - 60.



60. I have not been successful in tracing a complete album of Foster's songs, however a pamphlet with the words is included with the record of Stephan Foster's Songs , issued by Nonesuch.
61. Survival of the best of former ages is often advanced as a theory of the continued currency of the Traditional Ballad. Popular taste is, however, fickle, and most survivals are usually accompanied by considerable academic buttressing. The evidence of a growing interest in Foster as a representative, hence 'major', figure of the 19th century American music, is disturbing as it evinces the lack of real quality around which another tentacle of the academic industry can be established.
62. See Oskar Walzel German Romanticism. Ungar Publishing Co. New York, 1965. He sees the origin of the German Romantic lyric in an upsurge of Medievalism in the 18th century, and more particularly in the enthusiasm for the products of English antiquarian research, such as Percy's Reliques. He also suggests that there was a revival of interest in popular tunes salvaged from the 17th century and fitted out with new words; for example, Arnim adapted Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott. (Part ii, pp 147 - 162 esp. p 148. Also A.Closs, see below 52, pp 50 - 66.)  
F.W.Sternfeld in The Musical Springs of Goethe's Poetry The Musical Quarterly, 1949 pp 511 - 527, suggests the relationship of folk to learned elements in the lyric poetry of Goethe. But the general position of the nature of German folk-song is examined, esp. pp 514 ff.
63. G.Porter "Schubert's Song Workshop" in Music and Letters. Vol. XXXIX, No. 2, 1958. p 143.
64. The argument is of course vulnerable to the attack of those armed with a special knowledge of the expressive musical language of the Baroque period. I have suggested that Bach pre-figures the 19th century, but so does Mozart in his most important song 'Abendfindung'. The importance of Schubert I hope to demonstrate.



65. S.S.Prawer The Penguin Book of Lieder. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1964. pp 13 - 14.
66. Ibid. p 16.
67. A.Closs The Genius of the German Lyric. Cresset Press, London. 1958. p 155.
68. Ibid. p 137.
69. Prawer. Op. Cit. p 11.
70. Max Graf Composer and Critic; 200 years of musical criticism. Chapman and Hall, London. 1947. p 247.
71. Eric Sams The Songs of Robert Schumann. Methuen, London. 1969.
72. Beethoven Letters of Beethoven. Macmillan and Co., London. 1961. ed. Emily Anderson. Vol. ii. p 689.  
To William Gerhard, July 15th, 1817.
73. Lea Pocket Scores Schumann: Four Song Cycles. The translation by Sir Robert Garran was published by Melbourne University Press, 1946.
74. F.T.Palgrave Golden Treasury of the best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language. Oxford, London. 1962.  
pp ix - xii.
75. Alfred Einstein Schubert. Cassel and Co., London. 1951.  
trans. David Ascoli p 280.
76. A.Hutchings Schubert. Dent, Master Musicians Series, London. 1973.
77. "Tradition and the Individual" for example. See also Notes to Chapter 111 of this dissertation, No. 54.



78. The final chapter of this dissertation deals with the idea of impersonality achieved by distancing emotion and by detachment, more generally.
79. Yeats Collected Poems. 1961. pp 338 - 339. These are the fourth and final stanzas of the poem, which needs to be read in full. Last Poems (1936 - 1939), from which it comes contains some fine verse, as well as some cranky posturing to which of course the poet feels age has entitled him. Cp. Chapter 3 Part 2 pp with regard to the notion of aged wisdom.
80. Leavis speaks of the Yeats "of 'Rosa Alchemica' and the 'trembling of the veil'." (Common Pursuit, "Tragedy and the Medium", p 130.) It is characteristic of Leavis' scarifying wit to be as terse but quite pointed! And he is, of course, correct. I find the "cloud pale unicorns" an equally gratifying symbol of Yeats' early enthusiasm.
81. Annie Besant : Mrs. A. Besant was a well known supporter of Indian Home Rule, as well as the theosophical movement. She knew Madame Blavatsky ("I was conscious of a sudden leaping forth of my heart - was it recognition? then.....a fierce withdrawl, as of some wild animal when it feels a mastering hand." Autobiography. Fisher and Unwin, 1893. p 341) This description catches the mood of their first meeting. For her connections with Yeats see The First Five Lives of Annie Besant by Arthur H. Nethercot. Pupert Hart-Davis, London, 1961. pp 314 - 323, esp. 317.
- Madame Blavatsky : author of The Secret Doctrine was variously received as sage and fraud. Intellectual gypsy is probably kindest. (See any of her portrait photographs included as frontispieces to her volumes on the occult.) That is how she saw herself. Eliot was of the same opinion. See "A Cooking Egg", Stanza VI.
- Krishnamurti : had the advantage of his Indian birth to increase his credibility (which must have been prodigious.) In Sydney, where people are not generally given to overt displays of anything, there is a little pavillion on the south shore of the harbour. It was built for the arrival of Krishnamurti who, it was expected, would vacate the ship once through Sydney Heads, and walk across the



water to this hopeful little edifice. He remained on the ship until it docked. Whether this was due to the large shark population in the waters of Sydney Harbour or an innate lack of the conviction which his accolites did not share is open to debate.

Yeats' work on The Upanisheds with Shri Purohit Swami was a more practical conjunction of East and West with a limited scope. The vogue for mystical experience was, however, common. Yeats' association with the occult is well known and the influence can be seen in works like A Vision or in the poems of the 1920's and 1930's.

32. The words in parentheses here are taken from "Sailing To Byzantium", an earlier poem of Yeats which explores the "life-Art" relationship and which vacillates between fleshly concerns and notions of immortality achieved by being transformed into an art object which, of course, cannot be alive! This is perhaps Yeats' favourite paradox and primary dilemma!

83. F.R. Leavis "Four Quartets; Section III" in The Living Principle: English as a Discipline of Thought. Chatto and Windus. London, 1975. pp 216 - 249, esp. pp 247 - 248.

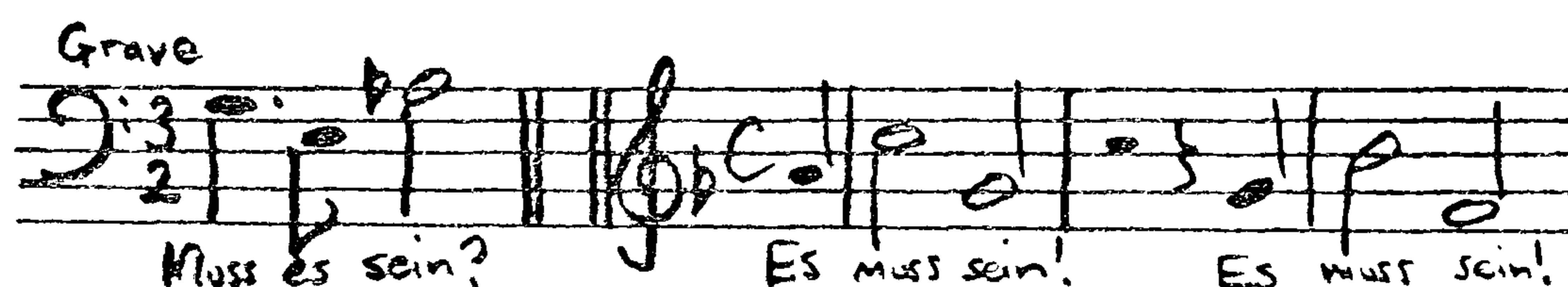
This critic is dissatisfied with the easiness with which "Incarnation" is produced in Section V of Dry Salvages. See Four Quartets. Faber and Faber, 1980. pp 37 - 38. It is useful to trace the logic which gives rise to it. Consider, for example, East Coker, Section V, especially lines pp 202 - 209, and the resonances of "a deeper communion".

