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**MYSTICISM IN THE POETRY OF
KATHLEEN RAINE**

by

Mohamed Sharaf El-Shaer

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29 JUN 1987

A B S T R A C T

A consideration of mysticism in the major religious traditions leads to the view that its universal core is the pursuit of union with the divine through love. This core is distinguished from non-mystical vision. Kathleen Raine has had a great deal of genuinely mystical experience as well as non-mystical visions, and is best classified as a visionary-mystic poet. The root of her poetry lies in her mystical experience, interpreted in the light of three interrelated factors, first her religious and spiritual development from an early Methodist upbringing through her brief conversion to Catholicism to her final Neoplatonism, secondly her intellectual development through her artistic interests and scientific training to *knowledge absolute*, and thirdly her Platonic emotional development from physical love to the marriage of minds and ultimately to a Plotinian marriage of souls. Her mature poetic theory is firmly Platonic and inspirational, based on a non-sectarian spiritual vision of imaginative archetypes.

DEDICATION

To the memory of my father,
to my mother,

and to Egypt,

*The Land of love, by me adored,
That ne'er will die or grow old.*

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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L I S T O F
A B B R E V I A T I O N S

1) WORKS OF AUTHORS OTHER THAN KATHLEEN RAINE

- CPPWB ... William Blake, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of, William Blake* (Revised Edition), ed. by David V. Erdman, Anchor Books, New York, 1982.
- DNMT ... Dionysius, the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, trans. by C.E. Rolt, S.P.C.K., London, 1920.
- EN ... Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. by Stephen Mackenna, Charles T. Branford Company, Boston, Massachusetts, 1916.
- FL ... Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love*, trans. by Clifton Wolters, Penguin Books, 1972.
- MDI ... Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, The University of North Carolina Press, 1975.
- MHS ... C. G. Jung et al, *Man and His Symbols*, Aldus Books Ltd., London, 1964.
- MP ... W. T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1961.
- MWB ... Helen C. White, *The Mysticism of William Blake*, The University Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, Madison, 1927.
- RPM ... Jalalul-Din Rumi, *Rumi, Poet and Mystic*, selected, trans., and ed. by Reynold A. Nicholson, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1950.
- SEM ... W. Ralph Inge, *Studies of English Mystics*, John Murray, London, 1906.
- Tao ... *Tao Te Ching*, trans. by Chu Ta-Kao, Mandala Books London, 1985.
- UM ... Richard Woods, ed. *Understanding Mysticism*, The Athlone Press, London, 1981.
- VRE ... W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1902.

2) KATHLEEN RAINE'S WORKS

- CPa *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1956.
- CPb *Collected Poems: 1935-1980*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, Boston and Sydney, 1981.
- DAS *Defending Ancient Springs*, The Oxford University Press, 1967.
- DS *On a Deserted Shore*, The Dolmen Press, Dublin; Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1973.
- FDN *Faces of Day and Night*, Enitharmon Press, London, 1972.
- FHF *Farewell Happy Fields*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1973.
- HH *The Hollow Hill and Other Poems 1960-64*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1965.
- IJP *The Inner Journey of the Poet and Other Papers*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1982.
- LC *Lost Country*, The Dolmen Press, Dublin; Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1971.
- L T *Living in Time: Poems 1941-45*, Editions Poetry London, Nicholson and Watson, London, 1946.
- LM *The Lion's Mouth*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1977.
- LU *The Land Unknown*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1975.
- OH *The Oracle in the Heart and Other Poems 1975-78*, The Dolmen Press, Dublin; George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1980.
- OP *The Oval Portrait and Other Poems*, Enitharmon Press, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1977.
- SF *Stone and Flower: Poems 1935-1943*, Nicholson and Watson, London, 1943.
- TP *The Pythoness and Other Poems*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1949.
- YO *The Year One*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1952.

INTRODUCTION

.....

. something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams -

Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare.
(Tennyson, "The Two Voices")
* * * * *

"My Heart is capable of every form;
A cloister for the monk, a fane for idols,
A pasture for gazelles, the votary's Ka'ba.
The tables of Torah, the Quran.
Love is the creed I hold; wherever turn
His camels, Love is still my creed and faith."
(Ibn al'Arabi, *Nafh ut Tib*)
* * * * *

"The mystical life is the centre of all that I do
and all that I think and all that I write."
(W.B. Yeats, *Letters*)
* * * * *

A mystical approach to the poetry of Kathleen Raine presents a dual problem: a) mysticism as a subject of no fixed definition, b) Kathleen Raine has herself become something of a polemical issue. As regards mysticism, though it strikes its roots deep in the history of mankind, it has never been an established academic subject. The definition of the term has been liable to various and clashing formulations. The mystical field has been explored, sometimes invaded and victimized, by many branches of knowledge (e.g. theology, philosophy, psychology, literature, metaphysics, anthropology and the like). Apart from the differences between these disciplines, even within a specific discipline the term still lacks a generally agreed definition that can be used in approaching literary works.

Moreover, the term has been severely attacked by many unsympathetic and ironic disbelievers in the existence of a spiritual order. Some accuse mystical experience and mystics of extreme subjectivity and mere emotionalism, of neurotic disorders, of depraved or perverted sexuality, of melancholy, of paranoia, of devil-worship, of practising black magic, and so on. Agnes Arber remarks the enormous degradation of the word "mysticism" in general usage, and how to many people it "suggests charlatanism or disordered mentality".(1) Mysticism also suffers from some mystics' misrepresentations of their experiences, and from the sectarian and emotional non-objectivity of some religiously fanatical mystics.

1- Agnes Arber, *The Manifold and the One*, John Murray, London, 1957, p. 14.

So, the first chapter will be devoted to an objective consideration of mysticism as manifested in the literature of major world creeds: Christianity, Sufism as the mystical phenomenon of Islam, Hinduism, Neoplatonism represented by Plotinus, Nature Mysticism, and what is called drug-induced mystical states. The investigation into these creeds is carried independently of any links with Kathleen Raine. The intention of this chapter is to ascertain whether mystical experience is one and the same, and whether the seemingly essential differences between its multiple forms are merely the result of preconceptions, as Rumi, the Sufi poet, claims in this analogy:

Some Hindus brought an elephant, which they
exhibited in a dark shed.
As seeing it with the eye was impossible, every
one felt it with the palm of his hand.
The hand of one fell on its trunk: he said,
"This animal is like a water-pipe."
Another touched its ear: to him the creature
seemed like a fan.
Another handled its leg and described the elephant
as having the shape of a pillar.
Another stroked its back. "Truly," said he, "this
elephant resembles a throne."
Had each of them held a lighted candle, there would
have been no contradiction in their words.(1)

Many distinguished authors on the subject of mysticism hold that it is the same, while others, theologians in particular, make it exclusive to their own creeds. The chapter also seeks to explore the relation between mystical experience in itself and the mystic's way to achieving it. The aim is to deduce a reasonable definition of mysticism and to determine whether it is a mere subjective emotion, as Bertrand Russel believes, or mere

1- Rumi, "The One True Light", *RPM*, p. 166.

intellectualism as Spinoza holds, or neither of these things, but instead what Kathleen Raine holds it to be: "Mysticism is not synonymous with vagueness, subjectivity and emotion; it is on the contrary ... characterised by an 'arbitrary, harsh and difficult' symbolism".(1) Mystical characteristics are also inferred from the survey of great mystics of all the traditions discussed. This aims to differentiate between mystical experience and non-mystical vision. This, it is hoped, will provide well-grounded criteria for analysing and assessing Kathleen Raine's visions.

The second facet of the dual problem is related to Kathleen Raine as a mystic and as a poet. Despite the fact that she is considered by some writers and critics one of the finest of contemporary poets(2), her fame and reputation in her own motherland are far lower than she actually deserves. Apart from a few reviews and essays on her poetry, no serious study of her work has appeared in England. In contrast, several serious studies of her poetry have been carried out by overseas scholars. It is ridiculous that the latest anthology devoted to contemporary English *women* poets does not include a poet like Kathleen Raine though it contains seventy-four poetesses.(3) This reflects the kind of critical taste dominating the modern literary arena, whereby Raine is regarded as if she were neither contemporary nor an English poet.

1- K. Raine, *Yeats the Initiate*, The Dolmen Press, Dublin, 1986, pp. 91-3.

2- "The Timeless World", *The Times Literary Supplement*, vol. 55, 1956, p. 148.

3- Fleur Adcock, *20 th Century Women's Poetry*, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1987.

As a mystic, Raine has been criticised for her declared ideas. Some critics find it odd of Raine to adopt Yeats' and Blake's views of the world. Born in 1908, brought up in Northumberland, surrounded by a religious environment, and studying natural sciences at Cambridge, Raine had early in life been caught in a struggle between her innate love for nature and spiritual freedom on the one hand, and the clashing doctrines of thought prevalent in the modern world on the other. She cultivated a sense of latent antagonism against any materialistic or positivist attitudes towards life and art.

The second chapter deals with Raine's immediate visions, as described in her autobiography. Her visions are traced back to her early childhood, and are discussed and analysed in an attempt to classify them according to the mystical characteristics expounded in the first chapter. The discussion also implies a comparison to what are known as mystical phenomena of light, and to the principles of Taoism. At the same time some of the visions are analysed in the light of Jungian psychological theory. The relation between her mystical experiences and poetic achievements is considered in chapter three. Chapter four tackles and elucidates the theme of Platonic and Plotinian love as manifested in her own life, her proclaimed views, and poetic work. Her poetic theory as displayed in her critical writings is discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER ONE

.....

MYSTICISM : UNIVERSAL PHENOMENON (A STUDY IN MYSTICAL LITERATURE)

"As all men are alike (tho' infinitely various) So all Religions".
(Blake, 'All Religions Are One')

* * * * *

"Nowhere more clearly than in the history of mysticism do we observe the essential solidarity of mankind".

(Underhill, *Mysticism*)

* * * * *

"The mortal body is a proof of the immortal spirit. . . . The lamps are different, but the Light is the same: it comes from Beyond".

