



## Dylan Thomas's "Poem in October": A Parody of Poetic Tradition

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**Abstract:** "Poem in October" offers a more searching examination of the poet's task and the direction of his activity. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the privilege as a poet also increases his anxiety and responsibility. Dylan Thomas explores in what ways he can play an effective, functional role in society. The contemporary critical opinions on the poem very much associated with Thomas's childhood memories are far from exhaustive, but they have not thrown into a sharp focus the central problem. As the poem abounds in traces and tissues of the poems of the thirties and the forties and the poems that have influenced them, Thomas means more than and something different from what he indicates through *écriture*. His commitment to empathic impersonal art and pragmatic functioning is parodic of the poets of sceptic poetic tradition, Thomas Hardy, W.B. Yeats and A.E. Houseman while disapproving the personal and aesthetic concerns of the contemporary poets perceived as self-centred, sentimental and ironic. Thus to understand or to criticize this popular poem, the reader is to take the words of the poet not as outward meaning but merely as trace or indicator of his meaning. Hence this paper, undertaking the figurative analysis, aims to rebut the existing critical opinions of biographical culture, to reveal Thomas's commitment to vicarious disinterested functioning in contrast to his contemporary poets's non-committed functioning, their evasion and escapism and to establish that the poem is a parody of poetic tradition.

**Keywords:** parody, empathy, heroic, dilemmatic, persuade, virtuoso, existential, pacifistic, freeplay and infernal.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The image of Wilfred Owen as "fragile and luminous" grown "by pain and labour" (*Contemporary Verse* 250) that the poets of the thirties adore and the Second World War poet "conscious of his desires and needs and flesh that rise and fall" lampoons as "poor bare forked animal," "a machinery of death and slavery" (*CV*) and "forgets ... his hatred of war" has been steadily revived by Sidney Keyes, the heroic war poet, "those cries and wings surprise our surest act" (*Modern Verse* 421). Keyes celebrates the sensibility of Owen amidst the poets of insensitivity:

Now it is time to remember the winter festivals  
Of the old world, and see their rafted halls  
Hung with hard holly; tongues confusion; slow  
Beat of the heated blood in those great palaces  
Decked with the pale and sickled mistletoe.... (*CV* 320)

Alun Lewis also acknowledges the influence of the patriotic war poet Siegfried Sassoon as "his single self-centred monotonous wish" liberates him from "the grey disturbance" of Wordsworth:

And time is a froth of such transparency  
His drowning eyes see what they wish to see;  
A girl laying his table with a white cloth. (*MV* 294)

Cecil Day Lewis perceptively underlines Owen's relevance to his generation of socio-political poets:

Owen commends himself to the post-war poets largely because they feel themselves to be in the same predicament; they feel the same lack of a stable background against which the dance

of words may stand out plainly, the same distrust and horror of the unnatural forms into which life for the majority of people is being forced. They knew in their hearts exactly what Owen meant when he said 'the poetry is in the pity.' (*Hope* 15)

His picture of Owen truly corresponds to the readers's notion of the reality about the war poet:

The Cause shales off, the Humankind stands forth  
A mightier presence,  
Flooded by dawn's pale courage, rapt in eve's  
Rich acquiescence. (*Collected Poems* 222)

In sharp contrast to his contemporary war poets, Owen whom Stephen Spender regards as "the most useful influence in modern verse" (*Destructive Element* 220), modifies his attitude to war by exposing its horror and beastliness. He prophetically observes that his elegies could not be consolatory to his own generation but might be so to a later one:

But mocks the steady running of the hour,  
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.  
For by my glee might many men have laughed,  
And of my weeping something had been left,  
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,  
The pity of war, the pity war distilled. (*MV* 180)

Spender is deeply conscious of his debt to Owen to whom he dedicates his ambitious poem, *Vienna*. His preference for Owen's "Strange Meeting" is significant in the context of his employment of the tiger imagery twice in *Vienna*: "A word, a brink, like the first unuttered love, / Upon the pulsing throat springs the hot tiger" (16).

Louis MacNeice aptly observes that Owen's poetry is cast in the heroic mould; this heroic image is invariably associated with another quality, intellectual curiosity resulting in moral earnestness and seriousness of purpose, and the image of a war poet gains in depth:

Yet one or two we have known who had the gusto  
Of wind or water-spout, and one or two  
Who carry an emerald lamp behind their faces  
And – during thunder storms – the light comes shining through. (*Collected Poems* 216)

Owen's war poems are much influenced by the pacifistic views of the French symbolist Laurent Tailhade and "he was unable to retain his belief in orthodox Christianity, but the pacifism of Tailhade gave him a kind 'religion of humanity,' and the indignation and pity arising out of his war experience had the quality of a 'conversion'" (de Sola Pinto 149).

In the transitional poem *Another Time*, sensuousness versus thought is still a major issue in Auden's criticism of Owen's war poetry and his followers as he slips out of his "own position ... into an unconcerned condition" (18) and states that "existence is believing" (111) "the universal wish to guess" and "to identify Law with some other word.":

No wonder then so many die of grief,  
So many are so lonely as they die;  
No one has yet believed or liked a lie,  
Another time has other lives to live. (*Another Time* 62)

Auden's light verses, "In Time of War" and *New Year Letter*, however sympathetically the readers may try to enter into their spirit, appear little more than casual, extempore jottings, and they seem to justify Dylan Thomas's contention that Auden's serious compositions, *Another Time* and *For the Time Being* are separated from his lighter work written during the war years. However, Auden's transitional and middle phases of five years between 1940 and 1944 witness the continuation of his early poetry written under the influences of Walter de la Mare's metaphysical and Eliot's historical

current, "in your every inch and glance is the globe of genesis spun" (Dylan Thomas 142), Thomas unfolds the metaphysical, existential truth underlying the ironic, satirical art of Auden's poems of early and middle phases:

In the blinding country of youth,  
That all is undone,  
Under the unminding skies,  
Of innocence and guilt  
Before you move to make  
One gesture of heart or head,  
Is gathered and split  
Into the winding dark  
Like the dust of the dead. (DT 137)

But before examining Auden's poetry of the middle phase in detail, it may be useful to make a brief, rapid survey of the ironic poetry of his early phase. And for evidence of such unification of sensibility the readers must study the early poems of Auden in which several passages attain to artistic cohesion under the formative forces of metaphysical tradition. During war years Auden, "hearing the ominous relentless noise" of -- "the Dark, the Flood, the Malice" -- his political, romantic and sceptic contemporary poets "who are not aware ... of what" his poetry "means," communicates to them the significances of his artistic process, his historical consciousness and his pitiless immortal art that "destroys ... all other meanings --- dolls or gingerbread ... it means a Will that wills all children dead" (*MCP*).

The romantic war poets Roy Fuller, Alan Rook and Keidrych Rhys remain nonchalant and impervious to Owen's poetry of pity, his "grave truth" remains unmade and undone. MacNeice explains their attitude towards war in general and the pity of Owen in particular:

Hearing the gasfire breathe monotonously  
She waits for words but no words come, she lifts  
A soapstone hand to smooth her hair and feels  
The hand is someone else's – the scene shifts  
To a cold desert where the wind has dropped  
And the earth's movement stopped and something steals  
Up from the grit through nerve and vein  
To flaunt its tendrils in her brain. (229)

In a sheer contrast while Lewis and Keyes bank upon the poetry of pity, the war poet F.T.Prince believes that to confront reality is to perceive the threatening darkness that surrounds his personal life and Auden's poetry, and that this puzzlement between his own dreams of love and Auden's art or philosophical anxiety alone can produce great poetry, "the terror of that love has set us spinning in this groove ... greased with our blood" (*CV* 251). The romantic war poets are not for any suffering or sacrifice in life and their unconcerned attitude corresponds to the indifference and unpity of the lost socio-political poets of the thirties. Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice, having acknowledged Owen as one of their "immediate ancestors" (*Hope* 3) in the poems of the thirties, "bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in labour" (DT 140) in the poems of war time; they are "gifted with possession still ... in no more wishing to belong" to Owen's tradition of pity and suffering, "hell is neither here nor there ... hell is not anywhere ... hell is hard to bear" (*AT* 32).

The insensitive war poets Fuller, Rook and Rhys try "to say Not Now" and believe "that existence is enough" (*AT* 64), "like the numberless flowers that cannot number ... and like the beasts that need not remember ... it is to-day in which we live" (*AT*). They are fostered by the early lyrics of Wordsworth, Auden and Thomas, "stepping lightly and lazily among the thorn-trees ... dusky and dazed with sunlight, half awake" (*MV* 405), "dark peasants drag the sun upon their backs" (*CV*) according to Lewis. Keyes's image of them partly redresses the balance: "the small defiant kestrels—how they cut ... the raincloud with sharp wings, continually circling ... about a storm-rocked elm, with passionate

cries" (*MV*). The impassive war poets, while completely ignoring Auden's aesthetic amoral impersonal art and Owen's pity of war, struggle between Wordsworth's "moral being" ("Tintern Abbey" 570) and Thomas's comic talent, the gay, lively aspect of his moral disinterestedness. Thomas describes their warring mind in dream of secure life and immortality:

Turns in the dark on the sound they know will arise  
Into the answering skies from the green ground,  
From the man on the stairs and the child by the bed.  
The sound about to be said in the two prayers  
For the sleep in a safe land and the love who dies.... (DT 126)

In *Poems*, Prince "remembers" and plays on Auden's impersonal art, "old freedom in a game ... mocking himself" (*CV* 250) while mocking at the "fear and shame," failure and pathos of his contemporary war poets, "the freedom of a band ... of soldiers ... stripped bare ... for bathing in the sea, they shout and run in the warm air ... their flesh, worn by the trade of war, revives" (*CV* 249). It is natural that such an existential spirit would respond only to serious poetry, to the kind of imaginative experience indicated by the Latin word "*Lachrimae Christi*" (*CV*). MacNeice explains:

So in this second war which is fearful too,  
He cannot away with silence but has grown  
Almost a cipher, like a Latin word  
That many languages have made their own  
Till it is worth and blunt and easy to construe  
And often spoken but no longer heard. (227)

Can it possibly be affirmed that Prince is indifferent to Owen's pity of war, that he considers the war poetry of Lewis and Keyes an inferior literary genre? Or does he possess the necessary breadth of vision to correlate the two forms of experience—the comic vision of Thomas and the tragic or the terrible vision of Auden? Or does he consider the two kinds antithetical, if not incompatible? Keyes's picture of him as "in bitterness ... of heart to strike the strings and muster ... the shards of pain to harmony, not sharp ... with anger to insult the merry guest" (*CV*) may startle the readers and admirers of Prince who looks upon Auden as a tortured figure, harrowed by misery and doubt. Lewis describes Prince's struggling "to master" Auden's craftsmanship:

--Dry bents and bitter thistles in their throats—  
Thread the loose rocks by immemorial tracks. (*CV* 294)

But Thomas's portrait of Prince as a follower of Auden indifferent to Owen's pity, even if slightly overdrawn, is a bold and necessary challenge to the pathetic, sentimental history and pity of his contemporaries, "sang heaven hungry and the quick ... cut Christbread spitting vinegar and all ... the mazes of his praise and envious tongue were worked in flames and shells" (DT 19)

And it is a matter of surprise that the war poets Lewis and Keyes are highly critical of the poets of war time and after a phase of warring poems, they espouse the cause of Sassoon and Owen respectively. MacNeice reports:

Hearing the church-bells too, she knows at once  
That only she can hear them for it is no  
Church or even belfry where they hang,  
There are no ropes attached or ringers down below,  
These bells are disembodied, they express  
The claims of frozen Chaos and will clang  
Till this and every other world shall melt  
And Chaos be Itself and nothing felt. (*MCP*)

Lewis and Keyes, "bowing ... with such old-world grace" to the influences of pity of war, would hardly share "the stones ... what expended, unprojected graves" of Auden and Thomas who deny the

significance of the moral and intellectual concerns that had disturbed war poets's brief but poignant poetic life, "the soil's a flirt, the lion Time is tamed ... and pain like a cat will come home to share your room" (*MV* 420). The most pervasive thought in Lewis's poems is that of human suffering, "one body growing in another body ... creation touching verminous straw beds" (*MV*). And when the readers make a plunge into the heart of Keyes's poems they experience a feeling that is almost religious, "for he is glorified ... and cold Aegean voices speak his fame" (*MV*). This explains his distrust of Auden's historic, philosophical certitude, Thomas's innate, poetic consciousness, and his preference for Owen's pity and "truth untold," "the nearness of remoteness like a lion's eye ... so near in a cage yet so far away ... in this death we are proud to die ... the yellow eye of a beast of prey" (*MCP* 221) and it is this same criterion of distrust that these heroic war poets apply to Wordsworth's "still, sad music of humanity" ("Tintern Abbey" 569). However, "the common experiences of war drew these young people together and defined their generation; yet the keynote of the 1940s was one of personal expression. Some were overwhelmed by the chaos around them, some felt their identities threatened or lost as they played out roles in a cosmic drama. Almost all of them, like Alun Lewis, walked the fine line between active participation and the detachment necessary for sanity" (Shires 37).

Thomas's estimation of the impassive and the passive war poets's rejection of Owen's pity and peace is parodic of Hardy's perception of the waning influence of Owen, "the sick Battle-God" among his contemporaries, "in days when men had joy of war" in particular "that god's gold nimb ... and blazon have waned dimmer and more dim ... even his flushed form begins to fade ... till but a shade is left of him." Hardy explains the fate of Owen's pity, "his fulgid beam," "his haloes rayed the very gore ... and corpses wore his glory-gleam," his pacifistic pity:

The modern meditation broke  
His spell, that penman's pleadings dealt a stroke,  
Say some; and some that crimes too dire  
Did much to mire his crimson cloak. (*Collected Poems* 86)

Moreover, Hardy's deriding of the pacifistic political patriotism has reverberations in Yeats, "yet here's a travelled man that knows ... what he talks about ... and there's a politician ... and may be what they say is true ... of war and war's alarms" (Yeats, *Collected Poems* 297) and in A.E. Houseman, the "longing sighs," "the wan look, the hollow tone ... the hung head, the sunken eye ... you can have them for your own," "lovers' ills are all to sell ... then you can lie forlorn ... but the lover will be well" (Houseman 90).

What these poets of sceptic poetic tradition, Hardy, Yeats and Houseman, while repudiating the philosophic, speculative vision of poetry, define, defend and dedicate as their empirical vision of kind paradoxical poetry has been the gist of Thomas's poetry since the beginning of his poetic career. MacNeice brings out the poetic truth behind Thomas's paradoxical poetry of transfiguration, empathic impersonal art and altruistic pagan tradition and expects his continuous repudiation of Auden's metaphysical tradition, his aesthetic amoral impersonal art and his active functioning as a poet of disinterested goodwill and action till the end of his poetic career:

Lastly, hearing the cock in the grey dawn  
Crow once, crow twice, she shivers and dissolves  
To someone else who in the hour of trial  
Denied his Master and his guilt devolves  
On her head only. If she could speak up,  
She might even now atone for that denial  
But the grey cock still crows and she knows why;  
For she must still deny, deny, deny. (229-30)

In *18 Poems*, Thomas's "ripening rule transcends" the metaphysical poet John Donne's "ancient rote-restricted ways" and the intellectual poet Auden's aesthetic impersonal art "of death-inducing kind" (*HCP* 168), his learning of the sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats and their process of vicarious impersonal art, "nothing shows to us ephemeral ones who fill ... but moments in Thy mind"



(HCP), "that had such burdens of the mind ... and toiled so hard and late ... to leave some monument behind ... nor thought of the levelling wind" (YCP 178) moulds him to create his gentle impersonal art similar to that of Auden "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 127). Thomas explains his poetic process of transfiguration as "a weather in the quarter of the veins ... turns night to day; blood in their suns ... lights up the living worm" (DT 17), the process of laboring for benign impersonal art as "light breaks where no sun shines" (94), his disinterested goodness for the depressed poets of the thirties as "power was contagious in my birth, second ... rise of the skeleton and ... robbing of the naked ghost. Manhood ... spat up from the resuffered pain" (66).

