

DYLAN THOMAS'S 18 POEMS AND AUDEN'S CRITIQUE

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ABSTRACT: *Literary taste has its twists and turns, and it is no wonder that Dylan Thomas's 18 Poems appeal to the poets of the thirties and the forties in different ways. The response of the Thomas circle is quick and unstinted. The Apocalyptic poets, Henry Treece, Vernon Watkins, G.S. Fraser, and Norman MacCaig become enthusiastic over Thomas's poem, and they plan to bring out a book of verse based on 18 Poems. The critics have also expressed their warm appreciation. The poets of the thirties, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender, and Louis MacNeice, are equally effusive. The reaction of W.H. Auden is, on the other hand, quite adverse. In Look Stranger!, he says that 18 Poems recording a sceptical theme, stands "wild" in its structure. Auden's critique on Thomas as articulated in Another Time, The New Year Letter, For the Time Being, The Age of Anxiety, and in Nones endorses, on the whole till the death of Thomas (1953), the opinions of the preceding years. The obvious limitations of 18 Poems should not, however, make the readers ignore its real excellences, and the excellences are many and varied. Hence, a figurative study is undertaken to establish that the most remarkable advance in Thomas's artistic discipline is marked in the defter handling of dramatic imagination and language. What really distinguishes the surrealist mind of Thomas is a capacity for self-analysis, a capacity for objectifying, and subjecting to analytical scrutiny, his own experiences and feelings. This power of self-analysis is the highest manifestation of the sceptic poetic tradition of Thomas Hardy and W.B. Yeats.*

KEYWORDS: Critique, Irrational, Touchstone, Pathos, Cohesion, Archetypal, Skeptical.

INTRODUCTION

The poets of the thirties, W.H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice, with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, returning to the human world find that it is equally alien: "Gave unaccustomed sunshine, / Prelude to who knows / What dead end or downfall... (MacNeice, *Collected Poems* 109). The victims are death-pale as they could no longer participate in life. "The earth turns over, our side feels the cold ... and life sinks choking in the wells of trees..." (*Look Stranger!* 25). However, Auden's contemporaries distrust systems and dogmas and hold incertitude as a value while searching for a concept of a stable order as a frame of reference. They "speak of" what "they know." Day Lewis confesses:

When love's a cripple, faith a bed-time story,
Hope eats her heart out and peace walks on knives,
And suffering men cry an end to this sorry
World of whose children want alone still thrives.... (*Collected Poems* 220)

They are banished from history as they are alien to it. Auden remarks in "Spain 1936":

The stars are dead; the animals will not look:

We are left alone with our day, and the time is short and

History to the defeated

May say Alas but cannot help or pardon. (*Another Time* 106)

Expelled from both time and art, pity and fancy, Spender lives in miserable isolation: “... was so much expenditure justified ... on the death of one so young and silly ... lying under the olive trees, O world, O death?” (*The Still Centre* 59). Finding “that the heart lives ... by self-betrayal, by circumspection is killed” he hates “this cold and politic self-defence ... hardening arteries and nerves ... grown dull with time-serving” (*DCP* 185). The experience of MacNeice is even more withering in the context of the emerging surrealist poem *18 Poems* of Dylan Thomas:

Rampant on Europe headlines

Herald beasts of fable;

Backward the eyes to ancient

Codes—vellum and roseleaf;

From the moving train of time the

Fields move backward. (*MCP* 110)

Analysing the root cause of the afflictions of his contemporaries, Auden points to excess of emotion:

And out of the turf the bones of war continue;

‘Know then, cousin, the major cause of our collapse

Was a distortion in the human plastic by luxury produced,

Never higher than in our time were the vital advantages;

To matter entire, to the unbounded vigours of the instrument,

To all logical precision we were the rejoicing heirs. (*LS* 45)

Auden’s *Look Stranger!* leaves its implicit remarks of his perceptive study that the visionary must pay a heavy price for the intensity; he is necessarily estranged. Auden articulates the deepening perplexity, and the development in his contemporaries’ thought is marked by a shift from “the language of learning and the language of love” (52) to “the language of moderation” (26), from the vocabulary of assertion to the vocabulary of doubt and conflict. They alter their friendship with Auden as they find alternative in the skeptical poet Thomas whereas Auden is more intellectual and historical, “mainspring of our striving towards perfection”:

Which cannot see its likeness in their sorrow

That brought them desperate to the brink of valleys;

Dreaming of evening walks through learned cities,

They reined their violent horses on the mountains,
Those fields like ships to castaways on islands,
Visions of green to them that craved for water. (*LS* 22)

Day Lewis attributes their agony and despair to the influence of the pitiless and cold-hearted Auden. “And now like horses they fidget ... smelling death in the air.” He ascertains:

For they took the land and the credit,
Took virtue and double-crossed her;
They left us the scrag-end of the luck
And the brunt of their disaster. (*DCP* 187)

Auden, besides being “unsympathetic,” faults his contemporaries : “You were all the rage for a while” (*DCP* 178). He calls “the castaways” to “forget the grief,” “hack of the cough, the hanging albatross ... cast back the bone of youth” (Dylan Thomas 60) and march “to denser summer” (*MCP*), “choose your gambit, vary the tactics of your game” (111) for the next war on Thomas and his defenders. Auden, as he has avoided “thoughts” of “challenge” of time,” is very much preoccupied with the “challenge of bells at morning ... crocus and almond” (*MCP*). The misery and transience of human life and the eternity of historic past are contrasted in Auden’s *Look Stranger!*, specifically in the poems “Hearing of harvests rotting in the valleys,” “Let the florid music praise” and “The earth turns over, our side feels the cold,” but in consonance with the metaphysical sensibility that runs through these poems, “knowing them shipwrecked who were launched for islands ... we honour founders of these starving cities ... whose honour is the image of our sorrow” (*LS*), “O but the unloved have had power ... the weeping and striking ... always; time will bring their hour” (20), “all our traditional sympathy with birth ... put by your challenge to the shifts of love” (*LS*), the emphasis is on the happiness of after-life rather than on earthly miseries. Day Lewis, describing *Look Stranger!* “the dark plays tricks ... on some of accredited glory,” “the pale wounds weep once more,” and “the archbishop is preaching ... stark naked,” comments on Auden:

... standing alone
Among his people, the dictator
Glares round for a bodyguard.
All the fears cold-shouldered at noonday
Flock to these shades, and await
In displeasure those who ignored them. (202)

It is the vocabulary of vicariousness, moral disinterestedness in *18 Poems* that distinguishes Thomas from Auden’s symbolic distance and his aesthetic, amoral disinterestedness, that influences the time-conscious, disgraced poets of the thirties. Thomas notes:

All things are known: the stars’ advice

Calls some content to travel with the winds,
Though what the stars ask as they round
Time upon time the towers of the skies
Is heard but little till the stars go out. (152)

According to Shires, “the special charisma Thomas exercised over some ... English writers owed much to his staunch individuality” (42).

The surrealistic poem *18 Poems*, being “soundlessly collateral and incompatible” (MCP 86), anti-religious and anti-intellectual, asocial and ahistorical in its implicit rebellious voice, points to the animating force and the harmonizing factor, “collateral and coeval” between Thomas and the lost poets of the thirties. MacNeice defends

And now the soldier
Tightens belt and outlook,
Eyes on the target,
Mind in the trigger-finger,
And a flight of lead connecting
Self and horizon. (MCP)

What Thomas experiences in the paradoxical structure of *18 Poems* is the ecstasy of love-passion representing poetry and cynical pity, not the torment of loneliness and grief:

One wound, one mind, spewed out the matter,
One breast gave suck the fever's issue;
From the divorcing sky I learnt the double,
The two-framed globe that spun into a score;
A million minds gave suck to such a bud
As forks my eye;
Youth did condense; the tears of spring
Dissolved in summer and the hundred seasons;
One sun, one manna, warmed and fed. (DT 58-59)

Contrary to the metaphysical directions of John Donne and Auden, “the swaying sound of the sea” Thomas’s *18 Poems*, under the sceptical setting of Thomas Hardy and W.B. Yeats “without a change in their orders,” “thrills the ear” with its “drumming, drumming” (DT), “beginning with doom in the ghost, and the springing marvels ... image of images, my metal phantom ... forcing forth through the harebell.... (73), progresses in the identical direction

while working for the salvation of the fellow-poets's pains in a distinterested manner. Thomas explains:

For we shall be a shouter like the cock
Blowing the old dead back; our shots shall smack
The image from the plates;
And we shall be fit fellows for a life,
And who remains shall flower as they love,
Praise to our faring hearts. (DT 111)

In *18 Poems*, Thomas's laboring for the surrealistic construct and moral disinterestedness, "imposing ... on flux an architectonic" (*MCP* 181), the archetype of joy "to fling his soul ... upon the growing gloom," "death-lament," "the weakening eye of day" and the "ferverless" (Hardy, *Collected Poems* 134) leftleant poets of the thirties, exemplifies a universal truth and the truth is both terrifying and assuring "though you can fashion everything ... from nothing every day, and teach ... the morning starts to sing ... you have lacked articulate speech" (Yeats, *Collected Poems* 180). He sings of the processing and the content of his *18 Poems*:

We summer boys in this four-winded spinning,
Green of the seaweeds' iron,
Hold up the noisy sea and drop her birds,
Pick the world's ball of wave and froth
To choke the deserts with her tides,
And comb the county gardens for a wreath. (71)

Ackerman, commenting on the "racial aspect of Thomas's personality," writes that "for him it was the intensity of the passion of the moment that counted and he believed, like most Welshman, with the strength of his emotion, rather than his intellect" (69).

