



122
689
THS

THE ELEMENT OF MYTH IN THE
POETRY OF W. H. AUDEN

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE
Patricia Jean Randall
1949



This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

The Element of Myth in the Poetry of W.H. Auden

presented by

Patricia Jean Randall

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in English

agm Smith

Major professor

Date Sept. 20, 1949

THE ELEMENT OF MYTH IN THE POETRY OF W. H. AUDEN

By

Patricia Jean Randall

A THESIS

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Michigan
State College of Agriculture and Applied Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

1949

THESIS

PREFACE

Because Auden's poetry is recent and somewhat obscure, if it is read at all, it is usually in scattered places that the casual reader may happen to encounter it, in anthologies, periodicals, or perhaps in separate small volumes of Auden's verse. The impression which results from such a limited familiarity with his work is in most cases a false one, for Auden's literary development has been so varied and, in a sense, so widely experimental that in order to say with any confidence that one understands the nature of his work it is necessary to read a good deal of it, and to approach it by following Auden's development through the various personal discoveries which he used in his poetry, and also through the various relationships that exist between scientific, political and literary movements --- in a broader sense, the impact of contemporary life upon poetry.

This does not mean that single poems cannot be read with pleasure. A small acquaintance with Auden's poetry can reveal to the perceptive reader its basic and residual qualities, and although it may be difficult, contemporary poetry, like poetry of any century can be enjoyed without specialized knowledge, either biographical or historical. However, because of Auden's affiliations with certain modern subject matters, Psychology, Marxism, and the more traditional compact with Christianity, still contemporary, however because it is connected with a literary movement that has come out of the peculiar circumstances of our own times, he is frequently misplaced in one or another of these categories. Those who have read the early Auden are apt to think of him entirely in terms of "Get there if you can and see the land you were once proud to own," or "Sir, no man's enemy,..." Those who have sampled the middle period may characterize Auden by the no less serious,

but more mature complexity of "September 1, 1939," or "The New Year Letter." Others may be distantly aware of the religious nature of his later work.

What I am trying to suggest is that Auden's poetry has a variety and breadth sometimes misleading to a casual reader, who may mistake the temporary exploratory phase, the tentative and hence partly superficial affiliation for the real thing. Auden is in no sense a specialized poet in the sense that Hopkins can be considered specialized, and although he may be opinionated, his work cannot be limited to a narrow category. In his versatile use of form as well as in the various disciplines which have provided not only a source for imagery, but a way out of the labyrinth in which modern Art finds itself, his poetry reflects his capacity for wide experience, which, in turn, is formed to his personal vision, and expressed always, no matter how conventional the form he uses, in a distinctly individual style.

In attempting a study of this sort, one generally finds himself restricted to a narrower path than he feels the nature of his subject demands. Although it may be impossible to do justice to Auden's complexity, I have tried, by following one basic aspect of his work through the early, middle, and recent poetry, to present a more comprehensive picture than that which might be gained from a limited approach, one that was not of a developmental nature.

This thesis is concerned with a problem which is partly aesthetic and partly ideological. It is an attempt to demonstrate how Auden has tried to resolve the perpetual dilemma which confronts artists from time to time, and which has attained, because of the excessive, unbalanced and uncertain character of modern life, a peculiar prominence in our own times: the recognition of a division between Art and Life, with the

attendant moral choice of whether to establish the aesthetic as its own criterion of value, or whether to assign to poetry the important but subserviant office of bringing an ethical or religious order into life. The proper solution to this problem is, of course, not either one of the members of this indissoluble but sometimes disunified partnership in a superior position but to erase their division, although not their difference, which can never be obliterated, by giving them a common direction. What the direction is to be is, in the last analysis, a matter of belief, that is, an explanation of the world, with the attendant set of values involved in such an explanation, to which both poetry and life can give full allegiance, the discovery, in short, of a myth which being more than an aesthetic convenience, or a severe discipline that regards art as a distracting and frivolous escape, can give to both Art and Life, in their orientation to its single unifying effect, a proper relationship with each other. Auden's particular definition of the relationship between Art and Life sets up a myth or series of myths through which Life can, in a free and figurative sense, be reflected without distortion in the mirror of Art. Art becomes, in turn, the medium through which can be apprehended the prevailing and final values, the "Wholly Other Life." This thesis is an attempt to trace through Auden's use of myth in his poetry, his arrival at this particular solution of the Life-Art problem, and to suggest on the way, something of the essential character of his work.

I should like to thank Dr. A. J. M. Smith and Dr. Bernard Duffey, for advice and encouragement that made working on this slippery subject not only possible, but pleasant and exciting as well. I wish also to thank Mrs. Beth Shaw Leppert for indispensable help in getting the manuscript into its proper form.

CONTENTS

PART I	page 1
PART II	26
PART III	59
PART IV	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY	82

THE ELEMENT OF MYTH IN THE POETRY OF W. H. AUDEN

I

Although the strenuous objection to the treatment of contemporary literature or contemporary critical problems in a paper of this sort has dwindled with the years into a mere lifting of eyebrows, there still remains a question to be answered --- why should the scholar or the serious critic tax his digestive powers in a field where the material is, for the most part, neither permanently nourishing, nor even palatable. The situation is, in some ways, a local one, for in Dr. Johnson's day, publishing never reached the industrial proportions that it has in ours, nor was there a vast company of people who, although they might have no literary gift, thought writing the solution to their inability to pursue with interest and success, any other occupation. Of these contemporary would-be writers, Auden has observed,

One would expect that a certain percentage would imagine they had a talent for medicine, a certain percentage for engineering, and so on. But this is not the case. In our age, if a boy or girl is untalented, the odds are in favor of their thinking they want to write.¹

The universal desire to express oneself in print has raised a mountain of material which anyone scientifically interested in the contemporary would find it hard to comprehend with any thoroughness. Still, the amount of trash being written now does nothing to blur the image of the few major figures outlined against our horizon, and although cautious scholarship may warn against a serious commitment of allegiance to a poet still alive and developing, or yet fresh in the grave, we can, as well as Matthew Arnold, who had no doubts about the future greatness of Wordsworth,

¹ W. H. Auden in Poets at Work, 166.

Keats, Byron and Shelley discover the qualities in poets of our own time that are permanent and fruitful.

If we can assume that in spite of the apparent deluge of mediocrity, our times have their just quota of truly talented writers, there remain, beyond the task of supporting them with intelligent interest and weeding the good from the bad, other duties requiring both knowledge and intuitive insight which contemporary writing brings into being by the very peculiarities of its own nature. For many reasons, which could not be properly examined here, contemporary poetry and prose have added to the difficulty of the condensation of complicated thought and feeling always present in major literature the further hardship of an obscurity stemming sometimes from the use of private allusions, imagery, and personal vision, or from the evolutionary process reflected in the perverse distortion of language and form to wrench from words themselves and the peculiarities of position an emotional effect that might correspond more intimately with the prevailing atmosphere of disruption in our times. Even more disturbing than obscurity in the tools of communication is the difficulty of deciding what a poet, no matter by what means he chooses to express himself, is trying to say. No two or three systems, philosophies, faiths exist today from which can be drawn the framework of a belief, but rather there are as many as history, and not always occidental history, cares to provide; or from a restless inability to find form for thought in anything ready made, a poet may, as Yeats did, manufacture his own world of belief. Under the circumstances, contemporary poetry is beginning to accumulate in its wake, a number of interpreters who may provide with special knowledge of the particular affiliations of their subject, a talent for history, and sometimes a sensitivity beyond that of the or-

dinary reader a link between the irresponsible poet and his often indifferent audience. Such a task, it seems to me, lies partly in the field of scholarship and not at all in the field of journalism, whose blunter sensibilities and distorted knowledge offers neither the sensitive intuition and sympathy of a fellow practitioner nor the dryer, but just as necessary offices of historical scholarship. The work of the three great contemporary poets, Yeats, Eliot and Auden, requires certainly for the most thorough examination, both a delicate emotional response and a knowledge not only of literature, but of other fields as well; philosophy, theology, theosophy, anthropology and psychology. This staggering burden of knowledge is impossible for any one critic to carry, but its size indicates at least that the minimum requirement for approaching the work of writers who are as erudite, although not systematically under the narrower discipline of scholarship, is at least a comparable training and knowledge.

Other objections to approaching a contemporary subject, especially the work of a man who is still alive, is the wasted energy of misconception, without proper historical perspective, and the impossibility of catching in a permanent mould, that is, drawing permanent conclusions about an artist who, still changing, may turn his back upon himself after his critics have settled the nature of his work and the direction in which he is going. There is always the possibility that a really good critic can provide illuminating insights into work that already exists as Matthiessen has done in The Achievement of T. S. Eliot. Enlarged once to provide for Eliot's latest development, it could be enlarged again without destroying the essential nature of any of Matthiessen's observations.

Not all critics, however, are as successful as Matthiessen, nor are all contemporary poets as easily comprehended as Eliot, whose interests are mainly traditional and whose beliefs are orthodox, and the misconceptions which may arise because of confusion within the critic himself, or because of the novel and unsettled nature of the material from which the poetry is drawn, (in Auden's early work the shifting lines of political doctrine, and the rambling paths of Freudian psychology) make it necessary that the controversy, if there is any, be carried on while the poet is still alive to defend himself. A critic can also, because he is a contemporary, participate in the various fashions, enthusiasms or special quirks of interest that may have an important reflection in the work he has to decipher.

In a serious approach to contemporary work, however, the problem is not to untangle obscure poetry for the purpose of presenting it rolled into a neat ball that the lazy reader may unwind it more easily. Part of the pleasure in reading poetry is its resistance to relaxed attention, the creation in the reader of an intense and heightened state of mind where each slow discovery, because it is attained only with the greatest difficulty has the greatest effect. No precis can be a tenth as exciting as the poem itself and the interpreter can only help by pointing out certain general things, or may, by focusing attention on some central thread, illuminate the work so that the details may fall more correctly into place. Certain details may always remain ambiguous, either through the poet's intention or by his failure, but the various layers of meaning that good poetry usually contains can only be penetrated by recreating the poem as far as one's own experience and capacity for feeling will take one.

In spite of the sometimes imposing difficulty of Auden's work, for this reason, very little explication de texte will be offered. The paper will rather concern itself with what it hopes to determine is the central problem with which Auden is concerned and in that way to indicate the basic and steadfast order, that upon close reading, becomes apparent in his work.

The problem which occurs throughout Auden's poetry, implicitly in the early poems, more clearly in the autobiographical passages in Letters from Iceland, The New Year Letter, and finally in climactic statement in The Sea and the Mirror, For the Time Being and The Age of Anxiety is the proper relationship between art and life, and the tool that I have chosen to pick apart the enigmatic nature of that relationship and its various shifts in Auden's poetry is the examination in his work of the element of myth as it involves belief. The relationship between the three elements, art, life, and myth becomes clearer when that relationship is set against the background of the circumstances from which it sprang. I do not intend to attempt here a sketch of the industrial revolution nor the effects of philosophical Darwinism on our own times, but only to indicate what prevalent feeling about belief, myth, religion has produced a religious revival among artists and dilettantes, what has launched thousands of oarless boats into the indifferent sea in quest of salvation.

When Auden says, in The New Year Letter,

The situation of our time
Surrounds us like a baffling crime²

he does not refer to a local instance, although "crime" includes the war, which may have prompted the observation, but uses the image of the un-

² W. H. Auden, The New Year Letter (from Collected Poetry), 272.

solved crime to express what Eliot did in the wasteland, an atmosphere of pervasive spiritual disorder and death. The poet is, in one sense, a clinical observer. He can bring into the light through symbols the malignant forces that only deform those who have not the instruction of the imagination to help them. Expressed in the dialect of a detective story, this is what Auden has sensed in his time:

Yet our equipment all the time
Extends the area of the crime
Until the guilt is everywhere,
And more and more we are aware,
However miserable may be
Our parish of immediacy,
How small it is, how, far beyond,
Ubiquitous within the bond
Of one impoverishing sky,
Vast spiritual disorders lie.³

After the wasteland has been charted, it remains for its inhabitants to take one or another of the paths to salvation. Every serious person has the difficulty of deciding which path will, if it does not lead to a general paradise, at least remove him from contamination and put him in touch with some sort of vivifying spiritual experience. He may have also to make the delicate moral choice between believing in some occult power for its therapeutic value to himself and believing in God because He really exists, apart from any benefits which might be gained by inventing Him. The burden that weighs on the twentieth century of finding order in moral chaos, of rediscovering Good and Evil, of opening up again the ancient channels between man and the supernatural offers itself with even greater urgency to the artist, but he has the added responsibility of his art to consider as well. Myth stands then in the same relationship to art as it does to life --- and the artist must ask not only that

³ W. H. Auden, The New Year Letter, op. cit., 272.

myth give him a better life but that it provide material for his poetry. Yeats, who is perhaps the most dramatic figure of all the poets who have felt the necessity for myth, was certainly interested in the latter advantage. In a letter to his father, J. B. Yeats, he says of the Vision, the enormous myth that he created from seances, automatic writing, signs, omens, and all the paraphernalia of spiritualism:

Much of your thought resembles mine ... but mine is part of a religious system more or less logically worked out. A system which will, I hope, interest you as a form of poetry. I find the setting of it in order has helped my verse, has given me a new framework and new patterns. One goes on year after year getting the disorder of one's mind in order and this is the real impulse to create.⁴

But Yeats, of course, was intensely interested in life. His public career as well as his magnificently vital later poetry testify to this. Yet the tradition, grace, harmony of his poetic is aesthetic rather than moral, and although he was faced with the same problem that obsessed Auden and Eliot, the lack of traditional belief, he made his choice along the lines that were most available to him, between beauty and ugliness, between the militant dullness of science and the freedom of the imagination. For the generation in which Yeats spent his early manhood, which included Wilde, Pater and the most important of the Art for Art's sakers, Auden sketches a world:

... where the great conflict was between the Religion of Reason and the Religion of Imagination, objective truth and subjective truth, the Universal and the Individual.

Further, Reason, Science, the general, seemed to be winning and Imagination, Art, and the Individual on the defensive. Now in all conflicts it is the side which takes the offensive that defines the issues which their opponents have to defend, so that when scientists said, "Science is knowledge of reality, Art is a faeryland," the artists were driven to reply, "Very well, but fairies are fun,

⁴ W. B. Yeats, Letter to J. B. Yeats, quoted in an essay by Donald A. Stauffer, "The Modern Myth of the Modern Myth," English Institute Essays, 3.

science is dull." When the former said, "Art has no relation to life," the latter retorted, "Thank God." ... Thus ... we find Yeats adopting a cosmology apparently on purely aesthetic grounds, i.e., not because it is true but because it is interesting.⁵

On the surface, this résumé of his reasons for choosing what Eliot calls a "highly sophisticated lower mythology"⁶ makes Yeats seem almost frivolous. His escapism is rebuked also by the stern voice of I. A. Richards, who said, "After a drawn battle with the drama, Mr. Yeats made a violent repudiation, not merely of current civilization but of life itself in favor of a supernatural world."⁷ Yet this criticism of Yeats is too severe, and Auden suggests an excuse for Yeats' choice of an eccentric and aesthetic supernaturalism when he points out that science had drawn the battle lines not on the basis of morality but had placed the choice between a materialistic conception of the real and the unreal, between the world of hard discernable fact, and the flimsy and childish world of the imagination. It would be foolish, of course, to maintain that Yeats' poetry is a repudiation of life. What he did was to set up an individual relationship between imagination and reality. Yeats' approach to life is perhaps best expressed in his quotation from an "old play:" "In dreams begins responsibilities,"⁸ and by dreams he meant the union with the reservoir of archetypes that resides within all men, the area where fumbling civilization has no place and where thoughts and actions, determined by a force beyond human comprehension move close to a natural order which may be uncovered by symbols in art.⁹ Recalling

⁵ W. H. Auden, "Yeats as an Example," Kenyon Review, X, no. 2, 189.