In *25 Poems*, Thomas transforms the artistic failure of the socio-political poets, "that sighs for the seducer's coming ... in the sun strokes of summer" (DT) into tragic gladness and generates hope in them for the Audenesque elegant art. His success could be attributed to the influences of Hardy and Yeats, their paradox of life-in-death vis-à-vis Auden's paradox of death-in-life, "all smalling slowly to the gray sea line ... and each significant red smoke-shaft pales" (HCP), "that we must labour to be beautiful ... it's certain there is no fine thing ... since Adam's fall but needs much labouring" (YCP 64), "labour is blossoming or dancing where ... the body is not bruised to pleasure soul ... nor beauty born out of its own despair ... nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil" (184). Thomas's forward movement as a poet of art songs drives a wedge between Auden and his contemporaries, "though they go mad they shall be sane ... though they sink through the sea they shall rise again ... though lovers be lost love shall not ... and death shall have no dominion" and turns the glorifiers of Auden's pure impersonal art into the worshippers of Thomas's kind impersonal art, "and death shall have no dominion ... dead mean naked they shall be one ... with the man in the wind and the west moon" (DT 31). He reiterates:

Cut to the still star in the order of the quick  
But blessed by such heroic hosts in your every  
Inch and glance that the wound  
Is certain god, and the ceremony of souls  
Is celebrated there, and communion between souls. (DT)

In the transitional poem *The Map of Love*, Thomas continues to function in coherence with his early poetry, *18 Poems* and *25 Poems*, "morning smack of the spade that wakes up sleep" (25) and makes a parody of the Yeatsian poetic beauty and poetic truth, his empirical vision of birth-in-death and paradoxical structure, "in a breath ... a mouthful held the extreme of life and death" (YCP 289), his process of transfiguration and objectivity, "propinquity had brought ... imagination to that pitch where it casts out ... all that is not itself" (YCP), his comic vision of "tragic joy," "what matter though numb nightmare ride on top ... and blood and mire the sensitive body stain .. what matter? Heave no sigh, let no tear drop ... a greater, a more gracious time has gone" (249), his consistent articulate "voice" of kind impersonal art amidst the critical and the dilemmatic contemporary warring poets, "stumbling upon the blood-dark once more ... then stumbling to the kill beside the shore ... then cleaning out and bandaging of wounds ... and chants of victory amid the encircling hounds" (290), his "praise of" pragmatic functioning as a poet, "sobriety is a jewel ... that I do much adore ... and therefore keep me dancing ... though drunkards lie and snore" (268) and his occasional playing with the Audenesque art to contradistinguish his benign impersonal art being helpful to the helpless contemporary poets, "they sang, but had nor human tunes nor words ... though all was done in common as before ... they had changed their throats and had the throats of birds" (299). Thomas's early poetry establishes himself as a successful poet like Auden while the contemporary poets have been struggling to "advance further," "for few are able to keep moving ... they drag and flag in the traffic ... while you are alive beyond question like the dazzle on the sea..." (MCP 108). MacNeice finds that Thomas's articulate voice as a poet and an artist of inner reality, cyclical pattern and inclusiveness is in tune with sceptic poetic voices of Hardy and Yeats:

The first train passes and the windows groan,  
Voices will hector and your voice become  
A drum in tune with theirs, which all last night  
Like sap that fingered through a hungry tree

Asserted our one night's identity. (109)

In *Deaths and Entrances*, Thomas imitates the humane impersonal art of Houseman, "the road one treads to labour ... will lead one home to rest ... and that will be the best" (AEH 89), "now you labour not with child" (62). Houseman's sceptic poetic functioning, his paradox of breath-in-death and his moral disinterestedness defies the socio-politico-historical and philosophic tradition, "the stinging nettle," "the leaf that hurts the hand." He brings out the truth behind his functional role as a paradoxical poet with a human voice:

That thrives, come sun, come showers;  
Blow east, blow west, it springs;  
It peoples towns, and towers  
Above the courts of Kings,  
And touch it and it stings. (73)

The war poet Houseman's life-centric human love and his paradoxical sensibility stands distinctive from the philosophic, political and historic tradition of his contemporary war poets, "I muse for why and never find the reason ... I pace the earth, and drink the air, and feel the sun" and "high heaven and earth all from the prime foundation ... all thoughts to rive the heart are here, and all are vain ... horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation" (AEH 10).

Thomas's sagacious functioning as a poet of paradoxical structure, benign impersonal art and comic vision of song pattern, in *Deaths and Entrances*, progressively advances "in the final direction of the elementary town ... I advance for as long as forever is" (DT) in line with the poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats and Houseman during war time while refusing to work like the impassive, the active and the passive poets of the forties and the thirties, "lucklessly she must lie patient ... and the vaulting bird be still" and persuading the dreaming war poets of the forties to labour actively on the paradox of birth-in-death rather than the paradox of death-in-life: to acquire the greatness of art song. He recasts his early poetic process resulting in an inclusive structure as hope for successful poetry:

And for the woman in shades  
Saint carved and sensual among the scudding  
Dead and gone, dedicate forever to my self  
Though the brawl of the kiss has not occurred  
On the clay cold mouth, on the fire  
Branded forehead, that could bind  
Her constant.... (DT 141)

On the whole, his functioning in the later poem is similar to his performance as an ahistorical, asocial, apolitical poet of sceptic poetic tradition in the early poem, *18 Poems*, "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) but dissimilar to the poets of philosophic, socio-politico-historical tradition and earth-centric tradition.

David Gascoyne recognizes Thomas's caliber of reconciling emotional contraries by breaking down the barriers between the solemn and the playful as evident in *18 Poems* and *Deaths and Entrances* and exalts him:

The turning point of history  
Must come. Yet the complacent and the proud  
And who exploit and kill, may be denied—  
Christ of Revolution and of Poetry—  
The resurrection and the life  
Wrought by your spirit's blood. (MV 351-52)

MacNeice, while commending Thomas's noble impersonal art and his resolute, independent and sceptic functioning in his poetry in contrast to the socio-politico-historical functioning of his

contemporaries, "though every sandcastle concept ... being *ad hoc* must crumble again," observes that his kind impersonal art offering salvation to the fallen poets stands futuristic:

And though today is arid,  
We know—and knowing bless—  
That rooted in futurity  
There is a plant of tenderness. (MCP)

Thomas's *Deaths and Entrances* that vindicates his sober and sagacious successful functioning as an ahistorical, apolitical and asocial poet to the aspirants of immortality, "the self-deceiving realist, the self-seeking ... altruist, the self-indulgent penitent" (MCP 276) is parodic of his preceding poetry, his poetic process of kind impersonal art, paradoxical structure and transfiguration. But Thomas's later art songs, his Audenesque vision of making immortal art deviates from the chief concern of his poetry according to MacNeice:

Of such is your future if it is to be fruitful,  
Of such is your widow's cruse, your Jacob's ladder,  
Of such is the garden of souls, the orchestration of instinct,  
The fertilization of mind, of such are your beacons,  
Your breaking of bread, your dance of desire, your North-West passage,  
Of such is the epilogue to your sagas of bronze and steel... (MCP 277)

Vernon Watkins's concluding lines of the poem "A Foal" lend support to MacNeice's perception that Thomas's later songs are as self-parodic, self-vindicative and self-therapeutic as Auden's songs:

Darkness is not dark, nor sunlight the light of the sun  
But a double journey of insistent silver hooves.  
Light wakes in the foal's blind eyes as lightning illuminates corn  
With a rustle of fine-eared grass, where a starling shivers. (MV 368)

However, Watkins discovers in Thomas's later songs of the Audenesque manner the thread of playfulness sometimes running across the stuff of serious things, but he does not demonstrate how far this spirit of fun is integrated with the *leitmotif* of Thomas's work and thought; and his argument does, in the main, point to two separate tendencies. His more emphatic statement points, however, to a duality, the spirit of laughter being regarded as an opposite and complementary impulse:

And whoever watches a foal sees two images,  
Delicate, circling, born, the spirit with blind eyes leaping  
And the left spirit, vanished yet here, the vessel of ages  
Clay-cold, blue, laid low by her great wide belly the hill. (MV)

The parodic song "Poem in October" is implicit of Thomas's faith in the poetry of inclusiveness in general, his *18 Poems* in particular, his asocial, apolitical, a historical and pragmatic functioning while disapproving the philosophic, socio-politico-historical functioning of the poets of the thirties and the war poets of the forties. Thomas unfolds the *leit-motif*:

In the fire of his care his love in the high room.  
And the child not caring to whom he climbs his prayer  
Shall drown in a grief as deep as his true grave,  
And mark the dark eyed wave, through the eyes of sleep,  
Dragging him up the stairs to one who lies dead). (DT)

Thomas chases gently and persuades the inactive romantic war poets, "possessed by the skies ... she sleeps in the narrow trough yet she walks the dust ... yet raves at her will ... on the madhouse boards worn thin by walking tears" while mocking the active war poets as defenders of Sassoon's nostalgic nationalistic tradition and Owen's pacifistic patriotic tradition, "yet she deludes with walking the



nightmarish room ... as large as the dead ... or rides the imagined oceans of the male wards," raving at the dilemmatic aesthetic lover Prince, "she has come possessed ... who admits the delusive light through the bouncing wall," showing scorn for Auden's escaping into the existential ironic prayer for the Christian Grace, "bolting the night of the door with her arm her plume ... strait in the mazed bed ... she deludes the heaven-proof house with entering clouds" and scoffing at the realistic poets of pity for being nonchalant and dreaded as the dreaming war poets, "a stranger has come ... to share my room in the house not right in the head ... a girl mad as birds." He derides the inactive war poets Fuller, Rook and Rhys and their mortal concerns similar to that of Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice and the immortality consciousness of Lewis, Keyes, Prince and Auden as a travesty of disinterested poetic functioning, "and taken by light in her arms at long and dear last ... I may without fail ... suffer the first vision that set fire to the stars" (DT 96).

Moreover, Thomas stands apart as a poet of unified sensibility, a pragmatic poet of moral disinterestedness working for the well-being of the dilemmatic war poets and their elemental powers of poetry in contrast to Auden's mockery being intensified from gentle gaiety to bitter scorn on the underlying anguish and the apparent theme of the poetry of Thomas and the pity-conscious and the pitiless war poets. Thomas's mockery protects him against suffering and enables him to meet grief with playfulness. He explains:

Oh the shearwater birds and their boatsized brood  
Oh the bulls of Biscay and their calves  
Are making under the green, laid veil  
The long-legged beautiful bait their wives. (DT)

Thomas sustains a hope for poetry of free mind, freeplay and freelove while persuading the war poets to work for an inclusive structure in lieu of working exclusively for personal or political or historical and existential structure. The poem also anticipates Thomas's continuous success as a poet and an artist of self-individuating, self-vindicating and self-dedicating parodic pattern in "Fern Hill" and assures him of the successful accomplishment of his task, "the heron, anking the scaly ... lowlands of the waves ... makes all the music..." (DT 114) in the last art song "Over Sir John's Hill," "longing still ... to labour and love though they lay down long ago" (DT 84) written under the influence of William Blake, his last "true love," "the last Samson of" his "zodiac" (DT 47), his sceptic poetic tradition in contrast to the uncertain future of Auden, his increasing anxiety about his loneliness and immortal sound pattern and the hopeless future of the half-sound and the unsound wild lovers of Auden's art. In the last poem "Over Sir John's Hill," Thomas reaffirms his faith in the poetic culture of Blake identical with the sceptic poets Hardy, Yeats and Houseman and in their asocial, apolitical and ahistorical functioning as poets of vicarious impersonal sensibility while persuading the "drowned" Auden to wake up from the laws of belief and fear, the death-centric metaphysical faith to become life-centric to be alive, "and you shall wake, from country sleep, this dawn and each first dawn ... your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun" (DT 81).

Thomas attributes his success as a poet as well as an artist to his moral disinterestedness and sceptic poetic tradition and the dying contemporary poets's failure to their speculative pursuit of immortal impersonal art which is nothing but Auden's aesthetic amoral disinterestedness and metaphysical tradition, "the flame in the flesh's vision" (DT 26) as the rule and energy of their poetry is alienated from the life situations of the fellow-beings and estranged from co-existence.

One who called deepest down shall hold his peace  
That cannot sink or cease  
Endlessly to his wound  
In many married London's estranging grief. (DT)

Thomas's commitment to magnanimous functioning as self-evident in "Poem in October" strikes a sharp contrast to the insensitive war poets's commitment to the Wordsworthian love of egotistical transcendentalism, the sensitive war poets's commitment to Sassoon's nationalistic pity or Owen's pacifistic pity, the dreaming Prince's divided commitment to personal love and Auden's impersonal art and the existential Auden's commitment to communal prayer for God's Grace. Evidently, the poem stands as a self-explanatory parody of Thomas's resolute, independent functioning, his

empirical voice of freedom, "freedom is man's creative word" (*DCP* 200) and "these are his palette ... and it is he who blends them with the brush-strokes ... of long experience and sudden insight" (*MCP* 272), his disinterested working for the freedom of the voiceless poets coexisting with the voice of the philosophic, political and historical tradition. Thomas's pragmatic functioning is in coherence with the life-centric vision of his early poem, *18 Poems*, "the people's fusion" (DT) as Day Lewis perceives that "freedom is more than a word, more than the base coinage ... of statesmen, the tyrant's dishonoured cheque, or the dreamer's mad ... inflated currency. She is mortal ... and made ... in the image of simple men who have no taste for carnage" (*DCP* 191).

## 2. REVIEWS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

Thomas's later poem "Poem in October" offers a more searching examination of the poet's task and the direction of his activity. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the privilege as a poet also increases his anxiety and responsibility. He explores in what ways he can play an effective, functional role in society. The question becomes related to the ultimate problem of man's salvation, and the poet's own creative journey becomes at the same time explorative of man's destiny. MacNeice explains that in the paradoxical structure of "Poem in October," there is a catalogue of vile things, "these yellow fanfares in the trench re-echo ... before the spades get busy, the same phrase ... the preacher lost his voice on. All is well ... the flowers say, with the child..." (*MCP*). The list includes the fantastic caricatures of the impassive war poets under the influence of the romantic tradition of Wordsworth, the realistic sketches of the active war poets under the influence of the patriotic tradition of Sassoon and Owen, the grotesque picture of Auden in the middle phase under the historical influences of the metaphysical de la Mare and the existential Kierkegaard, and the ahistorical, apolitical poetic image of Thomas under the influence of sceptic poetic tradition of Houseman. Moreover, Day Lewis distinguishes the paradoxical vision of Thomas's unified sensibility and his disinterested vicarious functioning, "a glooming light, a gleaming darkness shroud ... its passage" from Auden's ironic vision of aesthetic, amoral impersonal art, his concern for immortal art, "their doubles draw the willows, a brown mare ... drinks her reflection. There's no margin where ... substance leaves off, the illusory begins" and from the visionary poets's insensibility and their doubtful, insensitive functioning in time of war, "knowing one sigh of wind ... will rub these precious figures from the slate" (*DCP* 247).