Thomas's judicial weighing of human virtues and weaknesses Auden takes as facetious charlatanism, and what irritates Auden most is Thomas's tone of condescension. Auden, referring to Thomas's "delight" in moral disinterestedness, critiques the paradoxical structure of *18 Poems* "enchanted as the flowers" (*LS* 13), "churches and power stations lie ... alike among earth's fixtures" (14) promising hope for poetry to the fallen poets:

: Cold, impossible, ahead
Lifts the mountain's lovely head
Whose white waterfall could bless
Travellers in their last distress. (*LS* 24)

Auden evaluates that *18 Poems* expressive of personal experiences is highly romantic and visionary:

But no one but myself is loved in these,
 And time flies on above the dreamer's head,
 Flies on, flies on, and with your beauty flies.
 All things he takes and loses but conceit,
 The Alec who can buy the life within,
 License no liberty except his own,
 Order the fireworks after the defeat. (*LS*)

In *18 Poems* Thomas, while repudiating Auden's historical idea of poetry, "little cause for carollings ... of such ecstatic sound ... on terrestrial things," "the land's sharp features," "the Century's corpse" and "the cloudy canopy," searches earnestly as "the darkling thrush" (*HCP* 134) for a system of personal salvation. "He seems to have feared the influence of intellectual upon emotional and sensory experience, and consequently is reluctant to impose too rigorous a cerebral control upon his emotional perceptions and upon his imagery" (Ackerman). Thomas could not accept the Eliotian Auden's theory of aesthetic distance that a poet can achieve form only through self-annihilation. Eliot states that "the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" ("Tradition" 53). Auden's impersonal poetry, as envisaged in *Poems* (1930), "the articulated skeleton" is "more than the self-confidence of the falling root ... needs death, death of the grain, our death ... Death of the old gang..." (Auden, *Poems* 66). He recognizes the necessity of "surrender" and "sacrifice" of self, self-annihilation of flesh and blood, the need "to destroy the efflorescence of the flesh ... the intricate play of mind, to enforce ... conformity with the orthodox bone ... with organized fear..." for artistic freedom, and regards the involuntary, instinctive gestures of the young sceptical poet Rex Warner as irrelevant and irresponsible: "an undeveloped mind" (41), "day-wishing flowers" (43), "the lolling bridegroom beautiful" (Auden, *Poems*), "this lunar beauty ... has no history" (67), and an "instinctive look ... a backward love" (68). In *Look Stranger!*, Auden breaks his "vows" that Thomas's *18 Poems*, "the hot sun" flouting the "imperial standards" of poetry and shining "in that land of flesh and bone" will "shine on" temporarily, "time will bring their hour," "let florid music praise ... the flute and the trumpet ... beauty's conquest of your face," "their secretive children walk ... through your vigilance of breath ... to unpardonable death" (18) for portraying personal passion and for the absence of poetic justice. Auden expects that Thomas's *18 Poems* believing in "personal regeneration" and empathy, "O love, the interest itself in thoughtless Heaven ... make simpler daily the bearing of man's heart; within ... there in the ring where name and image meet" (11), is bound to die and repeat the precedents of history of failure. Vernon Watkins rephrases Auden's predict: "No drop though round through that white miracle / Will sink, to be your oracle" (*Modern Verse* 365).

In *18 Poems* Thomas, "the living white and red," "the pleased and the haunted ... the dying master sinks tormented ... in the admirers' ring" (*LS* 41) "urges upon" the fallen poets of pity, "how insufficient is" their "endearment and the look" (42), hear to raise "the image of reconciler" (44) "the high thin rare continuous worship ... of the self-absorbed" and uncover

“the hopes of time” (43) and his state of mind is partly akin to what Rex Warner, who has enjoined on his Oxford friends admiring Auden’s early poems to “turn a deaf ear ... to what they said on the shore” (Auden, *Poems*) and accept “a neutralizing peace ... and an average disgrace ... are honour to discover ... for later other” (42), “converting number from vague to certain... bring joy, bring day of his returning ... lucky with day approaching, with leaning dawn.” Auden recalls in *Another Time*:

So the giant who storms the sky
 In an angry wish to die
 Wakes the hero in us all,
 While the tiny with their power
 To divide and hide and flee,
 When our fortunes fall
 Tempt to a belief in our
 Immortality. (63- 64)

Critiquing the formative influences of the skeptical poets, Hardy and Yeats “whose river-dreams long hid the size ... and vigours of the sea” and “inspire” Thomas “with such a longing as will make his thought ... alive like patterns a murmuration of starlings ... rising in joy over wolds unwittingly weave...(*LS*), Auden considers the emergence of the sceptical poet Thomas --“the church clock’s yellow face, the green pier light ... burn for a new imprudent year” (28) -- as a danger to his own survival, “mopping and mowing through the sleepless night” (30). He explains the “perpetual threat” of grapho-centric poetry to logo-centric poetry:

With guns beneath your arms, in sun and wet
 At doorways posted or on ridges set,
 By copse or bridge we know you there
 Whose sleepless presences endear
 Our peace to us with a perpetual threat. (29)

Hence, he needs the “power” of his contemporaries” to counter the impact of Thomas who has “health and skill and beauty on the brain” and “love, satisfaction, force, delight.”

Day Lewis perceives that Thomas’s experiential truth is that Donne’s metaphysical concept of artistic process, “the hush of fallen ash,” “the landscape of their dissolution” is “unkempt groves, blind vistas, marks the defeat ... of men who imposed on Nature a private elegance ... died of dropsy” and that the Eliotian Auden’s “landscape of their dissolution” is “disease and slag-tip smoulder on ... with rancour round their narrowing path,” “towns there are choked with desperate men ... scrap-iron gluts the sidings here” (174). Thomas rejects the metaphysical and historical idea of poetry, “submission ... of a dying face now muted for the grave” as it fails to recognize the positive significance of human experience and effort, and

makes poetry “from the gashed hills of desolation ... our life-blood springs to liberty....” He explains:

Once in this time wine the summer blood
Knocked in the flesh that decked the vine,
Once in this bread
The oat was merry in the wind;
Man broke the sun, pulled the wind down. (DT)

Day Lewis acknowledges that Thomas’s *18 Poems*, a poetic image of the archetypal tradition of Hardy and Yeats, teaches him “the value of our stay” and the poetic process of breath-in-death, “the living clay”:

This clay that binds the roots of man
And firmly foots his flying span—
Only this clay can voice, invest,
Measure and frame our mortal best. (183)

MacNeice defines the tautology involving the poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats, and Thomas in a plain speaking manner:

Which when caught between the beginning and end
Turn other than themselves, their entities unfurled,
Flapping and overlapping—a tree becomes
A talking tower, and a woman becomes world. (209 -10)

While projecting his chief ancillary interest, the myth of inner reality of the fallen poets of the thirties and their own creative perplexities, Thomas articulates his main emphasis on the myth of literary ancestry of Hardy and Yeats and his own rising poetic voice, “passed ... into the undared ocean swung north their prow” and “for the virgin roadsteads of our hearts an unwavering keel” (*LS* 12). In *18 Poems*, myths and nature still continue to play their roles, but the focus is shifted to the need for assimilating the past heritage, the mythopoeic, archetypal tradition of Hardy and Yeats, “it shall be said that the gods are stone” (DT 123). Day Lewis, stressing the relevance of “the myth of the individual” as the poets’s vehicle in the post-war poetry, writes:

Emerging from the collective mind and illuminating it during the centuries when there was no other light, their task nevertheless was to get man on his own feet, teach him to walk by himself, think and feel for himself, no longer one unit in a living aggregate but an individual human being. So the poetic myths are dead and the poetic image which is the myth of the individual, reigns in their stead. (*Poetic Image* 32)

Thomas's recognition of myth and nature, the artistry of Hardy and Yeats gives a new orientation to his sceptic, surrealistic early poems, "a spring bird" questing for the salvation of the afflicted poets of the thirties. He explains:

I should tell summer from the trees, the worms
Tell, if at all, the winter's storms
Or the funeral of the sun;
I should learn spring by the cuckooing,
And the slug should teach me destruction. (DT 61)

And Thomas continues to be mythopoeic in his mature creation *25 Poems*, a symbolic representation of paradox and sonnets, written under the influence of Yeats to educate Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice, the poets of "intellectual disgrace" (AT 109) on the making of art song. He explains:

Symbols are selected from the years
Slow rounding of four seasons' coasts,
In autumn teach three seasons' fires
And four birds' notes. (DT)

Literary taste has its twists and turns, and it is no wonder that Thomas's *18 Poems* appeals to the poets of the thirties and the forties in different ways. The response of the Thomas circle is quick and unstinted. The Apocalyptic poets, Henry Treece, Watkins, Fraser, and Norman MacCaig become enthusiastic over the Thomas project, and Treece as the co-editor of the two Apocalyptic anthologies: *The New Apocalypse* (1939) and *The White Horseman* (1941) plans to bring out a book of verse based on *18 Poems*. Fraser, greatly moved by the "summer and winter," tenderness and pathos, simplicity and objectivity of Thomas's *18 Poems*, calls it "summer's a harlot but her heart is kind." To him, *18 Poems* is a source of animation and inspiration to the lost, depressed poets of the thirties:

Summer can ripen common flesh on sea-shores
And makes its whorlings whisper like sea-shells.... (MV)

Watkins describes the archetypal beauty of *18 Poems* as "this branch of silver-birch," "the flickering wren," and "that white miracle" (MV). Treece, exalting Thomas as a "legend," comments on *18 Poems* as a song based on concrete experiences of life:

There was a man
With a coloured coat of rags
Who left his body and blood on a tree.
But the thieves at his side gave the bones to the dogs,
And the black-thorn cock sang merrily. (*Contemporary Verse* 242)

The dramatic possibilities of the play of darkness and light inherent in the surrealist poems of Thomas stirs the fallen poets's imagination, but their chief concern is to find release from the depressing creative climate and their own gloomy moods. MacCaig, describing *18 Poems* as life-centric, adds that it is full of anti-metaphysical and anti-intellectual characteristics and effects:

On shaven grass a summer's litter lies
Of paper bags and people. One o'clock
Booms on the leaves with which the trees are quilted
And wades away through air, making it rock
On flower-beds that have blazed and dazed and wilted. (CV 235)

In *18 Poems*, the human heart represents the existent self, the experiencing faculty; the aggrieved mind readily responds to a state of anguished loneliness and rejoices at the extraordinary gaiety.