84. This is surely how "Sailing To Byzantium" works! A solution is posited and tonally upheld as a positive solution to the questions which the poem poses. The same is true of "Lapis Lazuli"; an exalted voice enthusiastic for a clear statement of discovery is qualified by the intellectual position which contradicts the tone. This in itself might be seen as resolution, but I prefer to see it as Yeats' capability of finding and articulating central human dilemmas (especially as they concern the artist) while being self-aware enough to understand that there can be no solution. This is,



I have said in the Chapter, the satisfactoriness of Yeats: a human honesty which cannot deceive itself with solutions which are either supernatural or a retreat into an aesthetic philosophy which ignores the "life" in the living poet!

35. Beethoven makes a useful comparison because I think he opts for a formal distancing of emotions by an extensive exploration of musical structures which include a study of contrasting perspectives (varieties of dance-like movements juxtaposed) and more technical applications to fugal passages. I continue to work on this. The last movement of the Quartet No.17, Opus 135 is entitled "Der schwer gefasste Entschluss", (The Difficult Resolve.) It is prefaced with two musical figures which become thematic material in the score:



They are <sup>not</sup> meant to be sung, but Beethoven fixes a meaning on which, one supposes, he means the work to turn. It is tantalizing to imagine what he might have meant. Biographers' opinions range from significations of destiny and fate to having enough money to pay the rent. This seems a tardy explanation, especially when the power of the music is considered.

86. "Humanism" presents several problems with regard to the location of a fixed meaning. In the Penguin Dictionary we find the following: "system of thought which sets up ethical but not religious standards". John Huxley is significant in this regard. It continues: "theory of study which gives first place to the study of man". Immediately Pope comes to mind and Shakespeare, Chaucer and the Historical Humanists who are suggested in what follows: "study of Greek and Roman art, thought etc." I use the word, uncapitalized, to indicate the ideas associated with personal mortality which is paradoxically, intensely private but which is also common to all men. It is a fixed bearing which concerns so much of recent art, especially verse. The implied common experience - common to all that is living - has imaginative ramifications long before it is experienced for man only, so it might be one feature in his thought which makes him distinctive



as a species. Speculation of this sort gives rise to the notion of humanism, awareness which is at the roots of religious belief and which is not exclusive to one culture or time. Chapter 11 examines this hypothesis in examples of verse and music.

87. Letter to Dorothy Wellesley, 6th July, 1935. Letters on Poetry from W.B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley. 1964. pp 7 - 8.
88. Ibid. p 7.
89. Eliot seems to conceive of himself as a Cubist and like Braque or Picasso utilizes a method akin to collage. This helps to account for the feeling of poems having been assembled from bits and pieces of other poems, reworked and recollected.
90. Cp. "The Anecdote of the Jar" in Harmonium by Wallace Stevens. Stevens selects the same image, an art object, which like some despotic ruler, becomes the focus of a scruffy desert, at once giving it order as well as emphasising its scruffiness. Yeats' emphatic ambivalence comes to mind, but also Eliot's stillness which polarizes. Stevens is more detached than either, however, and attracted by the idea of the jar having imposed itself like a snooty dowager to hold court over nothing, destroying what is natural by its obviousness and posturing.
91. I am not drawing on Plato here or suggesting that "reality" is in any way a shadow of an attainable higher order.
92. Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" in Poems. Oxford, 1922. pp 230 - 232. Verse V.
93. See Leavis F.R The Common Pursuit. Op.Cit. p 130. Leavis discusses an essay by Santayana making some useful observations, especially towards the end. A.C. Bradley's opening gambits in Shakespearean Tragedy Macmillan. London, 1904, comes to mind: "The Substance of Tragedy" Lecture 1, pp 5 - 39. See also the Birth of Tragedy by Nietzsche. F. in Basic Writings of Nietzsche. ed. W. Kaufmann. Modern Library. New York, 1968. p 3.. The list could go on to include numerous contributions in



Shakesperean criticism (in particular) but the sorts of references are self-evident.

94. W.H.Auden "Musée des Beaux Art" in A Selection. ed. R.Hoggart. Hutchinson. London, 1966. p 103.



CHAPTER TWO:

1. S. Johnson. Lives of the Poets. (4 Vols.) London, 1853. p309.
2. See the Letters of Emily Dickinson. Also in James Reeves, Selected Poetry of Emily Dickinson p x. The image of a frightened boy is taken from Blair's poem The Grave. She is clearly aware that such an echo is apt and "literary".  
cp. The Grave (ed. Gilfillan Edinburgh, 1854. p 135, ll 56-70.
3. The following account of the "death-instinct" is given in What Freud Really Said. D.Stafford-Clark , 1967. pp 158-160.

"He defined the death instinct as a drive commonly encountered in nature to reinstste the former state of affairs. But in this case the ultimate aim of the drive is the return of organic or living matter to its inorganic unorganized state; life is but a preparation for death and has its own instinctual drive towards its end. The activity of the death instinct can only be deduced indirectly in most people. It is seen at its most obvious in the urge to self-destruction seen in compulsive and repeated suicidal attempts, in destructive habits such as unnecessary risk-taking, in alcoholism or drug addiction, or in the psychopathic pattern of the lives of those individuals who bring destruction upon themselves and everyone closely associated with them. Mildred, heroine of Somerset Maughan's novel Of Human Bondage, is a classic example, just as Phillip's hopeless and humiliating abject passion for her exemplifies his own compulsive projection and introjection. Indeed the concept of the death instinct has proved so far more use to artists and novelists than to clinicians, and was rejected by the vast majority of Freud's own disciples, seeming to them to be a senseless and contradictory idea. Freud himself was for a long time very hesitant about it:

'It may be asked whether and how far I am myself convinced of the truth of the hypotheses that have been set out in these pages. My answer would be that I am not convinced myself, and that I do not seek to persuade other people to believe in them. Or precisely, that I do not know how far I believe in them.'

But although he was hesitant about it at first, he later became convinced of its value as a working hypothesis, and therefore of its clinical truth.....

Its development, its source, its impetus, its aim and its objects are all left relatively undiscussed. Aggression was clearly part of it, but the importance of aggression had now to be shifted to it, from its earlier association with sexual activity. The overtones of despair which characterize some of Freud's last writings about the future of the human race and its beliefs, while never losing either compassion or faith in



the value of the individual, owe something to this daemonic concept which he himself had created or released, and which could bring so little comfort to him or anyone else."

Wilhelm Reich, Freud's pupil, is more colourful, but equally useful. pp 89-90.

"He said there must be two separate, opposing forces. Two forces. That was in connection with a discussion of the death instinct. When I asked him whether masochism was primary or secondary, whether it is a turned-back sadism or aggression or a disturbance of aggression outward, or whether it's a primary death instinct thing, Freud, peculiarly, maintained both. He said that, clinically, masochism is secondary, but, in the basic theoretical sense, there must be a death instinct. And wrong as Freud was with the death instinct, wrong as he was, he was right even there. What he felt with the death instinct, what he tried to catch there, what he felt in the human being was a certain dying quality.....

It's a swampy quality. You know what swamps are? Stagnant, deadly water which doesn't flow, doesn't metabolize. Cancer, too, is due to a stagnation. 'Cancer is due to a stagnation of the flow of the life energy in the organism.' So Freud was trying to grasp that quality. I know, today, that 'he sensed something in the human organism which was deadly. But he thought in terms of instinct. So he hit upon the term "death instinct". That was wrong. "Death" was right. "Instinct" was wrong. Because it's not something the organism wants. It's something that happens to the organism. Therefore, it is not an "instinct".' Freud was very deep in that. He had a nose for such things. Tremendous!"

Reich's disagreement is outlined in The Function of the Orgasm, pp 102-104 and is given, in extract in Reich Speaks of Freud, from which the quotation, given above, is taken.

4. F.R. Leavis "The Augustan Tradition" in Revaluation . London, 1959. pp 101-154.
5. Ibid. p 106.
6. From the introductory essay in The Poems of Henry King. (ed. Margaret Crum) Oxford University Press, Clarendon. 1963. pp 43 - 44.
7. The range is easy to demonstrate by a random sampling of first lines:

TITLE	THEME
a/ There's been a death in the opposite house.	Observation of the effect of death on self and others.
b/ Safe in their alabaster chambers.	Nature of "meek members of the resurrection" who wait in death.