Describing Thomas as "the most obviously gifted poet," John Holloway points out that "his strength" lies "in a half-naïve, half-mystical, delighted sense of the livingness of man's environment and his oneness with it, which emerges in a few only of his poems, such as "A Refusal ...," "Poem in October," and "Especially when the October Wind" (94). Kenneth Allott, while disagreeing with Geoffrey Grigson's criticism of Thomas "for his neglect of a continuous line of meaning and for being, at times, fantastic and slovenly" (*CV* 276), holds that "Thomas moved in his later work towards the decorum of a more continuous 'narrative' of meaning, and both 'The Hunchback in the Park' and 'Poem in October' ... are satisfactory in this respect" (277). However, the literary critics adopting a biographical approach interpret the poem in a totally different manner. Walford Davies explains that "Poem in October" in which Thomas has "turned so strongly to the subject of his own childhood" (86) is "wonderfully alive with ordinary sights and sounds and is, amongst other things, a love poem to a particular place" (52). John Ackerman, attributing the poem to the inspiration of "Laugharne seascape," comments that it is "related in theme and technique to "Fern Hill" and "concerned with the visionary experience associated with childhood" (130). To Henry Treece the poem, representing "the mood of humble supplication" (118) is significant "for some exquisite allusions to the landscape and activities of childhood" (119). EynelWardi states that in "Poem in October," "there is more air" and that Thomas is "content with symbolizing his lost object instead of clinging to its fetishistic material equivalent" (129).

The contemporary critical opinions on "Poem in October" very much associated with Thomas's childhood memories are far from exhaustive, but they have not thrown into a sharp focus the central problem of the poem. Thomas has evoked the image of "child" to imply the parody between the child's disinterested innocence and playful action, all smiling face to all and the poet's disinterested goodness and action for the woeful contemporaries, his impersonal empathy for all the afflicted post-war poets of the thirties in *18 Poems* and *25 Poems* and for the sufferings of the war poets of the forties in *The Map of Love* and *Deaths and Entrances*, "smiles on thee on me on all ... who became an infant small ... infant smiles are his own smiles" (Blake 12). His tragic joy "on another's sorrow,"

his "infant joy" of offering "kind relief" to the care of fellow-poets stands distinguished from Auden's ironic distance and the warring poets's self-interested distance from the fellow-beings's tears; his perception of "another's woe ... another's grief" as "infant groan, an infant fear" stands apolitical and magnanimously distinct from Sassoon's indignant satire on his contemporaries "hear the wren with sorrows small ... hear the small bird's grief and care ... hear the woes that infants bear" and from Owen's stranger's farness pouring tragic pity and pathos on his contemporaries's sentimental insensibility, "weeping tear on infant's tear" (Blake). Thomas mocks the wholly playful and the Holy playful tone of his counterparts and their hope of immortality, Auden's hope for immortality through Christian Grace, the impassive war poets and the realistic poets's hope for wordly comforts and the heroic war poets's hope for immortal peace on earth in time of war, "Heaven and earth to peace beguiles" (Blake). He disapproves of the personal concerns of the realistic and the romantic war poets, their child-like ignorance of suffering and the impersonal, immortal concerns of Auden, his faith in the Incarnate-Suffering and the Incarnate-Child as they are self-deceptive, sentimental and ironic in war time. As the poem abounds in traces and tissues of the poems of the thirties and the forties and the poems that have influenced them, Thomas means more than and something different from what he indicates through *écriture*. His commitment to disinterested goodness and action, his impersonal empathy and his pragmatic functioning is parodic of the poets of sceptic poetic tradition, Hardy, Yeats and Houseman. Thus to understand or to criticize this popular poem, the reader is to take the words of the poet not as outward meaning but merely as trace or indicator of his meaning. Hence this paper, undertaking the figurative analysis, aims to rebut the existing critical opinions of biographical culture, to reveal Thomas's commitment to vicarious disinterested functioning in harmony with his sceptic poetic tradition in contrast to his contemporary poets's non-committed functioning, their evasion and escapism in compliance with their philosophic, historical tradition and to establish that the poem is a parody of poetic tradition.

### 3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Thomas's later poem *Deaths and Entrances* written during the time of the Second World War, like his serious poems, *18 Poems*, *25 Poems* and *The Map of Love*, is closely connected with the moods of the war poets, and the moods expressed in their verses vary from high-spirited exuberance to self-exploratory irony. He speaks of his moral disinterestedness as his way of functioning vis-à-vis the worldly-wise and the aesthetic amoral functioning of the poets of the forties:

Not for the proud man apart  
From the raging moon I write  
On these spindrift pages  
Nor for the towering dead  
With their nightingales and psalms  
But for the lovers, their arms  
Round the griefs of the ages,  
Who pay no praise or wages  
Nor heed my craft or art. (DT 82)

Thomas's later collection is pure, disinterested comic perception in which life with its infinite variety and contrast appears as a play and in which the instinctive urges and actions of the survival-conscious inactive war poets fall into warring pattern and are viewed with amused tolerance.

The popular poem, "Poem in October," written in the warring months of 1944 — a period of acute anxiety and depression — is Thomas's heroic attempt in verse, his comic vision of magnanimous impersonal art to fight against misfortune with the weapon of mockery obtained from the "merry guide" Houseman to lead him on "with gay regards of promise ... and sure unslackened stride ... and smiles and nothing spoken" (AEH 68); and yet he possesses the necessary detachment to laugh at the oddities of Auden and his contemporary poets of the thirties, the insensitivity of the romantic war poets and the sensitivity of the heroic infantry poets of the forties. And although the laughter has varied elements ranging from gaiety to banter, it is surprisingly free from bitterness and spite. Thomas unfolds the freeplay of his commitment to disinterested goodness and action as the poet's task parodic

of the vicarious impersonal functioning of the sceptic poets, Hardy, Yeats and Houseman, "woke to my hearing from harbor and neighbour wood" in time of war "when near and strange wounded on London's waves ... have sought your single grave" (DT), when the existential, metaphysical Auden prays for the Immortal Grace, the active war poets seek for the eternity of Sassoon's peace and Owen's pity, the visionary war poets for the spontaneity and greatness of Wordsworth and for the elegant art of Auden and the defeated realistic poets for their own survival:

It was my thirtieth year to heaven  
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood  
And the mussel pooled and the heron  
Priested shore  
The morning beckon  
With water praying and call of seagull and rook  
And the knock of sailing boats on the net webbed wall  
Myself to set foot  
That second  
In the still sleeping town and set forth. (DT 115)

The town is London, the capital of Poetry and Thomas scorns on the London literary society as "the still sleeping town" in which he moves and pins down the factions, the contrasts between the poets of metaphysical tradition and the poet of sceptic poetic tradition, "the mussel pooled and the heron" in the kingdom of contemporary poetry. The image of "priested shore" is implicit of the functioning of the priest-poet Auden as the follower of the metaphysical de la Mare and Eliot. The "water praying ... seagull" evokes the divided love of Prince, the young poet yearning for personal love and Auden's impersonal art. The "rook," implying the lyrical poet, is a combination of Fuller, Rook, and Rhys; the "the call of seagull" is suggestive of the poets Keyes with a dash of Lewis. The opening stanza of the "Poem in October," on this assumption, is a burlesque of the battle between the poets of Architectural School working for the "perfection of work" of art, the immortal power and pride of the historical art, "the net webbed wall" and the Architectonic School laboring for "perfection of life" (YCP 209), the dynamic rule and energy of the sceptic art, "the sailing boats." It introduces the conflicting thematic focus of the existential Auden, the realistic poets and the visionary war poets and the prudent Thomas. The likeness between Auden's metaphysical early phase and his existential middle and later phases and the identical pragmatic functioning of Thomas between his early phase and his transitional and later phases is close, "your amnesty, your advent, your Rebirth ... the archetype and the vindication of history ... the hierarchy of the equal" while the resemblence between the early and the middle and later phases of the political poets, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice and the war poets as a whole is distant and dilemmatic, "your hope, your clue, your cue, your snowball letter that makes your soft flakes hard, your aspirations active" (MCP).

In *Another Time*, Auden has a scarce whit doubt of immortality as he starts writing poems of inner reality emulating the existential art of Edward Lear, Rimbaud, Pascal, and Herman Melville, "unluckily for a death ... waiting with phoenix under ... the pyre yet to be lighted of my sins and days" (DT). In *New Year Letter*, he is of intersecting "the positive and negative ways through time." The dominant tone is one of hesitation bordering on the brink of faith in the Christian idea of human redemption:

Our life and death are with our neighbour  
And love illuminates again  
The city and the lion's den  
The world's great rage, the travel of young men. (*New Year Letter* 75)

In *For the Time Being*, Auden's hesitation vanishes and he appears committed to Christening. The time being that is the human life occasions the possibility of forging the severed links with God and the birth of Christ holds out great hope to human race and His Crucifixion underlines the value of physical sacrifice, "the Time Being to redeem from insignificance" to attain spiritual heights:

He is the Truth.

Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;

You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years. (ACP 308)

Auden's existential faith in the middle phase recalls his early metaphysical faith: "we saw in Spring ... the frozen buzzard ... flipped down the weir and carried out to sea" (*English Auden* 437) as perceived in de la Mare's poem "The Christening":

Time flies, time flies!

And yet, bless me! 'tis little changed am I;

May Jesu keep from tears those infant eyes

Be love their lullaby! (de la Mare 44).

Auden's non-commitment to the immediate crisis of the war-torn world and his commitment to his faith in existential suffering and immortal art, his historical idea of self-annihilation and his derision of the contemporary poets' lack of endurance, their divided love make a parody of Eliot's commitment to aesthetic functioning, "beating obedient ... to controlling hands" and his scorning on his contemporaries in *The Waste Land*, "I sat upon the shore ... fishing, with the arid plain behind me ... Shall I at least set my lands in order ... London bridge is falling down falling down falling down" (43) which, in turn, is parodic of Houseman's observation on the poets of war time, "but since the man that runs away ... lives to die another day ... and cowards' funerals, when they come ... are not wept so well at home ..." (AEH 59). MacNeice shows Auden's affinity with the earlier formative forces, the rhyming de la Mare and the rhythmic Eliot, "through the serene and chequered ... fields that he knows he walks like a fallen angel ... whose fall has made him a man," "to him are his own rhythm like his breathing ... and intimate as dreams" (MCP). Day Lewis finds a self-parody between Auden's early and later phases, his historic sense and existential art "by this fateful ... act, he confirms the ambiguous power of choice. It is she ... who weeps, a child chained to the outraged tree" (DCP). He perceives that Auden, in his mood of depression, finds relief, hope for his immortality in Prince's *Poems*. "They watch the spring rise inexhaustibly ... a breathing thread out of the eddied sand ... sufficient to their day" (DCP 217).

The second stanza of "Poem in October," a parody of Prince's way of life and also an implicit scoff of Wordsworth's didacticism, describes Prince as a young, energetic figure and an inveterate drinker and a frank sensualist emerging through indirection. Thomas, identifying himself with Prince, sings:

My birthday began with the water  
Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name  
Above the farms and the white horses  
And I rose  
In rainy autumn  
And walked abroad in a shower of all my days. (DT)

Prince's early poems, "In the Wood," "The Wind in the Tree," "Man on his Horse" and "An Epistle to a Patron" are rendered with dramatic vividness. But realism is combined with fantasy, and the fantasy is enlivened by mockery according to Day Lewis, "that was the fatal move, the ruination ... of innocence so innocently begun ... when in the lawless orchard of creation ... the child left this fruit for that rosier one" (DCP). While Thomas shares the lover's thrill and exhilaration, he also notes in Prince the amused detachment of an observer:

High tide and the heron dived when I took the road  
Over the border  
And the gates  
Of the town closed as the town awoke. (DT).

Despite his occasional irritations over Auden's indifference, Prince immensely likes his ebullient companion who provides a marked contrast to Thomas, Day Lewis, Spender, and MacNeice and the war poets, and the lampoon reveals Prince's good-humored, indulgent affection:



The meaning filled his actions, made him courteous  
And lyrical and strong and kind and truthful,  
A generous puritan. (*MCP*)

MacNeice suggests that Prince's early phase, centering as it does on his two love affairs between a mortal and an immortal, his love with the mortal youth and his love with Auden's impersonal art, "a country-lover and very English, the cadence ... of Christmas bells in his voice" (*MCP*), seems an evident parody of Thomas's "Fern Hill," the most extreme representation of visionary poetry in his work. In "Fern Hill," Thomas seems to mock not merely the romantic attitude manifest in Prince's early work, but the poetic act itself. "And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves ... sang to my horn, the foes on the hills barked clear and cold" (DT 54). His mock-pathetic lines heighten the ironic effect when compared with the other contemporary war poets, "lie still, sleep becalmed, sufferer with the wind ... in the throat, burning and turning" (93).

In the third stanza of "Poem in October," Thomas evaluates that the juvenile poems of Fuller, Rook and Rhys, while stressing their feasible and earth-centric poetic form, exhibit their parallel quest for identity as poet which involves a weighing of several alternative choices. Initially before the outbreak of the war, the young war poets skeptical about the poets of modernism accept Wordsworth's definition of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility" ("Preface" 180). Thomas sets forth:

A springful of larks in a rolling  
Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling  
Blackbirds and the sun of October  
Summery  
On the hill's shoulder.... (DT)

Day Lewis records his reaction, and the irreverence has a touch of juvenile bravado in a parody of Wordsworth's lines:

We are caught, all of us, in time's fine net,  
Walled up in time: yet still we seek a secret  
Spring, a weak mesh, where we may  
Break out and be immortal. (*DCP* 272)

Wordsworth's early poetry appeals to the young war poets as a poet of serene natural beauty to suit their moods of comforts and complacency in the midst of tense atmosphere and uneasy calm according to Day Lewis, "our youthtime passes down a colonnade ... shafted with alternating light and shade ... all's dark or dazzle there" (*DCP*). Thomas points out:

Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly  
Come in the morning where I wandered and listened  
To the rain wringing  
Wind blow cold  
In the wood far away under me. (DT)

Watkins notes that the war poems of Fuller, Rook and Rhys, intended as a diversion, are written in a fitful manner during intense war:

Light in the branches weaves.  
Hard is the waiting moment while it waves,  
This tree whose trunk curves upward from the stream  
Where the faltering ripples strum. (*MV* 365)

And, as Day Lewis's commendation shows, the mockery is many-sided:

But here may you find, for all his fretting

And gaunt regretting,  
Between the dove-tops and the weir's  
Undying fall, how broken years  
Can sing to a new setting. (*DCP* 269)

Quite contrastingly both Lewis and Keyes, being sceptical about the Word-centric ironic art of Auden's early poetry and the life-centric paradoxical art of Thomas's early poems, "the veiled Word's flesh, a near annunciation," "symbols of gross experience..." (*DCP* 218), moves under the sways of Sassoon and Owen respectively: "all that time there was thunder in the air ... our nerves branched and flickered summer lightning" (*DCP*).