Thomas's exploration of inner reality becomes especially pertinent in the historical phases when the accepted and traditional systems no longer appear satisfying and adequate at the close of the 1930's. "But life's green standards they've advanced / To the limit of your salt unyielding zone" (*DCP*). However a professed classicist, Auden naturally insists on the formal cohesion, perfect form of logo-centric, metaphysical sensibility. Thomas places reliance, on the other hand, on man's inward strength and affirms his faith in the potential divinity of each individual human being and in the poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats. Watkins brings out the battle of myths underlying the paradoxical sceptical *18 Poems* and the ironic critical *Look Stranger!*:

Lovers speak of Venus, and the white doves,
Jubilant, the white girl, myth's whiteness, Jove's,
Of Leda, the swan, whitest of his loves.
Lust imagines him, web-footed Jupiter, great dawn
Of thundering light.... (MV 367)

What *18 Poems* suggests is the poetic images of human predicament, human love and human reality as a substitute for the metaphysical images of historical sorrow, intellectual love and philosophic reality. This is how *18 Poems* prepares the ground for cold war between Auden and Thomas in their forthcoming poems.

REVIEWS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

Regarding the Apocalyptic poets's warm welcome to Thomas's *18 Poems*, Linda M. Shires, in her study of the poetry of the Second World War, estimates that "in their desire to escape rational controls, the Apocalyptic warmed to Thomas' romantic theory of composition. Basing his theory on the image, he suggested a method of composition with obvious connections to Freudian dream psychology" (41). Commending Thomas as a touchstone of success for other

Apocalyptic poets, Treece writes that “a terror of the darkness, a fear of hidden things In bringing them to light the poet teaches himself and some of us, to grapple with them and overcome them” (56). It is because of profound distrust of Auden’s intellectual poetry that “the private world of intuition and metaphysics was more important to poets of the 1940s than the political and intellectual world of the 1930s. And it is easy to stereotype the period as romantic and irrational; yet part of that irrationality was absorbed into systems of belief” (Shires 34-35). George Orwell, a socio-political writer, praises Thomas for his “innate talent” of extracting “music from words” and calls him an “almost extinct creature, a lyric poet” (315). What is significant in Thomas’s *18 Poems* is the “originality and intensity with which” his themes related to birth and death, process and decay, sex and redemption are presented. “Difficulty occurs when the density of image embodies a depth and subtlety of emotional and sensory perception that the mind, in conceptual terms, cannot follow” (Ackerman 43). According to Lita Hornick, Thomas “worked from rational principles towards hallucinatory effects of the irrational” (42).

Watkins perceives that “no poet of the English language had so hoodwinked and confused his critics. None has ever worn more brilliantly the mask of anarchy to conceal the true face of tradition....The most mistaken of his admirers were those who loved it for its novelty” (54). Quoting the words of Thomas, Shires maintains that *18 Poems* betrays “rigorous discipline and compression resulting in obscurity” (45). However sentimental and subjective the treatment may be, *18 Poems* centres on the ecstasy and agony of the lost poets, the human lovers. The most significant point in *18 Poems* is that “the style so triumphantly established in *18 Poems* remained fundamentally the same throughout his life—though of course there was development of theme and technique. His work does not show the kind of development found, for example, in Shakespeare or Yeats, where there is a real change in the style of the poet: though Thomas’s later poetry is generally more lucid” (Ackerman 39). The reaction of Auden is, on the other hand, quite adverse. In *Look Stranger!*, he says that *18 Poems* recording a sceptical theme, stands “wild” and “florid” in its structure. His critique as articulated in *Another Time*, *The New Year Letter*, *For the Time Being*, *The Age of Anxiety*, and in *Nones* endorses, on the whole till the death of Thomas (1953), the opinions of the preceding years. It is true that a reader’s response be pure; but it is equally true that the readers are brought up in a particular climate that forms and determines their taste, and a twentieth-century reader like Auden cannot be blamed if he demands even in the poems of Thomas the qualities which he himself cherishes and which Thomas’s mature work richly exhibits. The obvious limitations of *18 Poems* should not, however, make the readers ignore its real excellences, and the excellences are many and varied. Hence, a figurative study is undertaken to establish that the most remarkable advance in Thomas’s artistic discipline is marked in the defter handling of dramatic imagination and language. What really distinguishes the surrealist mind of Thomas is a capacity for self-analysis, a capacity for objectifying, and subjecting to analytical scrutiny, his own experiences and feelings. This power of self-analysis is the highest manifestation of the sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In *18 Poems*, Thomas’s mind is partly abstracted under the “autumnal spells” of Donne and “the heartless words” of Auden, and in such a state of tranced aloofness, “by the sea’s side hear the dark-vowelled birds,” he is unable to respond fully to the reality of the situation. He explains:

With fists of turnips punishes the land,
Some let me make you of the heartless words.
The heart is drained that, spelling in the scurry
Of chemic blood, warned of the coming fury. (DT 53)

The experience with Hardy's *Poems of the Past and Present*, however, is not in any way painful compared to Donne's songs. Then, the metaphysical aesthetic of Donne forces the paradox of death-in-life as the poet's way of knowledge, and Thomas rightly notes that the vehemence of pain is undone: "My fuses timed to charge his heart ... he blew like powder to the light ... and held a little Sabbath with the sun ... he drowned his father's magics in a dream" (DT 148). Thomas, bearing the axioms of spontaneity, intensity and magnanimity in mind could accept Hardy's lyrical voice as Donne's formulations are not quite precise and unambiguous. The perspective of Hardy helps Thomas to dramatize his personal situation and affords the necessary nourishment; Yeats also produces a sense of urgency. Thomas acknowledges:

A process in the weather of the heart
Turns damp to dry; the golden shot
Storms in the freezing tomb.
A weather in the quarter of the veins
Turns night to day; blood in their suns
Lights up the living worm. (DT 17)

It may be relevant here to refer to Hardy's approach to life and poetry that influences Thomas much recounting his enforced skeptical mind hounding for free energy, free play and free voice is identical to Yeats's celebrated observation "whatever flames upon the night ... man's own resinous heart has fed" (YCP 181).

It is from Hardy that Thomas learns that man, in his most optimistic mood and management, can develop "inner lives of dreams" (HCP 144), "the spell ... of inner themes and inner poetries" (140) as he wishes them. Hardy illustrates the young Hodge the drummer "whose landmark is a kopje-crest ... that breaks the veldt around" (80) as an exemplary heroic man:

His homely Northern breast and brain
Grow up a some Southern tree,
And strange-eyed constellations reign
His stars eternally. (HCP)

In the poem "A Reverie" Hardy, repudiating the "moments" of "the mortal's mould," "the norm of every of every royal-reckoned attribute," explains the qualities of his poetic process:

But in due days the purposed Life outshone—
Serene, sagacious, free;

--Her waxing seasons bloomed with deeds well done.

And the world's heart was won... (75)

When Thomas reads Yeats's *The Tower*, he finds Yeats's poetic ideal of life-in-death corresponds to that of Hardy. Yeats, in the poem "The Tower," mutters:

Death and life were not
Till man made up the whole,
Made lock, stock and barrel
Out of his bitter soul,
Aye, sun and moon and star, all,
And further add to that
That, being dead, we rise,
Dream and so create
Translunar paradise. (*YCP 167*)

Moreover, Hardy's ideal of co-existence "convincing triumphs over neighbour lands" where "none dubious of the cause, none murmuring" but "wives, sisters, parents, wave white hands and smile ... as if they knew not that they weep the while" (*HCP*) coincides with that of Yeats. *The Tower*, exemplifying Yeats's dramatic imagination, expresses his faith in moral disinterestedness and vicariousness:

Old lecher with a love on every wind,
Bring up out of that deep considering mind
All that you discovered in the grave,
For it is certain that you have
Reckoned up every unforeknown, unseeing
Plunge, lured by a softening eye,
Or by a touch or sigh,
Into the labyrinth of another's being.... (166)

Yeats as a poet of "hearts and heads" knows that the benchmark of poetic power and poetic character is "all that lamentation of the leaves ... could but compose man's image and his cry" (32), "the greatness of the world in tears," "a climbing moon upon an empty sky," "the instant clamorous eaves" "our greatness with our bitterness" (169) rather than "all the heavenly glory" "self-born mockers of man's enterprise" (184), "befitting emblems of adversity" (170), "all that famous harmony of leaves" that "had blotted out man's image and his cry."