- c/ Because I could not stop  
for death.                      Death seen as a courteous  
stranger who whisks the poet  
away to immortality.
- d/ The last night that she lived.      Careful observation of an  
individual death on self and  
others.
- e/ I heard a fly buzz when I  
died.  
.....And so on.                      Curious, almost surrealistic  
study of imagined death.

8. See introduction to Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson. (ed. James  
Reeves) Heineman. London, 1979. pp xxxv - xxxvi.

9. Essay by Alan Tate in Twentieth Century Views : Emily Dickinson.

10. The extent to which such things can be proved depends upon the  
degree to which evidence is acceptable. The very modernity of the  
verse is a challenge to see Emily Dickinson as an innovator. She  
is often delinquent in rhyme and rhythm for the sake of sense,  
thereby dissociating herself from a strict adherence to the "rules"  
of her time. She clearly seeks the literary attentions of  
Higginson. The apparent simplicity and non-observance of strict  
form are not signs of ineptness. There is too much in her work  
which demonstrates that she is making a deliberate effort to shock  
into awareness. See, for example, "Because I could not stop for  
death".

11. See note 3 above.

12. Susanne K.Langer in Feeling and Form. Routledge, Kegan Paul,  
1963. See pp 330 - 334.

Also see notes to Chapter One No. 23

Dangers abound in the world of generalizing philosophy. As  
a result "aesthetics" is easily debased. To cope adequately with  
the world of ideas, music, poetry, the novel, drama, film,  
mathematics and areas of science as well as more general concepts  
which are, essentially, ethical has many disadvantages. Schematizing  
has a value, even if it results in diagrammatic thought which has



its place in the world of "letters". Mrs. Langer's path is full of pitfalls and she dives headlong into some. Take for instance these lines from Feeling and Form. The subject is comic relief in tragedy, here the porter's scene in Macbeth.

"The humorous interludes in tragedy are merely moments when the comic spirit rises to the point of hilarity. Such moments may result from all sorts of poetic exigencies; the famous drunken porter in Macbeth makes a macabre contrast to the situation behind the door he beats upon, and is obviously introduced to heighten rather than relieve the tense secrecy of the murder.

What can Mrs. Langer have read when she thought she was 'doing' Shakespeare? It is a most irresponsible oversight, especially as my copy of Feeling and Form, a book which I might add is frequently held up as a great moment in modern aesthetics, is the Third Impression (1963). The book went through three printings after it was first published in 1953. It seems odd that nobody noticed that the "great comic scene" is misrepresented. To make the porter do the knocking is nonsense enough, but to have him beating on the door of Duncan's bedchamber suggests that any reading, on which such obvious errors have been made, must have been rather shallow. There is a difference between "knowing" and "knowing about"! The lines which the porter is given are evidence enough that he is tardy after the previous night's "great feast". Polanski makes him urinate and occupy his time and speech in logical activity after the heavy drinking which he muses upon. (Roman Polanski Macbeth, Columbia Pictures.) You could not possibly miss the sense if you read the play. (Or is it a failure of imagination?).

As a result, it is advisable to treat Feeling and Form with some caution. The error stood for ten years, and is perhaps still there in the latest printing. It brings into question the actual depth of enquiry on which apparently profound judgements are formed.

13. Feeling and Form, Op.Cit. passim.
14. Langer. Ibid. Chapter 13.
15. Langer. Ibid. p 211.
16. Mozart's masonic involvement, late in his short life, had a profound



effect on his music. The music which I mention here is generally acknowledged to have taken its inspiration from that brotherhood.

See for example,

a/ The Mozart Companion. (ed. Robbins-Landon and Mitchell)  
Faber, 1965. p 273.

b/ Mozart in Retrospect. A.Hyatt King. Oxford, 1955.  
pp 175 -176. p 178.

17. The lack of direct written accounts of World War One in the works of Yeats, Lawrence and Eliot is perhaps due to the fact that each man was only partially affected by the War. Lawrence had a German wife, and was seen as a potentially dangerous citizen in the south of England. Eliot was an American until 1927, although he was 26 in 1914, and settled in Britain in 1915. Yeats made many retrospective allusions. The "Zeppelins" in "Lapis Lazuli" for example. A peripheral effect can be detected in prevailing moods, and an occasional poem like Yeats' "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death". Ireland had its own problems about this time!  
T.S.Eliot dedicated his Prufrock and the Observation to "Jean Verdenal, 1889-1915, "mort aux Dardenalles".

18. J.Huizinga. The Waning of the Middle Ages. Edward Arnold.  
London, 1924. p 124.

19. For the Dies Irae see Grove's Dictionary. Vol. 11. p 704.  
The theme occurs often in the music of Romantic composers. Berlioz uses it in Symphony Fantastique; Listz in Totentanz and Tchaichovcky in Suite No.3, for example.

20. See essay concerning Troilus and Criseyde. In Chaucer the Maker, John Speirs. Faber and Faber, 1960.  
Especially his conclusion pp. 80 - 82.

21. For Lydgate's "ffisision" see The Fall of Princes.

Accounts of plague doctors can be found in The Black Death. P.Ziegler. Collins. London, 1969.



22. Petrarch's Sonnets in Selected Poems (ed. T.Gwynfor Griffith and P.R.J.Hainsworth.) Manchester University Press, 1971.  
Also in Rime, Trionfie e Poesie Latine. (ed. Neri, Martelloti, Bianchi e Sapegno.) Milano. 1951. (Vol. 11. of Complete Works.)  
and without the useful Manchester notes.
23. The dance of death continued to be popular well into the Renaissance period. Durer and his teacher, Wolgemuth, can be found in Dürer. Erwin Panovsky. Princeton University Press, 1971.  
See also Francis Douce The Dance of Death. Pickering. London, 1833.
24. "The Dance of the Sevin Dedly Synnis", cp. with "Dance Macabre".  
"The Dance of Death" ed. Florence Warren and Beatrice White.  
E.E.T.S. O.S. 181, 1931.  
See also English Art, 1307-1461. Oxford University Press, 1949.  
p 156, and F.Douce The Dance of Death. London, 1833. Op.Cit.
25. For the Vado Mori see Kathi Maeyer-Baer. Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death. Princeton Uni. Press, 1970. p 307.  
Also J.Huizinga. Op. Cit. pp 129 - 135.
26. From Journal of the Plague Year. Daniel Defoe. Penguin, 1980.  
p 256.  
For Lily's Almanach see p 42.
27. See Essay on Music. Martin Cooper.
28. It is probably true of all of A.E.Housman's poems. The last of the additional poems is called "The Olive". (Additional Poems XX111)  
It is brief and makes my point.

THE OLIVE.

The olive in its orchard  
Should now be rooted sure,  
To cast abroad its branches  
And flourish and endure.

Aloft amid the trenches  
Its dressers dug and died;



The olive in its orchard  
Should prosper and abide.

Close should the fruit be clustered  
And light the leaf should wave,  
So deep the root is planted  
In the corrupting grave.

29. For a list of some other settings of Housman poems, especially of A Shropshire Lad see Appendix One.
30. From The Name and Nature of Poetry. A.E.Housman. Cambridge University Press, 1933. pp 37-38.
31. Eliot wrote at some length about the "Music of Poetry". The following might be consulted:  
a/ "The Music of Poetry" pp 26-38. On Poetry and Poets. Faber, 1957.  
b/ "The Three Voices of Poetry". Ibid. pp 89-102.  
c/ for the "auditory imagination" see Selected Prose. Penguin Books, 1950. p 94.  
Coleridge wrote on the same subject in Biographica Literaria. Everyman, 19 . pp
32. The Letters of A.E.Housman. (ed. H.Maas) pp 181 - 182. Letters written to Grant Richards, Housman's publisher.
33. Housman's Letters. Ibid. p 198.  
It is interesting to note that Vaughan Williams might have been dealing with controversial material in quite another sense. In February, 1929 Housman wrote the following letter. (For the printed edition, his brother Laurence deleted part of the last sentence as unprintable.)  
"The financial expert who reorganized Grant Richards' business for his creditors thought that he would like to read A Shropshire Lad. He did, or as much as he could; then in his own words, "I put it behind the fire. Filthiest book I ever read; all about....."  
To Laurence Housman. Letters. p 276.
34. Housman made special arrangement with his publisher, Grant Richards, who was requested to take a firm stand.