In the poem "The Bards," the active war poet Keyes evaluates the groping mood of his contemporaries, Thomas and the five contemporary poets, Prince, Fuller, Rook, Rhys and Lewis, their songs of innocence and experience, life and death, hope and unhope. Echoing Owen's poetics as revealed in the poem "Insensibility," "whatever mourns when many leave their shores ... whatever shares ... the eternal reciprocity of tears" (*CV* 122), Keyes lampoons the morbid element of his contemporaries's poetry:

... tongues' confusion; slow  
Beat of the heated blood in those great palaces  
Decked with the pale and sickled mistletoe;  
And voices dying when the blind bard rises  
Robed in his servitude, and the high harp  
Of sorrow sounding, stills those upturned faces. (*CV*)

In the poem "Insensibility" Owen, commenting on the sensual and sentimental language of his five contemporary war poets, Rupert Brooke, Julian Grenfell, Charles Hamilton Sorley, Isaac Rosenberg and Ivor Gurney who "by choice ... made themselves immune ... to pity and what moans in man ... before the last sea and hapless stars," defines what is not poetry:

But cursed are dullards whom no cannon stuns,  
That they should be as stones;  
Wretched are they, and mean  
With paucity that never was simplicity. (*CV*)

Thomas's poem "When All My Five and Country Senses See" throws light on the direction of the Second World War poets's insensibility and "old men's placidity" between the "five senses." "And when blind sleep drops on the spying senses, / The heart is sensual, though five eyes break" (*DT* 146). The phrase "five ... senses" becomes increasingly associated with the self-comfort and self-complacency of the poets of World War II. To relax in comfort is to deaden one's sensibility; in such a frame of mind one is prone to be satisfied with over-simplified intellectual formulations that are deterrent to a genuine pursuit of truth. Day Lewis also brings out the discordant note of comprehension among the impassive, passive and the active war poets:

Cuckoophrase of children  
In their green enchantment  
Where slanting beams fall warm and cool as larksong—  
A woodnote rill unheard through afterdays. (*DCP*)

Linda M. Shires in her survey of poetry of the Second World War writes that "Brooke's typically naïve patriotism could hold no meaning for the young poets of the early forties. It interfered with more important and enduring interests: love, art, and for some, the pleasures of university life. As war stole their youth, so it also destroyed the intellectual communities which might have served their common aims" (57).

In the fourth stanza of "Poem in October," Thomas comments on the broad realistic humour of Lewis and Keyes and the bawdiness of several early verses of their contemporary war poets, "the horrid ...

woe drip from the dishrag hands and the pressed sponge of the forehead ... the breath draw back like a bolt through white oil ... and a stranger enter like iron" (DT). Lewis's verses, *Raiders' Dawn* and Keyes's *The Iron Laurel* show a spurt of vital energy as perceived in the war poems of Sassoon and Owen respectively and reflect a mood of relaxation after the prolonged, strenuous efforts expended on Auden's *Poems* and Thomas's *18 Poems*, "strange how those yearning airs could sweeten ... and still enlighten ... the hours when solitude gave me her breast" (*DCP*). Thomas explains the heroic struggle of Lewis and Keyes to liberate themselves as poets of pity:

Pale rain over the dwindling harbor  
And over the sea wet church the size of a snail  
With its horns through mist and the castle  
Brown as owls.... (DT)

Lewis expresses his conviction of the ultimate triumph of freedom and equality by the power of transmitted knowledge. The banter is light, and the scepticism about Auden's metaphysical tradition, "high as the eagle to her mountain bed" and Thomas's poetic tradition, "the finest red," "whose soil is fine as flour and blood-red" is tempered by fantasy; but the playful teasing is replaced by bitter derision. Lewis chooses Sassoon's satire and his sentimental love:

Each arid patch  
Owns the lean folk who plough and scythe and thatch  
Its grudging yield and scratch its stubborn stones.  
The small gods suck the marrow from their bones. (CV)

If the spirit of laughter is menaced by anger, it is equally menaced by a feeling of boredom, and the last poem *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets* is perhaps the only poem of Lewis in which he expresses sheer boredom in Auden's metaphysical art, "the grinning priests," in the impassive romantic contemporaries's poetry, "dark peasants drag the sun upon their backs" (CV) as well as his own love of the sarcastic pity of Sassoon.

Keyes, emphasizing his contemporaries's lack of imaginative response, scoffs at their temerity to kill the pity of war, the "unprojected graves," "the soil's a flirt, the lion Time is tamed ... and pain like a cat will come home to share your room" (*MV* 420). His abhorrence of obtrusive designs in Auden's poetry, "the storm bears down the pivotal tree, the cloud ... turns to the net of an inhuman fowler ... and drags us from the air" (*MV*) and the bitterness engendered by personal vanity and bigotry gradually draws him away from "the various voices" of Thomas, "watching at the prow ... of any southbound vessel, sailor, heed ... never that petrel spirit, cruel as pride" (*MV*). It is, however, a measure of Keyes's critical discernment that in spite of his dislike of certain aspects of Wordsworth's poetry and personality, he never fails to appreciate what he considers the essential greatness of Wordsworth as "a worshipper of Nature," "all sweet sounds and harmonies" ("Tintern Abbey" 571) recognizing "in nature and the language of the sense ... the anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse ... the guide, the guardian of my heart, and the soul of all my moral being" ("Tintern Abbey") in which there is "no room for mourning: he's gone out ... into the noisy glen" (*CV* 321). But in the case of Owen's sensibility, there is more scope for the pity war. In the sonnet "William Wordsworth," Keyes offers a sober, unprejudiced estimate on the nature of Owen's genius in contrast to Wordsworth's:

He was a stormy day, a granite peak  
Spearing the sky; and look, about its base  
Words flower like crocuses in the hanging woods,  
Blank though the dalehead and the bony face. (CV)

Keyes, having "fallen on bad times" and found that the romantic sensibility of Wordsworth and the modern sensibility of Auden and Thomas led him to "the worms," "I am ashamed to take delight in these rhymes ... without grief; but you need no tears," identifies himself with Owen to justify his task of probing into the mystery of human life, "we shall never forget nor escape you, nor make terms ... with your enemies, the swift-devouring years" (*MV* 419).

In *The Cruel Solstice*, Keyes hopes that he would, thus, share with the fellow-mortals the insight that he gains from Owen's pacifistic pity and that Lewis would share the sentimental pity of Sassoon, the scenes of the past that he unfolds, "that drunken heroes cannot choose but honour ... your stubborn blinded pride, your inward winter" (CV). What must have stirred their imagination is evident from Thomas's comments: "In the groin's endless coil a man is entangled" (DT 69). The anti-romantic strain is more explicit in their poems and in inventing the normal order, they also make fun of the accepted order itself. Day Lewis recasts the resolute functioning of Lewis and Keyes in time of war, "ah, not in dreams, but when our souls engage ... with the common mesh and moil, we come of age" (DCP 219). It may be assumed that the posthumously published poems of Lewis and Keyes are an illustration of their triumphant laughter after their spiritual rebirth and that they would write the kind of poetry identical to satirical and pacifistic vision that would transmit their agony and comprehension of the mystery of suffering, "there could I marvel ... my birthday ... away but the weather turned around" (DT). Moreover, Keyes's estimate of Wordsworth's refusal to lament the suffering of war serves as an ironic commentary on the insensibility of his contemporary war poets, Prince, Fuller, Rook and Rhys craving for super-mundane beauty, "the moment of your glory, out of clamour ... moulding your vision to such harmony" (CV). In the fourth stanza of "Poem in October," Thomas recasts:

But all the gardens  
Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales  
Beyond the border and under the lark full cloud. (DT)

In Lewis and Keyes, the word imagination is mostly associated with the fantastic constructions of an unbalanced mind and they are doubtful of the loneliness of the poets of socio-political poets; for the active war poets life is mysterious and sacred, and to refuse to acknowledge this mystery, to take shelter in readymade formulae is to flinch from reality. They understand that the war poet must, if he is to find his own bearing in an evolving society, discern the laws of change and the shifting patterns of ideas and norms, and express the deepest urges of the contemporary epoch. The Second World War started "as a war of nerves ... stunned the imagination instead of liberating it. There was no development from initial optimism about war to rejection of it, a development clearly evident in the poetry of the First World War" (Shires 53). The nonchalance of the romantic Fuller, Rook and Rhys, the escapism of Prince and the patriotism of Lewis and Keyes finds a parody in Houseman's scorn on the functioning of the war poets, "far I hear the bugle blow ... to call me where I would not go ... and the guns begin the song ... soldier, fly or stay for long" (AEH). The patriotic triumph and death of Keyes and Lewis, Day Lewis acknowledges, are very much similar to the death and honour of Owen and Sassoon but dissimilar to the defeat and dishonour of the left-leaning poets of the thirties, "dead youth, forgive us if, all but defeated ... we raise a trophy where your honour lies" (DCP).

The fifth stanza of "Poem in October" is implicit of the time-conscious poets's repudiation of the vicarious impersonal art of Thomas as they construe that Thomas's later poem "Refusal to Mourn the Death of a Child, by Fire, London Air Raid" is an outright refusal of his early poem *18 Poems* and his attitude of pity towards the sufferers, that Thomas's art song in the later phase deviates from the rule and energy of his early phase and aspires for the pure aesthetic of Auden's immortal art and that his stout refusal to mourn the death of a child in the London air raid is as cold and ironic as Auden. Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice realize that it is not enough for the contemporary poet to follow in the footsteps of the older masters, Auden and Thomas for their "huddled, fountain heart once fell in puddles ... round the parched worlds ..." (DT). Thomas underlines their contemplation of Owen's pity, their cold, hesitant and evasive attitude towards his kind impersonal art far or near, their travesty of truth about his comic vision of art song and tragic joy and their remembrance of their love of Auden's tragic vision of art and their tragic failure:

And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's the  
Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother  
Through the parables  
Of sunlight  
And the legends of the green chapels. (115-16)

Thomas's transitional poem "On No Work of Words" reveals the Left-leaning political poets's reliance on his gentle impersonal art and their deliberate effort to relieve their inward tension. Their transition from realism to modernism, from the influences of socio-politico-aesthetic art, from "three lean months" to the influence of vicarious impersonal art "the rich year," "the body belly" to "the big purse of my body," "no work of words" to the poet's "task" and "craft" proves, however, much too quick. Thomas comments:

To lift to leave from treasures of man is pleasing death  
That will rake at last all currencies of the marked breath  
And count the taken, forsaken mysteries in a bad dark. (DT)

They become increasingly serious and speculative and their mirth gradually loses its spontaneity. Thomas pronounces his prognosis of the hopelessness and change of heart of the weather-beaten poets:

It turned away from the blithe country  
And down the other air and the blue altered sky  
Streamed again a wonder of summer  
With apples  
Pears and red currants.... (DT)

Day Lewis confirms their sudden shift from frustrations and doubts to desires and their survey to survive, what deeds can survive and make their life fruitful:

Unseen the sunburst Aprils  
And the bloomed Octobers—  
Oh, tremulous rivers danced by primula light!  
Oh, blaze of marigold where love has been! ( 273 )

The fallen poets of the thirties, after having failed in their attempt to create the verbal melody of Auden, regain hope for poetry in Thomas's *18 Poems*, "flooded by dawn's pale courage, rapt in eve's ... rich acquiescence" and articulate empirical poems "words are to set man's joy and suffering there ... in constellations ... we speak of what we know, but what we have spoken ... truly we know not" (*DCP*). But during the war time, the pity-conscious poets, having rejected the un pity of the later Thomas, oscillate between the pity of the war poet Edmund Blunden and their survival, their "limited objective" and future. In *Word Over All*, Day Lewis speaks of their loss and regaining of their hope and joy in the romantic art:

O love, so honest of face, so unjust in action,  
Never so dangerous as when denied,  
Let your kindness tell us how false we are, your bloody correction  
Our purpose and our pride. (*DCP* 226)

The conflicting aesthetic process of life and death, light and darkness, Thomas and Auden evident in Spender's *Ruins and Visions* overpowers him completely that his five senses directing his own creative enterprise, "the unturning changeless heart" of the poet "burns in suns and snows of passion ... makes its mad protestations ... and breaks, with vows and declarations..." (23), "light-signals, parachutes, bombs, or sea-invaders ... the moon looks over the hill's shoulder, and hope ... mans the old ramparts of an English night" (*DCP*). MacNeice who showers his encomium on Thomas's "lyrical surprise," his early poem *18 Poems* doubts about the young Thomas repudiating Auden's impersonal metaphysical art:

For above all that was your gift—to be  
Surprised and therefore sympathetic, warm  
Towards things as well as people, you could see



The integrity of differences—O did you  
Make one last integration, find a Form  
Grow out of formlessness when the Atlantic hid you? (*MCP* 269-70)

MacNeice, while supplanting his note of tribute, strikes an elegiac note of loss and death when he comments on Thomas's song "A Refusal," his vicarious impersonal art becoming Audenesque pitiless immortal art:

Whether you did or not, the fact remains  
(Which I, for all your doubts, could have no doubt of)  
That your whole life till then showed an endeavor  
Towards a discovery—and if your pains  
Were lost the loss is ours as well; for you are out of  
This life and cannot any more hares for ever. (270)

The hopeless poets, having found hope and life of "happiness entirely" and poetry banishing "the blue eyes of Love entirely," "a mad weir of tigerish waters ... a prism of delight and pain" in the vicarious impersonal art of the early Thomas, perceive that they could not proceed with the later Thomas whom they perceive as cruel and ruthless as Auden, "brute reality there is no ... road that is right entirely" (*MCP* 181). Their refusal to take "the road" that Thomas has taken," their disappointment with Thomas's Audenesque art and unpity and their self-flagellation recalls Houseman's scoffing at the political minded poets surveying the world of survival in time of war, "comrade, if to turn and fly ... made a soldier never die ... fly I would, for who would not ... 'tis sure no pleasure to be shot" (AEH).