⁶ T. S. Eliot, After Strange Gods, 46.

⁷ I. A. Richards, quoted in After Strange Gods, 45.

⁸ W. B. Yeats, Later Poems, 173.

⁹ W. B. Yeats, Essays, 33.

the "great mind and the great memory" as well as refreshing the stale crust of experience, introduces into the world again the underground awareness of spiritual forces brought to expression by art, the definition of which is extended to include as well as the most highly contrived and sophisticated products, primitive folk tales and accounts of dreams.

Yeats' position in the controversy between Life and Art is a useful index to Auden's attitude as it is reflected in his early poetry. In a general sense, the various shifts in this attitude can, I think, be ranged in a scale from the elementary and emotional assertion of Pater's that life is a poem and that "Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end,"¹⁰ to a recognition of the divided harmony between life and art than can be supplied through belief in the Christian myth. In his early poetry, Auden has this in common with Yeats, that in searching for a Weltanschauung he also seized upon several beliefs that had later to be discarded. Yeats moved in his affiliations from the more superficial immersion in Irish politics, the revival of the theater, Irish folk motifs, to arrive at a belief which, although personal, was more universal and hence more valuable to his poetry. As far as efficacy of belief is concerned, where Yeats ended, Auden began, and the assuming of a final incidental moral responsibility in Yeats' later work forced simply by learning from passionate experience is what Auden had to begin with, an unvoiced recognition of the moral relationship that must be present in the balance between Art and Life. If Auden went beyond Yeats in juggling the three silver balls, Art, Life, and Myth, he is not a better poet for that reason. Poetry does not depend upon ability to resolve philosophical problems or to arrive finally, after many false

¹⁰ Walter Pater, The Renaissance, 236.

loves at the true faith of Christianity: It means only that Auden was more successful than Yeats in getting back to the proper position of the artist in society in completely comprehending and hence being supported by the fruits of the deepest and most complicated relationship that can be derived from the supernatural. From this point he can go on without groping, without stopping for novelties, and, released from the time wasting process of fumbling for conviction, he can enjoy the paradoxical freedom of development within a system that Eliot describes in "East Coker" when he says:

We must be still and still moving
 Into another intensity
 For a further union, a deeper communion.¹¹

In more general and less mystical terms, what the final goal of the artist should be, is to "bring order and coherence into the stream of sensations, emotions, and ideas entering his consciousness, from without and within," by doing for himself "what in previous ages had been done for him by family, custom, church, and state, namely the choice of principles and pre-suppositions in terms of which he can make sense of his experience."¹²

The lack of any prevailing system for organizing experience is so acute in modern times that instead of an artist expressing a variation within an established order, if he is fortunate, he can achieve a limited order within a vast variation. Although the chaos comprehends a number of local disciplines most of them are barely on speaking terms, and the individual who is conscious of the need for making order must either, by choosing several at once, split himself into a compartmental

¹¹ T. S. Eliot, Four Quartets.

¹² W. H. Auden, "Yeats as an Example," op. cit., 192.

man, or else by choosing only one, look at the world through an ideological peephole. Auden, being both versatile and voracious of systems of belief, has, in a sense, done both at the same time, for he managed to orient his work according to belief in different things at different times, keeping dormant within himself a number of other and perhaps contradictory affiliations while he seemed apparently to organize his experience according to one major conviction. It has been suggested that the intrusion of art considerably complicates the already confusing relationship of the individual to his life and to his actions. For Auden, the discovery that he was interested in writing poetry had the effect of dividing his mind into two camps. His early aesthetic development, grounded in the battles of the nineteenth century proceed along lines suggested in a passage from Letters from Iceland:

Aesthetic trills I'd never heard before
 Rose from the strings. Shrill poses from the cor;
 The woodwind chattered like a pre-war Russian
 Art boomed, the brass, and 'Life' thumped the
 percussion.¹³

The attempt to synchronize the brass and the percussion is part of the final goal of the quest. In simplest terms, that is precisely what Auden's development has represented, the reward being a multifold chalice made up, first of all, of purity, love, recognition of good and evil in a word, the positive values that can be achieved in life and reflected in art, and next, related to the first, a way of organizing experience, and making it available for us in poetry. How experience is to be translated is the major question and Auden has solved it according to the precedence of his age, to find a belief and to use its structure, the mythical element both in the exterior sense of providing a

¹³ W. H. Auden, Letters from Iceland, 209.

framework upon which to hang his perception, and also as a liberating agent for the creative energies within, controlled, ideally by the framework of belief.

Auden's development is not as sharply divided into "periods" as common journalistic criticism would have us believe. The three compartments, Communist, Freudian and Christian are not water-tight, partly because none of them are wrong, or even useless for writing poetry, but all, although the first two may be more limited than the third, are not able to offer the final explanation, or give the most complete information about the Way, to use both Auden's and James' terminology, to the Great Good Place. They have also in common, that in spite of their shortcomings, they are both pointed and in the same direction, to find the hidden springs of grace, through which man can live most fruitfully within himself and with his neighbors, through which life can become again fertile and meaningful. The spiritual energies released, the dark wood illuminated by the recognition of the paradoxical metaphysic that can be expressed only in figurative terms, that is, the language of myth. For these reasons, no rigid chart can be made of the various shifts in emphasis upon Auden's belief itself, or the imagery to which it corresponds. The effect is a cumulative one, and in his latest work, The Age of Anxiety, Auden has incorporated wherever they can best be used, all the channels through which he had approached the hypothetical and invisibly shining absolute before, this, however, with the orientation, which was only dormant in his earlier work of orthodox Christianity.

Any kind of organization of a poet's work necessarily injures it, for it sets up a pattern which may not be refined enough to represent its complexity and intricacy with careful fidelity. Therefore, analyses of

this sort have to be taken tentatively for what light they can shed on what will always be an enigmatic subject. In hope, then, of avoiding dogmatic rigidity, this paper will attempt to point out, by following the three twisted threads, Art, Life, and Myth through an approximately chronological arrangement of those sections of Auden's work which are most pertinent, the series of changes that occur in Auden's orientation to poetry and to experience. Expressed in its briefest form, the point that this paper hopes to make, is that throughout the development of his work, so far as it has gone, Auden is trying through the use of Myth, to bring closer together Life and Art by discovering the vital connection and the inevitable difference between them. Part of the responsibility for the shift in emphasis, from Art to Life or vice versa, can be attributed to the kind of myth that Auden is using at various times. When politics and psychology have the upper hand, as they do in the early poetry the attempt to bring meaning both to Life and to Art draws them into a comparatively simple relationship with each other. The search for grace, the quest theme which is central in Auden's work settles upon finding for itself a natural order. Art becomes both a means and an end, for Art is a talisman for balancing the outer and the inner life, for establishing a harmony in the macrocosm without and the microcosm within. The framework which Auden uses in the early poetry is the primitive folk legend and myth, the crude vitality of the Icelandic sagas, the imaginative truth of fairy tale, and another kind of myth, that which resides in dreams, fantasies, both the personal vision of the inner life and its expression in writers like Carroll and Lear who made almost exclusive use of the language of archetypal symbol. The end of Art is, of course, having satisfied the de-

sire to create something, but the emphasis in the early work falls most heavily upon Life. Auden is using art as a sort of magical discipline which will help him by releasing the wisdom of the id¹⁴ to live a more satisfactory life in the sense of regaining a flower-like freedom from choice. He sought the impetuous and natural expression of the self unrestrained by rational caution and the Prufrockian distrust of natural impulses. His hypothetical state of grace in the early poetry, a condition that D. H. Lawrence also shared, and his emphasis on Life, appear in one of the autobiographical sections of *Letters from Iceland*:¹⁵

¹⁴ The id is a somewhat controversial term, and although its extreme complexity in relation to its most precious development in the Freudian system, its rather fuzzy connection with another difficult term, libido, cannot be covered here, it might be helpful in the beginning to indicate Auden's own approach to it. The id is sometimes thought of as a sort of "beast in the jungle," a blind, selfish impulsive force, employing no restraint, and no foresight, but ready to pounce on whatever will most quickly and opportunely satisfy its desires. The id, to Auden's way of thinking, is a more benevolent creature, containing within itself the knowledge of a natural grace and harmony. Further examination of Auden's psychological doctrines and their sources will be taken up in the next chapter.

¹⁵ Self revelatory passages like this one appear fairly frequently in Auden's work, clearing a path through the immense tangle of personal references, private jokes, puzzling syntax and poetical ambiguity. The three notable instances of where he has taken stock of himself occur in *Letter to Iceland* (1937), *The New Year Letter* (1941), *The Sea and the Mirror* (1944). All of these passages are, if not primarily about, at least obliquely concerned with the Life-Art problem, and the evidence of Auden's position and its various fluctuations can be approached both from the evidence which the poetry itself presents, and Auden's own discussion of it.

The Iceland journey itself is curiously bound up in the self-conscious way in which modern writers are forced to solve their problems. The trip had, of course, its exterior motives, the interest of the problem being probably the greatest, but what Auden and MacNiece expected to get for themselves beyond the important remuneration was a removal from the chaos of Europe, and a renewed sense of stability that only occurs in the isolation of an island, where the faces change as slowly as the landscape and where, undisturbed by the superficial hustle of modern life, only the important outlines remain. Synge hoped to accomplish the same thing when he lived among the Aaran Islanders, and from it, gained a true sense of the tragedy of death, an emotion which, if we believe Evelyn Waugh, has become negatively apparent by its absence in our commercial rituals. MacNiece writes:

Then to Berlin, not Carthage, I was sent
 With money from my parents in my purse,
 And ceased to see the world in terms of verse
 I met a chap called and he fed
 New doctrines into my receptive head.

Part came from and part from D. H. Lawrence
 Gide, though I didn't know it then, gave part.
 They taught me to express my deep abhorrence
 If I caught anyone preferring Art
 To Life and Love and being Pure-in-Heart.
 I lived with crooks but seldom was molested
 The pure-in-heart can never be arrested.¹⁶

The form and imagery of the early work also reflect the daemonic source of Auden's inspiration. The id is necessarily random, organized only in snatches with its illuminating figures governed, if at all, by a dark and mysterious god. The early poetry, attempting to capture and make use of primitive and magical symbols, is often as oblique as a dream. Nothing is clearly said, although the impression is that a great deal is being felt. In this swift preview of Auden's Odyssey the next major change occurs in The New Year Letter (1944), where Auden's gradually mastering Christian tendencies become evident. Archetypal myth is pretty much laid aside here, the form is austere, and Auden is as prosaic as it is possible for him to be. The Christian element was, of course, present in Auden from the beginning, but the private and amoral inner source of expression had precedence until it began to appear insufficient, both as an approach to truth and as a source for poetry. Auden says in an article written a

but we must mortify
 Our blowsy intellects before we die,
 Who feed our brains on backchat and self-pity
 And always need a noise, the radio or the city,
 Traffic and changing lights, crashing the amber,
 Always on the move and so do not remember
 The necessity of the silence of the islands,
 The glacier floating in the distance out of existence,
 (Letters from Iceland, 32).

¹⁶ W. H. Auden and Louis MacNiece, "Letter to Lord Byron IV, Letters from Iceland, 209.

few years before The Double Man, where the New Year Letter first appeared, was published:

For the private world is fascinating, but it is exhaustible. Without a secure place in society, without an intimate relation between himself and his audience, . . . the poet finds it difficult to grow beyond a certain point.¹⁷

In the added complexity of their relationship, Art and Life take up a new orientation in their perpetual commerce with each other. The relation is, in a sense, a split between them, for Art, now felt to be a product of the diseased will, and not of a mysterious, but reliable inner light, is suspect; and so long as it remains an entirely human product, governed by the human will, it can never be completely trusted to reveal the path through the spiritual wilderness, nor diagnose the illness of our time. The New Year Letter seems to indicate that Auden has left the oasis where D. H. Lawrence settled for life, and has proceeded on the Quest, whose requirements become increasingly difficult. It is significant that in The New Year Letter the mythical framework, with the important exception of the figure of Satan, and a few minor embellishments drawn from fairytale and classical myth, has vanished almost completely.

The final step, final so far as Auden has gone, is, in a sense, a synthesis and a solution of the Life-Art problem, through the agencies of the Christian myth. In the last works, The Sea and the Mirror, For the Time Being, and The Age of Anxiety, one part of the Quest seems to have been completed, that is the finding of a belief which will not only offer the deepest and most complex and universal order for chaotic experience to follow, but will also sanction, because it can criticize, the other sources for poetry, the Ursprung of the dream world and primitive myth, imparting to them a new moral orientation. Auden's idiom regains the

¹⁷ W. H. Auden, The Oxford Book of Light Verse, xvi-xvii.

lushness and magical myth-creating faculty that it had in the beginning, but under the discipline of an orthodox belief, these images, which before were often more suggestive than definite are usually obscure only so far as the complexity of Auden's thought and feeling moves beyond the capacity of the reader. Life and Art, although they draw closer together, being connected by the controlling spirit of the Christian myth, retain the separation outlined in The New Year Letter. Arnold's aestheticism now seems to be completely discarded, for poetry can save neither its creator nor its readers, and the deadly serious business of life is not becoming so sensitive to experience that every situation is heightened by the lurid glare of perpetual intensity, but it is rather to save one's soul; the process of writing poetry is only incidental, just as any type of occupation is incidental to the desperate problem of salvation. Nevertheless, the final result of the Quest is not so interesting to the audience as the memoirs written along the way and even if, as Auden said in his poem "In Memory of W. B. Yeats,"

For poetry makes nothing happen; it survives
In the valley of its saying ...¹⁸

its survival is to be the most important. In a recent lecture on Yeats Auden defined the terms by which the modern world is to make its choices as being

not between Reason and Imagination but between the good and the evil will, not between objectivity and subjectivity but between the integration of thought and feeling and their dissociation, not between the individual and the masses but between the social person and the impersonal state.¹⁹

What matters most to us, is that Auden has been a successful catalyst in performing the offices of good poetry, that he has retained the mythi-

¹⁸ W. H. Auden, Collected Poetry, 50.

¹⁹ W. H. Auden, "Yeats as an Example," op. cit., 190.

cal approach which T. S. Eliot describes as "a step toward making the modern world possible for Art, toward ... order and form..."²⁰ he has managed through that means to unite thought and feeling, so that the wealth of the unconscious by supplementing and revitalising traditional myth, is harnessed to provide material to correspond with the complexity of his thought, both moral and philosophical.

This sort of approach of Auden's work requires an approximately chronological procedure in the examination of the various evidences of the changes in his use of myth. Not all the poems can be dated, however, since no chronological arrangement appears in the Collected Poems and the early volumes, which could have been used for definitely determining when a particular poem appeared, are not all available. Nevertheless, through a process of elimination most of the poems can be assigned to some position in relation to other work, and the major poems can be arranged in order. Although Auden's poetry does not fall neatly into three theological categories as Eliot's does,²¹ there are certain convenient divisions, the best for the purposes of this paper being a three-fold one, centering first around Paid on Both Sides (1930) and The Orators (1932), second, The Double Man (1941), and third, For the Time Being (1944) and The Age of Anxiety (1947). Incidental poems are to be included in their respective periods wherever they appear especially pertinent. With so large a mass of material as Auden has produced so far, some limitation must be made to fit the scope of this paper. I shall leave out any special consideration of major works, other than those already mentioned, since they

²⁰ T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order and Myth," The Dial, (1923), 483.