35. The Carnegie Trust chose to publish The Curlew in 1923. Yeats said little about it after the event, but Warlock's friend, the composer Moeran, wrote that it was "one of the most original things achieved by any British composer in recent years." Perhaps, Yeats was influenced by this sort of reaction. The Carnegie Trust had published On Wenlock Edge in 1912.
36. W.B. Yeats, 1889 - 1936. A biography by J. Hone. Macmillan. London, 1967. p 457.
37. Ibid. p 457. cp. Arnold Dolmetsch in the same volume. p 192.
38. Essay on "Speaking to the Psalter" in Essays and Introductions. Macmillan. London, 1974. pp 13 - 28. This includes some musical notation of Yeats' poems provided as a guide to intonation.
39. Florence Farr was highly thought of in her time, and worked with Yeats (poet), and Arnold Dolmetsch (musician, composer, musical instrument maker and antiquary). This quotation from the Joseph Hone's Biography of the poet, is taken from the "Out of Twilight" chapter. pp 191 - 192.  
It reflects the art nouveau pastel shades which grew out of Pre-Raphaelitism, and which are common in Yeats, and which are reflected in Hone's ambiguous title.
40. Sir Edward Burne-Jones' paintings are reproduced in Visionary and Dream. David Cecil. Constable. London, 1969.
41. The idea that "things falling apart/The centre cannot hold" is developed in a stronger poem than this; "The Second Coming". See Collected Poems. pp 210 - 211.
42. Mendelssohn actually said, loosely translated;  
"If I had meant to write an essay I would have done so in words!"
43. Ronald Bainton's Here I Stand. Fontana. London, 1970. This is the standard biography in English.  
See also his The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Hodder and Stoughton. London, 1963.



44. European Witch-Craze. Hugh Trevor-Roper. Macmillan. London, 1967.

45. See Diana Poulton John Dowland. Faber and Faber. London, 1972. esp. pp 217 - 218.

46. Settings of John Donne included:

There are six songs for which roughly contemporary settings are known. (See Helen Gardiner. Elegies and Songs and Sonnets.

Oxford, 1965. Appendix B, pp 238 - 247.) These are:

a/ "Goe and catch a falling star" in British Museum MS. Egerton 2013. An uninspired, repetitive and dolesome tune.

b/ "Sweetest Love, I do not go" in Tenbury MS.1018, is a flat hymn-like tune which is generally, pedestrian.

c/ "Come live with me and be my Love". See Tenbury MS. 1018 for the plain tune given in Gardiner, Op.Cit. p 239. British Museum MS.Add 10337 has the so-called embellished version. Neither is particularly distinguished.

d/ "The Message" in the Tenbury MS. 1019, by Giovanni Coperario (John Cooper) is contorted and lumbered with excessive stretching of syllables. It is also dull.

There is a lute accompaniment in manuscript for both "a" and "d" above. "C" occurs as the title for a lyra-viol lesson in Corkine's Second Book of Ayres (1612), but he might have had Marlowe rather than Donne in mind.

"Community" and "Confined Love" were known to have been set, but no music has survived.

"The Expiration" occurs in two places, a setting by Alfonso Ferrabosco (Ayres, 1609), which is cumbersome and in which heavy-handed conceits are lost. Another anonymous version is found in Bodleian MS. Mus.Sch. 575, and is florrid and dull.

"Break of day" was also set by Corkine (Ayres, 1612). It is a rather literal setting of the words which suggest motion, and is in that sense excessively musical at the expense of sense.

"The Apparation" was set by William Lawes, but a complete vocal part does not survive.

Issac Walton observes that Donne caused "Hymn to God the Father" to be set to a most grave and solemn tune, and to be often sung to



the Organ by the Choristers of St. Paul's. This has not survived. The version by John Hilton (British Museum MS. Egerton 2013) and Pelham Humphrey (Harmonia Sacra, 1688) can be found in Helen Gardiner. *Op.Cit.* pp 246 - 247.

47. For a full text of the song see Ben Johnson's Poems. Oxford University Press. London. (ed. I. Donaldson) pp 132 - 133. The music, with lute accompaniment can be found in Fellows realization in The English Lute Songs Series. Vol. 17, p 64.
48. See for example, F.R. Leavis who cites L.C. Knights from "Tradition and Ben Johnson" in Revaluation. Chatto and Windus, 1959. pp 17 - 18.
49. I do not wish to broach this chestnut love. See if you wish, Rosamund Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery University of Chicago Press. 1961, who it seems to me, gets bogged down in her own rhetoric. Part 1, Sections III and IV are most useful. I find Mason's Humanism and Poetry useful in this regard, especially his "Epilogue" which addresses the problem of relating a specific voice to the corpus of created verse, which is implicitly conventional. Pattison is equally valuable in Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance. (1948) Chapter V.
50. Sir Philip Sidney. An Apologie for Poetry. (ed. Geoffrey Shepherd.) Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1973. p 109.
51. Ibid. p 113.
52. Ibid. p 116.
53. List of songs 1/ "Burst forth my tears", First Book of Songs and Ayres. 1597. No. VIII.  
2/ "Go crystal tears". Ibid. No. LX.  
3/ "Come heavy sleep". Ibid. No. XX.  
4/ "Tears fill the heart".



54. "Line of Wit" essay in Revaluation. F.R.Leavis. The first essay in the volume. See Op.Cit. No. 4.
55. See above No. 46
56. T.D'Urfey Wit and Mirth or Pills to Purge Melancholy. (ed. C.L.Day) New York, 1959.
57. D.R.C.Marsh in 'Creativity and Control . La Trobe University Press.p 5.
58. Peter Pears and Julian Bream. A Recital of Lute Songs.  
Decca SDO 360.
59. Dowland's letter is reproduced in Diana Poulton. Op.Cit. pp 217 - 218.
60. Musical Banquet,(1610) Robert Dowland. The English Lute Songs. (ed. Peter Stroud) Vol. 20. No. 10. p 18.
61. Wilfred Mellers. Harmonious Meeting. Robson. London, 1965.  
p 93.
62. Ibid. p 92.



CHAPTER THREE:

1. T.S.Eliot in "Three Voices of Poetry", in Poetry and Poets.  
Faber. London, 1957. p 98.
2. Ibid. p 97. Eliot's introduction of "meditative verse" adds a fourth variety of "voice" to his hypothetical three and weakens the credibility of his argument. It demonstrates the disintegration of the theory before the essay has been completed!
3. Ibid. p 95.
4. See Appendix pp 309 in W.& R.Chambers The Life and Works of Robert Burns. (4 Vols.), 1857. Chambers was the most important early editor of Burns. Following such men as Cromek and Currie much of the spade work had been done. Chambers' Burns brings together much of the early, historical literary scholarship with oddly contemporary, scientific opinion like Mr.Combe's Appendix.
5. Ibid. p 311.
6. Matthew Arnold. Essays in Criticism; Second Series. Macmillan. London, 1911. pp 43 - 53.
7. Matthew Arnold. Letters. November, 1880. p 184
8. Arnold.M. Essays. Op.Cit. p 51.
9. John Spiers. The Scot Literary Tradition. Faber. London,1962. pp. 118 - 119.
10. See any of Wordsworth's late sonnets. The connection is not a matter of style or content but rather approach. Wordsworth, as the grand old man of Victorian verse, wrote with a publicly acceptable piety. Burns felt similarly obliged to try a contemporary fashion for the English pastoral. Both are exercises in a fashion and are limited by convention which restricts scope.
11. Thomas Crawford. Poems and Songs of Robert Burns. Oliver and Boyd. (Edinburgh, 1960) p 261.