The sixth stanza in "Poem in October" begins abruptly, and at the end of the second line Thomas writes of the end of the tragic love story of Auden and Prince and switches on the beginning of the romantic story of his contemporaries, the Wordsworthian lovers becoming the lovers of Thomas. "And the twice told fields of infancy ... that his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine" (DT). This division of the narrative into episodes is also a jesting comment on the visionary Prince's poetic aspiration. Prince's yearning for freedom, despite his unambiguous choice of Auden's historic sense and metaphysical structure, stands divided and defeated between personal love and impersonal poetry, between love and fear, "distracted ... on earth's austerity," "thick mystery ... law like an iron rod" (de la Mare 63). His wild love of Auden's awesome impersonal art, his "flame Death" burns "quenchless" and "in secrecy" (70) as "the awful breath of God" and Thomas sings of it, "the mystery ... sang alive ... still in the water and singing birds" (DT). The young poet Prince refuses to be awed at the unexplained enigma of Auden's aesthetic distance; he simply laughs, "now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs ... about the litling house and happy as the grass was green" (DT). In the poems "The Tears of a Muse" and "Shall I Weep?" the jocose dialogue between Prince and Auden is another instance in which the sense of pure fun combines with scintillating mockery. Before the outbreak of war, Prince is dreaming rapturously about deathless poetry based on "emotion recollected in tranquility." After the war broke out, the thought of the Eliotian figure Auden being carried up the high hill of suffering and resurrection stirs Prince's fancy; but his poems contain something more than jollity and jest. As Prince composes the first volume of poems, the mist around him appears figurative, and he expresses his somber reflections on his contemporaries's ignorance of the mystery of existence in Auden's poetry of the early and middle phases, "and the twice told fields of infancy." The comic debate is, as it were a jibe at all such human cogitations, and even the dumb, insensate Thomas is not spared the poet's irreverent mockery. However, in Prince's *Poems* as it stands, there is no evidence of any positive ideal. Nothing escapes the poet's smiling gaze, and the readers do not know in which direction the poem would have developed. Two things strike them most in *Poems*: Prince's capacity to laugh even in the most depressing warring circumstances, and the element of self-parody. He ridicules not only others, but also his own poetic output and aspiration. Thomas's ridicule of Prince's romanticism receives an almost tragic poignancy besides his three contemporary war poets, Fuller, Rook and Rhys in the popular comic narrative in verse "Fern Hill":

And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns  
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves

Trail with daisies and barey

Down the rivers of the windfall light. (DT)

Day Lewis, perceiving Thomas's paradoxical poem "Fern Hill" as a parody of the Audenesque art as well as a self-parody of Thomas's poetry of impersonal vicariousness, denounces Prince's *Poems* as visionary, "deathless illusion" and evanescent. It is an irony that the young Prince tells his contemporaries that they will lose their shape and stature because of their seasonal love and halcyon days just as Auden's close friends, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice have suffered "summer burns out, its flower will tarnish soon" (*DCP* 220). He comments on Prince's dilemmatic pursuit of impersonal art: "the heart follows it and freshly yearns," "yearns the sighing distances beyond... each height of happiness the vista drowned ... in gold-dust haze, and dreams itself immune ... from change and night to which all else is bound" (*DCP*). Prince's self-division, however, seems more pervasive in range, "that two-in-one of clarity and mist ... of maidenlight and ripeness which is autumn" and opposite to the movement of his contemporary war poets according to MacNeice, "through the serene and chequered ... fields that he knows he walks like a fallen angel ... whose fall has made him a man" (271).

In a contrasting manner, each of Prince's contemporary war poets suffers in the illusory delight of Auden and each of the three aspires and succumbs to the surrealistic Thomas as they perceive the continuous thread of life-centric moral disinterestedness and the sceptic poetic tradition in his poetry right from the beginning of his poetic career. Thomas recalls:

These were the woods the river and sea  
Where a boy  
In the listening  
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy  
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide. (DT)

Fuller's *Poems* has the earthiness of Thomas that is far removed from the atmosphere of Auden, and in *The Middle of War* he seems to ridicule his own aesthetic ideal. Rook's poems "The Cloud Darkens," "Oxford" and "War" lampoon the stance of maudlin lover Prince when he himself experiences the consuming ecstasy of Thomas and agony of love of Auden; and although the situation expressed in *Soldiers, the Solitude* is not analogous to Auden's and the satire contains no overt self-mockery, the skepticism of Thomas's *18 Poems* serves as an armour against sentimentality. Rhys's love of the absurd sometimes finds expression in the early verse "General Martel" in which apparently unconnected and incompatible things are juxtaposed. *The Van Pool and Other Poems* reveals a frolicsome gaiety. "From an odd room in a split house stare, ... milk in your mouth, at the sour floods ... that bury the sweet slowly, see the skull of the earth is barbed with a war of burning brains and hair" (DT). He finds in Thomas the supreme models of disinterested poetic strength of Hardy, Yeats, and Houseman bringing out the evolution of his creative mind born of labour which is, in a sense, a continual process of rejuvenation and regeneration in contrast to the innovative poets, Owen, Eliot and Auden.

And yet while acknowledging the limitations of Auden's irony as the principle of structure, the war poets perceive that Thomas's ruling energy could vitalise the artistic aspiration and poetic character of his fellow-poets far above animal instinctiveness, that this inner force in his paradoxical, magnanimous structure is evident in his *18 Poems*. Displacing Auden's "truth in the air," the war poets "rasped at last" that "my whole heart under your hammer." Thomas recasts their change of heart:

With unforgettably smiling act,  
Quickness of hand in the velvet glove  
And my whole heart under your hammer,  
Were once such a creature, so gay and frank  
A desireless familiar  
I never thought to utter or think  
While you displaced a truth in the air. (138)

The emerging pattern in Prince's *Poems* is complex, and the poetry of other war poets -- Fuller's *A Lost Season*, Rook's *These are My Comrades*, and Rhys's *Poems from the Forces* -- is a testament of faith in Thomas's *18 Poems*, though perplexities persist. Thomas comments on the romantic war poets's continuous bewildered love and fear:

On almost the incendiary eve  
When at your lips and keys,  
Locking, unlocking, the murdered strangers weave,  
One who is most unknown,  
Your polestar neighbor, sun of another street,  
Will dive up to his tears. (DT)

The romantic war poets resolve to choose Thomas's *18 Poems*, his magnanimous impersonal art of co-existence sharing the sufferings of the fellow-poets as perfect model of great poetry of war time, "deathless illusion, that could so relay ... the truth of flesh and spirit, sun and clay ... singing for once together all in tune ..." instead of "yearning" for Wordsworth's philosophic tranquility, "the old illusion ... where the succory burns ... blue lustre-drops of noon" or for Auden's amoral aesthetic distance, "the sighing distances beyond ... each height of happiness" or for Owen's pacifistic love and his strange farness from the woeful contemporaries, "the vista drowned ... in gold-dust haze" or for Sassoon's sentimentalism, "dreams itself immune ... from change and night to which all else is bound" (*DCP*). Day Lewis shows the war poets's fear of the Great War poets's lyrical pity and their appreciation of the varying notes, Wordsworth's lyrical grace, Auden's graceful song pattern and their love of Thomas's paradoxical pattern of lyric impulse although they are here awakened more by the flute than by the trumpet, the lyre and the piano, "waking, how false in outline and in hue ... we find the dreams that flickered on our cave ... only your fire, which cast them, still seems true" (*DCP*).

In the last stanza of the poem "Poem in October," too, the readers may recall, Thomas almost comes to denounce not merely the concept of poetry of the forties as illusion and retreat, but the imaginative activity itself, and at a certain stage the boundary-line between dream and vision becomes thin. But if Thomas scorns on the fancy and fantasy of the insensitive war poets of the forties and the ironic escapism of the existential artist Auden, he casts an equally mocking glance at the skepticism of the realistic poets. With the publication of the poem "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London" the ardent lovers of Thomas's vicarious impersonal art and his *18 Poems*, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice, disappointed with the Audenesque song pattern of the paradoxical poem, skeptical about his *modus vivendi*, turn around Blunden's romantic subjectivism of life and death, "the streams, the airs, the dews ... the soldier shades and the solacing heartbeams" (*DCP* 282). The war poets Fuller, Rook and Rhys, bidding good-bye to the Wordsworthian *modus operandi* turn to Thomas's poetic process of life-in-death and his disinterested magnanimous impersonal art. The visionary poet Prince doubtful about his destination of Auden's impersonal grandeur turns again for dreaming and yearning for mingling with Emily Bronte's "creation's throb and ache," her romantic process of existential art, "he, he shall find upclimbing from afar ... over his pain my chaste, my disenchanted ... and death -rebuking star (278). Thomas recasts the war poets's change of heart in their last phase: "And there could I marvel my birthday / Away but the weather turned around. And the true / Joy of the long dead child burning / In the sun." Whereas Thomas, despite the contraryposition of his contemporary poets as wild lovers of pure poetry or immortality art and successful living, preserves his pragmatic functioning as a kind impersonal poet as usual, "it was my thirtieth ... year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon ... though the town below lay leaved with October blood" (DT). His last poem *In Country Sleep*, while examining the impact of the dramatic turning of warring climate as well as the last phase of Auden and the other contemporary poets, Thomas establishes himself as a poet of sceptic poetic tradition, paradoxical structure and disinterested goodness and action, as an artist of unified sensibility occasionally playing with the artistry and the sound pattern of Auden. "O may my heart's truth / Still be sung / On this high hill in a year's turning" (DT). The closing lines of the poem functions as a rejoinder to the pity-conscious poets of the thirties and their suspicious reading of his inclusiveness in "A Refusal...." The poem "Poem in October" ends with an apocalyptic truth that his later poetry in general, his later art songs in particular are not to be read as a deviation from his early works or an aspiration for the immoral art of

Auden, but as a persistent continuation of the poetic truth of his preceding poetry, his preceding art songs, his consistent functioning as a harmonizer, an integrator of the defeated, the disgraced and the dilemmatic contemporaries till his last poem *In Country Sleep*, till his last art song "Over Sir John's Hill" that co-ordinates with the sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats, Houseman and William Blake and their inclusive mind.

Thomas's human care for the freedom of the dilemmatic war poets, "now to awake husked gestures and my joy like a cave ... to the anguish and carrion, to the infant forever unfree" (DT) is unlike the sentimental pity of Sassoon, the pacifistic pity of Owen and the historical prayer of Auden, "no return ... through the waves of the fat streets nor the skeleton's thin ways" but like the empathic disinterested art, "a good home" of Hardy, Yeats and Houseman, "and terribly lead him home alive ... lead her prodigal home to his terror ... the furious ox-killing house of love" (DT). The central focus of Thomas's *18 Poems*, "the coupled bud," is unified moral sensibility functioning for the salvation and happiness of the fellow-poets "one wound, one mind, spewed out the matter ... one breast gave suck the fever's issue" vis-à-vis the ironic, aesthetic, amoral metaphysical tradition "what had been one was many sounding minded" that diffuses man's creative vision, "a million minds gave suck to such a bud ... as forks my eye" (DT). His early poem of disinterested goodwill is a good augury for the focal point of his later poem *Deaths and Entrances*, "light in zenith" (DT), of disinterested action that culminates in the Audenesque structure of his art songs, "coil from the thoroughfares of her hair" (DT). Thomas's early poem "From Love's First Fever to Her Plague" envisions the thematic concerns of his poetry in general, his art songs in particular, his poetic process of breath-in-death, his process of transfiguration, his paradoxical structure, his vicarious impersonal art, his tragic joy, his pragmatic functioning and his comic vision of art song:

Youth did condense; the tears of spring  
Dissolved in summer and the hundred seasons;  
One sun, one manna, warmed and fed. (DT 58-59)

Day Lewis, while commenting on the contemporary poets's continuous clamour of "immortality and change of poetic technique, their "dreams" and "destinations," love and hate, entering and retreating "to escape time, always to start anew ... to settle like a bird, make one devoted ... gesture of permanence upon the spray ... of shaken stars and autumns," "her weight on the glass calm leaves no impression ... her home is soon a basketful of wind," their perfunctory choice and imminent failure as "alas, the bird flies blind ... hooded by a dark sense of destination," commends Thomas for his distinctive, resolute, independent and resinous pragmatic functioning and success, "travellers, we're fabric of the road we go ... we settle, but like feathers on time's flow" (*DCP*).

In the early poem *18 Poems*, Thomas articulates that the task of a poet is to render the journey of his active mind; and if his rendering is to gain depth, he must undergo the whole journey himself and assimilate the universal experience into his own personal consciousness. This is what his later poem *Deaths and Entrances* in general, his "Poem in October" in particular amply demonstrates. He explains his identical functioning as a poet of transfiguration, tragic joy and disinterested goodness and action:

It was my thirtieth  
Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon  
Though the town below lay leaved with October blood. (DT)

Thomas's asocial, apolitical and ahistorical functioning, his empathic impersonal art, in *Deaths and Entrances*, for another man's suffering, for the freedom of the war poets is identical with his performance, his asocial, apolitical and ahistorical concern for the fallen poets of the thirties in *18 Poems*, and so the early and later poems underline that the chief task of a poet is to explore and establish the hidden correspondence between experiences of suffering and creation. He regenerates life of joy and hope among the grief-stricken poets of the thirties through the process of breath-in-death. The misery and the afflictions confronted by the Lefties of the thirties, Day Lewis, Spender, and MacNeice nerve the creative spirit of the young Thomas, "I am the man your father was ... we are the sons of flint and pitch" (DT 72). He is brave enough to volunteer for their uncomfortable hours and envisions his vicarious impersonal art in *18 Poems* similar to that of Auden while defying the metaphysical art. He explains:



I see that from these boys shall men of nothing  
Stature by seedy shifting,  
Or lame the air with leaping from its hearts;  
There from their hearts the dogdayed pulse  
Of love and light bursts in their throats.  
O I see the pulse of summer in the ice. (DT 71)

In the succeeding poem 25 *Poems* also, Thomas tries the resources of his transfiguring mind and transmutes the mute sufferings that Day Lewis, Spender, and MacNeice have experienced in their love of Auden's song pattern into the sonnet sequence, "Altarwise by Owl-Light": "Faith in their hands shall snap in two, / And the unicorn evils run them through; / Split all ends up they shan't crack; / And death shall have no dominion" (DT). Thomas persuades them to sing in praise of tragic joy and kind impersonal art:

Though they be mad and dead as nails,  
Heads of the characters hammer through the daisies;  
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,  
And death shall have no dominion. (DT)

In *The Map of Love*, Thomas portrays the self-conscious war poets's "wan and weedy ... showing" and "galloping blight," their dilemmas between the forces of historic sense and poetic culture, transcendental reality and innate reality. Salvation to suffering must be found, he asserts, in mortal existence itself. He brings out the "bitter wisdom" (*YCP*) born of experiences of suffering placed against the "bitter glory" (*YCP*) attained through metaphysical knowledge. Recalling the empirical vision of his gentle impersonal art as evident in his early poems as well as art song, the articulate energy of the sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy and Yeats, "the present mouth,, and the sweetly blown trumpet of lies ... shaped in old armour and oak the countenance of a dunce ... to shield the glistening brain and blunt the examiners," he forewarns the war poets dreaming of poetry of greatness not to repeat the tragic "losses" of the realistic poets of the thirties as lovers of immortal art and persuades them to be active and alive:

And a tear-stained widower grief drooped from the lashes  
To veil belladonna and let the dry eyes perceive  
Others betray the lamenting lies of the losses  
By the curve of the nude mouth or the laugh up the sleeve. (DT 103)

In the later poem *Deaths and Entrances* written for the salvation of the warring poets of the forties, Thomas demonstrates enormous practicality in his functioning as a poet and reaffirms faith in the empathic impersonal art and the sceptic poetic tradition as evident in the early and transitional poetry, "tell his street on its back he stopped a sun ... and the craters of his eyes grew springshots and fire ... when all the keys shot from the locks..." (DT 28). He continues to work in the same manner in his last poem *In Country Sleep* articulating his mercy for the existential poet Auden, "as the star falls, as the winged ... apple seed glides ... and falls, and flowers in the yawning wound at our sides ... as the world falls, silent as the cyclone of silence" (DT 80).