(Rumi, *RPM*)

* * * * *

"All doctrines and all teachings are sprung from Him, from Him they grow . . . But that formless God takes a thousand forms in the eyes of His creatures".

(Kabir, *One Hundred Poems*)

* * * * *

"When the soul begins to mount, it comes not to something alien but to its very self. . ."

(Plotinus, *EN*)

* * * * *



1.1 CHRISTIAN MYSTICS AND THE FIRE OF LOVE

'Mysticism', says W.R. Inge, 'is the love of God'.(1) In this very short and simple aphorism, the author of *Christian Mysticism* elucidates, undoubtedly from the point of view of theology, a term which has long been and is still a bone of contention. In a kindred spirit Vladimir Lossky places much stress on the sublimity of the divine love and 'the ability of the soul of knowing God'(2) through the mystical communion of love. Like most theologians, as well as the majority of Christian mystics, Inge in more than one place esteems love of God as 'the crown and consummation' of the mystical experience in which the highest level attained by the mystic's soul lies in the achievement of a 'combination of knowledge with perfect love'.(3) Thereafter Inge proceeds to identify the spirit of love with the reality of God in the soul of the mystic, upon the theological foundation that 'Christ can never be in any creature except as the spirit of love'; in the restoration of this spirit lies our salvation, and for it we, as fallen creatures, crave and strive.(4)

In accord with Inge's simple definition, F. Pfeiffer describes mystical love as 'the fulfilment of knowledge', and he argues that this love 'may be identified ... with the one source in the soul from which Eckhart believed both knowledge and love to flow'.(5) Jacob Boehme, a highly intellectual Christian mystic, who is believed to have received spontaneous illumination direct from God Himself during the experience of enlightenment on which his whole

1- W.R. Inge, *SEM*, p. 37.

2- Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, James Clarke & Co. Ltd., London, 1957 p. 115.

3- W.R. Inge, *SEM*, p. 83.

4- W.R. Inge, *SEM*, p. 160.

5- Agnes Arber, *The Manifold and the One*, p. 29.

intellectual system is founded (1), refers to the love of God that contains the will and desire arising in the Absolute Godhead, giving rise to the life of God and to creation: 'The first beginning of all things is a craving, we are creatures of will and desire'.(2) In the *Dialogues of the Supersensual Life*, Boehme speaks of the Primal Love which is 'the virtue of all virtues', 'the highest principle', 'the greatest majesty', 'the power of all powers', 'the holy magical root', and which

may fitly be compared to nothing; for it is deeper than anything, and is as nothing with respect to all things, forasmuch as it is not comprehensible by any of them. And because it is nothing respectively, it is therefore free from all things; and is that only good, which a man cannot express or utter what it is; there being nothing to which it may be compared, to express it by.(3)

At the other end of the spectrum of the Christian tradition, St. Teresa of Avila, considered one of the most distinguished emotional and unphilosophical mystics, gives her description of the mystical state much more clearly. She repeatedly conveys throughout her works how the grace of the love of God bestowed upon her soul boundless happiness, indescribable rapture, and certainty of true rest, to which nothing in the mundane world, or to use her words, in 'this farce of a life' can be compared. Having been raised by grace to the 'sublime summit' in her union of love with the Beloved Lord, and vehemently burning with the Divine fire, St. Teresa's soul realized with a perfect clarity that all riches and all kingdoms of this world are mere 'pettiness' and valueless 'trafficking' in comparison to the real.

1- Bryan Aubrey, "The Influence of Jacob Boehme on William Blake", Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Durham, 1981, pp. 29-30.

2- Evelyn Underhill, 'The Essentials of Mysticism', in *UM*, p. 33.

3- Jacob Boehme, *The Signature of All Things and Other Writings*, introduced by Clifford Bax, James Clarke and Co. Ltd., Cambridge, 1969, pp. 240, 243.

sovereign and eternal splendour of the kingdom of God's love, on the principle that

it is a different thing to win a kingdom that shall have no end, because a single drop of the water of that kingdom gives him who tastes it a loathing for everything earthly. What will it be, then, when the soul is completely engulfed in such water?(1)

Thus, caring for rank, honour, fame, dignity or any other ambition in this world of shifting perceptions of truth is a human pretence and self-deception. The soul of the mystic, having been 'inebriated with the taste of the Divine wine'(2) in its "interior castle", shuts out the sight of creature comforts. Not only does it become disinterested in any of these fleeting pleasures in the world of generation, but also it believes that they should be profoundly despised: hence St. Teresa's soul cannot sometimes help laughing when it happens to see

serious people - men of prayer, leading the religious life - making a great fuss about niceties concerning their honour, which it has long since trampled beneath its feet. They say that discretion demands this and that the more they have the authority due to their positions the more good they can do. But the soul knows very well that if they subordinated the authority due to their positions to the love of God they would do more good in a day than they are likely to do as it is in ten years.(3)

From the same standpoint, St. John of the Cross identifies the mystical state attained by the soul by means of 'dark contemplation', as the union of love that takes place 'secretly and in darkness, so as to be hidden from the work of the understanding and of the other faculties. Wherefore, inasmuch as the faculties aforementioned attain not to it, but the Holy Spirit

1- St. Teresa, *Life*, in *Works*, (tenth impression), trans. by E. Allison Peers, Sheed and Ward, London, 1978, p. 131.
2- *Ibid.*, p. 111.
3- *Ibid.*, p. 134.

infuses and orders it in the soul'(1), St. John of the Cross affirms that it is impossible for the soul to achieve union with God apart from love: by love it can find its way back to its centre and walk securely in darkness, and this simply because

it has been suffering; for the road of suffering is more secure and even more profitable than that of fruition and action: first, because in suffering the strength of God is added to that of man, while in action and fruition the soul is practising its own weakness and imperfections; and second, because in suffering the soul continues to practise and acquire the virtues and become purer, wiser and more cautious.(2)

and in conformity with this, he states poetically that:

My soul is well content
To serve her spouse with all her wealth and might.
Her days of toil full-spent,
Her flocks now lost to sight,
Love is her labour, love her sole delight.(3)

Perceiving the intense presence of the 'inexpressible Reality' of the love of God, Richard Rolle shares with St. John of the Cross the view that divine love is above knowledge and without it knowledge of God is impossible. Rolle speaks so emotionally and so dearly of his ecstatic state of love that in his fairly small book *The Fire of Love*, he mentions love of God over 800 times, as Wolters notices.(4) The heavenly joy felt by Rolle's 'contemplative' heart through attaining the one fused togetherness with his Beloved is described as a marvelous melody which is

a peace that sings and loves and burns and contemplates. Very sweet indeed is the quiet which the spirit experiences. Music, divine and delectable, comes to rejoice it; the mind is rapt in sublime and gay melody and

1- St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, bk.II., ch. XVII., in *Works*, trans. by E. Allison Peers, Burns Oates, London, 1943, vol.I., p. 456.
2- *Ibid.*, p. 452.
3- St. John of the Cross, "Poems", *Ibid.*, vol. II., p. 445.
4- R. Rolle, *FL*, p. 22.

this union of the soul with God 'the birth of the Divine Word in man'(1), speaks of the one all-important reality of divine love which may unite the soul with God and 'immerse and cover it in Him'.(2) In a more philosophical overtone identical to that of Jacob Boehme, William Law exclaims that

one of the surest signs of Divine light and true regeneration, is an inexpressible tenderness, an unfeigned love, an unchangeable compassion towards all that are under any hardness of heart, blindness or delusion of our fallen nature. This is the necessary effect of regeneration.(3)

William Law concentrates mainly on man's love for God, 'the spirit of intercession', or 'devotion [as] the best scholarship'. Embracing this 'universal love' would, in Law's view, help to bring forth nothing but the nature of Christ in the soul. And therefore, if 'we desire this Divine virtue of love we must exercise and practise our hearts in the love of all, because it is not Christian love, till it is the love of all'.(4) More explicitly, in *The Spirit of Love*, Law spiritually discerns in the God of love who dwells in the soul the 'blessing of all blessings' that kills 'every root of bitterness, which is the pain and torment of every earthly, selfish love'.(5)

Further evidence corroborating the notion of Christian mystics that the love of God is the most important consideration can be found in the several passages written by mystics of various creeds, that have been gathered from widely scattered sources and cited by William James in his long lecture on the subject of

-
- 1- James M. Clark, *The Great German Mystics, Eckhart, Tauler and Suso*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1949, p. 45.
 - 2- W. Major Scott, *Aspects of Christian Mysticism*, p. 100.
 - 3- Gerald Bullett, *The English Mystics*, Michael Joseph, London, 1950, p. 150.
 - 4- William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, J.M. Dent and Co., London, 1898, p. 329.
 - 5- W.R. Inge, *SEM*, p. 159.

influence of drugs.(1) Viewing the matter from the angle of religious morality, Zaehner severely criticises Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, in which the latter assumes that mystical experiences must all be the same in essence, no matter whether they be the result of intensive ascetic training, of a prolonged course of Yoga technique, or simply of swallowing a dose of mescaline. However, for the benefit of this discussion, this type of "mystical" experience should not be overlooked.