12. Spiers. Op.Cit. p 111.
13. See Appendix B where I demonstrate that Burns is highly conscious of the intellectual currents of his time, much more so than is generally acknowledged.
14. Burns "Letters" in The Complete Works. (ed. Gebbie) New York, 1909. Vol. 5. p 155.
15. Ibid. p 186.
16. Ibid. p 190.
17. Ibid. p 195.
18. Ibid. p 203.
19. Ibid. p 225. For the song see p 256.
20. Ibid. p 227.
21. Ibid. pp 227 - 228.
22. Ibid. p 230.
23. Ibid. p 230.
24. Ibid. p 213.
25. Ibid. p 249.
26. Ibid. p 158.
27. Canon Rawnsley. Literary Associations of the English Lakes. Glasgow.



28. Burns. Letters. Op.Cit. Vol.5. p 217.
29. Ibid. pp 256 - 257.
30. Aiken: The Aiken/Burns letters considered by some to have been some of the most important and revealing which Burns wrote, imply a reciprocal honesty and forwardness. Shakespeare is the classic dramatist and a peak in Western Culture. Sterne, recent and of dubious reputation. Aiken, confident and benefactor in a less literary sense, Burns called him his "first poetic patron".
31. Burns. Letters. Op.Cit. Vol.5. p 170.
32. Chambers. Life and Works of Burns. Edinburgh. Vol. 1  
pp 100 - 101
33. Ibid. Vol. 4 p 33.
34. Crawford. Op.Cit. p 261.
35. Chambers. Life and Works of Burns. Edinburgh. Vol. 2  
p 33 ff.
36. "Ossianic" taste is a characteristic symptom of the enthusiasm for ruins from the past, partly gothic in its inspiration but also part of the first Celtic Revival.  
See Hodgart.M. The Ballads. London, 1962. p 147, p 153.  
Friedman. The Ballad Revival. Chicago, 1961.  
pp 199, 235, 249, 296.
37. The idea is important in Europe generally.  
See Bernard Smith. European Vision in The South Pacific.  
Oxford University Press. London, 1968.  
Also J.A.Williamson. Cook and the Opening of the Pacific.  
Hodder and Stoughton. London, 1946. esp. Chapters 1 - 3.  
The voyages of Bligh are also significant. He and other explorers brought back reports of primitive societies living in paradisaal isolation on beautiful islands, bathed with warm sun and temperate, teeming waters. True as that might have been measles, smallpox and syphillus quickly reduced the desirability of such places. This



does not alter, however, the impact on the European imagination, especially in the middle years of the eighteenth century.

38. Robert Fergusson. Poems of Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson.  
(ed. Kinghorn and Law) Scottish Academic Press. Edinburgh, 1974.  
pp 123 - 124.
39. Burns. Letters. Op.Cit. Vol.5. pp 171 - 172.
40. See Kinsley. Op.Cit. p 133<sup>4</sup>.
41. In the Merry Muses the following version of "John Anderson My Jo" is given. It makes an interesting contrast.

John Anderson, my jo, John,  
I wonder what ye mean,  
To lie sae lang i' the mornin,  
And sit sae late at een ?  
Ye'll bleer a' your een, John,  
And why do ye do so ?  
John Anderson, my Jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,  
When first that ye began,  
Ye had as good a tail-tree  
As ony ither man;  
But now its waxen wan, John,  
And wrinkles to and fro;  
(I've t) wa gae-ups for ae gae-down,  
John Anderson, my jo.



42. In a letter to Burns, Thomson enthusiastically described a fine print which was to accompany the poem that he included in a selection of humorous verse.
43. See P.Grainger's article of "Lincolnshire Folksong", in the "Journal of the Folk-song and Dance Society".
44. Kinsley's tune is taken from The Caledonian Pocket Companion. His arrangement seems clumsy. Cp. Scots Musical Museum.
45. Ramsay died in 1758.  
Cromek's Reliques of Robert Burns (1809) collected together fragments of the poet's writing which had not been gathered into earlier editions. To the three volumes of Poems which were published in the same year (ed.Cromek) this became Volume Four. These quotations are taken from Volume Five of the Standard Library Burns (ed. Gebbie). pp 377 - 410, and where all of the annotations to the "interleaved" Scots Musical Museum are given. pp 340, 409, 327, 408, 293, 406, 290, 405.
46. John Ramsay of Ochtertyre provides many useful insights into the late eighteenth century in Scotland. His Manuscript was published in 1888. It contains one reference to Burns, (Vol.2 p 554.) The passages about Allan Ramsay and border minstrelsy are of interest and he writes at length of James Beattie, (Vol.1 pp 504 - 518.)
47. See H.Blair. Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. Dick & Co. Edinburgh, 1820. Blair's ideas are expressed most directly in his Chapter XXXVIII (Lectures. Op.Cit. pp 212 - 230.) Poetry, he writes, "is the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed most commonly, into regular numbers." In the songs of primitive tribes "we see the first beginnings of poetic composition, in those rude effusions, which the enthusiasm of fancy or passion suggested to untaught men, when roused by interesting events, and by their meeting together in public assemblies." pp 212 - 215.



While such assertions might have been fair generalizations about "primitive tribes" (in America, for example), they could only with the greatest caution, be extended to include poets like Burns, or indeed any of the poet/songwriters of Blair's own time.

48. For an analysis of the Wagnerian echoes see B. Harris. "The music crept by me: Shakespeare and Wagner", in The Waste Land in Different Voices. ed. A.D.Moody. 1974. pp 105 - 116.
49. Professor Leavis conducted classes at the University of York in the 1960 - 70's. He worked on T.S.Eliot and Blake in particular, and especially on Four Quartets. The class of two graduate students in one of the 1973 Terms has given rise to my word "conversation" here.
50. Eliot is trying to conjure up a mysterious quiet; a stillness which gives him the inclination of his argument. Tonal flexibility is, of course, not subject to rules, but this still seems to be a serious oversight and a failure of tonal control, while seriousness is sacrificed with no clear objective.
51. T.S.Eliot. Notes to lines 199 of The Waste Land. Penguin Edition, 1948. p 68.
52. Sweeny Agonistes was recorded in a Memorial Concert in 1965, and released on H.M.V. The recording is presently not available.
53. The ideas of "death in life" implied in the "marriage-hearse" is taken up at several points in Sweeny Agonistes and elsewhere in Eliot. The voice of "London" is clearly Blake's own. Eliot speaks at one remove, but the revulsion which must have motivated his speaking on the subject is akin to Blake's. But Blake speaks from an apprehension of the repressive society in which people are trapped and imputes no blame. Eliot goes a step further and discovers not "mind forged manacles" but human limitedness and apathy.
54. Such notions are, of course, the free congress of any person who becomes committed to a necessary view of himself in a larger context.



(Are many of Eliot's critical essays, like the poems, leading towards a justification which is convincing enough, in the end, to win him a place in Westminster Abbey?) In achieving a universal voice which elevates the poet out of the commonplace he must know his place and his power and conversely, what is below him. Eliot died in 1965 but the seeds of this philosophy appear as early as 1917.

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these feelings.

1917, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"

How seriously this is intended, especially from the second sentence, can only be guessed at! It does delineate a position of sensitivity which is exclusive ; a position from which an exalted graduate might look down with patronizing approval on the activities of other orders. Such is the case with the "Marie Lloyd" essay. It is a masterpiece of smug superiority and calculated evasiveness dressed up as compliment. And it proceeds from the same source as the revulsion in the low life passages in the poems already mentioned. He begins with establishing that she was "familiar to what is called the lower class" and that her audiences were "invariably sympathetic", both of which are incorrect assertions. (See Our Marie, the biography by her sister.) Marie Lloyd raised the Music Hall to "a kind of art", he continues and adds;

She embodied the virtues which they genuinely most respected in private life.....(and became) the expressive figure of the lower classes.

(Selected Essays. Faber, 1965. p 458.)

There is no apathy in his determination of just where he is going and who is going to put him there!

55. A.L.Lloyd. English Folksong. Lawrence and Wishart.  
(London, 1967)
56. Robert Southey. Botany Bay Eclogues : "Elinor". (Not included in the Oxford Edition after 1909.
57. For a complete text (with tune) see J.S.Manifold Penguin Australian Songbook. Domino Press. Victoria, 1964. p 118. The



tune is included on the tape which is supplied. See Index to recorded material.