In response to the dramatic poetry of Hardy, Thomas exults over the vision of poetry out of the force of “manhood”:

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax.
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks. (DT 127)

Yeats's *The Tower* releases and gives direction to Thomas's creative ferment in *18 Poems*. Thomas speaks of “man's enterprise”:

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever. (DT)

Yeats's generosity combined with keen sensibility helps Thomas to release his creative energy and finally to get over Hardy's mannerisms through continual experimentation.

However perverse Hardy's own poetic practice may have been, he is undoubtedly a tireless experimenter, and he is able to instill into his young disciple what he needs most at that time — enthusiasm and a sense of mission. Thomas acknowledges Hardy as his introducer and it is his stimulating encouragement that spurs him to renewed creative endeavour. He is profoundly moved at the meditative lyrics of Yeats's *The Tower* and emulates Yeats as his poetic image. He admits:

I fellowed sleep who kissed me in the brain,
Let fall the tear of time; the sleeper's eye,
Shifting to light, turned on me like a moon.
So, planning-heeled, I flew along my man
And dropped on dreaming and the upward sky. (67)

It is indeed a common phenomenon in the lives of all great men and creative artists that they outstrip their preceptors whom they once happened to emulate and adore; but their later maturity does not cancel their debt to their former teachers.

In *18 Poems*, what the readers note particularly in Thomas's comments on Yeats is receptivity rather than “recollection,” and the reality of architectonic, paradoxical structure born of labouring overpowers him completely that he sees Yeats's watchful eye directing his own creative enterprise. He proudly and loudly trumpets the process of spinning a paradox:

In the beginning was the mounting fire
That set alight the weathers from a spark,
A three-eyed, red-eyed spark, blunt as a flower,
Life rose and spouted from the rolling seas,
Burst in the roots, pumped from the earth and rock
The secret oils that drive the grass. (DT 83)

This sensitive young poet Thomas's devotion to the poetic ideal and moral disinterestedness of Yeats is almost religious in tone and intensity contraposing the aesthetic, amoral disinterestedness of Auden. He explains:

Especially when the October wind
With frosty fingers punishes my hair,
Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire
And cast a shadow crab upon the land,
By the sea's side, hearing the noise of birds,
Hearing the raven cough in winter sticks,
My busy heart who shudders as she talks
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words. (DT)

In *18 Poems* Thomas, repudiating Auden's artistic principle of irony and his process of death-in-life envisioned in the Eliotian historic sense of "surrender of himself" ("Tradition" 52) to the invaluable tradition, chooses the Yeatsian paradox of life-in-death, "self-delighting ... self-appeasing, self-affrighting ... and that its own sweet will is Heaven's will" (*YCP* 160), "some possible dream" of love and kindness to comfort the sorrowful contemporaries of Auden "long coiled in ammonite's slumber" (*LS*). He speaks of his skeptical and anti-intellectual poetic origin:

In spring we cross our foreheads with the holly,
Heigh ho the blood and berry,
And nail the merry squires to the trees;
Here love's damp muscle dries and dies,
Here break a kiss in no love's quarry.
O see the poles of promise in the boys. (DT 72)

Thomas's impatience with such arid pedantry of Auden is manifest in *18 Poems* which anticipates his love of sensation throughout his poetic career:

All all and all the dry worlds lever,
Stage of the ice, the solid ocean,
All from the oil, the pound of lava,
City of spring, the governed flower,
Turns in the earth that turns the ashen
Towns around a wheel of fire. (26)

However Auden in *Look Stranger!*, being more proud of the immortal aspects of his poetry *vis-à-vis* the mortality of his contemporaries's poetry, "far-sighted as falcons, they looked down another future ... for the seed in their loins were hostile, though afraid to their pride ... and, tall with a shadow now, inertly wait," gapes at the rising surrealistic poet Thomas and his *18 Poems*, "prepared to lay on our talk and kindness ... its military silence its surgeon's idea of pain ... and out of the Future into actual History" (*LS*), admonishing "the unlucky," the fallen poets of the thirties "to be rooted in life ... for men are changed by what they do" (46). Auden's *Look Stranger!* shows Thomas at the worst reared up in the poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats:

Lucky, this point in time and space
Is chosen as my working place;
Where the sexy airs of summer,
The bathing hours and the bare arms,
The leisured drives through a land of farms,
Are good to the newcomer. (*LS*)

Auden, in *Look Stranger!*, holds that the influences of the skeptical, personal poets Hardy and Yeats lead Thomas to "the intricate ways of guilt and "modify" his "mature ambition ... to think no thought but ours ... to hunger, work illegally" for impersonal art involving man's labour, "love raging for the personal glory ... the liberal appetite and power ... the rightness of a god" (*LS* 17). In Thomas's early poetry "what is remarkable is the originality and intensity with which" the themes of "sex and death, sin and redemption, the natural processes, birth and decay" are articulated. (Ackerman 43).

Auden comments on Thomas's *18 Poems* as a poem steeped in light, colour, and poetry, in which even the dull mechanicals look a little insubstantial, and are woven into the texture of fancy, the "swift motions" of "the tigress." While pointing out that "there is no music or movement which secures ... escape from the weekday time" (*MCP* 79), underlines the rebellious sound in Thomas's poems:

But when the waters make retreat
And through the black mud first the wheat
In shy green stalks appears;
When stranded monsters gasping lie,

And sounds of riveting terrify

Their whorled unsubtle ears.... (LS 15)

Auden's satirical comments, disagreeing with the Apocalyptic poets's view that the challenge that Thomas faces confronts all humanity, and that his answer to the problems of existence has universal bearing, "some of the last researchers even write ... love made him weep his pints like you and me," point to the ahistoric and asymmetrical form of *18 Poems*:

With all his honours on, he sighed for one
Who, say astonished critics, lived at home;
Did little jobs about the house with skill
And nothing else; could whistle; would sit still
Or potter round the garden; answered some

Of his long marvelous letters but kept none. (LS 33)

In *Look Stranger!* Auden evaluates the structure of *18 Poems* as "the lilac bush" (LS). He sees:

But in my thought to-night you seem
Forms which I saw once in a dream,
The stocky keepers of a wild estate. (LS)

Auden holds that Thomas's *18 Poems* shows "the barren spiritual marriage of stone and water" (LS), "forests of green ... point to the rising moon," "gravity attentive" (LS), "traces of intentions not our own" but subjective, his achievement is "what our excitement could conceive" (LS), "a child's rash happy cries," "the drowned voice of his parents ... in unlamenting song," "the murderer in the glass" (16). The structure is no longer elegant, but romantic "noble emotions organized and massed ... line the straight flood-lit tracks of memory" (LS), "the untransfigured scene" (27) and "awkward, pasty, feeling the draught" (LS). Auden, standing "in spotless flannels or with hand ... expert on trigger" disagrees with his contemporaries complimenting Thomas as "Grecian figure":

Your beauty's a completed thing.
The future kissed you, called you kin
Did she? Deceiver!
She's not in love with you at all
No feat of yours can make her fall,
She will not answer to your call
Like your retriever. (35)

Another important thought implicit in Auden's *Look Stranger!* is that it is not enough for a poet to construct an order "by fasting, prayer and contemplation" for "personal regeneration." Auden holds that the poems in *18 Poems* reveal the visionary sensibility of Thomas, "dreams are amorous ... indeed." He is also doubtful about the future of imaginative power for it is "conceited." While recalling the absurd and incoherent beauty of the fashionable ultra-modernism of the sceptical poets, "fish in the unruffled lake" wearing "the swarming colours," "swan in the wintry air" having "a white perfection," and "the great lion" walking "through his innocent grove," Auden complains of "lion, fish, and swan" and their "toppling wave" moving against poetry of "Time" and historical consciousness:

We still shadowed days are done,
We must weep and sing
Duty's conscious wrong,
The Devil in the clock,
The Goodness carefully worn
For atonement or for luck;
We must lose our loves,
On each beast and bird that moves
Turn an envious look. (*LS* 60)

Auden's historic knowledge underlines the futility of such toppling move of personal poetry:

Others have tried it, all delight
Sustained in that ecstatic flight
Could not console
When through exhausting hours they'd flown
From the alone to Alone,
Nothing remained but the dry-as-bone
Night of the soul. (36)

While remembering the historic, "fine tradition" and "hunting fathers" who "told the story ... of the sadness of the creatures ... pitied the limits and the lack ... set in their finished features," Auden repeats their prediction that the future of skeptical and personal poetry would be "anonymous" (*LS*) and voiceless. He underscores the mortality of the consoling poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats and Thomas in contradistinction to the immortality of poetry of historic tradition:

Now the leaves are falling fast,
Nurse's flowers will not last;

Nurses to the graves are gone,

And the prams go rolling on. (*LS*)