²¹ The conventional division of Eliot's work is to compare it with the three divisions of the Divine Comedy, "Wasteland" representing "Inferno;" "Ash Wednesday," "Purgatorio;" and "The Four Quartets," "Paradisio."

are most pertinent to the point at hand. The two travel books, Letters from Iceland and Journey to a War, all the plays, some of which were written in collaboration with Isherwood, and the separate volumes of poetry, reserving the right to use passages from them or refer to them when it appears necessary to do so.

Before plunging into the paper itself, one last explanatory word should be offered about myth and the peculiar interest that it seems to inspire in modern life. As an approach to literature it has reached a steadily increasing vogue in all fields of criticism including the contemporary. The same impulse that caused Eliot, Joyce, Yeats and Auden to employ a mythical method seems to have seized the scholars also, and from fields outside literature, psychology, anthropology and art history in particular there have come a number of books which use literature as a basis for tracing certain basic symbolic figures such as the hero and the magician and the sin eater, or recurrent ideas such as the Oedipus story. Separate departments of folk lore have risen in universities, and researchers are scouring the back country, as Yeats did many years earlier, to record and preserve the lost traces of naive imaginative life in a society which is steadily becoming duller and more stultified by its mass-production way of living. In the literary field proper, the mythical method has many uses, and myth itself has a variety of definitions. When myth is used for tracing the history of ideas, it does not matter especially what particular facet or aspect of it the investigator believes to be valid, but when the problem is to trace the presence of myth in a particular period, or in the work of an individual author, some definite approach should be selected. The concept of myth used in literary criticism ranges from an extreme conservative position to radical originality where the critic tries

to create for himself a new definition of myth to fit in with the amount of information gathered around it in our times, especially that material which has come most recently from investigations of psychology and anthropology into the nature of primitive ritual and symbolism. Of the modern critics, the first sort is most ably represented by Douglas Bush, who, in his two books, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry and Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry never ponders over the various aspects of myth, but leaving out definition altogether, assumes that a mythical poem is one which uses the figures, stories and various imaginative motifs that appear in classical literature. He finds in modern poetry no diminution in the use of myth. "Beautiful simply as tales," he says, "the myths have constituted for modern poets a kind of poetic shorthand of infinite imaginative and emotive value."²² In limiting his definition, however, to a particular time and place, to Greek and Roman culture during the classical period he overlooks the myths of other cultures just as important to English poetry, the most notable examples being the Celtic and Teutonic elements which have been used almost exclusively by local colorists such as Arthur Machen and Mary Webb. The limitation which Bush uses is attractive for its neatness, but it does not cover sufficiently the mixed affiliations of most contemporary writers. Auden, Eliot and Yeats all use, as well as classical myth, the fairies, demons, the fisher kings, the heroes of primitive English folk tradition. Auden uses, in particular, material from the Icelandic sagas to connect the present with the past and to translate the apparently accidental warfare of modern times into the more meaningful simplicity of the primitive archaic outlook.

²² Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, 4.

The other extreme in the range of meanings that myth can have is the aesthetic approach, represented by Richard Chase in Quest for Myth. Chase would include Bush's definition and whatever additions in the form of other myths which might be made to it, but refuses to limit himself to the past or to second-hand material. Myth, for him, is created from emotional intensity, and "a poem which out of present emotional necessity, 'whether personal or social,' becomes mythical and then fuses itself with an old myth is a truly mythological poem ... but ... it does not need the old myth to become mythical."²³ After considering some of the complicated historical theories which try to account for myth, Chase asserts simply that myth is art, the myth itself emerging from the hidden regions of the id, to manifest itself in dreams and intuitive revelation, and then ultimately through the offices of the super ego, to be codified and captured in the art form where its mysterious and magical influence upon the reader announces its true status. Chase's definition is an interesting approach to myth itself especially in the use he makes of Freudian psychology, pointing out the irrational dream sources and the process through which they move until they are given meaning, and in some cases, moral value by the pressure of the outside world. As an approach to poetry, however, it places too great a burden upon the visceral responses of the reader who must depend on a tingling of the spine or a feeling of heightened intensity in order to separate the mythical from the non-mythical.

What Chase means by myth seems to be an ingredient common to all successful poetry, the condensation of strong or deeply felt emotion, evoking a universal response because it penetrates to the common root

²³ Richard Chase, Quest for Myth, 112.

from which the separate flowers have sprung. A theory like Chase's is the inevitable result of a self conscious probing into mental, emotional and spiritual processes which were facebly regarded in earlier times. Even in such an interest, having the flavor of a patient's curiosity about his own disease, reflects an unhealthy condition in society, it brings back the reassuring news that poetry, at any rate, has not exhausted its sacred front, and that out of the rubbish of contemporary life it is still possible to create relationships which will invest the too literal facts with a mythical vitality.

A recent prosaic statement about myth, which offers a flexible adjustment to the requirements of whatever case happens to be at hand appears in Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces. His summary is also a useful compilation of the various theories of myth that have been most influential both for explaining and for shaping contemporary literature. The list includes a variety of approaches, coming from the social sciences, psychology and theology:

Mythology has been interpreted by the modern intellect as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature (Frazer); as a production of poetical fantasy from pre-historic times, misunderstood by succeeding ages (Muller); as a repository of allegorical instruction, to shape the individual to his group (Durkheim); as a group dream, symptomatic of archetypal urges within the depths of the human psyche (Jung); as the traditional vehicle of man's profoundest metaphysical insights (Coomaraswamy); and as God's Revelation to His children (the Church). Mythology is all of these. The various judgments are determined by the viewpoints of the judges. For when scrutinized in terms not of what it is but of how it functions, of how it has served mankind in the past, of how it may serve today, mythology shows itself to be as amenable as life itself to the obsessions and requirements of the individual, the race, the age.

For the purposes of this paper, the best definition of myth is one which will comprehend Auden's own use of it. This does not mean, of

²⁴ Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 382.

course, that myth is to be fitted to the peculiarities of Auden's poetry, but rather that its definition should be broad enough to reflect the variety of his mythological references and to provide some pattern into which they might be fitted. Since the serious task of the poet in our times is to reorient himself and society in terms of values that impassive materialism can never supply, writing poetry, as Auden puts it, involves "throwing caution to the winds, accepting the subjective as God-given, wildly taking sides, becoming in fact what Mr. Yeats has described as a "foolish passionate man."²⁵ It involves, in short, finding a Weltanschauung, or belief, and through the symbols inherent in, or accessory to its structure to express experience of the irrational and supernatural, to transform passive reality, in the material sense, by a meaningful vision of the hidden forces which lie beneath it. Physical experience itself is like the tip of a nearly submerged pyramid; it represents only a minute fraction of the total life, most of which can be expressed only in the figurative terms which make up the body of myth. In the continual investigations with which men are concerned there are two kinds of truth, one spelled with a small, and one with a capital letter. The scientists and factual scholars are interested in the first, the artist in the second (as the amount of capitalization in Auden's poetry can easily attest), but the second, being elusive can only be described in non-literal terms, through imaginative processes which create, rather than real times or places, states of being. In Auden's poem, "Casino," where the gamblers' spiritual death as indicative of the terrible paralysis of modern times is expressed by a reference to Greek myth:

²⁵ W. H. Auden, "A Novelist's Poems," Poetry, IL, 224.

But here no nymph comes naked to the youngest shepherd;
 The fountain is deserted; the laurel will not grow;
 The labyrinth is safe but endless, and broken
 Is Ariadne's thread.²⁶

The observation and the relationship which is set up is entirely on an intuitive and spiritual level. And whatever figurative terms describe such states of being, whether they fit in with beliefs which are psychological, political or religious, are to be considered as belonging properly to the realm of myth. Spender applies to Auden's poetry the idea that myth can concern systems of belief and their various attendant symbols when he said "... he is well acquainted with modern tendencies of thought in philosophy, psychology, and politics, and he regards these tendencies as modern myths which he exploits in his poetry."²⁷ Myth considered as a Weltanschauung is a way of penetrating to the deeper reality that lies beneath the surface of the physical world. It is tempting here to call it a mirror of truth, for every spiritual symbol must stand for a spiritual fact. It is, however, Auden's conviction, and the point that this paper hopes to develop, that although myth itself may be a mirror for reality, its presence in poetry does not make the poetry a reflection of truth, for between the vision and its use, lies the abyss of the diseased human will which in its striving for perfection without knowledge twists and perverts what it sees to fit its own limited outlook.

This paper may appear to be dealing with two problems, the Life-Art balance, with which Auden as an artist is preoccupied, and his use of myth to provide symbols for his poetry. They form, however, in the light of Auden's intense seriousness about both Life and Art, an indissoluble relationship. The best way to express the manner in which Art, Myth and

²⁶ W. H. Auden, Collected Poetry, 91.

²⁷ Stephen Spender, "Have English Writers Marked Time?" Saturday Review of Literature, XXIX, 5.

Life revolve around each other is to use Auden's own symbol, the sea and the mirror. The sea is Life, the mirror is Art, and the selecting factor that determines what it is out of the enormous flux that will find its way to arrangement and order within the controlling boundaries of the mirror is the element of myth.

Rummaging into his living, the poet fetches
The images out that hurt and connect.

From Life to Art by painstaking adaption.²⁸

The connection between the images, and the images themselves, in so far as common use or experience has given them more than a private meaning are supplied through myth; the final picture in the mirror, whether it be a true or distorted representation, can only become coherent through its form-giving medium.

²⁸ W. H. Auden, Collected Poetry, 5.

PART II

There occurs throughout Auden's early poetry a mixture of two separate but related philosophies, Marxism and psychoanalysis. Without any intention of separating them, for they depend upon each other in this respect at least, that each is a way of restoring order, in the first case, to society, in the second, to its members, I think that it might be helpful in the beginning to indicate how Auden has used them in constructing his shifting Weltanschauung. That ideas should be important in his poetry suggests a didactic Drydenesque quality, a return to the rationalism of the eighteenth century. This, however, is not entirely what comes about; the regression, if Auden's intellectual interests can be described in that way, is rather to the seventeenth century, to T. S. Eliot's fusion of thought and feeling, away from the romantic dissociation of sensibility. The emotional force that lies behind such potentially dry material as Communist theory and psychoanalysis comes from what Louis MacNiece calls "taking sides." Auden is not so much interested in the ideas themselves as in how they can be used, no matter how extravagantly, to explain, or to divide or to diagnose the various confusing phenomena of modern life. In an open letter printed in the Auden issue of New Verse, MacNiece writes:

With regard to content, the subject matter of your poems is always interesting and it is a blessing to our generation ... that you discharged into poetry the subject matters of psychoanalysis, politics and economics. Mr. Eliot brought back ideas into poetry but he uses the ideas, say, of anthropology more academically and less humanly than you use Marx or Groddeck. This is because you are always taking sides.²⁹

Taking sides involves a transformation of whatever ideas are being used, and ideological systems having been assimilated and rearranged to suit

²⁹ Louis MacNiece, "Letter to W. H. Auden," New Verse, Nos. 26-7 (Nov., 1937).

the needs of the user, lose their impassive, standard outlines and becomes recognizable only through the emotional attitude that inclines them in one direction or another. In Auden's case, the perception of conflict is not limited to the automatic course of dialectical materialism but to a profounder level and the observations of psychoanalysis are expressed in more figurative terms: "the liar's quincey," or "the coward's stance."

Of the two ideologies, Marxism is perhaps the most oblique. In the first half of the thirties, Auden, Spender, and Day-Lewis were linked together as three Communist poets, but now that the atmosphere of the thirties has somewhat evaporated, it is not so easy to understand what could have made Auden's work appear so clearly Communistic to the reviewers. Someone reading only the Collected Poetry would find no evidence of formal Marxism, although some of the poems in the early radical period have been retained, and some of the same kind of observations that characterized Auden's Marxist tendencies prevail in later poems. In the early work appear luxurious diseased figures, landscapes laid waste, all to be taken, at least on a certain level, for an expose of a dying bourgeois culture.

Watch any day his nonchalant pauses, see
His dextrous handling of a wrap as he
Steps after into cars, the beggar's envy.

"There is a free one," many say, but err.
He is not that returning conquerer,
Nor even the pole's circumnavigator.

But poised between shocking falls or razor-edge
Has taught himself this balancing subterfuge
Of the accosting profile, the erect carriage.³⁰

The spectre of a ruined industrial scene occurs even more frequently; the sources of wealth and their various mechanisms which belong to the

³⁰ W. H. Auden, "IV," Poems, 43.

middle class are broken, deserted, scattered, while the owners spend their frivolous lives trying to avoid the serious business of life, either in the empty amusement of perpetual games, or in the emptier amusement of bath chairs.

Get there if you can and see the land you once were proud to own
Though the roads have almost vanished and the expresses never run:

Smokeless chimneys, damaged bridges, rotting wharves and choked canals,
Tram lines buckled, smashed trucks lying on their side across the rails;

Power-stations locked, deserted, since they drew the boiler fires;
Pylons fallen or subsiding, trailing dead high-tension wires;

Far from there we spent the money, thinking we could well afford,
While they quietly undersold us with their cheaper trade abroad;

At the theatre, playing tennis, driving motor cars we had,
In our continental villas, mixing cocktails for a cad.

At the end, the members of a diseased society, of which Auden himself is presumably a member, are exhorted to reform:

Shut up talking, charming in the best suits to be had in town,
Lecturing on navigation while the ship is going down.

Drop those priggish ways forever, stop behaving like a stone
Throw the bath-chairs right away, and learn to leave ourselves alone.

If we really want to live, we'd better start at once to try;
If we don't it doesn't matter, but we'd better start to die.³¹

To do Auden justice, however, it is necessary to assume that he voices more than a lament for a shaky industrialism, and rather tries to reveal the vast spiritual disorders that underly the complacency not only of the middle class but of every one. Although Day-Lewis expresses a similar feeling:

Drug nor isolation will cure this cancer:
It is now or never, the hour of the knife,
The break with the past, the major operation.³²

³¹ W. H. Auden, "XXII," *Poems*, 43.

³² Cecil Day Lewis, "Consider These, for We Have Condemned," quoted in *The Little Treasury of Modern Poetry*, 300.

his poem has a local, incendiary spirit that Auden's lacks. It would be impossible for Auden to write a line like the one which occurs in a sonnet by Day Lewis: "Yes, why do we all, seeing a Communist, feel small?"³³ He is neither so specific nor so subservient to a system as limited as Marxism, and although he may use it as he does in The Dance of Death (1933) where bourgeois society, in the form of a dancer, dances to its death before a shifting backdrop of resorts and night clubs, the audience shouts,

One two three four
The last war was a bosses' war.
Five six seven eight
Rise and make a workers' state
Nine ten eleven twelve
Seize the factories and run them yourself.³⁴

and the figure of Marx appears at the end, to utter these solemn words over the dead dancer: "The instruments of production have been too much for him. He is liquidated."³⁵ Marxism is never followed in as dogged a manner as its more orthodox followers would have it.

What has made Auden's reputation as a Marxist is probably both his limited, and at the same time widely implicative use of Marxist concepts, and the ignorance of those among his classifiers who were not even in the position of being political dilettantes. Those within the dates were never deceived, and Christopher Caudwell, in his criticism of English poetry, written from the standpoint of a thoroughly orthodox Communist considers the trio, Spender, Day-Lewis and Auden as helpful but irresponsible fellow travellers,³⁶ headed in the right direction, but their real service to the party ruined by their bourgeois conception of freedom. Even if they are prepared to join the party, he says, speaking now in general of the

³³ Cecil Day Lewis, quoted in Stephen Spender's The Destructive Element, 252.

³⁴ W. H. Auden, "The Dance of Death," Poems, 195.

³⁵ Ibid., 218.