J.A. Symonds, for example, interprets the experience he went through under the influence of chloroform as having 'felt for that long dateless ecstasy of vision the very God, in all purity and tenderness and truth and absolute love'.(2) Another example of the so-called mystical vision that is artificially produced by drugs and peculiarly associated with the love of God is the case of Mr. Trine, whose experience occurred under the influence of ether. 'While regaining consciousness', writes Mr. Trine, 'I wondered why, since I had gone so deep, I had seen nothing of what the saints call the love of God, nothing but his relentlessness. And then I heard an answer, which I could only just catch, saying "Knowledge and Love are One, and the measure is suffering"- I give the words as they came to me'.(3)

Viewed in the light of these descriptions, these states of consciousness are probably tinged with some tincture of mysticism. However, I tend to accept as reasonable the differentiation made by Helen White between drug-induced experiences and real mystical states of consciousness. Without stressing moral or religious categories, Helen White links the so-called mystical experience

-
- 1- See R.C. Zaehner, *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1957.
 - 2- W. James, *VRE*, p. 391.
 - 3- W. James, *VRE*, p. 393.

induced by drugs with hysterical states, since despite the accompanying negative, depressive and disintegrative results, both states (those of drug use and hysterics) produce temporary enhancement of life. But by no means can they produce the 'new birth' of the whole being which the experience of the great mystics produces.(1)

In addition, this viewpoint can be borne out by a firsthand substantial testimony from W.H. Auden. Although he first assumes that the state of the "Vision of Dame Kind" - a term Auden gives to what is generally known as nature mysticism - can be induced by chemical aids such as alcohol or the hallucinogenic drugs, he speaks negatively of his own two experiences of mescaline and LSD: 'Aside from a slight schizophrenic dissociation of the I from the Not-I including my body, nothing happened at all'.(2) Auden proceeds to point out that should the Vision of Dame Kind take place in some cases under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs, it would inevitably lead the individual to a continual indulgence in it with a view to rapture and to prolonging it, the most dangerous consequence of which is an 'increasing indifference towards the existence and needs of other human beings'.(3) It could also be added that as a rule, most of these cases are motivated by morbid feelings of worthlessness, the futility of life, isolation, failure, or the like, which are diametrically opposed to the mystic's permanent feeling of optimism. This is no denial of the sporadic periods of spiritual aridity featuring in the mystic's way and recorded by many Christian mystics. The mystic's optimistic attitude is reflected in his dealing with such frequent periods of dry spirituality as will be shown later.

1- White, *MWB*, p. 126.

2- W.H. Auden, "Four Kinds of Mystical Experience", *UM*, p. 382.

3- *Ibid.*, pp. 387-8.

It could be argued, however, that these drug-induced experiences might be psychologically categorized together with the negation of individual consciousness which is believed to be a mystical state. Although the nature of mystical union will be fully discussed later in this chapter, a brief outline is necessary here. There is a world of difference between this type of temporary and very easily accessible loss of consciousness, provoked on the spur of the moment by artificial and material means, and the mystic's perpetual negation of his own self-will and of all that is not God in order that he may, if God wills, realize the affirmation of the eternal Truth. "Pure consciousness", to use Stace's term, is neither 'consciousness' nor 'not consciousness', strictly speaking; the loss of consciousness in unconscious sleep is at the other end of the spectrum. The first is being beyond the bounds of being, the second unbeing. The second may occur under anaesthetics for instance, but if there is an experience induced by drugs, there cannot by definition be a negation of individual consciousness, but rather unconsciousness.

Moreover, we should not lose sight of the fact that despite the most laborious and painstaking efforts made by the Christian mystic to enjoy union with God, the occurrence of the union is due to the grace and will of God. The mystic way is very difficult and fraught with trouble; yet, the vision of love is not something we create, it is rather what God does in us, as St. Teresa frequently indicates: 'intervention on our part is quite unnecessary'.(1) Richard Rolle enthusiastically maintains the same idea: 'No one can do good, or love God unless God enables him to do so' because it is God Who 'infuses them [the lovers] with

1- St. Teresa, *Interior Castle*, in *Works*, p. 251.

the calm of holy desires'.(1) This suggests that mystical experience in itself is effortless, since it occurs without man's intervention. The effort spent by the mystic in preparing himself to be fit for mystical experience is the mystic's tiring way. For the Christian mystic, the mystical way involves both the experience and his prior preparation for it. In the drug-induced experiences the so-called union with God takes place effortlessly too, as in other mystical experiences, but arising from the experiencer's desire and demand through voluntary participation in a humanly controlled experiment. Such being the case they partly share the effortlessness of a mystical union in course of occurrence, and partly are in complete disagreement with the mystic's total dependence upon God's will. Therefore, they are in contention with the way of the not-choosing expounded by all great mystics of Christianity. For example, St. John of the Cross says:

Strive always to choose, not that which is the
easiest, but that which is most difficult;
Not that which is most delectable, but that
which is most unpleasing;
Not that which gives most pleasure, but rather
that which gives least (none).(2)

This is not so much to regard these experiences as not mystical as to exclude them, assuming they are mystical (initial mystical experiences can occur suddenly and without prior preparation), from the mystical way of Christianity. Despite being mostly interpreted in terms of the love of God and of the Christian theology, the consistent use of drugs to produce such 'mystical' states of consciousness cannot be reconciled with the mystical attitudes towards entrance into the illuminative and contemplative life unanimously held and recommended by the great mystics of the

1- R. Rolle, *FL*, pp. 80,87.

2- *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk.I., ch.XIII., *Works*, vol.1., p. 61.

Christian tradition. Such methods and attitudes can be summarized as: Henry Suso's mobilization of all the forces of the spirit, by which the soul is renewed in grace; Dionysius' the mystic's gathering of himself together away from outward things into the centre of his being; Eckhart's abandonment of earthly things which prevent the approach of the divine; Ruysbroeck's ascent of the soul to God by a process of 'deification', and the "eternal coming of our Bridegroom" through the exercise of love ; Tauler's dying to self-will and self-complacency; Boehme's becoming nothing to all that is nature and creature; St. Teresa's strengthening of the soul through the seven mansions of the interior castle; the ten steps in the ladder of love of St. John of the Cross; Rolle's gradual spiritual strength whose perfection is acquired by great labour; Browning's "submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete"; and finally the effort of contemplation as a rejection of mundane interests for the sake of the sublimation of the spiritual faculties, which Mark Schorer interprets as the "silencing of the faculties" by which all worldly interests are eliminated and the single interest of God is overwhelmingly prevailing.

From the literature on mysticism in general and Christian mysticism in particular, it seems clear that the tendency of the majority of Christian mystics to interpret their mystical states in terms of the love of God proceeds fundamentally from a threefold Biblical doctrine. This theological doctrine consists of 1) love of God as a presupposed reality that cannot be withheld from any lover, 2) the soul as divine, and in consequence capable of achieving union with the Divine, 3) human love for God as a prerequisite activating the former two.

First, the divine love of God for man - apart from the debatable issue of whether it is exclusive to Christians only or available to all mankind, since, as Dionysius the Areopagite points out, 'the Deity of Jesus is of a universal character belonging through Him to all redeemed mankind'(1) - is graciously assured by God Himself to be attainable by the soul that seeks it. References to God's love for his people clearly abound in the Holy Bible. These are just a few of them: 'God has poured out his love into our hearts'(Rom. 5:5), 'May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance' (2 Thess. 3:5), 'when the kindness and love of God our saviour appeared' (Tit. 3:4), 'May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me' (John 17:23), and in (1 John 4:7-21).

It may be this theological assurance of the love of God that inspired many Christian poets to write what can be recognized as genuine mystical poetry, though the poets themselves are not known as mystics, or at least have not recorded any sort of mystical experience about themselves. For example, Sir Philip Sidney is not known as a mystic, nevertheless he might be called such, not only because his canon of verse includes a great many religious poems, such as the thirty-four psalms of David, but mainly because he communicates the love of God as perfectly and sincerely as any brilliant mystic poet. In the poem '*Splendidis longum valedico nugis*', Sidney differentiates between earthly love which is the guilt of mortality belonging to "dust" on the one hand, and the heavenly divine love which provides the lovers with the Light of the Eternal Beloved, and leads them up to everlasting freedom on

1- Dionysius, *DNMT*, p. 9. See also John Hick, *God Has Many Names*, The Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1980, pp. 59-79.

the other hand:

LEAVE me O love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou my mind aspire to higher things:
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
What ever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might,
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be:
Which breakes the clowdes and opens forth the light,
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
O take fast hold, let that light be thy guide,
In this small course which birth drawes out to death,
And thinke how evill becommeth him to slide
Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.
Then farewell world, thy uttermost I see,
Eternall Love, maintaine thy life in me.(1)

Drawing, very likely, on the same source, Jones Very in a poem entitled "The Hand and Foot" declares that, through the Divine Love, what appears to our human judgment as bondage and servitude is in essence everlasting freedom in its highest and most honourable sense:

It is the way unseen, the certain route,
Wherever bound, yet thou art ever free;
The path of Him, whose perfect law of love
Bids spheres and atoms in just order move.(2)

The same can be said about George Herbert's poem "Love":

Immortal Love, author of this great frame,
Sprung from that beautie which can never fade;
How hath man parcel'd out thy glorious name,
And thrown it on that dust which thou hast made.(3)

Secondly, the idea of the feasibility of the soul's achievement of a divine union of love with God has its roots in belief in the divinity of the soul resulting from the way in which it was created by God. Helen White points out that, 'to the Christian, the soul is a spirit that God breathed into man, the image of God,

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- 1- Sir Philip Sidney, *The Poems*, ed. by William A. Ringler, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962, pp. 161-2.
 - 2- Jones Very, in *The Quest for Reality*, selected by Yvor Winters and Kenneth Fields, The Swallow Press, Chicago, 1969, p. 86.
 - 3- George Herbert, *A Choice of George Herbert's Verse*, selected with introduction by R. S. Thomas, Faber and Faber, London, 1967, p. 29. (reprinted 1969,72).

in itself the very stuff of reality'.(1) So Eckhart vigorously emphasizes this theological conception of the creation of the soul and elucidates the reason why it was made in the image of God:

This temple, in which God wants to rule in power according to His will, is the soul of man, which He formed and created just like Himself....He made the soul of man so like Himself that in heaven or on earth, among all the glorious creatures that God so beautifully created, there is none which is so like Him as the human soul.(2)

Furthermore, after admitting the existence of this sort of mystical communion of love with God, Zaehner stresses that the theological source from which the interpretation is derived consists in the premiss that the individual soul is created by God in His own image and likeness from nothing, and that it has the capacity of being united to God, of being "oned" to Him.(3) Certainly, William Law is not of the same mind as regards the creation of the soul from nothing. He advocates the principle that the soul of man is 'an effluence from God' and is not created by God out of nothing, on the assumption that its creation from nothing would 'condemn man to absolute and eternal separation from the Divine Spirit', and as long as 'the essences of our soul were a breath in God before they became a living soul, therefore the soul is a partaker of the eternity of God'.(4) However, Herbert Armstrong, a contemporary Christian thinker, does not attribute the divinity of the soul to the way of its creation, and he maintains that it is not the soul that was created in the image of God, but rather God created man, "the clay model", in His image:

We were born, all of us, from Adam. Adam was not in the spiritual image of God, as most people seem to think he

1- White, *MWB*, p. 59.