58. Any of Professor Manning Clark's volumes will fill out this meagre accounting for the most significant period of Australian History. eg. A Short History of Australia. Prof. Manning Clark. Mentor, Sydney, 1968.

The Poetical Works of Henry Lawson. Angus and Robertson. Sydney, 1947. He was born in 1867.

The Collected Verse of A.B. Paterson was edited by F.T. Macartney and published by Angus and Robertson. Sydney, 1951. He was born in 1864 and died in 1941. Although some of his later poems were clearly influenced by Kipling, "Clancy of the Overflow" appeared in 1889 having sprung, apparently, from native ability and perhaps some enthusiasm for A.L. Gordon.

The emergence of a nationalistic interest in education in Australia, especially after Federation (1901) gave rise to the enthusiastic "study" of Australian verse. This poem "The Man from Ironbark" has a special place in my sense of folkpoetry. It was written of course for dissemination in The Bulletin and in print (more generally). I have known it in this form from my earliest days, and had it read to me quite frequently by my father. Twenty (or more!) years later I came across it in different circumstances, having found its way into an oral tradition. Apollo Bay is a tiny sea-side town about as far south as one can go on the Australian mainland. It has been settled since the 1850's, and has always been isolated by a range of hills covered with dense rainforest. On several occasions while I lived there, the town was cut off for a day or more when bridges washed out and landslides blocked roads. Here, in Wild Dog Valley, lives Alan Coutts who had inherited his father's saw-mill, but who now runs cattle on the precipitous slopes of the Wild Dog Creek. He had been educated in a tiny school in the area where one teacher, in one room, had taught children from five to fourteen. His reading had included Paterson and Lawson, and he knew many by heart. Although it was more usual to see him on a horse he could be pressed, at a public gathering, to "do" a poem or two. His recitations were always lively and he had a fine sense of narrative and theatre. "The Man from Ironbark" was his particular favourite.



Alan Coutts made no distinction in his recitations between poems by Australians and other popular verse of the early part of this century. He was particularly good at "The Highwayman" of Alfred Noyes. He clearly thought of all of these poems as fine stories which could be worked into a splendid piece of recitation, although this should not be taken to mean fine round vowels and the like.

At one such meeting Alan Coutts "did" "The Man from Ironbark". It was immediately followed by a recitation from a man thirty years younger, in which local names and places were worked into the same poem. There are two important points to note in this. First the younger man, who was not a local, had the poem by heart and could, with great confidence, insert new names and places without losing his drift. I wonder how many of those who heard the poem carried away with them an impression of "The Man from Wild Dog Creek" (it was dedicated to Alan Coutts), and considerable respect for the extemporary powers of the man who delivered it. Secondly, it demonstrates the enduring power of such narrative pieces, especially in a society which, if it was asked directly, would place no special value in "poetry".

It is perhaps worth adding that there was no consciousness in any of the performances described above of these being "folk" pieces, or that they were being listened to with a more than immediate interest in the story and performance. In the recitations of Alan Coutts (he did not sing, except in choruses) lines were occasionally lost and passages transposed. Some more vivid adjectives were inserted from time to time, depending on the pitch which his performance reached.

59. Paterson. Ibid. p 33.

60. The music is given in Manifold. Op.Cit. p 118. This is the version usually sung, but it should be noted that the song is generally given another stanza in performances in Australia today. It is a development of a spirit which is quite removed by the editor of the volume in which it is printed where the line;

And a voice like a billy-goat dancing in a tin,  
is rather coy. I have never heard "dancing" sung, and more usually the word is "farting" or "shitting" which, in the context, are



better words and which do not compromise the singer's masculinity! The recent verse, which seems to have been popular in Queensland first, runs as follows:

There's a bloke down south or so I've heard,  
With a face like a dried up buffalo turd!  
If you think that's bad, then you ought to see his bird  
And of course he's a ryebuck shearer.

It is not inconvenient with the general feeling and is, undeniably modern. The word "bird" is a post-Beatles usage, so I suspect that the stanza was born as late as the 1970's.

61. Meredith and Anderson. Folk Songs of Australia.  
Ure Smith. (Sydney, 1967) pp 165 - 166.
62. A.B.Paterson. Old Bush Songs. Angus and Robertson. Sydney, 1930, 7th edition.
63. Manifold. Op.Cit. p 179 for a list.
64. I have no recollection of where I found this idea. It is not, unfortunately my own.
65. The anti-intellectualism is superficial, but like so many appeals in which exaggeration is offered as fact, a mythology quickly follows. Alf Garnet seems to have been taken up as speaking for the population who identify with him. Something of that clearly happened when Dennis had become a cult figure.  
See The Selected Verse of C.J.Dennis. ed. A.Chisholm. Angus and Robertson. Sydney, 1950. pp 9 - 41.  
"Joes" - melancholy thoughts (from "Joe Blakes" = snakes=shakes.)  
"Glarsey" - The glassey eye; a glance of cold distain.  
"crools the pitch" - cruels the pitch = causes his own troubles.
66. Given in Manifold. Op.Cit. p 60.
67. Meredith and Anderson. Op.Cit. p 165.
68. Sally Sloane's tune. Meredith Op.Cit. p 163, with Manifold's words. Op.Cit. p 63.



69. Meredith and Anderson. Op.Cit. p 98 Gladys Scrivaner's words are given with the tune to which they are usually sung. Meredith gives another melody which is less sentimental and more "folkish".

See also Martyn Wyndham-Reed's recording of Bushranging Songs.



## CHAPTER FOUR:

1. Most accounts of Medieval musical and cosmological theory give the required information. See for example, K.Meyer-Baer. Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death. Princeton, 1970. passim.
2. The Tempset : Act IV.Sc 1, 3  
Act V. Sc 1, 312  
See also Act V. Sc 1, 223 "three glasses"  
The number three occurs so often in this form, or a permutation of it.
3. See Note to Chapter One Section IV.
4. Romeo and Juliet. Act II. Sc IV, 108 - 151.  
The scene depends on the audience understanding the whole song. "Lady, lady, lady" comes from a popular song which begins, "There dwelt a whore in Babylon". It extends an earlier quip.
5. "Jacobean" is a maligned word. The style is so indistinct in drama that it may be almost useless! It does however delineate historical boundaries. The Tempest has been called a "romance" and lumped together with others of the late plays which seem less sour and tragic than earlier plays. It was almost certainly Shakespeare's last complete play so fits into history as "Jacobean". Elsewhere in this thesis I have referred to the relationship between Mannerism and the High Renaissance and compared them with the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods; the "younger" epochs being manifestly less self-conscious and more given to overt indulgences of theatricality for its own sake. (That would take another dissertation to substantiate.) However I think that The Tempest cannot be dismissed by conveniently making it out to be fanciful and escapist. To typify Mannerist I used the example of the staircase of the Laurentian Library in Florence, designed by an aging Michelangelo to make one crouch to use the handrail, not because of age or rheumatism in the architect, but surely to bring you closer to the earth and to make you acutely aware of yourself (and your clumsiness?) The middle-ages had invented its "death-the-leveller" cry. For late Renaissance (ie. Mannerist) man, acute self-



consciousness is a common goal, a contemplation posed for all thinking men. Princes, poets and (sometimes) peasants are subject to the machinations of architectural space, and the architecture makes them aware of their place in it.

The Tempest is not evasive and is no less "real" than Macbeth or Othello. Music, common to all, in some form be it a dance of witches, a "Willow song" or masque would seriously challenge the idea that just the late plays have a "romance" quality on strictly theatrical grounds. There is a colossal change of philosophical emphasis to be sure, but the plays use the same gestures.

6. Cheerful Ayres or Ballads.(1659) contained a tune attributed to Robert Johnson which is reproduced with lute accompaniment in the English Lute Songs (2nd Series), Vol. 17 ed. Spink. It is likely that Johnson's setting was used in early performances. He composed at the Court as James' lutenist after 1604. It is his tune which is given here.