In continuation of his success as a poet of moral disinterestedness, tragic joy and turning of phrase in the early sonnet sequence, "Altarwise by Owl-light," "Time is the tune my ladies lend their heartbreak ... from bald pavilions and the house of bread ... time tracks the sound of shape on man and cloud ... on rose and icicle the ringing handprint" (Thomas, *Collected Poems* 37), and in the transitional art song "After the Funeral," "after the feast of tear-stuffed time and thistles ... in a room with a stuffed fox and stale fern ... I stand, for this memorial's sake, alone ... in the snivelling hours with dead..." (DT), Thomas reinforces his asocial, apolitical and ahistorical functioning in the poem "Poem in October" that succeeds the song pattern of "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London" and foresees the Audenesque art songs "Fern Hill" and "Over Sir John's Hill" while turning on the contemporary poets's functioning and their love of pure and immortal art. These later art songs



having the Audenesque structure in the background vindicate his myths of transfiguration, vicarious impersonal art and tragic joy as the foreground with which Thomas awakens the romantic war poets's impassive love of art song. "turns the moon-chained and water-wound ... metropolis of fishes" (DT 38). Their main focus falls in line with the main concern of his poetic corpus, the chief concern of his art songs of the early and transitional phases and his sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats and Houseman "who'd raise the organs of the counted dust ... to shoot and sing your praise" (DT). Thomas's merciful impersonal art offering hope for art song to the hopeless, forlorn poets has been as protective and pro-creative as Hardy's archetypal love, "though may be hard their ways, some Hand will guard their ways ... bear them through safely, in brief time or long" (*HCP* 77), as considerate and consoling as Yeats's empathic culture, "that deep considering mind ... all that you have discovered in the grave ... reckoned up every unforeknown, unseeing ... plunge, lured by the softening eye ... into the labyrinth of another's being" (*YCP* 116) and as supportive and sustaining as Houseman's human love, "hands that gave ... a grasp to friend me to the grave" (*AEH* 9). The creative journey of Thomas, on the whole, is in stark contrast to the grand finale of the poetic pilgrimage of Auden and the dreams and destinations of the poets of the forties. MacNeice compares and contrasts:

But dream was dream and love was love and what  
Happened—even if the judge said  
It should have been otherwise—and glitter glitters  
And I am I although the dead are dead. (*MCP* 210)

Thomas's sober and sagacious functioning, his empirical vision of vicarious impersonal art and his Audenesque stylistics as revealed in the song "Poem in October" stand as a parody of the preceding song "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London," "deep with the first dead lies London's daughter ... robed in the long friends" (DT), the succeeding song "Fern Hill," "oh I was young and easy I the mercy of his means ... time held me green and dying ... though I sang in my chains like the sea" (DT 55) and the last song "Over Sir John's Hill" "I who hear the tune of the slow ... wear-willow river, grave ... before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken ... stone for the sake of the souls the slain birds sailing" (DT 114). The poem "Poem in October," thus, reaffirms his "heart's truth," his noble impersonal art and his faith in the parodic poetic tradition and anticipates the poetic culture of Blake, "he gives to us his joy ... that our grief he may destroy ... till our grief is fled and gone ... he doth sit by us and moan" (Blake).

#### 4. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In "Poem in October," Thomas imbibes Houseman's pragmatic functioning and his comic vision of empathic impersonal art "I too would be where I am not ... I too survey that endless line ... of men whose thoughts are not as mine" (*AEH* 34) corresponding to that of Hardy and Yeats, "your heart is luminous ... in the watched dark, quivering through locks and caves" to make his poems impersonal, ahistorical, asocial and apolitical, "the thunderbolts ... to shut the sun, plunge, mount your darkened keys ... and sear just riders back" (DT) to persuade the dilemmatic war poets of the forties, "fall in their midst the tower ... divides the shade and sun ... and the clock strikes the hour ... and tells the time to none" (*AEH* 25), to explore how far they are able to grasp and present the ironic vision and dissolve the apparent dichotomy of the solemn and the gay, of the serious and the trivial, of profundity and levity. He underlines:

Myselves  
The grievors  
Grieve  
Among the street burned to tireless death  
A child of a few hours  
With its kneading mouth  
Charred on the black breast of the grave  
The mother dug, and its arms full of fires. (DT 44)

Moreover, Thomas perceives that Houseman's implicit teaching of noble impersonal art, "I slept out in flesh and bone ... manful like the man of stone" (*AEH*) parodies the suggestive teachings of Hardy

and Yeats, their freeplay and freelove and advances his poetic journey while mocking his contemporaries, "rest beyond choice in the dust-appointed grain ... at the breast stored with seas. No return ... through the waves of the fat streets nor the skeleton's thin ways" (DT78).

Houseman's paradoxical structure makes a parody of Hardy's inclusive structure that approves of the empathic poetic tradition and disapproves of the ironic and sentimental tradition. Hardy sings:

Souls have grown seers, and thought out-brings  
The mournful many-sidedness of things  
With foes as friends, enfeebling ire  
And fury-fires by gaingivings! (*HCP*)

Hardy scorns on the war poems of Rupert Brooke and Julian Grenfell for their emotional patriotism, their "embarkation" for "convincing triumphs over neighbor lands" and for their comfortable living, "wives, sisters, parents, wave white hands and smile ... as if they knew not that they weep the while" because "each host draws out upon the sea ... beyond which lies the tragical To-be" and "none dubious of the cause, none murmuring" (*HCP* 75). He also censures the war poets of pity, Sorley, Sassoon and Owen, their laughing at their contemporaries's "playing" as "puppets" bonded to the realms of family and politics, their unselfish "departure" from their contemporaries's rhetoric of selfish, political patriotism, for their dream of a life of philosophic resignation, sentimentalism and naturalism, "and patriotism, grown Godlike, scorn to stand ... bondslave to realms, but circle earth and seas..." (76). Hardy, having found Sassoon's war poems as instinctive vision of anger and pity, "the tragedy of things" (79), Sorley's last war poems melodizing "a waltz by Strauss," raising "the old routs Imperial lyres had led," his "mute moment" opening his philosophic mind and gaining "Caligula's dissolving pile," "the power, the pride, the reach of perished Rome," "Rome: On the Palatine" (89), "a Christmas Ghost-Story," "the All-Earth-gladdening Law ... of Peace, brought by that Man Crucified" (*HCP*), Owen's poems of pity as symbolic of "the Colonel's Soliloquy," "the Girl you leave behind you is a grandmother" (*HCP*), writes paradoxical poetry with comic vision of vicarious impersonal art and sceptic poetic tradition, "blended pulsing life with lives long done ... till Time seemed fiction, Past and Present one" to dream life-centred co-existence, "the saner softer politics" (*HCP*). To Hardy "the logic of truth" behind the idealistic approach of Sassoon, Owen and Sorley to the reality of war seems diametrically opposite to each other, "in tacking 'Anno Domini' to years": "Death waited Nature's wont; Peace smiled unshent ... from Ind to Occident" (*HCP*). Moreover, Houseman's modern empathy is in tune with Hardy's "seeds of crecive sympathy ... sown by those more excellent than" the poets of escapism distancing themselves from the sorrows of war, "let men rejoice, let men deplore ... the lurid Deity of heretofore ... succumbs to one of saner nod ... the Battle-god is god no more" (*HCP*).

Houseman's poetry of inclusiveness and impersonal human love, "nods and curtseys and recovers when the wind blows over" that protests against the concerns of romantic and pure impersonal art and the power-conscious philosophic and patriotic pity "the nettle on the graves of lovers ... that hanged themselves for love" corresponds to Yeats's sceptic poetic mind, his paradoxical structure, "the gentle, sensitive mind" that "lost the old nonchalance of the hand" and "set his chisel to the hardest stone" to persuade the "timid, entangled, empty, and abashed ... lacking the countenance of his friends" to create poetry of great influence and magnanimous impersonal art that "hurried through the smooth and rough ... and through the fertile and waste ... protecting ... with human love" (*YCP* 180). Houseman contradistinguishes the dreams and destinations of the poets of love, patriotic pity and peace and the poet of disinterested vicariousness:

The nettle nods, the wind blows over,  
The man, he does not move,  
33The lover of the grave, the lover  
That hanged himself for love. (*AEH* 33)

This is in tune with Yeats's song that distinguishes the poet of moral disinterestedness from the poets of retrospective memories and dreams of immortality:

For those that love the world serve it in action,

Grow rich, popular and full of influence,  
And should they paint or write, still it is action:  
The struggle of the fly in marmalade.  
The rhetorician would deceive his neighbours,  
The sentimentalist himself.... (YCP 134)

Yeats, commenting on Owen's pity as "passive pity" (Introduction, *Oxford Poetry*), a pity "beyond all telling" (YCP 32), sings that "art ... is" not the tragic "vision of reality" of past love, pity and peace but the pragmatic vision of human life of birth and death or cyclical reality, "the folk who are buying and selling ... the clouds on their journey above" (YCP). The sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats and Houseman, "the gods of men in amity" demonstrates their "team ploughing" (AEH), their disinterested goodness and action, "hid in the heart of love" (YCP) cheering the fanciful poets "driven from home and left to die in fear" (YCP), "the cold wet winds ever blowing ... and the shadowy hazel grove ... where mouse-grey waters are flowing ... threaten the head that I love" (YCP), who "have gone down under the same white stars," under the influences of the poets of pure aesthetic and immortality.

At a certain level, the later poem "Poem in October" may also be read as a parody of Thomas's own early poem "Especially When the October Wind":

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 53)

Both in the early and later poems Thomas articulates the perplexities in human experience, and the perplexities are all related to the central question of poet's place in the universe and his ultimate destiny. In "Poem in October," Thomas, as it were, lets Houseman speak for him "on matters of birth and death" in a committed manner. He distinguishes himself by his distinctive role as a poet of lyric impulse committed to self-explorations and self-discovery, moral disinterestedness and pragmatic functioning while offering hope for successful poetic career to the non-committed war poets Fuller, Rook and Rhys. Houseman explains his pragmatic functioning as a poet of human impersonal art:

And sure enough beneath the tree  
There walks another love with me  
And overhead the aspen heaves  
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;  
And I spell nothing in their stir,  
But now perhaps they speak to her,  
They talk about a time at hand  
When I shall sleep with clover clad,  
And she beside another lad. (AEH 8)

Thomas's derisive comment on the poets of love, pity and peace, the poets of socio-politico-historical and amoral tradition is, in turn, parodic of Houseman's approval of the poets of sense and sensibility and his disapproval of the poets of pride and prejudice, metaphysical sensibility and dissociated insensibility.

In "Poem in October," Thomas vindicates his wholehearted disinterested freeloze, his gentle impersonal love for his counterparts "with unforgettably smiling act ... quickness of hand in the velvet glove." In contrast to Auden's stilted and unnatural appeal to the war poets, Thomas's counter appeal is munificent, "never thought to utter or think" of his contemporary poets as enemies but calls Auden as "friend by enemy" and the war poets as "friends." Thomas relays the "truth" behind his disinterested goodness and action as evident in "Poem in October":

That thought I loved them for their faults  
As much as for their good,  
My friends were enemies on stilts  
With their heads in a cunning cloud. (DT)

In the other two Audenesque art songs "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London" and "Fern Hill" also, Thomas appears as a playful companion to Auden and his contemporaries. In the sonnet sequence "Altarwise by Owl-light," Thomas's moral disinterestedness and his comic vision of paradoxical art song supplants, even if temporarily, the "desireless familiar," the disenchanting, uninterested friends of Auden and their pure aesthetic love, "that her love sing and swing through a brown chapel ... blees her bent spirit with four, crossing birds." Thomas explains:

Her flesh was meek as milk, but this skyward statue  
With the wild breast and blessed and giant skull  
Is carved from her in a room with a wet window  
In a fiercely mourning house in a crooked year. (DT)

So, it is Thomas's poetic process of life-in-death, his magnanimous impersonal art that makes him popular among his contemporary poets in contrast to Auden's artistic process of death-in-life, his aesthetic amoral impersonal art that costs his rising popularity.

MacNeice attributes Auden's cold and esoteric nature, "so calm because so young, so lethal because so meek" to his declining appeal and popularity among his contemporary poets; Auden's metaphysical aesthetic distance, "carving the longshore mist ... with an ascetic profile" in his early phase and his non-compromising passivity in the middle phase, "always be non-combatant ... being too violent in soul to kill ... anyone but himself" land him opposite to Thomas's position. He explains "the permanent bottleneck of highmindedness" of Auden:

Never to fight unless from a pure motive  
And for a clear end was his unwritten rule  
Who had been in books and visions to a progressive school  
And dreamt of barricades, yet being observant  
Knew that that was not the way things are:  
This man would never make a soldier or a servant. (224)

Although it may be mistake as MacNeice reminds the readers to overstress the painful aspects in Auden's poetry of the forties and ignore his moments of supreme happiness, it is his own overwhelmingly tragic destiny that leads him to reflect on the mystery of human existence.

The self-parody between Auden's poetry of the early and the middle phases, between his metaphysical sensibility and his existential sensibility betrays a certain thinness, and this is also the chief weakness of Auden's *Another Time* and other comic pieces, *New Year Letter* and *For the Time Being* written in the war-torn forties. MacNeice explains their farness from the fellow-beings:

So fling wide the windows, this window and that, let the air  
Blowing from times unconfined to Then, from places further than There,  
Purge our particular time-bound unloving lives, rekindle a Pentecost in  
Trafalgar Square. (MCP 244)

MacNeice thinks that *New Year Letter* reveals, with all its imperfections, Auden as the real chameleon poet, passing in an instant from puns to philosophy and back again; but he, too, observes that in Auden's *Another Time* and *For the Time Being*, gaiety and grandeur in separate compartments; private and occasional poetry is strictly divided from the poetry of high purpose:

For it is true, surprises break and make,  
As when the baton falls and all together the hands  
On the fiddle-bows are pistons, or when crouched above  
His books the scholar suddenly understands  
What he has thought for years—or when the inveterate rake  
Finds for once that his lust is becoming love. (*MCP* 218)

However, MacNeice does not fully share the view that Auden's songs are occasional and uncharacteristic.

Moreover, Auden's poems of the early phase are low burlesque of aesthetic, amoral impersonal art, "the aspen over stile and stone ... was talking to itself alone" (AEH) and the poems of the middle phase are high burlesque and grotesque satirical art, "horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation" (AEH). MacNeice explains the "neutrality" of Auden:

The neutral island facing the Atlantic,  
The neutral island in the heart of man,  
Are bitterly soft reminders of the beginnings  
That ended before the end began. (*MCP*)

Regarding the performance of Auden as a poet, MacNeice, wondering at the greatness of impersonal art of the early Auden as a priest-poet or a poet-critic "O delicate walker, babbler, dialectician Fire ... O enemy and image of ourselves," commenting on his desperate existential art and sarcastic, provoking criticism of his contemporary poets in the middle phase "though cotted in a grill of sizzling air ... striped like a convict—black, yellow and red" as a continuation of his early functioning in accordance with the metaphysical poet de la Mare and the intellectual poet Eliot, "thus were we weaned to knowledge of the Will ... that wills the natural world but wills us dead," finds him as a declining poet depending upon his follower, the self-indulgent war poet Prince for his immortality towards the last phase, "when our brother Fire was having his dog's day ... judging the London streets with millions of tin cans ... clanking at his tail..." The root cause of his falling, his alienation and estrangement from his contemporaries and his warfare against Thomas's popularity is his metaphysical process of aesthetic amoral impersonal art according to MacNeice, "night after night we watched him slaver and crunch away ... the beams of human life, the tops of topless towers" (*MCP*).