2- Mathew Fox, O.P., 'Meister Eckhart and Karl Marx: The Mystic as Political Theologian', *UM*, p. 544.

3- R.C. Zaehner, *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane*, p. 29.

4- Gerald Bullett, *The English Mystics*, pp. 144-5.

was. He lacked God's perfect spiritual character. He was not made of the same substance as God. Adam was made of the dust of the ground but God is spirit....we have only been bearing the physical image, not the spiritual.(1)

Nevertheless, Armstrong does not deny that man's soul has the faculty to achieve union with God through God's love. Thereupon he finally comes to conclude that: 'We can receive his spirit, his character and bear his image, spiritually'.(2)

The third part of the theological doctrine of the love of God, which is the realization of the first two, is man's love for God. It is the human expression of the sincere desire to enjoy the Divine manifestation. In other words, the divine union of love cannot be realized without man's initiation into the way of love. As a true lover for the Eternal Beloved, a mystic has to purify his heart from any worldly desire, to seek the perfection of the self by withdrawing from it, and to cast away from the soul all that is not related to God. When the mystic feels intensely and wholeheartedly that the love for God is the only dweller in his heart, the only stimulus of his affections, and the only driving force that moves his soul, he may be on the right path to gain the love of God, and beatified consequently with the vision of his Beloved. In order that one might reach the perfection of human love for God, St. Ignatius of Loyola puts forward a process in three required stages: 1) full knowledge and consciousness of sins; 2) reformation; 3) renunciation of the world. Then he proceeds to describe this state of comprehensive love for God as the 'love which moves me and makes me choose the said thing, [which] should descend from on high, from the love of God: in such a manner that he who chooses should first feel in himself that the

1- Herbert Armstrong, 'Why Does God Allow Wars', *The Plain Truth*, Ambassador Press Ltd., St. Albans, Vol. 51, No. 2, 1986, p. 2.
2- *Ibid.*

love which he has more or less for the thing which he chooses is solely for the sake of his Creator and Lord'.(1)

This passage might be followed by another passage from Jacob Boehme which seems to be identical to it, and which at the same time confirms, in Boehme's terms of the soul's feeling of "nothingness" that gives glory to the "eternal Being", the mystical view of self-abnegation and of entire indifference to the external and ephemeral world for the sake of transformation into the internal and eternal 'treasure of treasures':

when thou art gone forth wholly from the creature, and from that which is visible, and art become nothing to all that is nature and creature, then thou art in that Eternal One, which is God himself: And then thou shalt perceive and feel in thy interior, the highest virtue of love.(2)

With an inspirational glimpse of mystical insight, Robert Browning, similarly, renounces the glory of the world and turns his back on all its 'dazzling' temptations and ambitions lest they might distract his soul from its only and real abode which lies in the grace of the eternal Beloved's Bosom:

I keep the broods of stars aloof
For I intend to get to God.
That's why I haste to God so fast,
For in God's Breast, my own abode,
Those shoals of dazzling glory past,
I lay my spirit down at last.(3)

From the point of view of Dionysius the Areopagite, who is thought to be the 'fountain-head' of Christian mysticism, in order to reach the highest level of mystical contemplation and consequently be beatified with the vision of God, man has to sharpen his sense of God, allowing Him full scope in his soul. To quote Dionysius:

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- 1- W.H. Longridge, ed. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Robert Scott, London, 1919, p. 132.
 - 2- Boehme, *The Signature of All Things and Other Writings*, p. 240.
 - 3- *Johannes Agricola in Meditation, Works*, vol. III., p. 242.

'So man presses on towards God, and the method of his journey is a concentration of all his spiritual powers.'(1)

Charity is also believed to be akin to purification in respect of embracing the road that leads eventually up to the love of God: hence Julian of Norwich distinguishes between three types of charity; Charity unmade, Charity made, and Charity given. She goes on to explain that Charity is a 'precious gift of working in which we love God, for Himself; and ourselves in God; and that which God loveth, for God.'(2) Richard Rolle maintains a similar view that only by living in perfect charity can we reach the heights of divine contemplation, so that he emotionally sings its praises in this beautiful apostrophe: "Sweet charity, you are so obviously the dearest of all that is sweet! You take hold of our minds by your love; you possess them so clearly".(3) Additionally, in accord with the Bible, Helen White remarks that charity, as understood by the medieval mystics is the love of God: '[since] medieval religion was interested primarily in the soul's relation to God, and only secondarily in its relation to fellow-men, charity meant not what it has come to mean to us - benevolence - but love of God, a turning of the whole man towards God'.(4)

It is perfectly true that the term "charity" stands for love, and this can be clearly noticed from the use of both terms in the old and modern translations of the Bible, e.g. 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love [charity in old translation]'(1 Cor. 13:13). Moreover, the definition of charity in *Cruden's Concordance to the Old and New*

1- Dionysius, *DNMT*, p. 25.
2- W.R. Inge, *SEM*, p. 132.
3- R. Rolle, *FL*, p. 97.
4- White, *MWB*, p. 73.

Testaments confirms this identification, since charity is defined as a 'principle of prevailing love to God and good will to men, which effectually inclines one endued with it to glorify God and to do good to others'.(1) Still, charity as a disposition of kindness, leniency, beneficence, mercy, or liberality to those in need or distress is by no means excluded from the mystic's way, and reflects and expresses his own love for God through his individual love for people, or neighbours: to use the Biblical words, 'If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen' (1 John:20).

Another feature of the Christian mystic way to realize the union of love with God is penance or the asceticism of mortification. Although this process of mortifying the passions is considered by some mystics as a fruitful method of defeating what is called the lust within or the kicking of the flesh against the spirit and also as one of the main sources of the mystic's discipline, it is seen by other mystics as the most excessive aspect of mystical purification or self-renunciation. St. Catherine of Sienna emphasises that the abuse of penance may impede the soul from enjoying love since 'the soul cannot live without love.... because she was created through love'.(2) Therefore, St. Catherine wisely warns against the excess of penance, and states that it must be resorted to as a "tool", not as a desire in itself; and if needed, it should be used without exaggeration or abuse lest it should enervate the soul's ability

1- *Cruden's Concordance to the Old and New Testaments*, Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd., London, no date, p. 72.

2- Quoted by Richard Rolle in H. Emily Allen, ed. *English Writings of Richard Rolle*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1931, p. 142.

to reach its desirable goal.(1)

The final point in this presentation of the mystic's way in the Christian tradition is the mystic's fortitude in facing the troubles, cares, sorrows or hardships of life. With an inclination to see God's hand working in all things, the real mystic accepts wholeheartedly the many various ways in which his Beloved behaves. Most mystics, if not all, could be liable to periods of spiritual aridity, worldly suffering, temptations, adversities, persecution, or even disasters, but none of these seemingly frustrating events can shake the cement of the true mystic's spiritual edifice of his love for God since God's love for him cannot be gauged by our human measures. The mystic's attitude towards such troubles is contrary to Gerald Manley Hopkins' doubting question, in which he gives vent to the puzzled frustration at the very centre of his faith:

Thou art indeed just, Lord, I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?(2)

Void of this bitterness, the mystic's heart never feels such doubts about God's justice and love. He considers these troubles no other than blessings and tidings sent by his Beloved either as a reminder that his soul might have been led astray by a touch of vanity or other natural impulses, or as a test of the strength and perseverance of his love for God. The mystic's real love for God is neither instantaneous nor liable to the changes of human temperament and whims. Hence, Richard Rolle impressively

1- See White, *MWB*, p. 70.

2- Gerald Manley Hopkins, Poem 74 in *Poems*, (4 th edition), ed. by W.H. Gardner and N.H. Mackenzie, Oxford University Press, London, New York and Toronto, 1967, p. 106.

elaborates this sense of the mystic's steadfastness and stability in his love: 'Whether I suffer or prosper, face insult or honour, I will praise my God while I have my being. If I rest in Jesus I will rejoice: if I undergo persecution I will not forget the love of God'.(1) A similar tune is echoed by King:

Measure thy life by loss instead of gain;
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice;
And whoso suffers most hath most to give.(2)

So Jones Very says in "The Created":

There is naught for thee by thy haste to gain;
'Tis not the swift with Me that win the race;
Through long endurance of delaying pain,
Thine opened eye shall see thy Father's face.(3)

In the face of such inward or outward troubles, the prime and sole objective of the mystic is diligently to revive his spiritual faculties through a perpetual process of purification. The natural impulses of complaint, impatience, doubt, vanity and the like have to be buried, so that the mystic might regain and retain the mutual spiritual satisfaction previously established with the Beloved. In short, Julian of Norwich talks for the majority of mystics, 'no soul is rested till it is noughted of all things that are made: when, for love, it is willingly made nought, to have him that is all, then it is able to receive ghostly rest'.(4)

1- R. Rolle, *FL*, p. 71.

2- Harriet E. H. King, "The Sermon in the Hospital", from *The Disciples*, Kegan Paul, London, 1894, p.14.

3- Jones Very, "The Created", in *The Quest for Reality*, p. 87.

4- Gerald Bullett, *The English Mystics*, p. 58.