7. The play seems obsessive about "noise" and the lack of it. The very beating of the heart intrudes three times in the play (1.2.176; IV.1.163; V.1.246) like an inescapable drum.

Miranda observes (1.2.108) "Your tale, sir, would cure deafness" ( with its powerful import?)

Antonio observes (3.1. 319 - 321)

O, 'twas a din to fright a monster's ear,  
To make an earthquake! Sure it was the roar  
Of a whole herd of lions.

This list avoids the obvious musical and noisy places and is not exhaustive. The most powerful images in the play are to do with aural sensation. Even the tempest, is, in a sense, an "orchestrated" affair.

8. See Henry James Introduction to "The Turn of the Screw", included in Preface to the Aspen Papers in The Art of the Novel. ed. R.P.Blackmur. Scribner and Sons. New York, 1962. pp 159 - 179. esp. pp 169 - 177.

Only make the reader's general vision of evil intense enough  
.....and his own experience, his own imagination, his own  
sympathy...and horror.....will supply him quite sufficiently  
with all the particulars.

p 176.



9. The music to this song is also attributed to Johnson and can be found with lute accompaniment in Spink. English Lute Songs. Op.Cit. pp 24 - 25. Vol. 17.
10. Voltaire Candide. trans. J.Butt. Penguin, 1964. p 136  
 'Now, my dear Pangloss,' said Candide, 'tell me this. When you had been hanged, dissected, and beaten unmercifully, and while you were rowing at your bench, did you still think that everything in this world is for the best?'  
 'I still hold my original views,' replied Pangloss, 'for I am still a philosopher. It would not be proper for me to recant, especially as Leibnitz cannot go wrong; and besides, the pre-established harmony, together with the plenum and the materia subtilis, is the most beautiful thing in the world.  
 It would be foolish to infer any stylistic connection but Lear's experience in my reading, is given as a series of disasters. He does not learn anything as the result of them. With Cordelia in his arms he cries "Look up!" and desparately seeks some sign of breath in his dead daughter. He knows "about the world" once he is turned out, and learns nothing more. I do not wish to expand upon this here, but I think <sup>that</sup> King Lear is an inexorable slide downwards with misery compounded.
11. See J.Speirs English Medieval Poetry. 1967. pp 395 - 401.  
 Also N.Pevsner History of Architecture. (Penguin)  
 E.H.Gombrick The Story of Art. Phaidon.  
 G.Aylmer and R.Cant's A History of York Minster. 1977 is also useful. Esp. Chapters III - IV, and offer insights into an easily accessible monument. The crypt of the church at Lastingham exemplifies one of the earliest surviving examples of its type in this country. It retains a powerful feeling of a pre-Bede church and is probably relatively undisturbed (and close to York.)
12. G.B.Chambers Folk song and Plainsong. London, 1956.  
 Chambers gives these quotations from St. Augustine. pp 5 - 6.
13. Ibid. p 6.
14. W.Sargant Battle for the Mind. Pan Books. London, 1959. p 101.  
 Sargant's description might be exaggerated. Mr.Bob Jones has observed the occurence of this device in modern Welsh preaching



and was able to demonstrate the manner in which "hwyl" is delivered. He explained that the word implied that all was going well with the sermon and the preacher's hwyl was an indication of satisfaction with himself and his congregation. This would appear to be a gentler manifestation and, as Mr. Jones pointed out, might be a survival of a more primitive form which had been tamed. He suggested that there is an adolescent propensity to parody the style which might stem from the feeling that the preacher is often aware of the aptness of his "hwyl" and can even produce it at will.

15. Knox Enthusiasm. Oxford, 1950. p 513.
16. G.B. Chambers Op.Cit. p 10.
17. F.Ll. Harrison Music in Medieval Britain. 1963. p 39.
18. See for example R. Axton European Drama of the Early Middle Ages. Hutchinson. London, 1974. p 66 ff.
19. See Aylmer and Cant. Op.Cit. p 187.
20. The idea is developed in the Great Chain of Being.
21. There are two Thomsons:
  - a/ William Thomson who published Orpheus Caledonius in 1725. (2nd Ed. 1733 contained 50 new songs, making the total 100.) Burns mined this edition for many of his airs.
  - b/ George Thomson who brought out Select Scots Airs (25 tunes) in 1793. Burns provided one hundred and fourteen songs for this Thomson.

James Johnson collected together the Scots Musical Museum, and shared an intimacy with Burns that few men could claim. (See for example Letter May 25th, 1788.)
22. Many assumptions have been made about ballads and their origins by the collectors and commentators in the past three hundred years. There are, clearly, a good many ballads which spring from



a dateable event, especially in the fifteenth century. Many have lost their direct link with the occurrence which inspired them. Indeed some like the "Lyke Wake Dirge" give no clues, and might be Sir Walter Scott's own work! Others seem to be mixtures of parts of more explicable ballads.

23. See "Bold Ben Hall". Chapter 3, p 165.
24. Grainger's work is often spoken about but, I think, little read! The article in the Journal of the Folk Song and Dance Society is evidence of his enthusiasm and care. A new recording from the wax cylinders which Grainger made in Lincolnshire was available in the early 1970's. The performances were taken from 7" and 10" 78 r.p.m. recordings, released by H.M.V. in the first two decades of the century as "real peasant song".
25. "Creeping Jane".  
  
"Sir Patrick Spens", Child Ballads. No. 58.
26. This is taken from the introduction to The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads. p Xll.
27. The University of Edinburgh School of Scottish Studies have released a number of recordings of music ranging from waulking songs from Barra to Bothy ballads. These have included "mouth music".
28. Addison Spectator.
29. Bronson Op.Cit. p lX.
30. Ibid. p lX.
31. Ibid. p Xlll - XlV.



32. Bronson The Ballad and Song. 1969. pp 118 - 119.
33. Joan Baez "Joan Baez Ballad Book" Everyman Records.
34. See Bronson The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads. Op.Cit. Vol. 3 pp 150 - 155.  
Joan Baez sings "Mary Mild" No.6 (pp 152 - 153) with Child's words taken from his collection and modified. The tune (No.6) was collected in 1925. Bronson's No 7 was collected in 1929 and No.8 in 1932. They are all closely related, although the texts vary considerably. I think Joan Baez has made a composite ballad, adding the authoritative, accepted text to a recent (and pleasant) tune, having as it were, the best of both worlds.
35. Bronson Ibid. p 154.
36. Bronson The Ballad as Song. Op.Cit. p 75.
37. Taken from Kinsley. Oxford Book of Ballads. 1975. p 245.  
See Chappell Popular Music of Olden Time. 1965.
38. Bronson The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads. Op.Cit. Vol 1 p 159.  
Also listen to Jeannie Robertson on "The Child Ballads" (2 Vols) Topic Records.
39. Bronson The Ballad as Song. Op.Cit. p 115.
40. Kinsley Oxford Book of Ballads. Op.Cit. pp 360.
41. Ewan MacColl sings this song on "Child and Traditional Ballads", Folkways Records. The tune here is the same and taken from Bronson's text The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads. Op.Cit. Vol 2 pp 29 - 36. It is Group B No.11, p 34. Bronson gives an American recording company as having released the material in the U.S.A; The English and Scottish Popular Ballad. Riverside RLP 12-624(B1).



42. Bronson The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads. Op.Cit. Vol.2  
p 29.
43. Ibid. p 161. Tune 5 in Group C.
44. Ibid. p 159. This is Thomson's tune, 1733.  
Kinsley Oxford Book of Ballads. Op.Cit. p 594.
45. Walter Scott Minstrelsey of the Scottish Border. 1812.  
Vol. 111, p 163.
46. "The Twa Sisters", "Binnorie" and "The Cruel Sister" all seem to  
be variations of the one theme and cause some difficulty in  
classification (I take them as being variations on a theme.)  
See Gustav Mahler's Das Klagendelied for a transformation into a  
different context. His source is popular balladry; Des Knaben  
Wunderhorn.
47. See John Strachan Topic Records, "Child Ballads" (2 Vols)
48. Bronson The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads. Op.Cit Vol 1  
p 60.
49. Ibid. p 151. (Bronson 22)
50. Ibid. p 151.
51. Ibid. p 148. (Bronson 9)
52. Ibid. pp 143 - 184.
53. Ibid. p 182.
54. It should be noted that Jeanette McDonald and Nelson Eddy were  
already popular when "rose-marie" found its way into songs such  
as this operetta from which it comes. ( Rose Marie )  
had been popular from the early years of the century.