³⁶ Christopher Caudwell, Illusion and Reality, 283.

artist sympathetically inclined toward Communism,

this anarchistic quality in their alliance takes a characteristic form. They announce themselves as prepared to merge with the proletariat, to accept its theory and its organization, in every field of concrete living except that of art. Now this reservation --- unimportant to any ordinary man --- is absolutely disastrous for an artist, precisely because his most important function is to be an artist. It leads to a gradual separation between his living and his art --- his living as a proletarian diverging increasingly from his art as a bourgeois.³⁷

Auden stopped short of accepting Communism as a total faith, although he found aspects of it to be usable both as a Weltanschauung and as a source of images for poetry. The wasteland comprehends politics as well as art, religion, and daily life, and in contrast with the well meaning but hopeless anarchy of liberalism, communism offered and still offers the most vigorous remedy for corruption and disorder. It was also, in the thirties eminently available as a way of expressing dissatisfaction with the old system, whether or not its ideology could be completely accepted for building a new one.

According to Spender,

Auden "arrived at" politics by way of psychology. His early poems began by being preoccupied with neuroses in individuals, but this gradually extends (at the time when he had left Oxford and gone to live in Berlin) to an interest in the epoch and capitalist society.³⁸

This accounts, in part, for the mysteriously oblique Marxian allusions, the ambiguity of references which could possibly have political implications, but because they are not flatly levelled at the reader as threats, promises, or persuasions, maintain for themselves and the reader, the freedom of several layers of interpretation.

Auden's approach to psycho-analysis, more definite in outline than his Marxist affiliation, is more difficult to define because it has de-

³⁷ Christopher Caudwell, Illusion and Reality, 285.

³⁸ Stephen Spender, "Oxford to Communism," New Verse, 9-10.

veloped a complexity which requires, properly, the comment of an expert. On top of the doctrines of Freud and Jung, available, at least for inspection, are built the more esoteric teachings of minor followers, Layard, Homer Lane, and Groddeck. The first two have published no article (except for two by Lane on the conduct of boys' reformatories), making scholarship impossible. Groddeck was more prolific, having published at least five books and several articles, none of which, unfortunately, are available except through the unsatisfactory medium of the psychological abstracts. The problem is further complicated by the fact that Auden never refers to Groddeck in his poetry although he does several times to Layard and Lane, but from the evidence of people, who, knowing Auden, assume Groddeck's influence, and from the correspondence between the shadowy outline of Groddeck's teachings which can be found in the psychological abstracts and the beliefs which Auden expresses in his poetry, it may be safe to assume that there was such a relationship.

Two of the conventional features of psychology which Auden uses in his poetry, both as a source for imagery and as an orientation to life, are the concept of the id, the repository for desires so primitive that they must be seived through the refining mechanism of the ego, that is, the self, and the superego, social convention, before they reach the level of action, and the Jungian concept of the four faculties, thought, feeling, intuition, and sensation. The first concept has its greatest part in the early poetry, where it provides not only the knowledge that there is, no matter how shrunken and literal the life outside, an inner capacity for intense and passionate experience, but also a tremendously rich source for poetry, for experiencing the unconscious truth of dreams and fantasies, for releasing an intuition that can permeate poetry not only with the

depth of universally shared emotion through archetypal imagery, but can also provide the harmony that supplies the startling, and yet perfect combination of words. Auden's interest in psycho-analysis as it reflects the vivid inner life, is also responsible for his affection for Alice in Wonderland, Through the Looking Glass, and the poetry of Edward Lear, and his use of them as myth, his use in particular, of Alice will be included with the more orthodox psychological myth. Jung's concept of the four faculties has a metaphysical application and should be considered with the later work where his mysticism fits Auden's religious development, while Freud, who provides no moral guide other than instinct and "the wisdom of the blood," has his proper place in the early poetry. These few callous words about Auden's affiliation with Freudian doctrine are perhaps inadequate for conveying the profound and fruitful influence that it has had on his work. In one of his later occasional poems, "In Memory of Sigmund Freud" (1940), he exercises one of his finest talents, writing about a public man with the warmth that one would use in speaking of a good friend, which these figures, no matter how remote, turn out in fact to be even if the love is all on the side of the observer. Auden writes of Freud with the advantage of retrospect, but with the sense of what had been valuable in the beginning and still remains valuable:

...
 If often he was wrong and at times absurd
 To us he is no more a person
 Now but a whole climate of opinion.

...
 He quietly surrounds all our habits of growth;
 He extends, till the tired in even
 The remotest most miserable duchy

Have felt the change in their bones and are cheered,
 And the child unlucky in his little State,
 Some hearth where freedom is excluded,
 A hive where honey is fear and worry,

Feels calmer now and somehow assured of escape;
 While as they lie on the grass of our neglect,
 So many long-forgotten objects
 Revealed by his undiscouraged shining

Are returned to us and made precious again;
 Games we had thought we must drop as we grew up,
 Little noises we dared not laugh at,
 Faces we made when no one was looking.³⁹

The radical applications of Freudian psychology have a more specific application to Auden's verse and the infallibility of the id and its overpowering effect upon physical organs goes hand in hand with his vision of a pervasive illness in society. According to Groddeck and Lane, both functional and organic diseases take their source from basic disturbances in the id. As Isherwood explains, Lane's doctrine is his semi-fictitious account of his association with Auden:

There is only one sin: disobedience to the inner law of our own nature. The results of this disobedience show themselves in crime or in disease; but the disobedience is never in the first place, our own fault --- it is of those who teach us, as children, to control God (our desires) instead of giving Him room to grow. The whole problem, when dealing with a patient, is to find out which of all the conflicting things inside him is God, and which is the Devil. And the one sure guide is that God appears always unreasonable, while the Devil appears always to be noble and right....

Conventional education (I am paraphrasing Barnard's [Layard's] own words, from a letter Weston [Auden] once showed me) inverts the whole natural system in childhood, turning the child into a spurious adult. [Groddeck's Das Zwerges-
chlecht des Menchen states the same theory, adding to the assertion that man retains his childhood unaltered within him, the observation that he is bisexual as well, making two sets of dichotomies, the man-child and the man-woman] ... later when the child grows up physically into a man, he is bound to try to regain his childhood --- by means which, to the outside world, appear even more and more unreasonable. If the conscious mind were really the controlling factor, God would remain in prison, the world would become a bedlam in a few generations, and the race automatically die out. So diseases and neuroses come to kill off the offenders or bring them to their senses. Diseases are therefore only warning symptoms of a sickness of the soul; they are manifestations

³⁹ W. H. Auden, "In Memory of Sigmund Freud," Another Time, 118-9.

of God --- and those who try to "cure" them without first curing the soul are only serving the Devil. The disease of the soul is the belief in moral control: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as against the Tree of Life.⁴⁰

Isherwood's analysis, although it may be slightly exaggerated for effect, clarifies a good deal of the early work, where, in the unrefutable wasteland of modern life, Auden sees, rather than dead trees dry stone and broken images, an aggregation of distorted and diseased people, hears rather than the incessant sound of crickets, and the noise of rats' feet on broken glass, the blatant voices of "the enemy," mouthing slogans, clichés, catch words.

Three enemy questions --- Am I boring you? --- Could you tell me the time? --- Are you sure you're fit enough

Three enemy catch words --- insure now --- keep smiling --- safety first.⁴¹

These two disciplines, Marxism and psychology represent the sort of modern myths that Auden employs as a means for poetic expression. They are not the only ones that he uses --- the others will be taken up in the course of examining the poetry itself --- but they are perhaps the most important, and being also the most difficult, they require a special explanation. The perhaps improper emphasis placed on Marxism and psychoanalysis by considering them apart from the poetry may have the effect of suggesting in the beginning that Auden's method of writing poetry is more intellectual than it really is, that he is a sort of faddist adopting whatever new notion is esoteric enough for his purposes, a poet who goes through stages that bring him finally no closer maturity. Although there is an adolescent quality in Auden, especially in the early work, its oftentimes grotesque overbalance is compensated for by an overall

⁴⁰ Christopher Isherwood, Lions and Shadows, 300-1.

⁴¹ W. H. Auden, "Journal of an Airman," The Orators, 55.

seriousness and unity of purpose. About Auden's emphasis on ideas, Stephen Spender writes:

His gift is the peculiar gift of a writer who does not write from rejecting his experiences, nor from a strict selection among many appearances, but accepting more and more of life and ideas as he goes on experiencing The peculiar kind of experience which his poetry offers is an organic living experience, made up sometimes of contradictions and which is sometimes irresponsible and evasive. It is a mistake to suppose his poetry is primarily one of ideas; it is a chameleon poetry which changes its colour with the ideas which it is set against; but the life is in the chameleon, in the poetry itself, not in the ideas which are seen through it. It is a poetry of life which deals with ideas, but which is not ruled by them.⁴²

Spender's remarks about the subservience of ideas in Auden's early poetry to a central concern with life itself raises two additional points: the quest theme, and Auden's way of adjusting the scales upon which are placed the two balanced or unbalanced entities, Art and Life. It is quite true that Auden is aware that the variety and paradoxical nature of life can't be crammed into the narrow spaces provided by a few limited ideologies, but what is more important, I think, at least for the poetry itself, is a recognition of a central focus in his work, the quest theme, to which all the attempts at putting to rights the untidy chaos of the world are merely servants and tools. The quest as a unifying myth is used in the same sense in which it appears in The Divine Comedy, in medieval legends, or in fairy tales. It also forms, in a sense, a link between Life and Art in the early poetry because, with its various satellite henchmen, it attempts to find an assumed order in life, and through the subjective vision of poetry tries to bring together the two fractured moieties, the outer world of solid appearance, and the shifting personal inner world.

⁴² Stephen Spender, The Destructive Element, 276.

The inner life has an increased vogue since the fourteenth century. Its exploitation in modern times turns out to be sometimes, at least for the writer, an art form only in an incidental way. Rilke considered his Journal of My Other Self as a sort of catharsis to prepare for a more objective way of writing, with an emphasis on die Denge, on concrete delicate detail, on Rodin's concept of form. Kafka wrote, for one reason, to exorcize the witches that tortured him, was always planning when he should settle into the new and hopeful life to write differently. Their object seemed to be at that particular point to explore the inner life, and through illuminating its dusky caverns, to throw some little light on the world outside. By imagining himself a dog or a cockroach, Kafka could express his relationship to society, to his father, or to God. What is most important about this sort of writing is that it places the heaviest emphasis not on Art, although the preoccupation with form and creation is always there, but upon Life, and Art becomes a means for an intuitive exploration of life, a way of thinking and feeling about it that dredges from it some meaning, even if it be an unhappy, or a surrealist sort of outlook.

This is also the impression one gets upon reading Auden's early poetry, that Life and Art are somehow intimately connected, with Art taking its turns from Life, rather than the opposite relationship which one feels in a writer like Henry James. In the early work, the contents of the id are poured, sometimes, it seems, almost unsorted, into whatever receptacle is large enough to hold them. Impulse reigns, the inconsequential for its suggestive power is all important. And giving form to the apparently molten mass is the network of myth, which forms a bridge between the still unuttered emotional orientation and its expression as art.

The mythical method of writing about modern life is a curious mixture of a carefully observed factual reality and a distortion of relationships that, by disturbing the complacent balance of a surface observation of life, expresses what lies beneath the surface. The best example is, of course, Alice in Wonderland. In Kafka's parable, The Castle, there are also many evidences of this juxtaposition, the most obvious being the detailed and accurate description of the ant-like habits of the bureaucrat, observed from his own experience in an insurance office. As they appear to K, however, the officials are so exaggerated and surrounded with such mystery, that they no longer move in a familiar and literal reality but are clothes in all of the horrible implications of their trade. Although no so successful as Kafka in creating a unified effect, Auden's charade, Paid on Both Sides (193) is an approach to reality through the same sort of distortion that gives Kafka's work its mythical flavor.

What Paid on Both Sides is supposed to be about can only be tentatively determined. It seems to be an examination of a society which is fighting revolution, not necessarily a class war, for there is no difference between the two sides, but a senseless feud springing from the disease of a persistent social disunity. There are three factions altogether, the two imaginary states, Lintzgarth, and Nattrass, which are fighting with each other, and another group made up of a number of commentators, the same sort of device that Eliot uses in the *Wasteland*, when he introduces a unifying agent in the figure of Tiresias. The whole play as it stands, however, is hopelessly confusing and impossible to untangle in detail. What we are concerned with are the kinds of myths that Auden is using as a means of expression, and the relationship implicit in the poetry between Art and Life.

The whole atmosphere of the charade seems to be a combination of the primitive frontier quality of the Icelandic sagas with their continual raids, ambushes, disputes over property, and a sort of futuristic twenty-fifth century scene, where all the placid and complacent evil that is present now in society has born its fruit, and the inhabitants, their superficial civilization stripped away, have turned into worse than savages, for experience has lost even the elementary meaning that primitive mythology offers, and war proceeds without issue, merely from habits of deceit and treachery for its own sake. The account of the war takes sometimes the cryptic form of primitive Icelandic or old English poetry:

Day was gone. Night covered sky
 Black over earth When we came there
 To Brandon Walls where Red Shaw lay
 Hateful and sleeping Unfriendly visit.
 I wished to revenge quit folly
 Who my father at Colefangs valley
 Lying in ambush cruelly shot
 With life for life.⁴³

Or, as an expression of the futuristic element, there occurs a rhetorical incoherence, an attempt to reduce language to its basic suggestiveness a la Gertrude Stein. One of the characters says:

A forward forward can never be a backward backward.⁴⁴

or, to express a tragic vision of death, the same suggestive power in words is used in a sort of incantation.

Not from this life, not from this life is any
 To keep; sleep, day and play would not help there
 Dangerous to new ghost; new ghost learns from many
 Learns from old termers what death is, where.

Who's jealous of his latest company
 From one day to the next final to us
 A changed one; would use sorrow to deny
 Sorrow, to replace death; sorrow is sleeping thus.

⁴³ W. H. Auden, "Paid on Both Sides," Poems, 14.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 8.

Unforgetting is not today's forgetting
 For yesterday, not bedrid scorning,
 But a new begetting
 An unforgiving morning.⁴⁵

There is also in the charade an element of primitive wisdom, a consideration of basic questions, what is man, how does he live, what is the element common to all men. The Chorus which provides a commentary throughout the play, has a clear sightedness and universal vision that contrasts with the individual sorrows or the narrow business-like considerations of those involved in the war.

Chorus: Can speak of trouble, pressure on men
 Born all the time, brought forward into light
 For warm dark moon
 ...
 That prize held out of reach
 Guides the unwilling tread,
 The asking breath,
 Till on attended bed
 Or in untracked dishonor comes to each
 His natural death.

The chorus exposes the life we live now as false:

We pass our days
 Speak man to men, easy, learning to point
 To jump before ladies, to show our scars:
 But no
 We were mistaken, these faces are not ours.
 They smile no more when we smile back:
 Eyes, ears, tongue, nostrils bring
 News of revolt, inadequate counsel to
 An infirm king.

and finally it invokes a purposely mysterious power who tears away the epidermis that hides the festering sores, all the pretenses and superficial paraphernalia of a life which has extended itself into trivia.

O watcher in the dark, you wake
 Our dream of waking, we feel
 Your finger on the flesh that has been skinned,
 By your bright day

⁴⁵ W. H. Auden, "Paid on Both Sides," Poems, 8.