1.2 DIVINE LOVE AND ITS MARTYRS IN SUFISM

'The phenomenon of mystical love', says Annemarie Schimmel, 'is one of the most fascinating aspects of Sufism: a transcendent and absolute object is made the goal of every thought and feeling, so that love gains absolute primacy in the soul and mind of the lover.'(1) Similarly, Margaret Smith notes that 'the guide on the upward path of the mystic [referring to the Oriental mystic in general and the Sufi in particular] is, and must be Love', and that the Oriental mystic, being fully aware of the self as the greatest stumbling-block in his spiritual way to realize the union of love with God, has an unshakable belief that the self 'can be conquered only by Love'.(2)

According to the Sufis themselves, love of God is embraced as the noblest and most honourable sort of love, therefore Ibn Al'arabi declares 'Love is the highest form in which God is worshipped'.(3) In a different mode of presentation, Shebli, one of the pioneers of Sufism, spells out the same idea:

There are three sorts of death: for the love of this world, for the love of the next world, and for the love of God. Those who die in love of this world are hypocrites, those who die for love of the hereafter are ascetics, while those who die for the love of God are gnostics.(4)

Indeed, the Divine love of God recorded in the states of Christian mysticism emerges as fervently and extremely typified in many equivalent states in Sufism. So similar, in essence or

1- Schimmel, *MDI*, p. 289.

2- M. Smith, 'The Nature and Meaning of Mysticism', *UM*, pp. 21-2.

3- S.A.Q. Husaini, *Ibn Al'arabi: the Great Muslim Mystic and Thinker*, Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore, 1931, p. 98.

4- Javad Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Women*, Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, New York, 1983, p. 19.

expression, are many Christian states to those in the Sufi tradition, that the two sometimes appear to be quite indistinguishable, despite the quite different religious environments. For instance, the Persian Sufi Rumi, regarded by almost all Orientalists as the greatest Iranian poet and one of the greatest Sufis, poetically depicts the state of the soul in the union of love in expressions that are almost identical with the passage from Boehme on the soul's nothingness, and the entire consecration of man's will in God's will: 'I am nothing; for all that I am is no more than an image of being, and only God is to me I AM.'(1) Rumi applies the same nothingness to everything in comparison to the love of God, therefore, in his meeting with the Beloved the whole world is incinerated and turned into a heap of ashes because Love of God is the flame which

consumes everything else but the Beloved.
He (the lover) drives home the sword of Not
in order to kill all other than God:
thereupon consider what remains after Not
There remains [nothing] except God: all the rest is gone.
Hail, O mighty Love, destroyer of polytheism.(2)

To complete the parallell, the following lines from another of Rumi's poems entitled 'The Negative Way' might be read in conjunction with the lines quoted above, since they show more explicitly his abiding belief in negation as a way of gaining the affirmative love of God:

Until you deny all else, the affirmation of God
escapes you: I am denying in order that you
may find the way to affirm.
I play the tune of negation: when you die death
will disclose the mystery-
Not the death that takes you into the dark grave
but the death whereby you are transmuted and

1- Boehme, *The Signature of All Things and Other Writings*, p. 255.
2- Cited in Abul Hasan Nadwi, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, vol. 1., translated by Mohiuddin Ahmad, Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, India, 1971, p. 351.

If Thou art satisfied with me, then
O Desire of my heart, my happiness has appeared.(1)

The overwhelming and ardent desire to realize the complete absorption or passing-away of the lover into the Beloved, so clearly displayed in the case of Rabi'a, is beyond doubt the nuclear point of Sufism, around which all its other features revolve. Since the Sufi breeds his infinite yearning for God from his own revealed vision, he does not love God in a dogmatic way, as ordinary Muslims do, in the sense that he loves God neither out of fear of hell nor out of hope for paradise, but rather he loves Him out of love and for love's sake. Bin al-Sherif points out that while the devotee loves God in the hope of being paid off, the Sufi loves God for His own sake because He deserves to be the only Beloved.(2) This Sufi principle of the utter indifference to reward or punishment either here or in the hereafter is again eminently and solemnly crystallized in the state of Rabi'a to which Margaret Smith refers as the 'Spiritual Marriage of lover and Beloved'. In her "loving converse" with her Lord, Rabi'a does not remember hell or paradise, but she prays thus: "O my Lord, the stars are shining and the eyes of men are closed, and kings have shut their doors and every lover is alone with his beloved, and here am I alone with Thee."(3) When the earthly eye is closed, the spiritual eye of the Sufi sees nothing but the Beloved. Nothing whatsoever can distract him from his ultimate and transcendental goal. Even when hell and paradise occur to the Sufi's mind they constitute neither fear nor desire in his highest realm of the perfection of love. In this spirit of passionate intensity Rabi'a lays stress on this purity and perfect integrity when addressing

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- 1- Margaret Smith, *Rabi'a the Mystic and Her Fellow Saints*, Cambridge, 1928, p. 28. (reprinted 1984).
 - 2- M. Bin al-Sherif, *Love in the Kor'an*, Darul Ma'arif, Cairo, 1981, p. 113. (in Arabic)
 - 3- Margaret Smith, *Op.cit*, pp. 27-9.

her Lord:

"O my Lord if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of Paradise, exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty."(1)

It is obvious here that this type of Sufi love seeks the delight and blessedness of being with the Beloved regardless of any suffering or any sacrifice. The attitude of the Sufi towards God is one of such infinite love that he measures the value of it in trouble. The Sufi Nuri testifies to that legacy when he calls it the "love that rejoices in suffering"(2), and Schimmel refers to it as a 'disinterested love for which God has not asked and for which He will not recompense the lover.'(3) Also in the same vein Rumi highly appreciates his anguish and suffering, regarding them as a token of God's loving-kindness, and any bitterness or sorrow inflicted upon him by the Beloved is in fact "sweet" and joyfulness and honour generously and mercifully granted to his soul and heart: "I am in love with grief and pain for the sake of pleasing my peerless King./ Tears shed for His sake are pearls, though people think they are tears.(4)

Similarly, M. Taymour, empowered by the love of God, utters his supplications: "I do not fear the vicissitudes of life for I am well protected against them by the Talismans which are but the unremitting and perpetual love for You, I am never exasperated by pains because I find in Your satisfaction with me the eraser of pains and the healer of wounds."(5) The unconditioned submission of the Sufi to God's will makes him accept the calamities of life

1- *Ibid.*, p. 30.

2- Cited in Schimmel, *MDI*, p. 60.

3- Schimmel, *MDI*, p. 60.

4- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 33.

5- Bin al-Sherif, *Love in the Kor'an*, p. 120.

as graceful merits. He firmly believes that God does not make His love for man equivalent to man's peace and security, but He tests the sincerity of His loved ones with what He likes and wills on the basis of the Kor'anic verse : 'But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But God knoweth, and ye know not' (II:216). Aspiring to reach his ultimate goal, the Sufi banishes from his mind any sense of frustration, depression, distress, or envy, since he is quite detached from such worldly emotions. Therefore, he does not wonder, argue, or rebel in his relation to God. On the contrary, the Sufi is always optimistic in encountering what seem to other people mishaps or disasters. He gratefully and exultantly considers the misfortune showered upon his head a 'ray of bliss, a touch, a kiss, a token of the Friend', (1) and 'the more the pain of the wretched sufferer is, the less his lament'. (2) Using another image, Rumi says: 'Though the Beloved sprinkles plaster on your head, welcome that as if it was Tartary musk'. (3) So comments the Sufi woman Roq'yah:

O God, O Creator, though You inflict me with torment,
It is nothing in comparison with what I lose
From being far from You.
Though with heaven's bounty You bless me,
It is still less than the rapture
With which Your love has favored my heart. (4)

Owing to the underlying Sufi principle that the love of God boundlessly pervades the whole universe as an infinite "Ocean of Creative Energy" with neither beginning nor end, the Sufi poet can gain access to the Divine Beauty through his penetration into both

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- 1- Shamsi Tabriz, *Selected Poems from the Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, trans. by R.A. Nicholson, Cambridge, 1977, p. 346.
 - 2- Rumi, *Mystical Poems of Rumi*, selected and trans. by A. J. Arberry, the University of Chicago Press, London, 1968, p. 48.
 - 3- *Ibid.*, p. 121.
 - 4- Javad Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Women*, p. 115.

nature and creatures. Titus Burckhardt remarks that the love of God in the heart of the Sufi is 'born spontaneously wherever the Divine Reality is felt or contemplated'.(1) The vision of the beautiful, if it is piously and spiritually evaluated by the mystic's eyes, provides him with the vision of the Creator of the beautiful, who must be the Absolute Beauty in Himself. Wherever the Sufi looks, he embraces the beautiful face of God. To the eyes of the keen traveller on the road of Reality, all elements of nature are reflections of the 'dust of the village of the Divine Law'(2), or as the Urdu poet Mir puts it, beholding the divine splendour mirrored in every natural form in the cosmos by the very nature of the mystical method of the love of God: 'Rose and mirror and sun and moon - what are they?/ Wherever we looked, there was always Thy face'.(3)

Spiritually guided by the Kor'anic verse, 'The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein declare His glory: There is not a thing but celebrates His praise' (XVII:44), the Sufi comes incidentally into line with the Platonic theory of "Forms" and "Ideas", with the myth of the cave, and with the Neoplatonic idea of the world of the ideal revealed only when the veil of matter is swept aside. So Jami plainly perceives the majesty, grandeur and 'ravishing beauty' of the Creator in His uniqueness of perfection and sublimity through each phenomenal form:

Thou movest under all the Forms of Truth,
Under the Forms of all Created Things;
Look whence I will, still nothing I discern
But Thee in all the Universe, in which
Thyself Thou dost invest, and through the Eyes
Of Man, the sutle Censor scrutinize.

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- 1- Titus Burckhardt, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, trans. by D. M. Matheson, Thorsons Publishers Ltd., Northamptonshire, 1976, p. 32.
 - 2- Schimmel, *MDI*, p. 299.
 - 3- Cited in Schimmel, *MDI*, p. 289.