Moreover, Thomas's poems, Auden maintains, convey thoughts that are translatable into romantic sensations, "dream of islands" (*LS* 23). To Auden, the very structure of Thomas's early poetry is "the irresponsible beauty of the stranger," "gaucheness," "the village of the heart," "a licensed house for tourists," "one of the new ... trunk roads," "the thin cafes spring up overnight," "the sham ornamentation, the strident swimming pool" and "the identical and townee smartness" (55). According to Auden of *Another Time*, *18 Poems* suffers from the alleged vices of sloppiness and imprecision and is deficient in another respect. "But in that child the rhetorician's lie / Burst like a pipe: the cold had made a poet," "Verse was a special illness of the ear ... integrity was not enough" (31). He critiques that *18 Poems* is vague, "the improper word ... scribbled upon the fountain," sentimental, "the storm of tears shed in the corner," romantic and "fallacious." Auden perceives that the emphasis in *18 Poems* is placed on sentiment which lapses too often into sentimentality in both diction and tone. "The almost neuter, the slightly awkward perfection ... for the sex is there, the broken bootlace is broken ... the professor's dream is not true" (21). The metaphysical poet Donne whom modern poets regard as their predecessor is said to have achieved "a fidelity to thought and feeling" ("Metaphysical Poets" 180). Auden argues that in the early sceptic poems Thomas, "hinting at the forbidden like a wicked uncle ... night after night to the farmer's children you beckon," dissociates himself "far from" the historic tradition "you with your charm and your apparatus have abolished ... the strictness of winter and the spring's compulsion" (*AT* 35). Having accomplished "fusion of elements" ("Tradition" 173) and "unification of sensibility" ("Metaphysical Poets" 183) since the beginning of his poetic career, "rooms where the lonely are battered ... slowly like pebbles into fortuitous shapes" (*AT*), Auden faults Thomas for his love of the skeptical poets leading to his "dissociation of sensibility" ("Metaphysical Poets") in the early poems, "deaf to prophecy or China's drum ... the blood moves strangely in its moving home ... diverges, loops to travel further ... than the long still shadow of the father" (*LS* 28), "the innocent ... unobservant offender falls in a moment ... victim to the heart's invisible furies" (*AT*).

It is a measure of Auden's critical discernment that he is the first to detect the inadequacies in *18 Poems*. The complexity of tone and texture regarded in modern criticism as a criterion of poetic worth is evidently absent in Thomas's poetry from the beginning of his poetic career according to Auden :

That everywhere on the horizon of his sigh

Is now, as always, only waiting to be told

To be his father's house and speak his mother tongue. (*NYL* 166)

In *New Year Letter*, Auden points out that in Thomas's poems "the senses open upon a world of time," "the light is ... novel still and immensely ambitious" (185), "white shouts and flickers through its green and red" (184). In *For the Time Being*, Auden focuses on Thomas's "craving the sensation but ignoring the cause," (*Collected Poems* 308), his "working charm is the full bloom of the unbothered state" (340). In *The Age of Anxiety*, he remarks that *18 Poems* is the least mature of all Thomas's complete poems, "a choice of physiological aids to the imagination" (345), "for all gestures of time ... and all species of space respond in our own

contradictory dialect” (408). And In *Nones*, he stresses that Thomas’s voice of scepticism “promises nothing” and he feels unsatisfied due to his ahistorical attitude, “this land is not the sweet home that it looks ... nor its peace the historical calm of a site,” “a backward ... and dilapidated province, connected ... to the big busy world by a tunnel, with a certain ... seedy appeal” (12), “a blank I loves blankly a blank You...” (14). Thomas reveals himself as adventurous and sceptical as Hardy and Yeats according to Auden: “A robin with no Christian name ran through / The Robin-Anthem which was all it knew...” (15). Auden’s critique beginning with *Look Stranger!* (1936) on Thomas’s poems has been continuously and consistently maintained and reinforced in *New Year Letter* (1942) *For the Time Being* (1944), *The Age of Anxiety* (1948) and in *Nones* (1951).

However, Thomas asserts that he has successfully attained the unified sensibility of a poet in the paradoxical structure of his *18 Poems*, “his six ... feet in the rubbing dust” confronting Auden’s metaphysical sensibility:

The words of death are dryer than his stiff,
 My wordy wounds are printed with your hair.
 I would be tickled by the rub that is:
 Man be my metaphor. (DT 76-77)

Auden apparently confuses freedom with laxity, and the stylistic devices or aberrations of Donne and Auden have undoubtedly a pernicious influence on the young Thomas who emulates the rule and energy of Hardy and Yeats with avidity to achieve his united being. Thomas reasserts:

My hero bares his nerves along my wrist
 That rules from wrist to shoulder,
 Unpacks the head that, like a sleepy ghost,
 Leans on my mortal ruler,
 The proud spine spurning turn and twist. (DT 97)

The critical perspectives of Hardy and Yeats, however, are normally free from imbalance and eccentricity, and they impress Thomas by the sanity of temperament evinced in them. “And I am dumb to tell a weather’s wind / How time has ticked a heaven round the stars” (DT).

Auden’s animadversions teach the readers something about literary criticism by negative example: they show that a critic of any worth must be disinterested. The poets of the thirties, Day Lewis, Spender, and MacNeice are guided by extra-poetic considerations and political prejudices, but they are effusive about *18 Poems* because prejudice is the enemy of taste. They, too, dabble in politics and have definite views on political issues. But when they discuss poetry, these considerations no longer distract them, and they bring to bear upon their task what may be called an untrammelled sensibility. It is true that Thomas is not a great creator, and his early poems are in many ways unsatisfactory. Day Lewis thinks that in *18 Poems* Thomas fails to achieve the necessary balance between convention and originality. However, he appreciates that the poetic beauty and truth nullifies the minor flaws in *18 Poems*:

We also, whom a bawdy spring
Tempted to order everything,
Shall shrink beneath your first caress
Into a modest nothingness. (182)

While harshly censuring *18 Poems* for romantic vagueness and diffusion, “a water-lily upon ... the ornamental water,” “unbroken ... reverie of reed and water” (203), Day Lewis is full of praise for his verbs of motion. The qualities that he underlines are earthiness, definiteness, and vividness, “expressive flight ... on the vibrant air”:

... unhurried
The threat and pulse of wings, the throat
Levelled towards the horizon, see--
They are prophecy. (204)

MacNeice foresees an assurance that there is light on the shores of darkness, that midnight would be followed by dawn, takes away much of the horror of the process and reconciles the explorer to his immediate predicament. As experiments in artless language, Thomas writes a precious, luscious, plaintively sentimental kind of verse. MacNeice celebrates “the raking flight” of *18 Poems*:

The luck and pluck and plunge of blood,
The wealth and spilth and sport of breath,
And sleep come down like death above
The fever and the peace of love—
This is on me and these are yours. (191)

Spender observes that there is no fusion, but just a queer juxtaposition of the natural and the archaic, that the “acceptance of that sun which hews the day from night” (*The Still Centre* 77) is part of the process of growth and that Thomas succeeds in expressing what he has intended with magnificence and assurance. The other characteristics of *18 Poems*, especially of its vocabulary and versification emanated from Thomas’s desire to secure a medium of expression which is both luxurious and lively, have been noted in detail by Ackerman, Davies, Treece and other critics and commentators. Analysing the trend of the Second World War poetry, Linda M. Shires says that Thomas in “some of his early poetry is overtly self-conscious and wildly rhetorical, much of what seems drunkenly abandoned is really very structured” (45).

Irony, inclusiveness, and complexity apart from indicating qualities of craftsmanship, reflect a sensibility, a particular way of experiencing reality. MacNeice comments on Auden’s pursuit of irony and complexity:

Whose life is a bluff, professing
To follow the laws of Nature,

Conspiracy and usurpation,
Smuggling over the frontier
Of fact a sense of value,
Metabolism of death,
Re-orchestration of the world (182)

But the close interrelatedness between nature and man as envisaged in Thomas's *18 Poems* is in Auden absent. MacNeice compares and contrasts:

Man: a riot of banners,
Bulge in the wind, a prism,
Bulge in the wind, a prism,
Organ-pipes in the sunset,
Orgy of brains and glands,
Thunder-crackle and the bounce of hail,
Wink of wings and fog's delusion,
A rampant martyr, a midnight
Echo, a forest fire. (*MCP*)

John Ackerman, analysing the themes of Thomas's poetry, observes:

Thomas's poetry is also informed by the perception of a radical relationship between human and natural life. This sometimes leads to a mystical sense of the unity between all forms of life, a sensitivity towards animal and vegetal life much more profound than the conventional 'love of nature'. A related concern in his poetry is the attempt to fit this sense of the unity of human and natural life into the developing pattern of religious thought and feeling. (41)

MacNeice rightly observes that Auden's satire on the trend of anti-intellectualism sinks into flat triviality:

When I saw him last, carving the longshore mist
With an ascetic profile, he was standing
Watching the troopship leave, he did not speak
But from his eyes there peered a furtive footsore envy
Of these who sailed away to make an opposed landing—
So calm because so young, so lethal because so meek. (224)

A gulf separates man and nature, the human sphere and the divine in Auden's poems and there is co-existence of man and nature in Thomas's poems. MacNeice points out:

So there's no one in the world, I sometimes think

Such a wall flower as I

For I must talk to myself on the ground

While he is talking to his friends in the sky.... (223)

To Auden, the poet Thomas, like other mortals, is also an intruder, and not a crusader. "Behind his eyes are shadows of a night" and "his mind long since refused ... to let that time intrude on what came after" (227). Auden's *Look Stranger!* shows Thomas at the worst reared up in the poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats. His satire also narrows down the thought maintained in the preceding poems that the presence of mortals is a profanation of the divine sanctuary:

Certainly our city—with the byres of poverty down to

The river's edge, the cathedral, the engines, the dogs;

Here is the cosmopolitan cooking

And the light alloys and the glass. (67)

It is no wonder that to Auden's historic sense and amoral aesthetic tone the voice of moral disinterestedness should appear as a profanation, a desecration of the mystery, and his remarks, sometimes humorous, sometimes sharp and pungent, are withering in their effect.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In *Poems*, Auden hints at God's Grace as an essential thing for the emergence of a poet of greatness because his contemporaries's "divided face ... has no grace ... no discretion ... no occupation" to attain "the easy knowledge ... of the virtuous thing" (48-49) and in *Look Stranger!* he clearly believes that "the defeated and disfigured figures" (63) by simplifying "all sorrow" and emulating the poetic model of Thomas would not realize "their dreams of freedom" ensuring their recoverability and regeneration, "that hopeful falsehood cannot stem with love ... the flood on which all move and wish to move." What is indispensable, according to Auden, is contrition, "the all-night journey under sea ... work west and northward, set up building" (*LS* 62). He "wooded perfection" at the expense of life as "he's bedded deep in the glacier, perfect ... and null, the prince and image of despair." Day Lewis explains: "One the rare air made dizzy renounced / Earth, and the avalanche took him at his word... (185). But Thomas, while rejecting Auden's optimism in God's Word and his modernism, the "predestined need" to voice "our design," advocates to the cramped poets a self-orientated and life-centred imaginative model and method to execute their will, to "invest ... measure and frame our mortal best" (*DCP*). He persuades the Auden school to be surrealistic to generate hopes for poetry and immortality, "the honoured clay," by imbibing the ideals of the immortal poets of poetic tradition, "earth's exuberant fields," "the order of our day," "life distil ... rare personal good from common ill" (*DCP* 183). He remembers the poetic images as enshrined in the archetypal poetry of Hardy and Yeats:

In the beginning was the secret brain.
The brain was celled and soldered in the thought
Before the pitch was forking to a sun;
Before the veins were shaking in their sieve,
Blood shot and scattered to the winds of light
The ribbed original of love. (DT)

In *18 Poems*, Thomas “seems to be quarreling with God and His Church, but belief in the reality of God and Christ is always there” (Ackerman 40).

In *18 Poems*, the word imagination is mostly associated, under the influence of Hardy, with “sleep.” Thomas explains:

I dreamed my genesis in sweat of sleep, breaking
Through the rotating shell, strong
As motor muscle on the drill, driving
Through vision and the girdered nerve. (DT 66)

In censuring *18 Poems* as “nurse’s flowers,” “forests of green have done complete ... the day’s activity,” Auden confuses the probable with the possible. But what enrages Thomas most is Auden’s complete lack of perception, his judicial air; for the young surrealistic poet who extols sensation as a cult this sterility of response in a critic, “harvest ... of hemlock and the blades,” “rust ... my blood upon the tempered dead,” “metal ... of suns in the man-melting night,” “muzzled ... death on the mouth that ate the gas” betrays his lack of taste and denies him access to the realm of imagination. Thomas speaks of empirical validity in the Yeatsian impersonal art.:

I dreamed my genesis in sweat of death, fallen
Twice in the feeding sea, grown
Stale of Adam’s brine until, vision
Of new man strength, I seek the sun. (DT)

This explains Thomas’s love for poetic process of life-in-death, “how light the sleeping on this soily star” and his substitution of the world-concentric poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats for the Word-centric historic tradition and the artistic process of death-in-life, “how deep the waking in the worlded clouds,” of Donne and Auden in *18 Poems*:

There grows the hours’ ladder to the sun,
Each rung a love or losing to the last,
The inches monkeyed by the blood of man.

And old, mad man still climbing in his ghost,
My fathers' ghost is climbing in the rain. (DT)

Thomas qualifies Auden as “shrapnel ... rammed in the marching heart, hole ... in the stitched wound and clotted wind,” “second ... rise of the skeleton and ... robbing of the naked ghost.” He perceives that Auden’s poems are a rather bewildering document of the Eliotian taste, revealing at once flexibility and rigidity, catholicity and narrowness, sanity of judgement and dogmatic frigidity. He explains:

Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock
Tells me the hour’s word, the neural meaning
Flies on the shafted disk, declaims the morning
And tells the windy weather in the cock.
Some let me make you of the meadow’s signs;
The signal grass that tells me all I know
Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye.
Some let tell you of the raven’s sins. (DT)

In *18 Poems* the young poet Thomas, “this insect,” who transmutes his “symbols” of world-centric tradition, Hardy and Yeats into “the plague of fables,” “that ... have outelbowed space” of the Word-centric tradition of Donne and Auden corresponds to the Chrysalis in the Aesop fable “The Ant and the Chrysalis.” The caviling pedant Auden is like the Ant that disdains and pities the freedom of the Chrysalis to disturb the evolving butterfly in the shell. Thomas, celebrating the “birth of natural order and love” (*LS*), free play of free energy, unfolds the moral that appearances are deceptive:

This story’s monster has a serpent caul,
Blind in the coil scrams round the blazing outline,
Measures his own length on the garden wall
And breaks his shell in the last shocked beginning;
A crocodile before the chrysalis,
Before the fall from love the flying heartbone,
Winged like a Sabbath ass this children’s piece
Uncredited blows Jericho on Eden. (DT 139)

These lines are adapted from the fable of Aesop and are taken out of the original context. Thus using Auden’s ironic mode in a different context, what Thomas means in *18 Poems*, “the insect certain is the plague of fables” (DT), is that a literary critic must be receptive before attempting at any evaluation:

In trust and tale I have divided sense,
Slapped down the guillotine, the blood-red double
Of head and tail made witnesses to this
Murder of Eden and green genesis. (DT)

Thomas emphasizes Auden's lack of imaginative response and scoffs at his temerity to kill the symbols of archetypal, poetic tradition: "Time at the city spectacles, and half / The dear, daft time I take to nudge the sentence."

For Auden, the locus of principles for literary evaluations is nature, "love like a mist or fire through the bed of eels" (DT 75), and in reducing art itself to nature, "for what by nature and by training ... we loved, has little strength remaining" (LS), he misses the fictional, figurative character of the poetical world and blurs the distinction of probability and possibility according to Thomas:

And in the pincers of the boiling circle,
The sea and instrument, nicked in the locks of time,
My great blood's iron single
In the pouring town,
I, in a wind on fire, from green Adam's cradle,
No man more magical, clawed out the crocodile. (DT)

What Thomas conveys is that Auden's criticism of *18 Poems* exemplifies harmful and fatal affair of yells of hate. "But a literary critic should have no emotions except those immediately provoked by a work of art—and these ... are ... perhaps not to be called emotions at all" according to Eliot ("Perfect Critic" 12-13).

When Thomas says that there is no better text-book than *The Tower* of Yeats for the appreciation of poetry, "this is the fortune of manhood" "the natural peril ... a steeplejack tower, bonerailed and masterless ... no death more natural" (DT), "shut, too, in a tower of words, I mark ... on the horizon walking like the trees ... the worldly shapes of women," "some let me make you of the vowelled beeches ... some of the oaken voices, from the roots ... of many a thorny shire tell you notes ... some let me make you of the water's speeches" (DT), the tribute is deserved. For Yeats avoids both the frigidity of mechanistic philosophy and the mazziness of metaphysical idealism, and concentrates on the work of art which, as something immediate, concrete, and objective, is far more important to him than coercive precepts or inconclusive speculations. Thomas explains:

Light breaks on secret lots,
On tips of thought where thoughts smell in the rain;
When logics die,
The secrets of the soil grows through the eye,

And blood jumps in the sun;

Above waste allotments the dawn halts. (*DT* 94)

Understanding precludes judgement from without, “the yelling pack ... the hare leap to the wood” and here the readers may recall Yeats’s comment that the critic can never be precise fully about the beauty of a literary work until he has undergone the same ways as the poet, “rejoice as the lover”:

Then suddenly my heart is wrung

By her distracted air

And I remember wildness lost

And after, swept from there,

Am set down standing in the wood

At the death of the hare. (*YCP* 189)

Eliot also writes that “criticism is a development of sensibility. The bad criticism, on the other hand, is that which is nothing but an expression of emotion. And emotional people—such as stockbrokers, politicians, men of science—and a few people who pride themselves on being unemotional—detest or applaud great writers such as Spinoza or Stendhal because of their “frigidity” (“Perfect Critic” 15).

Hardy combines in his critical approach theoretical soundness with sensibility and it is obviously manifested in these lines:

Someone said: “Nevermore will they come: evermore

Are they now lost to us.” O it was wrong!