See clear what we were doing, that we were vile.
 Your sudden hand shall humble great
 Pride, break it, wear down to stumps old systems which await
 The last transgression of the sea.⁴⁶

In this sort of life, the basic meaning of tradition, ritual, law, had disappeared. Father Christmas appears as a comedy character and Christmas has degenerated into an excuse for giving toys to children. Where religion was important before, superstition only has endured:

Sometimes we read a sign, cloud in the sky,
 The wet tracks of a hare, quicken the step
 Promise the best day. But here no remedy
 Is to be thought of, no news but the new death;

... last night at Hammergill
 A boy was born fanged like a weasel.⁴⁷

At the trial of a spy, we hear the flat empty statements of politicians:

Yes, I know we have and are making terrific sacrifices, but we cannot give in. We cannot betray the dead. As we pass their graves can we be deaf to the simple eloquence of their inscriptions, those who in the glory of their early manhood gave up their lives for us? No, we must fight to the finish.⁴⁸

Although the play is short, there are so many characters, representing one thing or another, so many comments of different sorts, that any complete examination of them would resolve itself into hopeless monotony. As might be expected in this world of perpetual warfare, the doctor is an important character but, like Father Christmas, he is also a comic figure, able to diagnose "Tennis elbow, Grave's Disease, Derbyshire neck and Housemaid's Knees," besides having discovered the origin of life.⁴⁹ He and Father Christmas, and some of the other commentators provide a vaudeville background for the serious business of the war, with its perpetual ambushes, raids, schoolboy exchanges of vows and knives, its darkly muttered

⁴⁶ W. H. Auden, "Paid on Both Sides," Poems, 8-9.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 21.

understatements, based probably on the sagas. "It shall be as you like. Though I think that much will come of this, chiefly harm."⁵⁰

At the end of the Charade, the two sides make uncertain peace through the marriage of characters on opposite sides; but their peace is broken immediately by the intervention of one of the mothers (an uncertain but important symbol in Auden's work, especially that which he did in collaboration with Isherwood) who forces her son to treacherously renew the feud again by killing the bridegroom. The play ends on a defeated note. The bereaved bride says:

Now we have seen the story to its end.
The hands that were to help will not be lifted,
And bad followed by worse leaves us tears,
An empty bed, hope from less noble men.⁵¹

After reading this obscure play, one wonders where, exactly, it is to be applied. Is it, as some critics have decided, the exposé of industry at war with itself, or does it have deeper religious and psychological implications. I think that it might be partially explained in terms of its being Auden's version of the Wasteland theme, not a slavish imitation but only a different approach to the same subject, made possible, perhaps, by Eliot's example. One of the poems which Auden has preserved in the Collected Poetry from "Paid on Both Sides" begins "The Spring unsettles sleeping partnerships,"⁵² suggesting the opening of "The Waste Land:" "April is the cruellest month,...." The poem ends:

... Better where no one feels,
The out-of-sight, buried too deep for shafts.⁵³

echoing an earlier expression of the same theme:

⁵⁰ W. H. Auden, "Paid on Both Sides," Poems, 21.

⁵¹ Ibid., 33-4.

⁵² Ibid., 17.

⁵³ Ibid., 18.

Could I have been some simpleton that lived
 Before disaster sent his runners here;
 Younger than worms, worms have too much to bear.
 Yes, mineral were best; could I but see
 These woods, these fields of green, this lively world
 Sterile as moon.⁵⁴

Auden's wasteland, however, is a more vigorous place than Eliot's; unlike Eliot's living dead, his characters have not lost the will to action, but their impulses are usually in the wrong direction. The world which he presents is a painful one, offering paths in all directions, some leading back to the old life, which is finished, some promising a new future, "Beg fruit, eagles above the stream,"⁵⁵ but no one knows the way, and life is random and usually vicious.

One of the difficulties with "Paid on Both Sides" is that it includes, to use Auden's figure, too much of the sea within the mirror. The theory to be found in psychology that the random thought is the most suggestive seems to be enthroned here, and while it may be true, it lacks the virtue of providing a logical system, or at least a possibility for development that will finally perfect, round off, finish a work of art so that it represents a separate world in harmony with itself. "Paid on Both Sides" misses being in itself a finished myth, as Kafka's work succeeds in being, although its impact is a mythical one partly because, trying to make a universal statement, it generalizes, draws from the past, and transforms the present into symbols. That one controlling myth, or figurative approach to reality isn't present in "Paid on Both Sides," has its reflection also in the Life-Art relationship, that is, that the great variety of notions and ideas which Auden derives from life are scrambled and condensed into

⁵⁴ W. H. Auden, "Paid on Both Sides," Poems, 17.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 34.

poetry which seems to have rather than a communicative function, an evocative one, both for the poet and for the reader.

Most of the poems in the 1930 volume have the same atmosphere of a lurking disaster that one finds in "Paid on Both Sides;" they present the same vision of disorder and menacing corruption. One, in particular, seems to be pointed toward Marxism:

Financier, leaving your little room
Where the money is made but not spent,
You'll need your typist and your boy no more;
The game is up for you and for the others.⁵⁶

but they raise the same question that seemed always about to be answered in "Paid on Both Sides," Who are the evil ones? What is the deadly disease? Auden is more definite in the last poem in the collection.

Sir, no man's enemy, forgiving all
But will his negative inversion, be prodigal:
Send to us power and light, a sovereign touch
Curing the intolerable neural itch,
The exhaustion of wearing, the liar's quinsy,
And the distortions of ingrown virginity.
Prohibit sharply the rehearsed response
And gradually correct the coward's stance.⁵⁷

Here the disease is classified in psychological terms, and the two sides seem to draw apart, making a pathway through the earlier confusion, and supplying a clearer Weltanschauung than the earlier perception of a universal disease and disorder.

Although there remains always a necessary ambiguity in his work, the next major poem, The Orators (1932) demonstrates that Auden is moving in the direction of greater clarity, and that whether or not he is interested now in communication, as he is later in The New Year Letter, because his point of view has begun to crystalize more than it had when he wrote "Paid

⁵⁶ W. H. Auden, "XXIX," Poems, 78.

⁵⁷ W. H. Auden, "XXX," Poems, 79.

on Both Sides," Art and Life take a step apart, and the impressions expressed in the earliest poetry have now a concrete application, there is still, here, the direct concern with life; The Orators is a series of observations specifically about the English middle class although it has its application to the general life, but there is in the separate poems a greater concern with logic, not of a random sort, but that which may, without the psychiatrist's key, finally become apparent to the reader. The method of communication also shifts in The Orators from suggestive and evocative language, from the manufacture of symbols and a personal myth to something more general. The imagery of fairy tale becomes more prominent here; the people who flashed past before we could decide whether they were good or evil stop and talk; the individual poems, we feel, try to make a definite point. The vision, of course, remains individual, and probes beneath the surfaces in order to discover, by turning everything inside out, the root of the disease and what metaphysic can be adopted as a cure. The point of view in The Orators is mainly psychological and anthropological. It also has, what was only a little apparent in "Paid on Both Sides," a clinical flavor, the sharp acerbity of the physician who knows what he is about, even though the symptoms of his own disease are not entirely clear to him. Finally, in The Orators, the quest theme begins to emerge, particularly in "The Journal of an Airman," where the Airman, also engaged in the same local skirmishing that went on in "Paid on Both Sides," if he doesn't free himself from the common contamination, at least discovers what he is, and in that way gains his advantage over the others, the enemy, who are blind to their illness.

The Orators, with all of its advantages over the earlier work, is a sprawling and somewhat incoherent book. When he put together the

Collected Poetry, Auden included only a few sections, explaining that The Orators belongs to a certain class of work "the good ideas which ... in-competence or impatience prevented from coming to much."⁵⁸

For this reason partly and for reasons of time and space, this paper will deal only with what seems to be the most important sections, Book I, "The Initiates," and Book II, "The Journal of an Airman."

One of the elements only implicit in the earliest work, that begins to become apparent in The Orators, is the use of the Christian myth. In the earlier work Auden is obsessed with the confusion in his world; the prominent note in his poetry is the unhealthy disorder of modern times. Even the last poem in the 1930 volume, "Sir, no man's enemy forgiving all," could be called properly a Christian poem although Auden's inclusion of it in the Collected Poetry since his conversion may have made it so now. God and salvation are equally dim in the early work and the only desperate suggestion for change is "death of the old gang."

We know it, We know that love
...
Needs death, death of the grain, our death,
Death of the old gang; would leave them
In sullen valley where is made no friend,
The old gang to be forgotten in the spring,
The hard bitch and the riding-master
Stiff underground; deep in the clear lake
The lolling bridegroom, beautiful there.⁵⁹

In The Orators there appears to be a merging of psychology and Christianity. Sin is presented imaginatively as it is in Dante's Inferno, this time however in a combination of sermon and case study.

To start with then, the excessive lovers of self. [Auden is talking about Dante's classification of excessive, defective, and perverted love.] What are they like? These are they who

⁵⁸ W. H. Auden, Preface to Collected Poetry.

⁵⁹ W. H. Auden, "XVI," Poems, 61.

even in childhood played in their corner, shrank when addressed. Lovers of long walks, they sometimes become bird watchers, crouching for hours among sunlit bushes like a fox, but prefer as a rule the big cities, living voluntarily in a tap room, the curiosity of their landlady...With odd dark eyes like windows, a lair for engines, they pass suffering more and more from cataract or deafness, leaving behind them diaries full of incomprehensible jottings, complaints less heard than the creaking of a wind pump on a moor.⁶⁰

This added sharpness in the characterizing of "that old gang" is a clearer expression of what Auden has said modern poetry is properly concerned with, the division between the good and evil will and it is, in part, this sort of orthodoxy that orients the sometimes too random effects of psychological Weltanschauung.

The religious element in Auden's psychology has been examined by Malcomb Cowley, who proposes a pat but fairly useful set of correspondence.⁶¹ According to his analysis, original sin represents for Auden, Narcissism or self pride; Hell is the predicament of self-centered man in his isolation; salvation is an escape from selfhood; eternity is a mystical experience. Although when Cowley published the article in 1945, Auden's theology had outstripped so worldly a definition, in The Orators it clearly joins hands with Homer Lane's semi-mystical approach to the diseased personality.

There are at least three ways of interpreting The Orators, all of them, I think valid. They are not arranged in levels, as are the various kinds of allegory in The Divine Comedy, so that one can read the poem consistently on whatever level is possible for him, but the different elements are scattered throughout the book so that as in a kaleidoscope, from time to time the pattern shifts, changing, but not breaking the consistency.

⁶⁰ W. H. Auden, "Address for a Prize-Day," The Orators, 14-5.

⁶¹ Malcomb Cowley, "Virtue and Virtuosity: Notes on W.H.Auden," Poetry, V, 55 (March, 1945) 208.

The explanations range from the concrete to the occult. The first views The Orators as an expose of the decadent middle class, a social tract with undertones of war and revolution. The second proposes an ingenious application of Homer Lane's or Groddeck's psychological principles with the purpose of revealing through a commentary upon their actions, which involuntarily reveal their hidden disease, the corruption that feeds upon "the old gang" who form, apparently, the majority of those people under observation. The third is more vague. There is a suggestion of the quest theme which Auden has used in all of his work even more consciously than his near contemporaries, Yeats and Eliot. Most of the early poetry is a negative expression of the quest where the corruption cries for a deliverer. In The Orators the airman conquers the dragon, but his salvation is limited. It is only himself that he saves, just as, Auden tells us, the poet, no matter how hard he may try or how much his actions resemble those of the hero who plunges into the wilderness of himself to find salvation for everyone, can never become the messiah because, for one thing, poetry has not so powerful a grip on the common life nor does it properly have the function of propaganda, for, as Auden puts it,

... poetry is not concerned with telling people what to do, but with extending our knowledge of good and evil, perhaps making the necessity for action more urgent and its nature more clear, but only leading us to the point where it is possible to make a rational and moral choice.⁶²

The quest, then, could perhaps best be described as a personal odyssey, offering no more than an example for the general public, its victories necessarily personal because they are paid for by struggle. The particular odyssey described in this version of the quest is the development from adolescence into the next level, not so boldly physiological as its

⁶² W. H. Auden, quoted in an article by Kerker Quinn, "Poets into Playwrights," Virginia Quarterly Review, Autumn XIII, 619.

statement here seems to imply, but a spiritual development, what would be described in anthropological terms as rites of passage.

Auden is fond of historical summaries, some of them ontogenetic and some autogenetic. He may even go back as far as the worm in order to relocate the several connections without which the world, to his eyes, is ricochetting madly into nowhere. More often his retrospections are accounts of his experience of development either specific, applying only to himself, or intuitive, applying to a general state of being. One of the finest poems in the early collection (1930), *It was Easter as I walked in the public gardens*, contains, among other things, this developmental theme:

This if the account of growing, of knowing;
First difference from first innocence
Is feeling cold and nothing there,
Continual weeping and oversleeping,
Is mocking, nudging, and defense of fear;
Verbal fumbling and muscle mumbling,
Imagination by mispronunciation,
Sebaceous belly, swollen skull,
Exchanging hats and calling dear
Are rich and silly, poor and dull. 63

In *The Orators*, I think Auden set about recreating a certain part of his childhood with, of course, the impersonality required by T. S. Eliot for paying the proper respect to tradition.

Although much of this explanation may seem beside the point, *The Orators*, unless it is to be studied thoroughly in itself, requires some sort of general characterization in order to rescue the scattered bits which must represent it in this paper from an effect of total bewilderment. As far as the Life-Art problem is concerned, *The Orators* represents an experimental, tentative, and yet unformulated relationship. Over the

63 W. H. Auden, "XVI," *Poems*, 60.

chasm that yawns between appearance and fantasy is thrown a makeshift bridge of beliefs of which one feels, Auden is not finally convinced, but which are useful to him for achieving the airman's view of reality.

Consider this and in our time
As the hawk sees it or the helmeted airman;⁶⁴

And it is reality, that is, an emphasis on life that still remains important. Poetry has predominantly the function of untangling confusion, of discovering the difference between good and evil, of providing for poets "a mirror in which they may become conscious of what their own feelings really are...."⁶⁵ Still, as the various kinds of Weltanschauung begin to pierce the gloomy confusion, Art itself also takes on a more crystalline organization. Auden has, from the beginning been a formalist, but in the early poetry he uses form in a more exterior sense. Within the strict bounds of Icelandic alliteration and stress, the terza rima, the tricolets, there is still an uncontrolled and undigested virtuosity of feeling, a richness of suggestion which, by its sheer jungle-like growth of exotic images, presents a complication, not so much of condensed and paradoxical thought, as the later poetry does but of a haze of imagery made to express a comparatively simple level of ideological and emotional experience. Such a poem as this one, which appears in the 1930 volume has what seems to be an unnecessary turgidity. Its subject, birth and the wasted richness of "Life stripped to girders, monochrome. Deceit of instinct"⁶⁶ is perhaps suited to a groping, inchoate expression, but its suitability to Hopkin's alliterative sprung rhythm, which has always

⁶⁴ W. H. Auden, "XXIX," Poems, 76.

⁶⁵ W. H. Auden, "Poet of the Encirclement," New Republic, 109 (Oct., '43) 579.

⁶⁶ W. H. Auden, "XIII," Poems, 53.

about it a sprightly tension, and a jumping logic that illuminates rather than confuses, is doubtful.

Bones wrenched, weak whimper, lids wrinkled, first dazzle known,
World wonder hardened as bigness, years, brought knowledge, you:
Presence a rich mould augured for roots urged --- but gone,
The soul is tetanous; gun barrel burnishing
In summer grass, mind lies to tarnish, untouched, undoing,
Though body stir to sweat, or, squat as idol, brood,
In duriate the fire with bellows, blank till sleep
And two-faced dream --- "I want," voiced treble as once
Crudely through flowers till dunghill cockcrow, crack at East.⁶⁷

There is about this poem, whether intentional or not, it would be hard to say, a heavy untidiness that is corrected in the later poetry. The last poem in The Orators is an example of the inner clarity that becomes increasingly apparent in Auden's work:

"O where are you going?" said reader to rider,
"That valley is fatal where furnaces burn,
Yonder's the midden where odours will madden,
The gap is the grave where the tall return."