Beneath that veil He hides.(1)

From love life springs in every inanimate object, and through the vigours of love dead matter has a living soul and what appears perishable is rendered eternal. Here is the poet Nizami describing this miraculously creative faculty of love:

If the magnet were not loving, how could
it attract the iron with such longing?
And if love were not there, the straw would not
seek the amber.

and then he comes to the conclusion that: "the heaven has no *mihrab* (altar) save love".(2) In a similar spirit Rumi too alludes to this marvellous power of love through which the 'earthly body soared to the skies: the mountain began to dance and became nimble'.(3)

It might be assumed, especially by a European reader, that this particular Sufi notion of beholding the mortal as a bridge leading up to the perception of the Immortal Being indicates a debt of Sufism to either Platonism or Neoplatonism. To the Muslim, the assumption is not only indefensible but a radically false allegation, in spite of the fact that many Sufis have been in some way or other influenced by both philosophies. The guiding light of the Sufi is always the Kor'an. It provides for him the most spiritual power to reckon with. From its orientation, the Sufi draws in the most explicit way his firmly established conviction that even the smallest ephemeral particle in the cosmos intrinsically reveals the Truth of the Self-Subsisting Eternal Beauty. Like any mystic of other creeds, the Sufi incorporates

1- Jami, *Salaman and Absal*, trans. by E. Edward Fitzgerald, Alexander Moring Ltd., London, no date, p. 2.
2- Schimmel, *MDI*, p. 293.
3- Abul Hasan Nadwi, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, p. 346.

his own vision of the Beautiful with the spiritual knowledge revealed in the sacred writings of his religion:

Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which God sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth; - (Here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise.

(The Kor'an, II: 164)

This is just a single example of the many references in the Kor'an which incontrovertibly prove the authenticity of the Sufi doctrine that the signs of the Uncaused Beauty are to be found in all nature, as well as within human nature: "On the earth are Signs for those of assured Faith, as also in your own Selves" (LI: 20,21). It is through commitment to this orientation in the Kor'an, which preceded in time any access made by Muslims to any other creeds or philosophies, that most of the Sufis interpret their mystical visions. Jami's vision of the beautiful has its supporting justification in his 'assured Faith' in the Kor'anic revelation. Like many other Sufis, he is always ravished by God's "world-captivating Beauty", and intoxicated beyond measure by the love of the "Unique and Incomparable Heart-enslaver".(1) With perfect clarity, Rumi blends the truth of his own vision of nature with the real knowledge he has from the Kor'an about the Resurrection in the poem "God in Nature":

Ascend from materiality into the world of spirits,
hearken to the loud voice of the universe;
Then thou wilt know that God is glorified by all
inanimate things.(2)

1- E.G. Browne, *A History of Persia*, vol. I., T. Fisher
Unwin Ltd., London, 1908, p. 441.

2- Rumi, *RPM*, pp. 119,20.

To complete the picture, the Kor'anic phrase "as also in your own Selves" gives rise to a variety of interpretations. It causes some Sufis to go so far as to consider womanly beauty the most perfect natural sign for contemplation in which God reveals Himself in the full blaze of His Glory, as Ibn Al'arabi, who is known to the Arabs as *Ibn Aphlaton* (the son of Plato) for their close doctrinal kinship, suggests in this passage:

When man contemplates the Reality in woman he beholds[Him] in a passive aspect, while when he contemplates Him in himself, as being that from which woman is manifest, he beholds Him in an active aspect. When, however, he contemplates Him in himself, without any regard to what has come from him, he beholds Him as passive to Himself directly. However, his contemplation of the Reality in woman is the most complete and perfect, because in this way he contemplates the Reality in both active and passive mode, while by contemplating the Reality only in himself, he beholds Him in a passive mode particularly.(1)

This view was echoed later in the Christian tradition by some metaphysical poets such as John Donne and George Herbert(2), and was highly appreciated by both Yeats and Goethe, who especially admired the poetry of Hafiz, the famous Sufi poet of love.(3) But the most direct example of this parallel development can be found in the work of Francis Thompson:

A perfect woman - Thine be laud!
Her body is a Temple of God:
At Doom-bar dare I make avows,
I have loved the beauty of Thy house.(4)

Ibn Al'arabi's doctrine of finding God through contemplating the beauty of woman was also echoed by Hafiz himself, whose poetry

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- 1- Ibn Al'arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, translated and introduced by R. W. J. Austin, Paulist Press, New York, 1980, p. 275.
 - 2- See *The Metaphysical Poets*, ed. by Helen Gardner, Penguin Books, 1980, pp. 70-87, 117-131.
 - 3- See A. El-Ghamrawi, *W.B. Yeats and the Culture of the Middle East*, The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, Cairo, 1979, pp. 29-35.
 - 4- Cited by E. Herman, *The Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, James Clarke and Co., Ltd, London, 1922 (third edition), p. 221.

reminds the reader of Tennyson's line, 'Her eyes are homes of silent prayer'(1), and also, to a certain extent, of Blake's "The nakedness of woman is the work of God"(2). Here, for instance, is one of his passionate formulations:

A woman's smile, a lute to rouse the morn,
A nook, a heart unbound, a flagon drawn.
.....
.....
The jasmine blooms in the shadow of your hair!
Lips beyond price, since Aden's pearls lie there,
Like you, the soul is ever wine-inspired;
The wine's bright soul shines through a form as fair.(3)

As a connotative or symbolic device, the expression of erotic love for beautiful women is often used by Sufi poets to symbolize their inexpressible and unparalleled love for God. The following lines from a poem entitled "Love's Awakening", together with the verses already cited, surely testify to the justice of Hafiz's reputation as the greatest of the Sufis in this respect. Speaking very erotically, he sees eternity lie in the fulfilment of his love for a charming maid whose beauty, since he undoubtedly had Ibn Al'arabi's teaching in mind, is a spark of the Radiating Beauty of the Everlasting Beloved:

Hafiz, if thou wouldst win her grace,
Be never absent from thy place;
When thou dost see the well-loved face,
Be lost at last to time and space.(4)

Alluding to the tragic love stories of Qays and Laila from Arabic folklore, and of Farhad and Shirin from the Persian tradition (both as familiar to Arabic and Persian readers as Romeo and Juliet is to the European reader), Jami asserts, also after

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- 1- Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, XXXII, 1.
 - 2- Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, CPPWB, p. 36.
 - 3- Hafiz, *The Ruba'iyat of Hafiz*, translated and introduced by Syed Abdul Majid, John Murray, London, 1919, pp. 41,50.
 - 4- Hafiz, *Fifty Poems of Hafiz*, collected and translated by A. J. Arberry, The University Press, Cambridge, 1953, p. 84.

the fashion of Ibn Al'arabi, that it was the reflection of the Divine Beauty in the beauty of Laila's face and body, and in the sweetness of Shirin's lips, that was the real driving force behind the great sacrifice and self-denial of the two greatest lovers of Arabia and Persia:

Not till thy Secret Beauty through the Cheek
Of Laila smite does she inflame Majnun,
And not till Thou have sugar'd Shirin's Lip
The Hearts of those Two Lovers fill with Blood.(1)

The same might be said of Rumi who shares Ibn Al'arabi's view that the Divine Reality may be contemplated in woman. Rumi holds that through woman's essential nature, when seen with the spiritual not the lustful eye, the Divine Beauty reveals itself and graciously inspires the lovers with the Truth. Therefore, "A woman is a ray of God: she is not the earthly beloved./ She is creative: you might say she is not created".(2)

Equally relevant to the interpretation of the same Kor'anic phrase "in your own Selves" is the Sufi speculation that God, or rather the Divine attributes, can be revealed in each union of loving souls. At first sight, this conception of love appears to be drawn from the Hellenistic tradition, more specifically from either Plato's marriage of minds or Plotinus' marriage of souls. Perhaps the idea was developed and cultivated by late Sufis in the light of Platonism and Neoplatonism. But this should not blind us to the fact that the Islamic Traditions, from the very outset of Islam, recognized and emphasised this 'archetypal' union of loving souls, and thus the Sufi doctrine is more likely to be a parallel and not a debt. Among the seven kinds of people who will enjoy the Shade of God on the Day of Resurrection are, as the Prophet

1- Jami, *Salaman and Absal*, p. 1.

2- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 44.

said, two men loving each other for God's sake, and God will say on that Day: 'Where are those who love one another through My glory? Today I shall give them shade in My shade, it being a day when there is no shade but my shade.(1) Drawing on this Islamic principle, Rumi, like others, refers to this sort of mystical transmutation of loving souls into the Universal Essence of Love:

O Thou Whose soul is free from "we" and "I", O Thou
Who art the essence of the spirit in men and women,
When men and women become one, Thou art that One;
when the units are wiped out, lo, Thou art that Unity.(2)

It is vital here to point out that Sufi doctrines in their relation to Islamic teachings and dogmas may be divided into four main categories: 1) directly, and authentically Islamic with no parallels in other creeds, 2) directly, and authentically Islamic in reconciliation with other creeds, 3) indirectly Islamic, resulting from the personal speculations and deductive interpretations of Sufis of which there are two types: a) congenial and approved of by the majority of orthodox Muslims; b) esoteric and repudiated by Muslim theologians as contradictory to fundamental Islamic teachings, and 4) completely peculiar and alien to Islam and in no way reconcilable with Islamic dogmas. It is undoubtedly this last category that gives rise to the controversial issue of the origin of Sufism and its relation to the fundamental Islamic teachings.(3)

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- 1- *Forty Hadith Qudsi*, selected and trans. by E. Ibrahim and D. J. Davies, Ernest Klett Printers, Stuttgart, 1981, pp. 100-1.
 - 2- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 33.
 - 3- For further details, see M. Lutfi Jum'ah, *The History of the Philosophy of Islam*, Al-Ma'arif Bookshop, Cairo, 1924, pp. 253-61. See also the brief account of the four theories of the origin of Sufism in E.G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, pp. 418-21; A. J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1957, pp. 90-1, for the origin of the Sufi doctrine of *fana'* (Annihilation in God); Javad Nurbakhsh, "A Brief History of Sufism", in his book *Sufi Women*, pp. 13-20; and also the attack on the philosophers in Al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-Falasefah*, pp. 29-33. (in Arabic)