Though may be hard their ways, some Hand will guard their ways,

Bear them through safely, in brief time or long. (*HCP* 78)

Hardy’s meaning is that through receptivity alone can the critic restore the poet’s vision and intention. The thrust becomes all the more effective as the readers hear Hardy’s own voice, “hold we to braver things ... wait we, in trust, what Time’s fullness shall show” (*HCP* 77), “and blended pulsing life with lives long done ... till Time seemed fiction, Past and Present one” (89) and identically, Yeats sings:

Once out of nature I shall never take

My bodily form from any natural thing,

But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make

Of hammered gold and gold enamelling

To keep a drowsy Emperor awake.... (*YCP* 163)

Yeats's empiricism is particularly discerned in his observations on taste:

Come swish around, my pretty punk,
And keep me dancing still
That I may stay a sober man
Although I drink my fill.
Sobriety is a jewel
That I do much adore. (*YCP* 268)

A critic's primary task is to respond properly to a work of art, and Yeats shows an unmistakable ability to read poetry. This does not, however, mean that Yeats rejects the value of theoretical principles. He believes that judgement must be based on actual experience, "all that we did, all that we said or sang ... must come from contact with the soil, from that ... contact everything Antaeus-like grew strong" (*YCP* 277), and that principles acquire validity only when they grow out of the response awakened by individual poems, "a drunkard is a dead man ... and all the dead men are drunk" (*YCP*).

Auden finds in *18 Poems* an absence of fine discriminating sense, but he praises the poetry of Eliot for its mythical elements, defends Walter de la Mare for the improbabilities as a warning against vain and illusive predictions and asserts the aesthetic, amoral purposiveness of art:

Lost if I steer. Gale of desire may blow
Sailor and ship past the illusive reef,
And I yet land to celebrate with you
Birth of natural order and of love;
With you enjoy the untransfigured scene,
My father down the garden in his gaiters,
My mother at her bureau writing letters,
Free to our favours, all our titles gone. (*LS*)

This is a sermonist's discourse, "split words ... that spill such acrid blood," not the language of one who shares the mystery of creative process and grapples with the problem of pain of his fellow-poets according to Thomas:

Were that enough, enough to ease the pain,
Feeling regret when this is wasted
That made me happy in the sun,
How much was happy while it lasted,
Were vagueness enough and the sweet lies plenty,

The hollow words could bear all suffering

And cure me of ills. (112)

Thomas's distrust of normative standards is equally apparent in his rejection of Audenesque vocabulary, of the notions of probableness in the sense of verisimilitude, propriety and poetic justice and in the very success of *18 Poems* among Auden's friends, their praise, "there's more than dying ... lose the great pains or stuff the wound" and their prediction that the young Thomas, a promising poet, would certainly emerge as a "perpetual" threat to Auden's greatness, "He'll ache too long" (DT).

Moreover, Auden predicts the mutability of *18 Poems*, being a poem of cynical pity, as the sceptical poetry aiming at "personal glory," individual myth and symbol has no future at all. He estimates:

Our hunting fathers told the story

Of the sadness of the creatures,

Pitied the limits and the lack

Set in their finished features;

Saw in the lion's intolerant look,

Behind the quarry's dying glare,

Love raging for the personal glory

That reason's gift would add,

The liberal appetite and power,

The rightness of a god. (LS)

And Auden's critique on skeptical art is identical to Eliot's confrontation with the unsubtle music "along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street" in *The Waste Land*:

O City city, I can sometimes hear

Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,

The pleasant whining of a mandolin

And a clatter and a chatter from within

Where fishmen lounge at noon.... (37)

Thomas rephrases Auden's prediction in the opening lines of the poem "And Death Shall Have No Dominion": "And death shall have no dominion. / Dead men naked they shall be one / With the man in the wind and the west moon.... Whereas in the last stanza of the poem Thomas, while refuting Auden's critique "where blew a flower may a flower no more / Lift its head to the blows of the rain....," reaffirms his faith in the poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats, "season and sunshine," in the poetic process of birth-in-death: "Break in the sun till the sun breaks down

/ And death shall have no dominion” (DT 31). He notes the same lack of perception and objectivity in Auden’s strictures on skeptical poets and he also scores through the following remark in the poem “Grief Thief of Time”:

These stolen bubbles have the bites of snakes
 And the undead eye-teeth,
 No third eye probe into a rainbow’s sex
 What bridged the human halves,
 All shall remain and on the graveward gulf
 Shape with my fathers’ thieves. (DT)

In *25 Poems* Thomas, smiling at the puerility of Auden’s strictures, confirms that true criticism must be free from maladroitness: “Groping for matter under the dog’s plate, / Man should be cured of distemper” (DT 112).

Again, Thomas defends the mingling of good and evil, joy and sorrow scenes in his *18 Poems* with reference to Yeats’s skeptical poetry, “O what if leveled lawns and graveled ways ... where slippered Contemplation finds his ease ... and Childhood a delight for every sense, but take our greatness with our violence... (YCP) in contrast to Auden’s distrust of the deductive method in literary evaluations. He discovers:

All all and all the dry worlds couple;
 Ghost with her ghost, contagious man
 With the womb of his shapeless people.
 All that shapes from the caul and suckle,
 Stroke of mechanical flesh on mine,
 Square in these worlds the mortal circle. (DT)

Thomas at the same time considers it a grave defect in Auden that he writes with no moral purpose. He singles out the distinctive Yeatsian moral disinterestedness, “the people’s fusion ... the coupled bud ... and the flame in the flesh’s vision” different from Auden’s Eliotian aesthetic, amoral disinterestedness, “out of the sea, the drive of oil ... socket and grave, the brassy blood” (DT). His early poems indicating his moral disinterestedness and his paradoxical structure through rhetorics of challenge and empathy, “what if those things the greatest of mankind ... consider most to magnify, or bless ... but take our greatness with our bitterness... (YCP), vindicates his faith in the poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats.

Auden who has “knocked down” Thomas’s *18 Poems* recognizes his *25 Poems*, “a little comes, is tasted and found good ... there must, be praised, some certainty ... if not of loving well” (DT), as an almost perfect structure having elegant pattern. In *Another Time*, Auden ironically praises Thomas, “enormous beauties round him move ... for grandiose is his vision ... and grandiose his love” (18). He distinguishes the meritorious features of *25 Poems* “set

against our size and timing ... the almost neuter, the slightly awkward perfection” (21) from *18 Poems*:

Wrapped in a yielding air, beside
The flower’s soundless hunger,
Close to the tree’s clandestine tide,
Close to the bird’s high fever,
Loud in his hope and anger,
Erect about his skeleton,
Stands the expressive lover,
Stands the deliberate man. (AT 15)

In *Look Stranger!* Auden, while complimenting Thomas’s second volume *25 Poems* as highly impersonal and artistic achievement, a well-accomplished paradox, faults his first volume *18 Poems* for its adolescent, sentimental and rhetorical structure:

Sighs for folly said and done
Twist our narrow days;
But I must bless, I must praise
That you, my swan, who have
All gifts that to the swan
Impulsive Nature gave,
The majesty and pride,
Last night should add
Your voluntary love. (60)

Auden’s remarks on Thomas’s *18 Poems*--“vagueness enough and the sweet lies plenty ... the hollow words”—leads Thomas to “cure ... the ills” of *18 Poems* and structure his next book *25 Poems* as paradox and make his art songs claiming greatness on a par with Auden and questioning the jurisdiction of Auden’s critical activity itself. Thomas’s comic sense gives way to exasperation:

Were that enough, bone, blood, and sinew,
The twisted brain, the fair-formed loin.... (DT)

25 Poems in which Thomas resuffers the painful desolation of Auden’s friends who have made vain attempt to emulate Auden’s art song, “all sway forward on the dangerous flood ... Of history, that never sleeps or dies ... and, held one moment, burns the hand” (LS 66) firmly crosses out Auden’s remark and adapts a comic query about Auden’s greatness as a

poet of art song and as a critic of his contemporaries's poetry. Auden perceives that the young poet Thomas as an imminent challenger and competitor to his eminence among his contemporaries:

Fresh loves betray him, every day
 Over his green horizon
 A fresh deserter rides away,
 And miles away birds mutter
 Of ambush and of treason;
 To fresh defeats he still must move,
 To further griefs and greater,
 And the defeat of grief. (AT 16)

Thomas's counter reply, besides pointing out that his *18 Poems* is endowed with the intense maturity and the poetic process of life-in-death, "the womb ... drives in a death as life leaks out," explains its paradoxical structure that "she threads off the the sap and needles, blood and bubble ... casts to the pine roots, raising man like a mountain ... out of the naked entrail" (DT). He speaks proud of his anti-metaphysical paradoxical *18 Poems* as a maiden work of mythopoeic imagination influenced by "the weather fall" and "man's footfall," the poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats for human cultivation and human love:

Shall it be said that venuswise,
 An old god's dugs are pressed and pricked
 The wet night scolds me like a nurse? (DT)

Besides Auden's critique on Thomas's budding artistry, an "ephebe" (Harold Bloom 220), Thomas himself admits the inadequacy of his growth-oriented art: "Shall a dropped stone drum on the ground, / Flung gravel chime?" (DT). MacNeice perceives Thomas's *18 Poems* as a symbol of "Cuckoo across the poppies ... making myth ... Simeon on his pillar ... stands in the air alone," a paradoxical structure suggesting the moral disinterestedness of Hardy and Yeats, "nothing to be seen ... but a stone posture ... the shape of the song ... of the cuckoo" in contradistinction to Auden's poetry as a symbol of ironical structure representing the aesthetic, amoral disinterestedness of de la Mare and Eliot, "without context ... not looking down ... personification ... of distance" (MCP 83). Thomas justifies his early poems, *18 Poems* and *25 Poems* as identically paradoxical and impersonal, "this twin miracle" (DT). These early poems are also "natural parallel" (DT) to Auden's early poems, *Poems* (1928), "the consumptives' terrace," and *Poems* (1930), "the water final": "Under the skysigns they who have no arms / Have cleanest hands, and as, the heartless ghost / Alone's unhurt, so the blind man sees best" (DT 144).