"O do you imagine," said fearer to farer,
"That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
Your diligent looking discover the lacking
Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?"

"O what was that bird," said horror to hearer,
"Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?
Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,
The spot on your skin is a shocking disease?"

"Out of this house" --- said rider to reader
"Yours never will" --- said farer to fearer
"They're looking for you" --- said hearer to horror
As he left them there, as he left them there.

A small part of the credit for the increasing clarity in Auden's work can, I think, be laid, to his developing perception of how myth is to be applied to poetry. The first poem in Book I, "Address for a Prize-Day" is an extremely complex combination of Christian myth, psychology,

⁶⁷ W. H. Auden, "XIII," Poems, 53.

Marxism, and a fusion of these abstract disciplines with humorously concrete references taken from daily life. The tone of the poem is sophisticated naivety: written as a parody of speeches given by one of Auden's pre-school masters, it captures the over-simplification, the rhetorical attractiveness, the direct organization of those communications designed for the young.

Commemoration, Commemoration. What does it mean? What does it mean? Not what does it mean to them, there, then. What does it mean to us here now? It's a facer, isn't it, boys? But we've all got to answer it. What were the dead like? What sort of people are we living with now? Why are we here? What are we going to do? ... What do you think? What do you think about England, this country of ours where nobody is well?⁶⁸

All of the questions except the last one have the tiresomely familiar ring of general considerations uttered on all public occasions. They are, however, the very questions that modern life, because it has no answer for them, has evaded for years, and in the light of the underlying seriousness of the poem, commemoration represents a sort of day of judgment, the end of the old regime.

The combination of sermon and case study has already been touched upon. Another amusing incursion of the contemporary is Auden's mock-serious device of bringing divinity up to date. Just as Kafka's heaven is an immense and complicated bureaucracy, Auden's angels, specialists in spiritual fields, descend upon England like a body of trained government agents.

Imagine to yourself a picked body of angels, all qualified experts on the human heart, a Divine Commission, arriving suddenly one day at Dover. After some weeks in London, they separate, one passing the petral pumps along the Great North Road ... one to the furnace-crowded Midlands ... another to

⁶⁸ W. H. Auden, "Address for a Prize-Day," The Orators, 13-4.

Cornwall where granite resists the sea and our type of thinking ends, and soon. And then when every inch of the ground has been carefully gone over, every house inspected, they return to the capital again to compare notes, to collaborate in a complete report which made, they depart as quietly as they came. Beauty of the scenery apart, would you not feel some anxiety as to the contents of that report. Do you consider their statistics as to the average number of lost persons to the acre would be a cause for self congratulation?⁶⁹

From the easy, urbane manner of "Address for a Prize Day," Auden travels underground into the regions of "Paid on Both Sides." This time, however, the sides have shifted, the "old gang" is clearly separate from the secret band of revolutionaries, the few chosen frontier fighters, who live among the others unknown but waiting for a chance to strike.

Smile inwardly on their day handing around tea. (Their women have the faces of birds.) Walking in the mountains we were persons unknown to our parents, awarded them little, had a word of our own for our better shadow.⁷⁰

The expression of myth that Auden uses here is the idiom of the boys' secret society, magic pass words, private jokes, references to a mysterious leader, the atmosphere of mountain fighting, the peculiar innocence of military life. The use of myth in this case is an artificial one, the sophisticated creation out of other myths, not necessarily believed in, of a representation of psychic functions partly religious, and partly manifestations of the id that are present in that group of adventurers who have become conscious of a spiritual world within themselves. In language partly Biblical, partly taken from fairy tale, Auden expresses in a manner removed from sentimentality because of the suggestion of parody, the imaginative excesses of the chosen few:

If it were possible, yes, now certain. To meet Him alone on the narrow path, forcing a question, would show our unique Knowledge. Would hide Him wounded in a cave, kneeling all night by his bed of bracken, bringing hourly an infusion of

⁶⁹ W. H. Auden, "Address for a Prize-Day," The Orators, 13-4.

⁷⁰ W. H. Auden, "Argument," The Orators, 20.

bitter herbs; wearing His cloak receive the mistaken stab,
 deliver his message, fall at His feet, He gripping our mori-
 bund hands, smiling.⁷¹

This section has the effect of a humorous nightmare, a tangle of random comments, "Murder of a rook by weasels"⁷² --- the rook is a symbol of prosperity and grace. There is a parody on ritual, witty and sometimes obscene:

A Schoolmaster cleanses himself at half-term with a vegetable offering; on the north side of the hill, one writes with his penis in a patch of snow "Resurgam."⁷³

Secret the meeting in time and place, the time of the offshore wind, the place where loyalty is divided. Meeting of seven, each with a talent.⁷⁴

This grotesque landscape is what is hidden by the door behind which no one looks. Its schoolboy spirit of adventure is in a way, a compensation for a world where heroism is neither welcome nor even possible. It is a serious and comic manifestation of the spirit that sponsored Lawrence of Arabia, or that caused D. H. Lawrence to look at his characters in terms of their capacity for passion. It is a counter attack on the morbid lethargy, the shallowness, the death wish of "the old gang," an attempt to escape "the tragic fate of the insects"⁷⁵ or of the Hollow Men for whom

Between the desire
 And the spasm
 Between the potency
 And the existence
 Between the essence
 And the descent
 Falls the shadow.⁷⁶

In itself, the world which Auden creates is a system of myth, the purpose of which is to encompass and reveal the surface of life, and to suggest the

⁷¹ W. H. Auden, "Argument," The Orators, 22.

⁷² Ibid., 28.

⁷³ Ibid., 22-3.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 20.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 24.

⁷⁶ T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," Collected Poems, 104.

suffering and captive forces beneath the shallow crust. It could perhaps best be described as a school boy saga, modeled upon the Icelandic sagas, with the conscious addition of Freudian symbolism, and a shift in tone from the naive to the sophisticated, from the innocently crude, to a deliberate return to primitivism.

Book II of The Orators, "Journal of an Airman," also makes use of the school boy saga. It provides a body of contrived folklore found in the notebook of its central character, the airman. The "Journal" resembles, in a way, Rilke's Journal of my Other Self, where, under the guise of autobiography, Rilke created for himself a traditional ancestry, a number of childhood anecdotes, a history, in short, that might give him the roots that he lacked, cut off, as he was, and as most modern people are, either from an immediate ancestral past or from the past of his race which is kept alive by ritual and tradition.

The airman represents the exceptionally sensitive person, in this case, a homosexual, who from the vantage point of his isolation can see life as it really is, not being caught in the deceptive meshes of ordinary existence. With his extraordinary vision to guide him, the airman fills his notebooks with a number of random jottings --- definitions, bits of poetry, pseudo-scientific laws, plans for attack, description of the enemy, using Freud's theory that in the inovert habitual actions we reveal ourselves most clearly.

Three signs of an enemy letter --- underlining --- parenthesis
in brackets --- careful obliteration of cancelled expressions

...

Three signs of an enemy house --- old furniture --- a room
called the Den --- photographs of friends

...

Three terms of enemy speech --- I mean --- quite frankly ---
speaking as a scientist, etc.^{??}

^{??} W. H. Auden, "Journal of an Airman," The Orators, 55.

In order to discover the enemy, if description is not sufficient, the airman provides several psychological figure tests and draws up his relationships in terms of complicated geometric patterns. One important point that he makes about the enemy is that "THE ENEMY IS A LEARNED NOT A NAIVE OBSERVER."⁷⁸ He is a perversion of the scientific man, the crafty manipulator of statistics, the professor of education, the advertising researcher; his mind is controlled, patterned, precise; he is the "reasonable" one, as opposed to the extravagant and childlike personality of the airman and his friends. They are, on the other hand, the ones who are truly alive, who do not live by negation.

Of the Enemy's definitions by Negation
Unless you do well you will not be loved.
 I'm afraid of death (instead of I want to live).
 Pleasure is the decrease of pain (olives --- whiskey).⁷⁹

Following the advice of Lane and Groddeck, the airman and his friends are guided by intuition rather than reason, and their childishness, their delight in practical jokes is only their refusal to stifle the natural reactions of the child which lies beneath the surface of their maturity.

The airman's construction of his genealogy represents a rather peculiar inversion of the usual Freudian Oedipus complex. Starting with a simple biological dominant and recessive chart, using black and white for characteristics, the airman proves that in the F_3 generation, the true ancestry of the pure white individual is the uncle. This corresponds to some types of primitive ancestor classification where the maternal uncle assumes the education and initiation of the neophyte. As it is used here, the relationship suggests homosexuality:

⁷⁸ W. H. Auden, "Journal of an Airman," The Orators, 43.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 71.

It wasn't till I was sixteen and a half that he invited me to his flat. We had champagne for dinner. When I left, I knew who and what he was --- my real ancestor.⁸⁰

Although Auden may seem to be straining the boundaries of poetry with devices such as this one, they do not appear out of place in the particular medium that he uses, just as prose passages in his later work are perfectly in keeping with the more traditional forms. Science is treated facetiously all the way through the "Journal:"

The second law of thermo dynamics --- self care or minding one's own business.⁸¹

Auden uses the psychological Weltanschauung in connection with the quest theme to form a sort of semi-religious framework for the "Journal." The airman suffers from a mysterious disease, manifested in an inability to control his hands. His affliction suggests Groddeck's statement that the id inflicts punishment upon those parts of the body which have denied its commands, and the airman, who is frantically searching for purity before the terrible collapse of civilization which threatens throughout the "Journal" is not cured until he realizes that "God the desires ... means to be obeyed."

The peculiar structure of The Orators is a function, perhaps, of the kind of myth which it uses. Like looking at a dim star out of the corner of your eye, the obscure but important aspects of life can be captured only through indirection, through random thoughts connected by a hidden logic, through an intuitive manipulation of experience. And it is still experience that counts in The Orators; it is not a poem which offers emotion designed for the luxury trade, providing a delicate fla-

⁸⁰ W. H. Auden, "Journal of an Airman," The Orators, 61-2.

⁸¹ Ibid., 41.

vor not to be found in ordinary life, elevating, or ennobling, but rather with all the vehemence of a judgment day warning, it points out the evils of the whole structure of life. It has the quality as Eliot's verse has also of demanding action, either an acceptance or rejection and its moral purpose imposingly overshadows the aesthetic. Although Auden's moral purpose never diminishes, his art, by sheer necessity of his talent, refines, develops, moves into a new position in relation to its more functional purpose in the early work.

PART III

In the nine years between The Double Man and The Orators Auden published four volumes of poetry, (Poems 1934, Look Stranger, Spain, Another Time), two travel books (Letters from Iceland, Journey to a War), four plays, written in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood, (The Dance of Death, The Dog Beneath the Skin, The Ascent of F6, On the Frontier) and one anthology (The Poet's Tongue). One may wonder why in this brief excursion through Auden's poetry, all these stations have been by-passed, and The Double Man chosen for at least a partial stop. Time and space, of course, prevent a complete examination of Auden's work, and The Double Man is particularly pertinent to this paper because, for one thing, the poem which fills the main body of the book, "The New Year Letter," presents a detailed account of Auden's intellectual and emotional development, his ideas about politics, metaphysics, Life and Art, and for another, The Double Man is representative, in relation to the other work, of a certain point which Auden has reached in his ascent of the glass mountain. If the early poetry can be said to correspond roughly with Eliot's "Waste-land" period, this middle point of development might find its counterpart in Ash Wednesday, the dry time of waiting for grace, with full realization of helplessness in forcing the gates of heaven.

In this period, Auden has discovered not only the usefulness, but the truth of the Christian myth. The moral impulse has found its proper expression, but nothing has yet been resolved; the healing waters have not been released either for Life or for Art and although the painful order that Auden must make for himself and for others is slowly creeping out of confusion, its effects are yet to be fully realized.

The advantages gained in the past have not been entirely discarded, but they have been re-examined, criticized, and put away to be brought out only for occasional use. Lane and Groddeck reappear from time to time, are viewed with regret, and dismissed because they have seen only half of the dichotomy, good and evil. The freedom of the unconscious, the emptying of the storehouse of the id is also no longer possible, at least for use in poetry.

O hour of images when we sniff the herb
 Of childhood and forget who we are and dream
 Like whistling boys of the vast spaces
 Of the inconsistent racing towards us
 With all its appealing private detail. But
 Our ways are revealing; crossing the legs
 Or resting the cheek in the hand, we
 Hide the mouths through which the disregarded
 Will always enter. For we know we're not boys
 And never will be: part of us all hates life,
 And some are completely against it.⁸²

But with the decrease in emphasis upon psycho-analysis and Marxism Auden shows no diminution of interest in politics or in human error, both his own and that of other people. His preoccupation cannot change because stubborn outlines of the world still remain, no matter from how many different angles they are examined. The change is rather in his shift to the Christian myth, with its attendant theological complexities, in his adoption of a belief which has not only the Arnoldian virtues of being useful for pruning the wilderness of life, and for extending its order and its sources of inspiration to poetry as well, but also because it is the truth, is able to bear the allegiance of full belief. Marxism and psycho-analysis were never permanently accepted. Auden tells us in his article on Yeats that

⁸² W. H. Auden, "Prologue," The Double Man, 11.

You cannot use a Weltanschauung like psycho-analysis or Marxism or Christianity as a poetic myth unless it involves your emotions profoundly, and if you have not inherited it, your emotions will never become involved unless you take it more seriously than as a mere myth.⁸³

Earlier in the article, Auden makes the statement that

in poetry all dogmas become myths; that the aesthetic value of the poem is the same whether the poet and/or the reader actively believes in what it says or not. The poet is apt, then to look around for some myth --- any myth, he thinks, will do --- to serve the same purpose for himself. What he overlooks is that the only kind of myth which will do for him must have one thing in common with believed dogma, namely, that the relation of the former to the poet, as of the latter to the soul must be a personal one.⁸⁴

This personal relationship is what the Christian myth promises in "The New Year Letter," although as a source for poetic material, the fountain is still dry, the arguments prosaic, the entrance into the garden yet to be effected.

"The New Year Letter" is a long and complex poem. It ranges from a discussion of Auden's literary influences to a brief history of New England. Although every part of the poem is useful for understanding Auden's work, only two aspects can be presented in this paper, the Art-Life relationship, and Auden's use of Christian theology, if not yet as myth, as an approach to solving some of the difficulties of the quest, both as it affects every man and as it is concerned with the artist's eternal riddle of striking a balance between Life and Art.

The first section of the "Letter" contains a discussion of the Life-Art relationship. Listening to music, Auden feels the attractive order which Art can offer, not however real, and therefore to be equated with Life, but an ideal order, a wished for perfection, which leaves still the howling wilderness to be faced outside the limited garden.

⁸³ W. H. Auden, "Yeats as an Example," Kenyon Review, X, no. 2, 191.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 91.

Where Buxtehude as we played
 One of his passacaglias made
 Our minds a civitas of sound
 Where nothing but assent was found,
 For art had set in order sense
 And feeling and intelligence,
 And from its ideal order grey
 Our local understanding too.⁸⁵

This is the small but wonderful gift that Art can offer, a glimpse of an ideal order from which may even spread by contagion order in Life as well. But here Kinekegaard enters the picture, through whose help Auden sets up a metaphysical distinction between Life and Art.