Thus it is not disputed that Sufism, the mystical movement of Islam, must naturally have been in contact with other trends of thought, and have been influenced in varying degrees by Platonism, Christianity, Neoplatonism, Hinduism, and even what was left of the paganism of the Magi of Persia. But the point is that without its deepest foundations in the Islamic tradition, in terms of which Sufis interpret their vision and justify what seems to be shocking to some Muslims, the existence of Sufism in the framework of Islam would have been called in question, and it would consequently not be recognized as an Islamic movement. This is not so much to give a historical interpretation of the origin of Sufism as to elaborate briefly its genuine roots in the religion to which it pertains, apart from its reaction to and correlation with other schools of thought. If the love of God, as indicated above, is the ultimate hope of the Muslim mystic and the only means by which he is capable of defeating 'the dark shadow of Not-being', the possibility of apprehending it must certainly be derived from some theological premises professed in his own religion, or at least understood by him as such. This is absolutely true, since the Sufi, through the Kor'an and the Traditions has absolute certitude that his "Beloved" is "the" God of love. More specifically, to the Sufi, as well as to broad-minded Muslims, the love of God is indubitably proclaimed by God in the Kor'an and repeatedly confirmed by the Prophet in the Traditions. Indeed, the divine love of God in Islam is confined to its followers alone, Allah's people who are faithful and overflowing in their love for Him. God's love of this kind is embodied in many places in the Kor'an, referring to those who may be beatified with it: 'God loveth those who do good' (II:195; III:134, 148; V:93), 'who act aright' (III:76), 'who put their

trust in Him' (III:159), 'who judge in equity' (V:42), 'who keep themselves pure and clean' (II:222, IX:108), 'who fight in His cause' (LXI:4), 'who turn to Him constantly' (II:222), 'who are fair and just' (XLIX:9, LX:8), 'who are kind' (V:13); 'God loveth the righteous' (IX:4), 'the firm and steadfast' (III:146), '..if ye do love God, follow me [the Prophet]: God will love you' (III:31), 'I cast love over thee [Moses] from Me' (XX:39), and '... He loves them, and they love Him' (V:54). Upon the last statement, Annemarie Schimmel comments that it was this particular Kor'anic passage that provided the Sufis 'with the proof for their theories of the mutual love between the Creator and the creature'.(1) Moreover, in the Holy Hadith, God, through the Prophet, tells the faithful:

My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks.(2)

According to the Kor'an, God did not create man in His image, but man was created from sounding clay or mud moulded into shape in due proportion, and then God breathed into him something of His Spirit: "I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit" (XXXVIII:72).(3) However, some Sufis hold that God created man in His image relying on the Kor'anic verse "Behold, thy Lord said to the angel: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth' (II:30). Logically enough, to the Sufi, the Gerent and the vicegerent must be of the same substance. To the orthodox Muslims, this is considered an extreme interpretation, since God tells them that

1- Schimmel, *MDI*, p. 40.

2- *Forty Hadith Qudsi*, pp. 104-5. See also Hadith 24 pp. 102-3, and Hadith 30 pp. 116-7.

3- This statement is repeated in the text in (XV:28-9; XXXII:9).

the soul is in His command and the faithful should not go further in their speculations because spiritual knowledge may be revealed or withheld according to God's will and favour. This cannot be disputed. It is definitely and most explicitly expressed: "Of knowledge it is a little that is communicated to you, [O people]" (XVII:85). But one thing is certain and incontrovertible for all Muslims; man has a portion of God's divine spirit, which justifies the Sufi's yearning to be united with God through mystical vision. Shamsi Tabriz refers to this Islamic truth:

Thou mak'st him a morsel of dust that
he may become pure herbage;
He is free from filth when thou hast
breathed into him a soul.(1)

To be beatified with the Divine vision and to be deservedly granted the love of God, the Sufi has to follow most sincerely the course of the Prophet, and consequently to gain the attributes of the true lover of God referred to in the Kor'anic verses cited above (this principle is not applicable to very few heterodox Sufis like Khayr(2) who renounced the formality of religion). Yet, to the Sufi all these attributes of the true lover can be melted and crystallized into one Sufi term, that is "purity of heart", from which other derivative qualities radiate. Purity of heart is the basic criterion by which the real Sufi can be distinguished from those hypocrites and worldly people who falsely claim to be Sufis, and in doing so impugn Sufism and notoriously debase its sublime essence. To this Rumi assents:

WHAT makes the Sufi? Purity of heart;
Not the patched mantle and the lust perverse

1- Tabriz, *Selected Poems from the Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, p. 191.
2- See R.A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, G. Bell & Sons Ltd., London, 1914, pp. 61-2.

Of those vile earth-bound men who steal his name.(1)

Thus the heart, for the Sufi, constitutes the noblest and holiest place of the human being in which God resides if He so wills. It is the field in which the love of God can grow and flourish. The Sufi Ruzbihan emphasizes this idea in the following metaphor: 'Look well, for the heart is the marketplace of His love, and there the rose of Adam on the branch of Love is from the color of manifestation of His rose'.(2) In another place Rumi stresses that 'If the orifice of the heart is open and clean;/ Divine light without agent shall it glean',(3) while Rabi'a, when possessed by a state of perfect intimacy with her Beloved, addresses Him: 'Within my heart I established you'.(4)

On the practical side of the Sufi, purity of heart requires love of neighbour, which is a precondition of the Muslim's faith, for the Prophet says: 'No one can be considered a Muslim until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself'.(5) Charity is also held to be a contributing factor in the Sufi structure of love, whether it denotes love, or almsgiving as it does in Christianity. In the sense of love, the Prophet defines it as follows: '*Ihsan* [literally charity] is to adore Allah as though thou didst see Him, and if thou dost not see Him, He nonetheless seeth thee'.(6) On the other hand, charity, defined as *zakat* (benevolence), is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is also one of the many Islamic forms of expressing gratitude to God for His gifts and beneficence. Self-renunciation, self-sacrifice, penance, patience in adversity and thanksgiving in blessings,

1- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 54.

2- Schimmel, *MDI*, p. 298.

3- Abul Hasan Nadwi, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, p. 345.

4- Javad Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Women*, p. 75.

5- *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol.1. Hadith 12. narrated by Anas.

6- *Ibid.*, Hadith 43. narrated by Abu Huraira.

preparation for the Hereafter, and the casting away of self-will are in varying degrees held by Sufis to be tools to eliminate the self-attributes which veil the lover from the Beloved:

without the commerce of love
there is no admittance to the Beloved.
They say, "What is love?" Say, "The abandonment
of free will."
He who has not escaped out of free will,
no free will has he.(1)

Also Al-Ghazali says of his personal mystical experience: 'Having entirely surrendered my own free-will, my heart no longer felt any distress in renouncing fame, wealth, or the society of my children'.(2) Nicholson summarizes the Sufi way of complete and unconditioned submission to God's will, when he refers to the Sufi love for God as "the giving up of all possessions - wealth, honour, will, life and whatever else men value - for the Beloved's sake without any thought of reward".(3) Then he moves on to give evidence for the idea by quoting the Sufi Bayazid's saying: "It is a crime in the lover to regard his love, and an outrage in love to look at one's own seeking while one is face to face with the Sought (the Beloved). His love entered and removed all besides Him and left no trace of anything else, so that it remained single even as He is single".(4) The consummation of love between the soul of the Sufi and God can be perfectly achieved through the entire detachment of the soul from all that is not God on the part of the Sufi, and through divine satisfaction and grace on the part of God. Referring to this mutual relationship of love fulfilled in its deepest sense, Margaret Smith emphasises the faithful and untiring role of the soul in overcoming the obstacles

1- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 48.

2- Cited in Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, (Fourth Edition), Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, 1912, p. 254.

3- R.A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 107.

4- *Ibid.*, p. 115.

that might impede it from reaching its aspiration, and the role of God's grace in appraising the sincerely unremitting endeavour of the soul to attain the desirable stage of divine satisfaction:

The mystic path was made up of a number of stages, and as the soul passed through these it acquired certain qualities, which enabled it to rise higher and higher, and to attain to yet more exalted stations, until at last, through its own unwearied efforts, and with the help of the Divine grace, it would triumph over all hindrances and find its true home in God.(1)

This is borne out by the endeavours manifested in the writings of virtually all Sufis. This, in turn, corroborates the idea of the close affinity between the mystic ways of both Christians and Muslims. To cut it short, the state of perfect love for God can be distinctively recognized when the Sufi is no longer preoccupied with the temptations of the world. Worldly ambitions widen the gap between the soul and God. The Sufi always works to close this gap that separates him from his Beloved. In the following lines the poet summarizes with perfect clarity the Sufi way of achieving the communion of love with God:

I have separated my heart from this world
My heart and Thou are not separate.
And when slumber closes my eyes,
I find Thee between the eye and the lid.(2)

1- Margaret Smith, *Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East*, The Sheldon Press, London, 1931, p. 170.
2- Cited in Margaret Smith, *Ibid.*, p. 62.