Auden's love of art songs, "the aspen heaves ... its rainy-sounding silver leaves" (AEH) and his appeal to the fellow-poets of the thirties and the forties has been historical and distant, cold and unnatural, cynical and ironic, "a cairn of stones," "the shadow and sheen of a moleskin mountain ... and a litter of chronicles and bones" (*MCP* 225), symbolic of the sentimental and the self-deceiving character Olivia in *Twelfth Night* according to the sarcastic MacNeice:

When the pillar-box wore a white bonnet-  
O harmony of roof and hedge,  
O partly of sight and thought—  
And each flake had your number on it  
And lives were round for not a number  
But equallednought, but equallednought! (*MCP*)

Auden's aesthetic influence and appeal among the contemporary poets of the thirties and the forties has been on the decline, with the rising popularity of Thomas as the envy of all the fallen poets of the



thirties and the warring poets of the forties, "though on the flat his life has no ... promise but of diminishing returns ... by feeling down and upwards he can divine ... that dignity which far above him burns" (*MCP*). Thomas speaks of the feeling of despair descending on Auden:

My holy lucky body  
Under the cloud against love is caught and held and kissed  
In the mill of the midst  
Of the descending day, the dark our folly.... (DT)

In the poem "Whit Monday," MacNeice estimates that the readers should not lean too much on Auden's statement that he could continue to be progressive with the change of his metaphysical art as existential art, "death my christening and fire my font" which may have been intended to comfort the far away war poets. "But the Happy Future is a thing of the past and the street / Echoes to nothing but their dawdling feet" (*MCP* 223). Fuller, Rook, and Rhys resolve to emulate Thomas whereas Prince is dilemmatic in his love of Auden's art, "the death bidding two lie lonely." Spender observes that "Thomas is a poet who commands the admiration of all contemporary English poets. He has influenced a number of younger writers who see in him an alternative to the intellectual writing of Auden. Of the poets under forty-five, he is perhaps the only one capable of exercising a literary influence as great as that of Auden" (*Poetry* 45).

The sharp tonal shifts in the poems of the lost realistic poets from the gay to the serious and from the serious to the gay indicate an effort to communicate contrary experiences equal to the swift movements of thought and indifferent aesthetic of the inactive war poets of the forties, "yes, we wake stiff and older; especially when ... the schoolboys of the Thirties reappear ... fledged in the void, indubitably men..." (*MCP* 240). During the second half of the Thirties, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice perceives that the archetypal form of Thomas stands as a stark contrast to Auden's historic prototype. Obviously, Thomas's *18 Poems* indicates the successful process of vicarious impersonal art offering them a hope for the successful poetry and survival. Day Lewis compares and contrasts the aesthetic amoral disinterestedness of Auden and the moral disinterestedness of Thomas, "oh here and unlamenting ... her graceful ghost shall shine ... in the heart mature as fruited fields ... the singing words of pain" (204). He welcomes the stirring influence of Thomas, his empathic impersonal art and paradoxical structure as a panacea for Auden's ironic structure, "o love, so honest of face, so unjust in action ... never so dangerous as when denied ... let your kindness tell us how we are, your bloody correction ... our purpose and our pride" (*DCP*). Spender estimates that the individual quality of Thomas "aiming from clocks and space" tries to "lay bare" the "universe" in man and his impersonal art is not artificial or esoteric, nor does it involve any philosophical fanaticism. It is rather affectionate paradoxical structure, "yet all experience, like stars ... hangs in your eyes the lights ... of sustained co-existence" and it stands as a contrast to Auden's metaphysical art, "that severe line, when I place it ... seems nothing but pain" (*Ruins* 75-76). He ponders over his chaotic past but through a visualization of a happy future in the sceptic poetic tradition of Thomas and he hopes to reassemble the fragments of his life, "your fingers of music ... pressing down a rebellion of mistakes ... raise here our devout tower of mutual prayer" (83-84). MacNeice perceives that Thomas "took the books of pagan art and read ... between the lines or worked them out to prove ... humanism a palimpsest and God's ... anger a more primal fact than love" (198) and that he heaves a sigh of relief in Thomas's kind impersonal homely language, "I thank you, my love, for this repose ... for the death you have brought home to me" (*MCP*) as his desire for art song has fumbled around Auden's "foreign-looking luggage" and "the unheard-of constellations wheel" (*MCP* 193), his historic consciousness involving "a perception" of "the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country" ("Tradition" 294). MacNeice hopes:

We were the past—and doomed because  
We were a past that never was;  
Yet grant to men that they may climb  
This time-bound ladder out of time  
And by our human organs we  
Shall thus transcend humanity. (*MCP* 234)

This explains why Thomas's de-idealized life-centric poetic culture is deeper than Owen's patriotic pacifism and Auden's metaphysical idealism. Owen's earth-centric pacifistic tradition and Auden's Word-centric tradition can be learnt through study and intellectual effort, but Thomas's de-centred, ex-centric poetic tradition demands a different kind of understanding—the fellow-poet must be able to experience his vision. The reason for the political poets's dissatisfaction with Thomas's vicarious impersonal art of the poem "A Refusal..." and their dissociation from Thomas's vicarious impersonal art is so obvious that it is their misreading of Thomas's cynical pity, his Yeatsian empathy as Owen's political pity, their misplacement of Thomas's moral disinterestedness as Auden's aesthetic amoral disinterestedness, their misinterpretation of Thomas's occasional art songs as an ambitious pursuit for Auden's immortal art and his greatness and their misjudgement of Thomas's warm impersonal art as cold and ironic, pitiless and inhuman as Auden's. Identically in the past, it is their mistaken identity of Auden's metaphysical artistic process as metempiric poetic process, his paradox of death-in-life as the paradox of life-in-death that has led to their tragic failure in climbing Auden's grandeur and their alienation from Auden. Thomas explains:

On almost the incendiary eve  
Of deaths and entrances,  
When near and strange wounded on London's waves  
Have sought your single grave,  
One enemy, of many, who knows well  
Your heart is luminous  
In the watched dark, quivering through locks and caves,  
Will pull the thunderbolts  
To shut the sun, plunge, mount your darkened keys  
And sear just riders back.... (DT 47)

So, the realistic poets's enchantment as well as their disenchantment with Auden's metaphysical *modus operandi* of tragic art, their half-sound approach to his tragic vision of phono-centric immortal art in the post-war thirties and their love of Thomas's sceptic *modus vivendi* in the thirties and their hate of his noble impersonal art in the warring forties are all much to do with their concern for the comfortable survival and the successful poetic career, "the sound about to be said in the two prayers ... for the sleep in a safe land and the love who dies" (DT). MacNeice compares their whimsical functioning to the Duke Orsino in *Twelfth Night*:

But now the sphinx must change her shape—  
O track that reappears through slush,  
O broken riddle, burst grenade—  
And lives must be pulled out like tape  
To measure something not themselves,  
Things not given but made, but made. (241-42)

In "Poem in October," Thomas perceives that the pacifistic pity of Owen, the sentimental pity of Sassoon, the ironic Grace and prayer of Auden, the un pity of the time-conscious poets of the thirties and the war poets of the forties are identical to each other as they are self-defensive, rhetorical, evasive and escaping in their functioning as poets in the war time, "the sound about to be said in the two prayers ... for the sleep in a safe land and the love who dies ... will be the same grief flying" (DT).

However, Thomas shows no bitterness or hate towards the self-seeking heroic war poets, Lewis and Keyes, "sufferer with the wound ... in the throat, burning and turning," the self-indulgent passive war poet Prince dreaming of Auden's aesthetic, "all night afloat ... on the silent sea we have heard the sound ... that came from the wound wrapped in the salt sheet" as well as no love for the Wordsworthian impassive war poets Fuller, Rook and Rhys who defy the warring note of the

metaphysical Auden, "the salt sheet broke in a storm of singing" and heed to the vicarious impersonal art of the sceptic saviour, "the voices of all the drowned swam on the wind." He is used to maintain his kind disinterestedness that is the secret of his success as poet of great influence:

Open a pathway through the slow and sail,  
Throw wide to the wind the gates of the wandering boat  
For my voyage to begin to the end of my wound,  
We heard the sea sound sing, we saw the salt sheet tell,  
Lie still, sleep becalmed, hide the mouth in the throat,  
Or we shall obey, and ride with you through the drowned. (DT 65)

Day Lewis, while rebuking the inactive and insensitive war poets' *sipso facto*, their hum and haw around the Wordsworthian greatness and Auden's immortality, "a calmer stream, a colder stream" (244) and their irresponsible singing of "what came into their head" (243) and commending the responsible functioning of the active war poets for immortalization of the poetry of pity, "the word ... of hope and freedom high," projects his love and hate while describing the sensibility of the war poets:

The river this November afternoon  
Rests in an equipoise of sun and cloud:  
A glooming light, a gleaming darkness shroud  
Its passage. All seems tranquil, all in tune. (DCP)

Spender's poems "Dusk," "At Night," "In a Garden," "The Barn" and "The Coast" in *Ruins and Visions* testify to his fascination for nature, his instinctive romantic drive of the pity of Owen in presenting the war poets's dreaming of "timeless Being." The images of silence are concrete and accretional and by elimination leading to complete effect of repose:

A terra cotta blanket  
Of dark, robs one by one  
Recognition from villages,  
Features from flowers,  
News from men,  
Stones from the sun. (*Ruins* 79)

MacNeice's critical comments on the performance of the war poets are an admixture of praise and dispraise, "loves and hates." He approves of the Wordsworthian war poets for their change of heart from Wordsworth to Thomas, from fear to love, from death to life "an age of mainlanders, that dare not fancy ... life out of uniform, will feel no envy" (250) and commends the active war poets for resolving to be unambiguous in their choice to immortalize the poetry of pity and peace, Sassoon and Owen "between moving dunes and beyond reproving ... sentry-boxes to have been self-moving" (251) while scoffing at Prince for remaining sensual and ambiguous till the end "sizzles with stinking life," "and when you get down ... the field is a failed or a worth-while crop, the source ... of back-ache if not heartache" (*MCP*). Commenting on the miserable failure of the poet Prince, MacNeice derides at his sizzling love of Auden's metaphysical artistry:

No envy unless some atavistic scholar  
Plodding that dry and tight-packed world discover  
Some dusty relic that once could swim, a fossil  
Mind in its day both its own king and castle.... (*MCP*)

MacNeice deprecates the aesthetic desire of the dilemmatic Prince's passive aspiration for "the garden of souls" and his "cue" for immortality, but he appreciates the impassive war poets's "aspirations active" for the paradoxical poet Thomas and his "clue" for "the orchestration of instinct ... the fertilization of mind" and "future ... fruitful" (*MCP*). He compares the impulsive conversion of the

self-indulgent war poets, the lovers of playful personality to the impulsive, singer the Fool in *Twelfth Night*:

Snow-happy hicks of a boy's world—  
O crunch of bull's-eyes in the mouth,  
O crunch of frost beneath the foot—  
If time would only remain furled  
In white, and thaw were not for certain  
And snow would but stay put, stay put! (*MCP*)

Prince falling in love with Auden's aesthetic greatness reveals himself as the self-deceiving fanciful character Malvolio, an image of pomposity, self-love and hypocrisy, in love with Olivia in *Twelfth Night* according to MacNeice:

Windows between you and the world  
Keep out the cold, keep out the fright;  
Then why does your reflection seem  
So lonely in the moving night? (*MCP*)

Estimating the position and the functional role of the poets of the war-torn forties, MacNeice reveals himself as a connoisseur:

Who often found their way to pleasant meadows  
Or maybe once to a peak, who saw the Promised Land,  
Who took the correct three strides but tripped their hurdles,  
Who had some prompter they barely could understand,  
Who were too happy or sad, too soon or late,  
I would praise these in company with the Great... (254)

He disapproves Prince as an ardent worshipper of Auden's elegant impersonal art, his historical and philosophical knowledge, "the world's best talkers, in tone and rhythm ... superb, yet ... lacked sense of touch" (*MCP* 254) who commends Auden's impersonal art to his contemporary war poets "dove-melting mountains, ridges gashed with water ... itinerant clouds whose rubrics never alter" (*MCP*), but he is "lost in many ways, through comfort, lack of knowledge ... or between women's breasts, who thought too little, too much." He scorns him as one "who knew all the words but he failed to achieve the Word," as an anonymous, obscure poet, "some who go dancing through dark bogs are lost." He underestimates the fear-stricken war poets, Fuller, Rook and Rhys who "bound to a desk by conscience or by the spirit's ... hay fever," "who were too carefree or careful" and "who lived in the wrong time or the wrong place" as "minor poets," whose "books are library flotsam" and "some of their names—not all—we learnt in school ... but, life being short, we rarely read their poems ... mere source-books now to point or except a rule." However, MacNeice contradistinguishes the heroic war poets of pity, Lewis and Keyes from their contemporaries and ranks them as major poets enlightened by the Great War poets, Sassoon and Owen, "for if not in the same way, they fingered the same language ... according to their lights," as the ancient Chorus of the dramatic war poetry, "for them as for us ... chance was a coryphaeus who could be either ... an angel or an *ignis fatuus*." However, he perceives that there is a cloud of uncertainty over the project of immortality of Auden and Thomas, the established major poets of the forties, "let us keep our mind open, our fingers crossed" just because Auden's poetry of the forties which continues to be pitiless, inhuman and metaphysical like his early poetry witnesses diminishing brightness and setback, and Thomas's later poetry especially his popular art songs which are unlike his popular early poetry of pity and co-existence but parodic of Auden's ambitious ironic, pitiless immortal art. So both Auden and Thomas, as they commit artistic suicide in their poetic career, are bound to incur the loss of their greatness and their well-wishers of immortality, the accreditations of their early poetry, "while those opinions which rank them high are based ... on a wish to be different or on lack of taste." It is a matter of lamentation that the great

poets, as they function during war time unlike the war poets of pity but like the war poets of non-commitment, are to be included in the list of "minor poets":

In spite of and because of which, we later  
Suitors to their mistress (who, unlike them, stays young)  
Do right to hang on the grave of each trophy  
Such as, if not solvent, he would himself have hung  
Above himself; these debtors preclude our scorn—  
Did we not underwrite them when we were born? (*MCP*)

MacNeice's objective assessment of the functional role of Auden and Thomas, besides representing the opinions of the poets of the thirties, reflects his own unexpected disappointments. In the estimation of the functioning of poets of the forties, MacNeice as a connoisseur, while scornful of the passive Prince, is panegyric on active Lewis and Keyes, approves of the instinctive actions of Fuller, Rook and Rhys and appreciates the impersonal Auden and Thomas with no scorn or taste or wish and he adjudges them as "inconsequent wild roses." For MacNeice poetic practice is integrated with the practice of living.