Art is not life and cannot be
 A midwife to society.
 For art is fact accompli.
 What they should do, or how or when
 Life-order comes to living men
 It cannot say, for it presents
 Already lived experience
 Through a convention that creates
 Autonomous completed states.⁸⁶

At the end of To the Lighthouse Lily Briscoe, who has been waiting all her life for some sort of fulfillment, puts the final stroke to her painting. "Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision."⁸⁷ This mystical equation of Life and Art is what Auden denies in "The New Year Letter." Life is never completed and the vision is never final (as it is in Art) until death draws the final stroke. Grace is a condition of perpetual striving, perpetual suffering, of an attempt to find an elusive balance which is never quite within reach. This is, of course Eliot's paradox, "In my end is my beginning,"⁸⁸ for according to Auden paradise is not to be enjoyed on earth but only its promise, seen in the distance over the ridges of the endless Purgatorial mountain.

⁸⁵ W. H. Auden, "The New Year Letter," The Double Man, 16.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁸⁷ Virginia Woolfe, To the Lighthouse, 310.

⁸⁸ T. S. Eliot, "East Coker," The Four Quartets, 17.

But perfect Being has ordained
 It must be lost to be regained,
 And in its orchards grow the tree
 The fruit of human destiny,
 And man must eat it and depart
 At once with gay and grateful heart,
 Obedient, reborn, re-aware;
 For if he stop an instant there,
 The sky grows crimson with a curse,
 The flowers change color for the worse.
 He hears behind his back the wicket
 Padlock itself, from the dark thicket
 The chuckle with no healthy cause,
 And helpless sees the crooked claws
 Emerging into view and groping
 For handholds on the low round coping,
 As horror clambers from the well:
 For he has sprung the trap of Hell.⁸⁹

What this passage implies is only one of the relationships possible, or not possible between Art and Life. Auden is saying that Life should not be regarded as if it were Art, and therefore capable of being willed to completion. There is, of course, a necessary commerce between Art and Life and the practical question which must finally be answered is how is experience to be translated, to be made into a form that will be separated from life and yet share in the fidelity of fact. For Auden, the ordre logique seems to lie in his use of the Christian myth. The leap from the early poetry in "The New Year Letter" emphasizes the enormous distance that has been traversed between the two regions of intuitive and rational knowledge. Rilke's Das Andere and the equally expansive but much brighter kingdom of theology. The frontier myth is no longer useful, and the "old gang" although still in force, are no longer to be exterminated but viewed in the sympathetic light of an understanding of human error. Although Marxism and psychology have always some valuable point to make because they are at least in part true, they contain the fundamental

⁸⁹ W. H. Auden, "The New Year Letter," The Double Man, 44-5.

error of promising a paradise on earth which, even if it were possible, would be only scantily fitted out with the few harmonious but limited bits of furniture that disciplines circumscribed by materialism can offer. In the notes to "The New Year Letter" Auden finds psychology dangerous because:

... it tempts a man to think that since the suffering of his tribulation can be removed, he will not have to suffer at all; that, since the way to cure tribulations is to treat them aesthetically, that is, not to repress them by will but to admit them and examine them, temptations can be dealt with in the same way by yielding to them.⁹⁰

Christian theology in Auden's poetry is an almost inevitable outlet for his moral or ethical passion because both his poetry and his way of thinking have moved consistently in the direction of tradition, knowledge and classicism. No other discipline could organize and criticize as the Christian ethic does in "The New Year Letter," the jumbled and divergent insights and pieces of knowledge ranging historically from Aristotle to Kierkegaard which are reflected through Auden from the chaos of the modern world. Finding an order, however, is not the goal of the quest, nor does its process provide an entirely satisfactory subject matter for poetry. The texture of "The New Year Letter" varies from dry syllogistic statement, the charm of which lies in its verbal ingenuity:

I see it now. The intellect
That parts the Cause from the Effect
And thinks in terms of Space and Time
Commits a legalistic crime
For such an unreal severance
Must falsify experience.

to a lyric passage like this one. Although Auden often misses by his emphasis on the prosaic, the happy fusion of thought and feeling:

⁹⁰ W. H. Auden, "The New Year Letter," The Double Man, 131.

O Unicorn among the cedars,
 To whom no magic charm can lead us
 White childhood moving like a sigh
 Through the green woods unharmed in thy
 Sophisticated innocence

...

Convict our pride of its offense
 In all things, even penitence,
 Instruct us in the civil art
 Of making from the muddled heart
 A desert and a city where
 The thoughts that have to labor there
 May find locality and peace,
 And pent-up feelings there release,
 Send strength sufficient for our day
 And point our knowledge on its way
O da quod tubes, Domine.⁹¹

The function of myth in this transitional poetry is then more heavily balanced on the side of Weltanschauung than in the sense that Yeats used it on the side of poetic release, of finding a source of images for poetry; the emphasis falls more heavily upon the explanation of doctrine and its application than on the "unicorn among the cedars" and it is not until the recent poetry that Christian mythology fulfills this evocative function.

Another kind of myth, which has been mentioned before in connection with The Orators, is the quest or, in a broader sense, the fairy tale. It has also its connection with theology, for Auden looks upon fairy tale as a symbolic expression of the prevailing religious spirit of the past. In his review of Grimm's Fairy Tales he interprets briefly the formula of the three brothers who have set out on a competitive quest:

From the formula of the three brothers the reader will learn that the hero --- is, the one who becomes an individual person, for that is what it means to be the exception who marries the Princess and inherits the kingdom --- is not a superman with exceptional natural gifts. The third son succeeds not through his own merit but through Divine Grace. His con-

⁹¹ W. H. Auden, "The New Year Letter," The Double Man, 269-70.

tribution is, firstly, a humility which admits that he cannot succeed without Grace; secondly, a faith which believes that Grace will help him, so that, when the old beggar asks for his last penny, that is, when, humanly speaking he is doom-ing himself to fail, he can give it away, and lastly, a will-
ingness, unlike his elder brothers who always carry asperin, to accept suffering. He is the one who is not anxious.⁹²

The way in which Auden uses myth in the sonnet sequence called "The Quest" which makes up the last section of The Double Man is perhaps the most successful as far as poetry itself is concerned. Although in "The New Year Letter," sheer virtuosity and the contagious excitement surrounding ideas that are experienced with genuine feeling and enthusiasm carried off the dryer sections. "The Quest" is closer to Eliot's fusion of thought and feeling. Where the "New Year Letter" was didactic and exact, "The Quest" returns to the ambiguity and magical suggestiveness that makes it possible for a poem to be experienced without being understood. Auden uses myth here as he has done sometimes in the earlier work, to connect the past with the present, to give a universal and impersonal flavor to his poetry. Life is figuratively represented, as it was in the Middle Ages, in terms of a pilgrimage or a journey, the failures and successes expressed humorously and ironically in a mixture of myth and the idiom of contemporary life.

They noticed that virginity was needed
To trap the unicorn in any case
But not that, of those virgins who succeeded
A high percentage had an ugly face.⁹³

or

Fresh addenda are published every day
To the encyclopedia of the Way

Linguistic notes and scientific explanations
And texts for schools with modernized spelling and illustrations.

⁹² W. H. Auden, "The Brothers Grimm," New York Times Book Review, Nov. 12, 1944, 1-28.

⁹³ W. H. Auden, "The Presumptuous," The Double Man, 174.

Now everyone knows that the hero must chose the old horse
Abstain from liquor and sexual intercourse

And look out for a stranded fish to be kind to:
Now everyone thinks he could find, had he a mind to,
The way through the waste to the chapel in the rock
For a vision of the Triple Rainbow or the Astral Clock.

Forgetting his information comes mostly from married men
Who liked fishing and a flutter on the horses now and then.⁹⁴

"The Quest" is important because it is, in a sense, Auden's own personal myth. Although the striving toward perfection takes many forms, involves numerous conversions, the idea that there is a perfection to reach for but not to gain remains the same. And whether it is to bring together the two fractured halves of man's nature, reason and emotion, or to solve the artist's moral dilemma, the translating irresponsible Life into responsible Art, or to attain the double, although unequal grace of writing well and putting himself in relation to God, the Quest has its versatile and useful application.

Although it might seem that his stringent moral attitude toward Life and toward Art might be exactly parallel with Eliot's moral severity in After Strange Gods, there is a redeeming elasticity in Auden's ethical orthodoxy. In a poem, published a short time before "The New Year Letter" he says of W. B. Yeats

You were silly like us: your gift survived it all;
and of Kipling and Claudel, although here he is more critical, not having entirely pardoned Kipling himself:

Time that is intolerant
To the brave and innocent
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

⁹⁴ W. H. Auden, "The Wav," The Double Man, 178.

Worships language and forgives
 Everyone by whom it lives;
 Pardons cowardice, conceit,
 Lays its honors at their feet.

Time that with this strange excuse
 Pardoned Kipling and his views
 And will pardon Paul Claudel
 Pardons him for writing well.⁹⁵

In a critical sense the problem is perhaps unable to be resolved, for no matter how much in variance a writer may be with the moral code which Auden now holds to be the final and inevitable truth, how can he discard the aesthetic excellence, that, as a writer he cannot resist, although he realizes that it must, in the end, be subservient to his morality. For himself, Auden has solved the problem through his use of the Christian myth which he applies now, in the later work, both to Life and to Poetry.

⁹⁵ W. H. Auden, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," Another Time, 108-9.

SECTION IV

One might expect that upon his dedication to the Christian myth Auden would go the whole way and become what is known as a religious poet, a writer of devotional verse. For Auden, however, considering the situation of our time, such a reaction would be a retreat, for between the affirmation vision and its expression in poetry stretches the whole disgraceful and untidy world which is not to be forgotten by retiring into a private singing chamber. "The Sea and the Mirror," the next major poem of the Double Man is, in a way also a transitional work, for its subject is a fuller and more figurative treatment of what was briefly examined in "The New Year Letter," the relationship between Life and Art. It may be called transitional because it is, like Rilke's Malte Laurid, Brigge an examination of certain problems that face an artist and in the greater clarity gained by the examination, it is a preparation for things to come.

"The Sea and the Mirror," an extended epilogue to The Tempest, is concerned with the problem which is implicit in the action of the play and with which Auden, his voice growing steadily more affirmative, is also preoccupied in his own work. The problem is this: is it justifiable for Art in its parable of human experience to prevent a harmonious and joyful vision of man's proper state on earth, slighting, although it may not ignore, the disharmony that reality necessarily projects into the magic circle. In the words of Caliban, through whom Auden addresses the audience, this is Shakespeare's and any artist's dilemma.

Having learnt his language, I begin to feel something of the serio-comic embarrassment of the dedicated dramatist, who, in representing to you your condition of estrangement from the truth, is doomed to fail the more he succeeds, for the more

truthfully he paints the condition, the less clearly can he indicate the truth from which it is estranged, the brighter his revelation of the truth in its order, its justice its joy, the fainter shows his picture of your actual condition in all its drabness and sham, and, worse still, the more sharply he defines the estrangement itself...the more he must strengthen your delusion that an awareness of the gap is itself a bridge, your interest in your imprisonment a release, so that, far from your being led by him to contrition and surrender, the regarding of your defects in his mirror, your dialogue, using his words, with yourself about yourself, becomes the one activity which never... lets you down, the one game which can be guaranteed, whatever the company, to catch on...⁹⁶

This dangerously euphoric pastime is what Jung calls transcendence:

The greatest and most important problems are basically all insoluble; they must be so because they express the necessary polarity immanent in every self-regulating system. They cannot be solved but only transcended...⁹⁷

Auden maintains, however, that transcendence is deceptive in so far as Art makes us believe that we have, by the deepening of our emotions solved Life's problems. After an evening at the theatre, having lived, as it were, another life, having run through a gamut of emotions and come out cleansed and elevated:

We are wet with sympathy now,
Thanks for the evening but how
Shall we satisfy when we meet,
Between Shall-I and I-Will,
The lion's mouth whose hunger
No metaphors can fill?⁹⁸

In order to make his point about Life and Art, Auden has underlined the symbolism of The Tempest even more heavily than Shakespeare did. Ariel represents Art, Caliban, imperfect mortality and Prospero, the artist. In dismissing Ariel, Prospero makes a choice, not however, in favor of Caliban, who remains as a reproach to his self-deception and negligence, but

⁹⁶ W. H. Auden, "The Sea and the Mirror," Collected Poetry, 399-400.

⁹⁷ C. G. Jung's The Secret of the Golden Flower, 88, quoted in Jacobi's The Psychology of Jung, 126.

⁹⁸ W. H. Auden, "The Sea and the Mirror," op. cit., 351.

but turning his back on his magic which always made everything too easy,
he embarks upon the journey of the moral life.

And now in my old age, I wake, and this journey really exists,
And I have actually to take it, inch by inch,
Alone and on foot, without a cent in my pocket,
Through a universe where time is not forshortened
No animals talk, and there is neither floating nor flying.⁹⁹

This is the journey that faces everyone, and the artist in particular,
while his Art may lead him into graces has always the danger of discover-
ing too late that the temporary harmony he created for himself is only a
shabby approximation of the real Word, that in his mirror, because of his
imperfect knowledge and shaking will "all our meanings are reversed"¹⁰⁰
and the feeble reflection, far from being worthy of any allegiance for
its own merits, is a mere shadow of the "perfected Work which is not ours."¹⁰¹

The shift in relationship between Life, Art, and Myth which was ex-
pressed in "The New Year Letter" now becomes even clearer. Myth looms up
before the other two which, in their human falibility, crouch at its feet.
And this time, myth is not simply an idea which will orient the world in
a certain convenient way, but the only possible answer, the final perfec-
tion beside which the dreadful confusion of history in which both Ariel
and Caliban have a part, final perfection beside which the dreadful con-
fusion of history in which both Ariel and Caliban have a part is like grand
opera rendered by a provincial touring company.

Our performance --- for Ariel and I are ... just as deeply
involved as any of you ... has been so indescribably in excu-
sably awful....We floundered on from fiasco to fiasco, the
schmalz tenor never quite able at his big moments to get right
up nor the ham brass right down, the stud contralto gurgling
through her maternal grief, the ravished coloratura trilling
madly off-key and the re-united lovers half a bar apart...¹⁰²

99 W. H. Auden, "The Sea and the Mirror," op. cit., 351.

100 Ibid, 402.

101 Ibid, 402.

102 Ibid, 401.

When the whole awkward performance is finished, its players who are all of us, discover that the noise, the fake properties, the foolish pretenses have been nothing but an evasion of the terrible reality.

Yet, at this very moment when we do at last see ourselves as we are, neither cozy nor playful, but swaying out on the ultimate wind-whipped cornice that overhangs the unabiding void --- we have never stood anywhere else --- when our reasons are silenced by the heavy huge diversion --- there is nothing to say.¹⁰³

But before he condemns the artist to eternal silence Auden, turning around on himself, reinstates Art in its humble, but still useful position as a bridge, although a feeble one between the Ultimate and its shabby subjects. The position that Matthew Arnold held is now completely reversed in Auden. Religion, rather than being a hand-maiden to poetry is now comfortably seated on the throne where neither Caliban nor Ariel can ever replace her. In their subject state, however, they draw closer together for Auden no longer draws his line between Life and Art, but between perfection and two kinds of striving toward perfection, both of them faulty and doomed to be only an approximation, but inseparably connected in their relationship to the "Wholly Other Life."

The most important way in which Auden uses myth in "The Sea and the Mirror" is in the orientation of the poem itself. Its foundation rests upon the Christian myth although its problems are resolved this time not in terms of an intricate legalistic theology but in terms of the bare conception of the ultimate Word.

"For the Time Being," the Christmas oratorio that follows "The Sea and the Mirror" represents Auden's fullest use of the Christian myth. Here, through its directive medium the divergent pieces of Auden's vision are

¹⁰³ W. H. Auden, "The Sea and the Mirror," op. cit., 402.

pulled together, and we meet again the psychological and political explanation of the disease of our times, but this time, the diagnosis is oriented in terms of Christianity.