Auden's strictures on *18 Poems* is more inclined to the structuralist concerns for "the structurality of the structure." MacNeice endorses that "the tone of words" of Auden is unequivocally Structuralistic and phonocentric:

That criticism, a virtue previously,
Now can only weaken
And that when we go to Rome
We must do as the Romans do, cry out together
For bread and circuses; put on your togas now
For this is Roman weather. (144)

The judgements of professional critics of structuralism often betray a lack of inwardness, and Thomas is not sure that Auden knows what it is like to read and enjoy a play or a poem. In the deepest sense, what is remarkable in Thomas is that he lives his theories, and the patterns that he continually builds up and rejects evolve out of his sensuous responses to life situations. Jacques Derrida, differentiating the “event” of post-structuralism from the Structuralism of “structure or the structurality of structure” or “the process of giving it a centre or of referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin,” defines:

The function of this centre was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure-but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the play of the structure. By orienting and organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits the play of its elements inside the total form. And even today the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself. (90)

In contradistinction to Auden’s metaphysic centric, transcendental freedom, Thomas is concerned with the means of free energy and freeplay: “Freedom was not on their lips; it was what made them endure, / A steel spring in the yielding flesh, a thirst to be free” (*DCP* 198). It is a question that keeps recurring in various figures in *18 Poems*: “a candle in the thighs ... warms youth and seed and burns the seeds of age,” “the fruit of man unwrinkles in the stars,” “dawn breaks behind the eyes,” “from poles of skull and toe the windy blood slides like a sea,” “the gushers of the sky ... spout to the rod ... divining in a smile the oil of tears,” “night in the sockets rounds,” “day lights the bone,” “the skinning gales unpin ... the winter’s robes” and “the film of spring is hanging from the lids” (DT).

The Apocalyptic poets, “the dark deniers” perceive that in crossing with the historic process of death-in-life, Thomas’s *18 Poems*, while voicing the depth of suffering of the fallen poets, “the boys of summer in their ruin,” offering them hope for great poetry, “comb the county gardens for a wreath,” reflects the life-centric archetypal sensibility, “the sleepy man of winter pulls,” “a muscling life from lovers in their cramp” and “from the planted womb the man of straw” (DT). Thomas recalls their tone of appreciation:

In spring we cross our foreheads with the holly,
Heigh ho the blood and berry,
And nail the merry squires to the trees;
Here love’s damp muscle dries and dies,

Here break a kiss in no love's quarry,

O see the poles of promise in the boys. (*Poems 72*)

Giving more importance to the inward world, "the Apocalyptic saw themselves as moralists eager both to free the individual from the constraining systems of a mechanistic universe and to exalt him into the 'godhead' of his own imagination" (Shires 26). The Apocalyptic commentator Watkins understands that the very structure of Thomas's *18 Poems* is lyrical and gently musical:

Light in the branches weaves.

Hard is the waiting moment while it waves,

This tree whose trunk curves upward from the stream

Where faltering ripples strum. (*MV 366*)

In *18 Poems*, Thomas's creativity is marked as much by a search for form as by a fresh exploration of reality. Day Lewis states:

The best, neither hoarding nor squandering

The radiant flesh and the receptive

Spirit, stepped on together in the rhythm of comrades who

Have found a route on earth's true reckoning based. (186)

Thomas, according to MacNeice, apart from finding his own vision of art and content, form and faith, works for co-existence and fellowship:

... yet in his mind

A crowd of odd components mutter and press

For compromise with fact, longing to be combined

Into working whole but cannot jostle through

The permanent bottleneck of his highmindedness. (*MCP*)

The poets of pity, Day Lewis, Spender, and MacNeice, having known that their future is uncertain and that Auden's ironic technique "seemed far too difficult and dull" (*LS*), "unable to endure " themselves, "sought relief ... in the insouciance of the soldier" (*LS*) Thomas in order "to be rooted in life." Their "hatred" of Auden "promised ... an immediate dividend, all of us hated." The prevalent "moods give no permission to be idle" and "through loss and anger the hands of the unlucky ... love one another" (*LS*). Thomas breaks out:

Light breaks out where no sun shines;

Where no sea runs, the waters of the heart

Push in their tides;

And, broken ghosts with glowworms in their heads,

The things of light

File through the flesh where no flesh decks the bones. (DT)

MacNeice holds that Auden's imputed purpose is "a foregone design" in contradistinction to the purposeful human "prototypes" of Thomas. Thomas's *18 Poems* conveys the poetic origin and the final phase of the poets of the thirties and their hope for poetry:

And ours is not. For we are unique, a conscious

Hoping and therefore despairing creature, the final

Anomaly of the world, we can learn no method

From whales or birds or worms;

Our end is our own to be won by our own endeavour

And held on our own terms. (MCP 217)

MacNeice's contempt added to indignation is directed not merely against their rapacity but also against their wanton cruelty.

Thomas's *18 Poems*, thus, does not specifically refer to any moral question; but the contrast between Auden and Thomas, "O see the poles are kissing as they cross," on the one hand and Auden's contemporaries, "these boys of light are curdlers in their folly" (DT), on the other assumes a moral dimension. The contrariness of the two aspects of reality is clearly envisaged in *18 Poems*. "I, in my intricate image, stride on two levels ... forged in man's minerals, the brassy orator ... laying my ghost in metal" (DT). And his *25 Poems* is also built on the antithesis of pure art and human art, aesthetic, amoral disinterestedness and moral disinterestedness, and the insidiousness of ironic malevolence and the vicariousness of paradoxical benevolence are contrasted: "the scales of this twin world tread on the double ... my half ghost in armour hold hard in death's corridor ... to my man-iron side" (DT). *18 Poems* bursts upon the political and historical poetry of the thirties, survives all machinations of Auden's critique and stands inviolable, invulnerable even to death. The picture is, in this sense, reassuring according to Thomas:

Child of the short spark in a shapeless country

Soon sets alight a long stick from the cradle.... (DT 28)

In *25 Poems* structured as a paradox Thomas, having defied Auden's aesthetic, amoral disinterestedness in the cradle of metaphysical tradition and his artistic process of death-in-life, "death is all metaphors, shape in one history" and emulated the moral disinterestedness in tune with Yeats's sceptic, poetic tradition and his poetic process of life-in-death, perfects his exuberant art as artistic and establishes himself as a poet of art songs and vicariousness as well as a disinterested critic of Auden's "monuments of unaging intellect," "monuments of its own magnificence," "the artifice of eternity" (*YCP*) and "the ancient habit sticks" (176). Day Lewis, describing the spirit of *25 Poems* as "buoyancy of will" and "the rudeness of ... heart," predicts:

“Mortal these words and the deed they remember, but cast a seed / Shall flower for an age when freedom is man’s creative word” (*DCP* 200).

CONCLUSION

Auden’s hair splitting criticism of Thomas’s *18 Poems* as set “in a shapeless” sceptic, self-conceited “circles” of Hardy and Yeats is vitiated by dogmatism and didacticism and Thomas would only smile at his puerility: “Hairs of your head, then said the hollow agent ... are but the roots of nettles and of feathers ... over these groundworks thrusting through a pavement ... and hemlock-headed in the wood of weathers” (*DT*). Thomas’s impatience with Auden’s structuralistic criticism of *18 Poems* is sometimes in the nature of a mild thrust, “for all there is to give I offer: Crumbs, barn, and halter” (*DT*) and his critical approach is unlike Auden’s ironic play but creative like Yeats’s comic play, “from a glad kindness cannot take his eyes,” “nor but in merriment begin a chase ... nor but in merriment a quarrel” (*YCP* 159). True criticism, according to Thomas, should be free from maladroitness, “groping skill no scorn, no note of malediction” (*HCP* 102) for “opinions are accursed,” “an intellectual hatred is the worst,” “for arrogance and hatred are the wares ... peddled in the thoroughfares” (*YCP* 160). He notes in Auden a want of taste leading to a confusion of issues, a refusal to yield up to the spell and mystery of a work of art, a distressing attempt at imposing mechanical standards from without, and an almost unpardonable temerity and opinionatedness where only passive receptivity can open up the secret, “not long on thee will press the hand that hurts the lives it loves” (*HCP*), “if there’s no hatred in a mind ... assault and battery of the wind ... can never tear the linnet from the leaf ...” (*YCP*). On the whole in *18 Poems* Thomas, having learnt the moral disinterestedness from the poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats, emerges as a poet of inclusiveness and vicariousness, coherence and co-existence, “as nothing other than ... part of a benignant plan ... proof that earth was made for man” (*HCP* 114), “hurried through the smooth and rough ... and through the fertile and waste ... protecting, till the danger past ... with human love” (*YCP*) and holds that Auden “being made beautiful overmuch” should “consider beauty a sufficient end ... lose natural kindness” and “have no business but dispensing round ... their magnanimities of sound” (*YCP*), “right enmeshed with wrong ... strange orchestras of victim-shriek and song ... and curious blends of ache and ecstasy” (*HCP* 107), for “ceremony’s a name for the rich horn ... and custom for the spreading laurel tree” (*YCP*), “the sense of ills misdealt for blisses blanks the mien most queenly ... self-smittings kill self-joys; and everywhere beneath the sun ... such deeds her hands have done” (*HCP* 102).

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