MacNeice, while scorning on Thomas's Audenesque song pattern that works as destroyer of his life-centric impersonal art, brings out the distinction between Thomas as a paradoxical poet of self-exploration and Auden as a metaphysical or existential poet of ironic functioning, the war poets functioning as the Wordsworthian poets, the lost dilemmatic realistic poets, Day Lewis, Spender, MacNeice functioning as pitiless and the dilemmatic Prince functioning as poet of escapism and the active war poets, Lewis and Keyes functioning as poets of pity and pathos, sacrifice and death, political heroism and patriotism:

Here you are gabbling Baudelaire or Donne,  
Here you are mimicking that cuckoo clock,  
Here you are serving a double fault of a set,  
Here you are driving naked from a Dalmatian rock,  
Here you are barracking the sinking sun,  
Here you taking Proust aboard your doomed corvette. (*MCP* 269)

Thomas's later his art songs, "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London," "Poem in October" and "Fern Hill" which are parodic of his poetic corpus and his early art songs stand as the poetic image of his pragmatic attitude and the myths of his life-centric sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats, and Houseman committed to "matters of birth and death." Whereas the ruthless attitude of his contemporary poets and their commitment to the socio-politico-historical structures are symbolic of the centre of pride and power. Thomas compares and contrasts: "And truly he / Flows to the strand of flowers like the dew's ruly sea / And surely he sails like the ship shape clouds" (DT).

MacNeice who dismisses the art songs of Thomas in the later phase as casual exercises in the Audenesque mode, discovers in the weightier poems of Thomas — *18 Poems*, *25 Poems*, *The Map of Love* and *Deaths and Entrances* -- which are not ironic and cold in the narrower sense, an attempt at seeing life in its totality, at achieving sympathetic impersonal art, an imaginative balance between gravity and geniality, terror and mirth, "the bandaging dark which bound ... this town together is loosed and in the array ... of bourgeois lights man's love can save its breath." Seen in this perspective Thomas's "Poem in October," a serious counterpart to the pitiless song "A Refusal..." stands dissociated from his compassionate main poetry and associated with the immortality-centric song of the declining Auden, "their ransomed future severs once more the child of luck from the child of lack—and none is wild" (*MCP*). Thomas's disinterested, magnanimous poetical character as evident in his poetry is a contrast to Auden's self-reproving stoic character and an analogue to the sober and sympathetic character Viola, a foil to the sorrowful Olivia in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and his pitiless impersonal Audenesque character of his later art songs is comparable to that of the Duke in *Measure for Measure*. Moreover, MacNeice compares Thomas's poetry of paradoxical



structure to the dramatic romance *Twelfth Night* that sings of self-exploring and self-improving individual will, and Thomas's later art songs of Auden's metaphysical structure to the dark comedy *Measure for Measure* that insists on poetic justice and God's Will. He regrets for the loss of Thomas as a successful poet who attains the fusion of contrary emotional identities and anticipates that the future of Thomas as an artist of diffusion would be similar to that of Auden as an artist of decreasing appeal and waning popularity:

For now the time of gifts is gone—  
O boys that grow, O snow that melt,  
O bathos that the years must fill—  
Here is dull earth to build upon  
Undecorated; we have reached  
Twelfth Night or what you will ... you will. (242)

However, Thomas contends that his later art songs do not present the complex ironic vision of Auden's art songs in which affirmation and negation clash and coalesce or the historic vision of immortal art or the socio-political vision of immortal poetry but the paradoxical vision of his main poetry of life and death, vicarious impersonal art and the disinterested poetic tradition. His occasional art songs of tragic gaiety adapts exclusively the pagan poetic process of Yeats and his dramatic art of altruism in contrast to Auden's art songs of tragic grandeur that adopts the Word-centric artistic process of de la Mare, Eliot and Rilke and their phono-centric tradition and their dramatic irony of scorn and conflict. Thomas vouchsafes:

There is nothing left of the sea but its sound,  
Under the earth the loud sea walks,  
In deathbeds of orchards the boat dies down  
And the bait is drowned among hayricks.... (DT 38)

But Thomas's poetry of self-exploration imitates the sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats and Houseman and their inclusive vision of pragmatic functioning to persuade his contemporary poets of pity and peace, love and pity, to liberate them from their socio-politico-historical vision of poetry and their divination of the art of Wordsworth, Owen and Eliot. He testifies:

Down, down, down, under the ground,  
Under the floating villages,  
Turns the moon-chained and the water-wound  
Metropolis of fishes.... (DT)

Thomas moves on the identical stream in the last poem *In Country Sleep* and the last art song "Over Sir John's Hill" and vindicates his functioning as a poet of impersonal art empathizing with the suffering of Auden in harmony with the sceptic poetic tradition of William Blake and his dramatic process of tragic joy as an artist of Yeatsian altruistic pagan tradition in contrast with Auden's functioning in *The Age of Anxiety* as an artist as well as an analyst of the artistic performance of his contemporary poets whom he tries to influence to recover and regain his lost popularity and restore his original position as an eminent artist of Eliotian logo-centric tradition and immortal art, "land, land, land, nothing remains ... of the pacing, famous sea but its speech ... and into its talkative seven tombs ... the anchor dives through the floors of a church." He unfolds:

Good-bye, good luck, struck the sun and the moon,  
To the fisherman lost on the land.  
He stands alone in the door of his home,  
With his long-legged heart in his hand. (DT 39)

Thomas's empirical vision of substantial art song, his comic vision of tragic gladness and gentle impersonal art is parodic of Yeats who works in a "composite" manner, "no dark tomb-haunter once; her form all full ... as though with magnanimity of light ... yet a most gentle woman" (*YCP* 289) and

sets "a purpose" for substantial artistry analogous to the pragmatic artistry of Michael Angelo "on the Sistine Chapel roof" for "profane perfection of mankind" vis-à-vis the contemporary poets's "secret working mind" for "a God or Saint." Yeats sings of the prototype of his altruisticartistic sensibility which is in sharp contrast with the metaphysical amoral sensibility:

There on that scaffolding reclines  
Michael Angelo.  
With no more sound than the mice make  
His hand moves to and fro.  
Like a long-leggedfly upon the stream  
His mind moves upon silence. (287)

Yeats's contemporary poets, Lawrence and Eliot in the very zest of creating formal art and poetic purity have always represented life's reality as tragedy, "tragedy wrought to its uttermost." Whereas the paradoxical art of Yeats transforms tragedy itself into gaiety, "gaiety transfiguring all that dread" (*YCP*). He rejoices at the life-centric resourcefulness of his comic vision of art songs, "bitter sweetness" (236) in contrast to the death-centric Eliot's tragic vision of pure art "sweeter word" (235) and "bitter glory" (215) and the ecstasy-centric Lawrence's sensual vision of pure poetry "wild wisdoms of spirit and tongue" (339). He perceives:

We that look on but laugh in  
What matter though numb nightmare ride on top,  
And blood and mire the sensitive body stain?  
What matter? Heave no sigh, let no tear drop,  
A-greater, a more gracious time has gone;  
For painted forms or boxes of make-up  
In ancient tombs I sighed, but not again;  
What matter? Out of cavern comes a voice,  
And all it knows is that one word 'Rejoice!' (*YCP*)

The mind transcends pain only when it experiences pain consciously and with zest. This conscious experiencing presupposes psychic distancing that saves the mind from being involved and overwhelmed, and transforms pain into lasting and tragic joy, "bitter wisdom that enriched his blood" (237). Yeats, disapproving his contemporaries's tragic vision of pure art, speaks proud of his comic vision of vicarious impersonal art:

For wisdom is the property of the dead,  
A something incompatible with life; and power,  
Like everything that has the stain of blood,  
A property of the living; but no stain  
Can come upon the visage of the moon  
When it has looked in glory from a cloud. (*YCP*)

Profoundest philosophy comes out of tragedy: total external blackout results in internal illumination. Yeats, explaining the reasons for not including "certain" war poems "bound ... to plead the suffering of their men," writes in his Introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* that "in poems that had for a time considerable fame, written in the first person they made that suffering their own. I have rejected these poems for ... passive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all the great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies, and further, in Greece the tragic chorus danced" (xxxiv).

Unlike the contemporary poets of the warring forties, Thomas has been adapting the sobriety of Yeats that keeps him "a sober man ... although I drink my fill" and "dancing" till the end of his poetic career because "a drunkard is a dead man ... and all dead men are drunk" (*YCP*). The disinterested functioning of the poet's noble impersonal art, his free love and free play is parodic of the polygonal understanding and disinterested goodness and action of William Shakespeare when dramatizes an identical situation according to Yeats:

Shakespearean fish swam the sea, far away from land;

Romantic fish swam in nets coming to the hand;  
What are all those fish that lie gasping on the strand? (*YCP* 193)

"Poem in October" specifically shows that Thomas's special use of mockery seems to be directed against all poetic artifices, "monuments of unaging intellect" and "monuments of its own magnificence" and all kinds of poetry involving artifice, "the artifice of eternity" (*YCP* 163) rather than against a particular style, "over the wakeward-flashing spray ... over the gardens of the floor ... clash out the mounting dolphin's day ... my mast is a bell-spire" (DT). The song that represents Thomas as an artist of dramatic monologue and stream of consciousness, introspective memories and gentle impersonal art and continuous natural progression, Auden as an eclectic artist of interior monologue, historical consciousness, glorious aesthetic amoral art and broken logical degeneration, "all complexities of mire or blood," "life-in-death and death-in-life" and the receding realistic poets and the inactive war poets as romantic lovers of soliloquies and retrospective personal consciousness "the unpurged images of day" stands parodic of Yeats's art song "Byzantium":

Marbles of the dancing floor  
Break bitter furies of complexity,  
Those images that yet  
Fresh images beget,  
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea. (210)

What Thomas's paradoxical poetry as a whole as well as his parodic art songs has been demonstrating is his unbroken and unchanged poetical character, his moral disinterestedness parodic of the functional role of Yeats as a poet of disinterested goodwill and action as well as an artist of kind impersonal art, "all day in the one chair ... from dream to dream and rhyme to rhyme I have ranged ... in rambling talk with an image of air ... vague memories, nothing but memories" (*YCP* 128). MacNeice, while comparing and contrasting Thomas's achievement as a poet and an artist, is certain that his poetry of paradoxical structure, "integrity of differences" and his success as a poet of self-discovery is enough to assure him of immortality but he is skeptical about his popularity as an artist parodic of the Audenesque song pattern aiming at immortality:

Being mature and yet naïve a lover  
Of what is not himself—but it becomes himself  
And he repays it interest, so has had  
A happy life and will die happy; more—  
Belongs, though he never knew it, to the Kingdom. (*MCP*)

Day Lewis, having watched "the journeying scene" of the "two travellers" Auden and Thomas, "one is preoccupied, one just stares" (*DCP* 293), perceives "indifferently" that their mortality or immortality depends upon their last poems, their *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*:

What each of them shares  
With his fellow-traveller, and which is making the best of it,  
And whether this or the other one  
Will be justified when the journey's done,  
And if either may carry on some reward or regret for it  
Whither he fares. (*DCP* 294)

However, Blake whose poetic culture that Thomas emulates in the last poem *In Country Sleep* perceives that "excess of sorrow laughs ... excess of joy" (Blake), that the death of poets of tragic vision is certain "like birds in their nest, ... are ready for rest, ... and sport no more seen ... on the darkening Green" (Blake 46) and foresees that the vicarious impersonal art, the life-centric articulate energy of the poet assures him of immortality:

He who binds to himself a joy  
Does the winged life destroy  
But he who kisses the joy as it flies  
Lives in eternity's sun rise. (47)

Yeats, while tracing the history of the mortality of personal poetry "in Galilean turbulence," political, patriotic poetry "the Babylonian starlight brought ... a fabulous, formless darkness in" and pure poetry of "all Platonic tolerance" and "all Doric discipline" and immortal art "dropped the reins of of peace and war ... when that fierce Virgin and Her Star ... out of the fabulous darkness called," underscores the immanence of the poetry of life and death, altruistic impersonal art and tragic happiness, "and lay the heart upon her hand ... and bear that beating heart away ... of Magnus Annus at the spring ... as though God's death were but a play." He explains further:

Everything that man esteems  
Endures a moment or a day.  
Love's pleasure drives his love away,  
The painter's brush consumes his dreams;  
The herald's cry, the soldier's tread  
Exhaust his glory and his might:  
Whatever flames upon the night  
Man's own resinous heart has fed. (*YCP* 181)

In "Poem in October" Thomas, rejecting "the monuments of its own magnificence" and the "bodily form" of "monuments of unaging intellect" (*YCP*) advances as "the natural parallel" (DT 73) to the recalcitrant pragmatic poetic tradition of Yeats and anticipates "Infernal wisdom" (Blake 35), a symbolic representation of his vicarious impersonal art and his tragic joy "on another's sorrow" (Blake) and his comic vision of parodic art song in "Over Sir John's Hill," "love seeketh not itself to please ... nor for itself hath any care ... but for another gives its ease ... and builds a Heaven in Hell's despair" (62) in contrast to Auden's tragic vision of song pattern, "love seeketh only Self to please ... to bind another to its delight ... joys in another's loss of ease ... and builds a Hell in Heaven's despite" (63). So, "Poem in October" serves the reader right as a parody of sceptic poetic tradition that repudiates the geo-centric and logo-centric traditions and immortal art.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Thomas's poem "Poem in October," implying a strong derision of the nearness and farness, pure subjectivity and objectivity as witnessed in the war poets, the caricatures of Fuller, Rook, Rhys and Prince, the satire of Lewis and in the lampoon of Keyes, the burlesque existential art of Auden, his aesthetic, amoral ironic distance, "hollow fires burn out to black," "nought's to dread" and the grotesque falling and rising of the realistic, time-conscious poets, "lights are guttering low" looking "to left or right," reveals itself as a parody of the vicarious impersonal art and the sceptic poetic tradition of Yeats identical to that of Hardy and Houseman, "a bird's sleepy cry ... among the deepening shades" (*YCP* 168), "self-delighting ... self-appeasing, self-affrighting" (*YCP*), "the purposed Life ... serene, sagacious, free" outshining "the norm of every royal-reckoned attribute" (*HCP*), and "the house of dust ... where my sojourn shall be long ... if the heats of hate and lust ... in the house of flesh are strong ..." (AEH 88) as well as a self-parody of his own corpus in praise of poetic licence and inclusiveness, harmony and co-existence, "burning in the birds bed of love, in the whirl- ... pool at the wanting centre, in the folds ... of paradise, in the spun bud of the world" (DT 23). On the whole, Thomas's pragmatic functioning, his commitment to a historical, asocial and apolitical poetry stands emblematic of Yeats's comic vision of magnanimous impersonal art and disinterested goodwill and action, "the strength that gives our blood and state magnanimity of its own desire ... everything that is not God consumed with intellectual fire" (*YCP* 200) and of his transfiguring mind that alchemizes "the extreme of life and death," the tragic sufferings of poets of romanticism and classicism, realistic and philosophic tradition into tragic happiness, "things thought too long can be no longer thought ... for beauty dies of beauty, worth of worth ... and ancient lineaments are blotted out" (*YCP*). Above all, the poem "Poem in October" augurs the continuity of his empirical vision of poetry, empathic impersonal art and tragic gaiety in the similar parodic structure in the last song "Over Sir John's Hill" and the immortality of his poetry of freeplay and freelove, "auguries of innocence," cyclical life of birth and death and innocent vicariousness in contraposition to his contemporary poets, "to see a World in a grain of sand ... and a Heaven in a wild flower ... hold Infinity in the palm of your hand ... and Eternity in an hour" (Blake 111).

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