The poem uses the story of the miraculous birth, not in any ornamental sense, but for its real and serious application to the modern world. The historical analogy is a complete one, for, as the poem develops, we discover that we ourselves are the Romans, that our world is only an extension of theirs. The situation of our time requires the same grace-giving redemption that was to descend two thousand years ago. When the chorus describes the condition of unenlightened waiting, the terrible period of estrangement from God, the point in history when paganism on one hand, and the unleavened law on the other had taken man as far as they could and left him perched on a glacier where he could neither go up without assistance, nor down without breaking his neck, we recognize our own dilemma as Auden envisions it.

O where is that immortal and nameless Centre from which our points of
 Definition and death are all equi-distant? Where
 The will of our wish to wander, the everlasting fountain
 Of the waters of joy that our sorrow uses for tears?
 O where is the garden of Being that is only known in Existence
 As the command to be never there, the sentence by which
 Aelphs of throbbing fact have banished into position,
 The clock that dismisses the moment into the turbine of time?¹⁰⁴

Not only is the poem drawn directly and unmistakably from our own times, but also it uses what Auden has found to be the proper application of the modern disciplines, Marxism and Psychology. Jung's four elements in the human personality introduce the Annunciation. They are the four fractured parts of the Whole, which was split apart by the fall,

¹⁰⁴ W. H. Auden, "For the Time Being," Collected Poems, 412-3.

We who are four were
 Once but one
 Before his act of
 Rebellion¹⁰⁵

Auden, however, does not regard them in quite the same light in which they are presented in Jung's work, for instead of juggling them as Jung does into an uneven and constantly shifting equilibrium, feeling having the upper hand in youth, thought being the ruler of old age: Auden, whose point of view is removed from the practical and the secular, would consider their ideal state a complete union, where no disharmony is possible because there are no parts to get out of adjustment. As it is, however, the lack of understanding between the four faculties must inevitably send man off in foolish and wrong directions, and although it is only through their help that he may have a brief glimpse of the garden, they stand just as ready to lead him into error as into Grace.

Intuition

As a dwarf in the dark of
 His belly I rest;

Feeling

A nymph, I inhabit
 The heart in his breast;

Sensation

A giant, at the gates of
 His body I stand;

Thought

His dreaming brain is
 My fairyland.¹⁰⁶

The proletariat receives his share of attention in "For the Time Being" but he is not, apparently to receive the heaven on earth that Marxism

¹⁰⁵ W. H. Auden, "For the Time Being," Collected Poems, 414.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 414-5.

tries to provide, but must satisfy himself in his dull waiting with the promise that things will be better after the miraculous birth, or if that is not to be realized, with the faint but positive voice of the Unknown

Who answers for our fear
As if it were His own
So that we reply
Till the day we die;
"No, I don't know why,
But I'm glad I'm here?"¹⁰⁷

The shepherds who are Auden's symbol for the proletariat are naturally resentful toward the insincere voice of Capitalism, softened by the lie of sentimentality.

We observe that those who assure us their education
And money would do us such harm,
How real we are just as we are, and how they envy us,
For it is the centreless tree
And the uncivilized robin who are the truly happy,
Have done pretty well for themselves:¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, they, as well as everyone else, are supposed to realize that it is not the secular goal toward which their expectant eyes are to be directed in their case, revolution and management of their own labor, but the entirely other Reality, the promise of salvation.

In "For the Time Being," Auden states again his resolution of the aesthetic problem, that through the sanction of the Christian myth, Art has its justification and its raison d'être.

Because in Him the Flesh is united to the Word without magical transformation, Imagination is redeemed from promiscuous fornication with her own images.¹⁰⁹

Auden's final pronouncement about Life and Art, final in so far as his work has progressed, is that Life must extend itself into Art and Art in-

¹⁰⁷ W. H. Auden, "For the Time Being," op. cit., 439.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 437.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 452.

to Life --- that although between them yawns a chasm that will never close again since one is accomplished, and the other is perpetually in a state of being, Art must incorporate within its finished wall the broken spot where the recognition of imperfection may creep in and Life, on the other hand, may perceive in Art the other Perfection toward which it is so blindly groping.

In "For the Time Being" Auden's use of Christian myth fulfills the same purpose that the Odyssey did in Joyce's "Ulysses," making it possible to extend to the stubbornly prosaic equipment of our times some of the symbolic flavor of the past. Auden's early use of symbols such as pylons, deserted factories, ruined industrial towns, although they derived a certain force from their natural desolation, was not entirely satisfactory because it lacked a traditional connection. Under the auspices, however, of Christian mythology and the Quest, modern life takes on a bold and curiously effective symbolism. Auden presents humorous aspects of Joseph's situation in terms of ordinary life, maintaining, as he does so well, the light touch that relieves the over-balance of excessive earnestness. Even in light verse, Auden's approach is never frivolous; his manner only to lighten the heavy burden of seriousness for

... Truth, like love and sleep, resents
approaches that are too intense.¹¹⁰

Joseph, therefore, can be presented in a farcical way without in the least injuring his biblical dignity and --- under the title "The Temptation of St. Joseph" appears this verse:

My shoes were shined, my pants were cleaned and pressed,
And I was hurrying to meet
My own true love:
But a great crowd grew and grew

¹¹⁰ W. H. Auden, "The New Year Letter," The Double Man, 24.

Till I could not push my way through,
 Because
 A star had fallen down the street;
 When they saw who I was,
 The police tried to do their best.¹¹¹

Although to Auden's mind Art is a looking-glass world where the right hand becomes the left, where the relationships are reversed so that the failure becomes a success and the old witch turns out a beautiful princess, its accuracy can be sharpened and refined by its dependence on what he believes to be the Truth of Christianity. Of his own art the Truth requires two things, first that it represent the perfection that is always in sight, but barely discernable against the horizon, and second, man's separation from it during his life and perhaps for eternity. For this reason "For the Time Being," because it is a parable of modern times, ends without success or failure. In the age of anxiety which is our own times, the well-meaning but mistaken Herods have created, because of their fear of the supernatural a fantastic defensive order. The flight to Egypt, however, has made salvation still possible, and although the modern world, like a timid bather shrinks at the edge of the icy ocean, the burden of suffering which may lead to grace is waiting to be assumed.

The night of agony still to come; the time is noon:
 When the spirit must practice his scales of rejoicing
 Without even a hostile audience, and the soul endure
 A silence that is neither for nor against her faith.¹¹²

Auden's last published book, The Age of Anxiety, is a reversed approach to the theme of For the Time Being. The necessity for salvation is presented here in terms of material rather than figurative reality. There is, however, an effect of realism, for the four characters, Quent, Rosetta, Emble, and Malin, are clearly symbolic of the various modern types which

¹¹¹ W. H. Auden, "For the Time Being," op. cit., 422.

¹¹² Ibid., 466.

are separated from God, and their lives reveal a faulty orientation to its proper objective, the theme, again, of the quest toward whose goal, Auden believes, everyone is compelled unwittingly to struggle, no matter how blindly and unsuccessfully.

Although The Age of Anxiety has a realistic rather than a mythological setting, it is infused with the Christian belief. Through a device which Auden himself has always found to be useful for getting at the underlying truth behind appearances, the action of the poem shifts from a relatively literal to an imaginative expression, without, however, destroying its essential unity. The four characters, surrounded by the meaningless and aimless futility which is life without grace, through their contact with each other, and with the aid of a few drinks, are driven to think and talk about themselves, their childhood, and thence to create a fantasy which might reflect the vital and important problems of life. Although their observations are aimless, not from indifference but from their inept unfamiliarity with the "Wholly Other Life," from their wanderings takes on a sort of coherence, in their gradual recognition of a metaphysical unity toward which they should strive. This use of the inner resources as a wavering approach to the truth, is not at all unlike Auden's earlier doctrine, the wisdom of the id, but now it is transformed by a belief in Christianity, the tool which Auden uses now for charting the expanses of the inner life is the quest, and upon the introspection of the four characters, he imposes a medieval system of categories, The Seven Ages, and the Seven Stages, both allegorical representations of life as a journey toward some definite goal.

In The Age of Anxiety, the quest theme becomes ever more clearly religious than it appeared to be in The Double Man. According to Auden, those

who set out upon their journey in error, who are deceived that God does not exist and that their materialistic preoccupations are more practical and more sensible than the elusive life of the spirit, are never really out of relationship with God; their very striving is an evidence of the need within themselves to attain the perfection which their fractured being is forever attempting to regain. Auden's adaptation of the quest in The Age of Anxiety is expressed through the medium of religious myth, fairy tale, and modern idioms. Through this means, he tells us that modern life has taken the negative way. The hero is not in this case equipped with a shining horse, nor does he pursue a golden radiance, but

On an old white horse, an ugly nag,
In his faithful youth he followed
The black ball as it bowled down hill

Piers Ploughman psychology and images from modern life join forces in both a literal and figurative diagnosis of the contemporary situation.

Then he harrowed hell
Heated the abyss
Of torpid instinct and trifling flux,
...
For he ignored the Nightmares and annexed their ranges,
Put the clawing chimaeras into cold storage.
...
In the high heavens,
The ageless places,
The gods are wringing their great worn hands
For their watchman is away, their world-engine
Creaking and cracking. ¹¹

One element which is conspicuously lacking in The Age of Anxiety is any mention of the Life-Art problem. Is it, one wonders, a temporary omission, or is it no longer there because, having discovered the proper relationship, Auden finds it no longer necessary to make this relationship a part of the subject matter of his poetry. In the continual shift-

ing of ideas and beliefs from the early period to the late, there has, I think, been a qualitative change in the balance between Life, Art, and Myth. In the beginning the difficulty was able to be solved in a pragmatic manner. The disturbing chaos of modern life, which must always make it seem a heavy burden to those who live it, weighs, of course, as heavily on Auden as it does on every one else. As an artist, he has the possibility of making art an escape, at least temporarily from an uneasy reality. Choosing a different approach, however, Auden has grappled with the problems of life through the clarifying and revelatory medium of Art, the relationship between them expressed through myth or belief which in the early period is derived from the modern disciplines, Marxism and Psychology. Although they are approaches to the truth, these beliefs, as far as Auden is concerned, are not to be taken with a final seriousness but to be valued for their efficacy in forming a pattern which life, both the inner life of the spirit and the outer life of the world, can follow, and to provide in lieu of any prevailing traditional explanation, an approach to the serious problems that modern life has carefully concealed beneath the factual facade.

In the later work, with the acceptance of the Christian Myth, the relationship changes. Art through its reflection from Life is a channel which, though faulty, is the only approach man has to God. Myth is no longer a method for imposing order upon chaos, for making for life a self-contained system or for transforming the material of life into its figurative truth through Art. The authoritarianism of the Christian doctrine decide all moral and aesthetic questions, and Auden substitutes the limited order that man can make for himself for an approximation of a Divine order.

The critical problems, however, are still to be solved. The early work discovers certainly a rich source of imagery through evocative use of psychological theory, but the necessarily personal nature of the symbolism derived from the underground caverns of consciousness makes the poetry, while it has a vigorous and magical effect, an unsatisfactory communication to the world. With the adoption of the Christian myth, although Auden's idiom never becomes easy, a greater clarity appears, for one reason, because Christian theology has not been entirely forgotten --- its imagery and language is traditional and by its familiarity it can be comprehended by a nominally Christian society, and for another, that with greater humility, although no less fidelity to his Art, Auden believes that communication is necessary.

Christianity also brings to Auden's work an added assurance and depth of feeling. From a renewed commerce with Christian tradition both Art and Life can regain the moral direction which Auden believes they must perpetually attempt to find. And in Auden's work itself are reflected the fruits of his struggles, the important people he has met in the course of the quest, and the wonderful sights that he has seen along the way.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Major Works of W. H. Auden (Arranged chronologically)

- Poems, London, Faber and Faber, 1930
- The Orators, London, Faber and Faber, 1932
- Poems, London, Faber and Faber, 1932
- The Dance of Death, London, Faber and Faber, 1933
- Poems, New York, Random House, 1934
- The Dog Beneath the Skin, London, Faber and Faber, 1935
- The Poet's Tongue, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1935
- The Ascent of F6, London, Faber and Faber, 1935
- Look, Stranger, London, Faber and Faber, 1936
- Spain, London, Faber and Faber, 1937
- Letters from Iceland, London, Faber and Faber, 1937
- On the Frontier, New York, Random House, 1938
- Journey to a War, New York, Random House, 1939
- Another Time, London, Faber, 1940
- The Double Man, New York, Random House, 1941
- For the Time Being, New York, Random House, 1944
- The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden, New York, Random House, 1945
- The Age of Anxiety, New York, Random House, 1947

II. Books

- Auden, W. H., in Poets at Work, New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1948
- Bush, Douglas, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, Minneapolis, The University of Minnesota Press, 1932

- Campbell, Joseph, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, New York, Pantheon Press, 1949
- Caudwell, Christopher, Illusion and Reality, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1947
- Chase, Richard, Quest for Myth, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1949
- Eliot, T. S., After Strange Gods, London, Faber and Faber, 1934
- , Collected Poems, New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1936
- , Four Quartets, New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1943
- Isherwood, Christopher, Lions and Shadows, New York, New Directions, 1947
- Jacobi, The Psychology of Jung, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1943
- Pater, Walter, The Renaissance, London, Macmillan and Co., 1920
- Spender, Stephen, The Destructive Element, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1936
- Stauffer, Donald A., "The Modern Myth of the Modern Myth," English Institute Essays, New York, Columbia University Press, 1948
- Williams, C., ed., The Little Treasury of Modern Poetry, New York, Scribners, 1940
- Woolfe, Virginia, To the Lighthouse, New York, Modern Library, 1927
- Yeats, W. B., Essays, New York, Macmillan and Co., 1924
- , Later Poems, New York, Macmillan and Co., 1924

III. Articles

- Auden, W. H., "A Novelist's Poems," Poetry, IL (1936), 224
- , "Poet of the Encirclement," New Republic, CIX (Oct., 1943), 570-81
- , "The Brothers Grimm," New York Times Book Review, Nov. 12, 1944, 1-28
- , "Preface to Kierkegaard," New Republic, CX (1944), 683-4
- , "Yeats as an Example," Kenyon Review, X (no. 2), 187-95
- Cowley, Malcomb, "Virtue and Virtuosity: Notes on W. H. Auden," Poetry, LXV (Jan. - March, 1945), 202-9
- Dupee, F. W., "W. H. Auden," Nation, CLIX (Oct., 1944), 537

- Eliot, T. S., "Ulysses, Order and Myth," The Dial, LXXV (July - Dec., 1933), 486-3
- Flint, F. Cudworth, "New Leaders in English Poetry," Virginia Quarterly Review, XIV (1934), 502-18
- Fremantle, A., "Wise Man's Sons," Commonwealth, IXL (Dec., 1944), 194-6
- Grace, W. J., "The Double Man," Commonwealth, XXXIV (1941), 279-81
- Grigson, Geoffrey, "Notes on Contemporary Poetry," Bookman, LXXXII (1932), 287-9
- Lechlitner, R., "Odyssey of Auden," Poetry, LXVI (1945), 204
- MacNiece, Louis, "Letter to W. H. Auden," New Verse, Nos. 26-7 (Nov., 1937), 11-3
- Quinn, Kirker, "Poets into Playwrights," Virginia Quarterly Review, XIII, 616-20
- Spender, Stephen, "Have English Writers Marked Time?" Saturday Review of Literature, XXIX (Jan., 1946), 3-5
- , "Oxford to Communism," New Verse, Nos. 26-7 (Nov., 1937), 9-10
- , "This Age in Poetry," Bookman, LXXVIII, 10

ROOM USE ONLY

30 12 54

AUG 1 1968

AUG 1 1968

~~AUG 1 1968~~