55. Bronson The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads. Op.Cit. Vol 1  
p 147.
56. Cecil Sharp English Folk-Song: some conclusions. Mercury, 1965.  
esp. Chapters 1, 11, 111, XII.
57. For example: a/ Scotland Sings. (London, 1953)  
b/ The Singing Island. (1965)  
c/ Travellers' Songs. (1977)  
the last two of these by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger.
58. Bronson The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads. Op.Cit Vol 3  
p 324. (Bronson 33) Bronson gives a recording number  
RLP 12-625(B1). It also occurs Folkways records
59. See Kidson Traditional Tunes. (Oxford, 1891) p  
It is given in Bronson The Traditional Tunes to the Child Ballads.  
Vol 3 p 324.
60. Kinsley The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns. (3 Vols) 1968.  
p 1390.
61. Ibid. Vol.11, p 612.
62. J.Manifold The Penguin Australian Songbook. 1964. p 73.
63. Ibid. pp 66 - 67.



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BURNS :

1. Songs of Robert Burns. (Ewan MacColl) Folkways. FW 8758 (1959)
2. Poems and Songs from Robert Burns. (Ian Campbell) XTRA 1074 (1968)

CAMPION :

1. Lute Songs. (Pears, Bream) ACL SDD 360 ('60, 1973)

DOWLAND :

1. Awake Sweet Love. (Deller Consort) Bach Guild. BG 673
2. Elizabethan Lute Songs. (James Bowman) H.M.V. HQS 1281 (1972)
3. Lute Songs. (Pears, Bream) ACL SDD 360 ('60, 1973)
4. Metaphysical Tobacco. (Musica Reservata) RG 572 (1968)

GRAINGER :

1. Salute to Percy Grainger. Decca. SXL 6410 (1969)



MAHLER :

1. Symphony No.1. (Walter) CFP 4027

MOZART :

1. A Mozart Lieder Recital. (Barenboim/Fischer-Dieskau)  
 ASD 2824 (1972)  
 2. Don Giovanni. (cond. Josef Krips) GOS 604 (1959)  
 3. Die Zauberflöte. (cond. Karl Bohme) GOS 502 (1959)

PURCELL :

1. Ceremonial Music. (including Funeral Sentences) Argo.  
 ZRG 724 (1972)

SCHOENBURG :

1. Pierrot Lunaire. Everest 3171

SCHUBERT :

1. Die Schöne Müllerin. (a) DDG 2538 001 ('60, 1971)  
 (b) H.M.V. ASD 481 (1962)  
 2. Winterreise. (a) Hotter, Moore. H.M.V. XLD 30102-3 ('55, 1968)  
 (b) F.Dieskau, Moore. H.M.V. ASD 551(S) -2 (1963)  
 3. Schwanengesang. (a) Hotter, Moore. H.M.V. XLD 30103 ('55, 1968)  
 (b) Fischer-Dieskau, Moore. H.M.V. ASD 544 (1963)  
 4. Piano Trio. Op 99 SUA ST 50624 (1964)  
 5. Piano Trio. Op 100 SUA ST 50194 (1962)

SCHUMANN :

1. Liederkreis. Op 24 (Heine) (Fischer-Dieskau, Demus)  
 DDG 139109 (1966)  
 2. Liederkreis. Op 39 (Eichendorff) (Renyolds, Parsons)  
 Delyse DS 3203 (1969)  
 3. Franenliebe und-Leben. Op 42 (von Chamisso) (Ferrier, Spur)  
 ACL 307 ('54, 1968)  
 4. Dichterliebe. Op 48 (Heine) (Fischer-Dieskau, Demus)  
 DGG 139 109 (1969)

STRAUSS (Richard) :

1. Four Last Songs. (Schwarzkopf) ASD 2883 (1963)  
 2. Lieder. (Souzay) SAL 3483 (1964)



VAUGHAN-WILLIAMS :

1. Songs of Travel. (Shirley - Quirk, Tunnard) Saga STX ID 5211  
(1963)
2. On Wenlock Edge. (Partridge) H.M.V. HQS 1236 (1971)
3. Ten Blake Songs for Voice and Oboe. (Partridge, Craxton)  
H.M.V. HQS 1236 (1971)
4. Five Tudor Portraits . H.M.V. ASD 2489 (1969)
5. Five Mystical Songs. H.M.V. ASD 2458 (1969)

WARLOCK :

1. The Curlew. (James Griffet) SHE 510 (1972)

COLLECTIONS AND HISTORICAL MATERIAL.

(A) TRADITIONAL BALLADS AND FOLK SONG :

1. The English and Scottish Popular Ballads. (Child Ballads)  
(MacColl) Folkways FG 3509A (1961)
2. Traditional Songs and Ballads. (MacColl, Seeger)  
FW 8760 (1964)
3. Popular Scottish Songs. (MacColl, Seeger) FW 8757 (1960)
4. The Outlandish Knight. (Tawney) Polydor 236577 (1969)
5. Ned Kelly and That Gang. Trailer LER 2009 (1970)
6. Australian Folk Song. (A.L.Lloyd)
7. Songs from the Shearing Sheds. Calender R 66-443

(B) HISTORICAL ("FOLK" PERFORMANCES) :

1. Child Ballads. (2 Vol.) Topic 12T 160 (1961)  
12T 161 (1961)  
(part of a set "Folk Songs of Britain", 12 records  
Topic 12T 157 - 169.)
2. Nonesuch Explorer. Nonesuch H 7 - 11 (2 records)
3. Unto Brigg Fair. (Joseph Taylor recording Percy Grainger  
1908) Leader LEA 4050 (1972)

(C) MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE :

1. Treasury of English Church Music. (Vol. 1) OCSD 3504 (1966)
2. Moines and Troubadors. (H.M.V. 441)



3. Spanish Song of the Renaissance. (Los Angeles) ALP 1883 (1961)  
 4. Songs for a Tudor King. SAGA 5461 (1978)

(D) SCOTTISH HISTORICAL :

1. Music of Castle, Burgh and Countryside. SPSS 3 (1972)  
 2. Bothy Ballads. TNGM 109  
 3. Music from the Western Isles. TNGM 110  
 4. Waulking Songs from Barra. TNGM 111

(E) MUSIC HALL AND VICTORIANA :

1. Victorian Ballads. Pearl SHE 508 (1973)  
 2. Stephen Foster Songs. Nonesuch H71268 (1973)  
     Historical (Original Performances)  
 3. Golden Voices of the Music. ACL 1077  
 4. Music Hall to Variety. WRC SH 145  
 5. The World of Music Hall. Decca PA 81  
 6. The Golden Age of Music Hall. Rhapsody RHA 6014  
 7. Top of the Bill. Rhapsody RHA 6002  
 8. Gus Elen Sing. British Music Hall Society Pub.

(F) MODERN BALLAD PERFORMANCES :

1. The Cruel Sister. (Pentangle) STAL - 934162  
 2. Basket of Light. (Pentangle) RS 6372 (1972)  
 3. Sweet Child. (Pentangle) 2RS 6334 (1971)  
 4. Liege and Lief. (Fairport Convention) SIL 934136  
 5. Below the Salt. (Steeleye Span) CYL 34716 (1972)  
 6. Now We Are Six. (Steeleye Span) CHR 1053 (1974)  
 7. Summer Solstice. (Maddy Prior) CREST 12 (1971)

(G) KATHLEEN FERRIER :

1. Kindertotenlieder. ALM 7002 (1972)  
 2. Decca Colleccion. ( 6 Vols.) ACL 304 - 310 (1968)