1.3 THE DOCTRINE OF *BHAKTI* IN HINDUISM

One of the greatest spiritual landmarks of Hindu mysticism is the doctrine of *bhakti* (1), which generally means divine love. Satyavrata Patel elucidates the meaning of *bhakti* as the love of Krishna, which overwhelmingly captures the soul of the Hindu mystic, then he proceeds to concretize it as 'positively love which knows no barriers, flows in all directions vertically and horizontally'.(2) Without jumping to conclusions, the love of God in Hindu mysticism is as highly esteemed by Hindu mystics as it is in both the Christian and Islamic traditions. For Frits Staal, the understanding of the term *bhakti* is highly recommended as a 'useful introduction to Indian forms of mysticism, especially for those who are raised in a Western monotheistic environment.'(3) The prime objective of the present discussion is neither to deal with the nature and function of the numerous Hindu gods, nor to decide which of them, Krishna, Vishnu, Rama, Shiva or even Brahma (not Brahman, the Godhead or the Absolute transcendent) may really be the god of love. To avoid the possibility of confusion in the mind of the reader who is not familiar with Hinduism, any one of the gods mentioned above could be the god towards whom love is usually directed.(4) But, the main concern in the present domain is rather to throw some light upon the doctrine of the love of God as conceived and depicted in Hindu mysticism, bearing in mind that in Hinduism the 'nature of God and even his very existence were

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- 1- For a semantical analysis of the word *bhakti*, see Zaehner's translation of *The Bhagavad-Gita*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p. 181.
 - 2- Satyavrata Patel, *Hinduism, Religion and Way of Life*, Associated Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980, p. 43.
 - 3- Frits Staal, 'Superstructures', *UM*, p. 101.
 - 4- See, for example, R.P. Mishr, *Hinduism, The Faith of the Future*, S.S. Publishers, Delhi, 1981, p. 29, and also S. Patel, *Hinduism, Religion and Way of Life*, pp. 135-9.

matters of secondary importance.'(1)

'The idea of God's love for man', explains Zaehner, 'is present for the first time in the Gita.'(2) Despite the fact that this sentence is basically intended to make a chronological statement about the development of the notion of the love of God in the history of Hinduism, it also affirms by implication the actual existence of that love, regardless of the reliability of the historical chronology. In other words, there is no denial of the love of God as a feature in Hinduism in Zaehner's statement, though he argues about the time of its emergence in the sacred writings of Hindus, producing an historical interpretation that has been supported by Frits Staal.(3) Nevertheless, Dr. Mishr, who is a Hindu thinker, argues against Zaehner's historical interpretation, assuring us that *bhakti*, the love of God or "Absolute Devotion to God", is not a late development in Hinduism. To quote Mishr: 'We see it [*bhakti*] in the Rigved in the form of the longing of the seers to be delighted with the company of gods. We see it in the beautiful prayers of the Upanishads. We see it in the Gita where Krishn propounds it with full passion and compassion.'(4) Again, though it is not so much our intention to discuss the idea chronologically as to prove its existence and importance in Hindu mystical states, it is relevant here to consider carefully the significant implications in Mishr's short historical survey, in the light of which the term *bhakti* seems to be unequivocal. The manifestations of *bhakti*, from Mishr's point of view, find expression in the "longing of the seers", the "prayers of the Upanishads" pointing to the human side, and in the

1- R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 6.

2- R.C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, The Athlone Press, London, 1960, p. 74.

3- Frits Staal, 'Superstructures', *UM*, p. 101.

4- R.P. Mishr, *Hinduism, The Faith of the Future*, pp. 47-8.

"full passion and compassion" of Krishna indicating the godly side. From this, *bhakti* actually contains both God's love for man and man's love for God at the same time. It is not applicable only to the love of God as opposed to the love for God, but it connotes the realization of the love of God by the soul. In other words, when the soul's love is reciprocated by the Beloved, it is *bhakti* or the achievement of the union of love with God, the most cherished hope to which Hindu mystics aspire. Moreover, from Max Weber we have another obvious testimony that *bhakti* means the human unconditioned love for God or the 'passionate inward devotion to the redeemer or his grace', (1) while Zaehner explicitly refers to it as the love of God when he speaks of Krishna who 'holds the secret not only of moksha but also of the love of God for man that the liberated soul may enjoy if God so wills.' (2) Thus, *bhakti* may signify the love of God in the general sense of the word, but specifically it is the consummation of love between the soul and the Divine as suggested by De Chaudhuri in his remark that *The Bhagavata Purana* discriminates between three kinds of *bhagavatas* (followers of *bhakti*), to the highest of which pertain those who realize the divine presence of the Supreme Self. (3) The idea is again emphasized by Kathleen Raine in her commentary on Kabir, the "supreme poet of *bakhti* ":

There is of course a Western tradition of erotic mystical imagery - in the writings, for example, both of St Teresa of Avila and of St John of the Cross: but nowhere is the relationship of the soul with God as that of the bride with the bridegroom more rhapsodically affirmed than by Kabir. In many passages this affirmation of love - *bakhti* - goes with a rejection of knowledge. (4)

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- 1- Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, trans. by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale, The Free Press, U.S.A., 1958, p. 307.
 - 2- R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, p. 65.
 - 3- Harendra K. De Chaudhuri, *God in Indian Religion*, Prabartak Printing & Halftone Ltd., Calcutta, India, 1969, p. 67.
 - 4- Kathleen Raine, 'Yeats and Kabir', *Temenos*, No. 5., Skelton's Press Ltd., London, 1984, p. 27.

It is evident now that *bhakti* signifies more or less the spiritual state in which the perfection and consummation of the love relationship of the individual soul with the Universal Self is hopefully realized. In this connection we read in *The Bhagavad-Gita* (1) this statement, which crystallizes the essence and message of the whole book:

But by devotion [*bhakti*] that excludes all else, O Arjuna,
I can be known, seen, and in principle entered into,
Paramtapa. (2)

Bhakti in this verse is translated as 'devotion', but in Zaehner's more recent translation it is rendered as 'the worship of love', which seems to me more accurate and more significant considering the two preceding verses which repudiate any form of ritual devotion (e.g. Vedas, austerities, gifts or sacrifices) for the sake of love.

The liberation or release of the soul means that the individual soul reaches Brahman and is consequently merged in the eternal ground of the universe. Brahman is the Absolute or God transcendent - the impersonal Absolute that is beyond the distinction of person or not-person. God is at the same time the Absolute manifest, and the gods are in fact phases of God. Brahma (not Brahman), Vishnu and Shiva are the main aspects, and are personal. Being impersonal and unmanifest, Brahman is transcendent relative to them, though they are transcendent relative to the world. Liberation is the knowledge of God as dwelling in the heart, or as Zaehner understands it, the experience of 'God's immanence in the human heart, but is not yet

1- Quotations from *The Bhagavad-Gita* are taken from Narayana Guru's translation, Asia Publishing House, London, 1961, unless otherwise is mentioned.

2- *The Bhagavad-Gita*, XI:54., p.509.

felt to be union with a *transcendent* God who is "beyond all essences as they really are". (1) As a result, no wonder if the importance and value attached to Bhakti by Hindu mystics seem to be much greater than that of the liberation of the soul, and therefore

Liberation may be an excellent thing, but compared to the love of God it is as mustard seed beside Mount Meru, and the selfish cultivation of one's own immortal soul is contemptuously dismissed as fit only for those who do not know how to love. (2)

In *The Hymns of Guru Nanak*, the founder of the Sikh religion, the path of Bhakti transcends both action and knowledge as ways of salvation. The union with God which is the goal of life for Nanak can be attained only through *bhakti*, which means, of course to him, the worshipping of the Name *namamarga* : 'I have no miracles except the name of God'. (3) In the same vein Narada speaks of the absolute superiority of *bhakti* and its dispensation with knowledge in these verses:

Some say knowledge alone is the means of love.
Others say of knowledge and love that each
depends upon the other.
But Narada holds that love is itself the means
and the end.....
Therefore love is the best road to salvation. (4)

Even if the soul can achieve salvation through its untiring and constant pursuit for holy knowledge, this holy knowledge, or as Max Weber formulates it 'liberating knowledge which can be only attained by a mystical re-union of the spirit with the divine All

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- 1- Introduction to *Hindu Scriptures*, selected and translated by R.C. Zaehner, Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1966, p. xiv.
 - 2- Quoted in Zaehner, *Hinduism*, p. 100.
 - 3- *Hymns of Guru Nanak*, trans. by Thushwart Singh, Sangam Books, Bombay, 1969, pp. 36,7.
 - 4- Narada, *The Gospel of Love*, Ganesh & Co. Madras, 1924, pp. 8-9.

One, Brahman'(1), depends mainly on God's will and grace because of its being absolutely under His divine control. Consequently, there is no other way for man to gain this holy knowledge except by the love of God. So Kabir with the spiritual eye of the mystic asserts that the conflict between sects under the name of Knowledge is not the way of seeking the Indivisible Lord, chiefly because

The Supreme One must be other than this.
The Yogi, the Sanyasi, the Ascetics,
are disputing one with another:
Kabir says, "O brother! he who has seen
that radiance of love, he is saved."(2)

The best example of the absolute *Bhakti*, that totally waives any formal rites to attain union with God, can be clearly found in the poems of Alvars. To Nam Alvar, an outstanding figure of the sect, the technique taught in Yoga is meaningless, for it is void of love; and the highest aspiration of the soul of man is to achieve intimate union with God, which is possible only through the bonds of love:

As I dote on the Lord of Kalkarai (God)
Whose streets with scarlet lily are perfumed
My heart for his wonderful graces melts
How then can I, my restless love suppress?(3)

According to the sacred writings of Hinduism, the soul of man was not only created by God in His image and likeness, as is the case in both Christianity and Islam, but it was a particle of God, an integral portion or fragment of His own Self, and was not, therefore, created out of nothing:

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- 1- Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, p. 175.
 - 2- Kabir, *One Hundred Poems*, XIII, translated by Rabindranath Tagore, assisted with introduction by Evelyn Underhill, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1915, p. 13.
 - 3- N.S. Dasgupta, *Hindu Mysticism*, Fredrick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 1959, p. 150.

A qualitative unit even of Mine which is eternal, having become life in the world of life, attracts (to itself) the senses - of which the mind is the sixth - which abide in nature.(1)

In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the story of the creation of man is presented in more detail in regard to the reason for creating man as an emanation of the Universal Self or Atman and how the creation of the world of generation took place. So when the Universal Self found no pleasure in His own loneliness,

He longed for a second. Now he was of the size of a man and a woman in close embrace.
He split (*pat-*) this Self in two: and from this arose husband (*pati*) and wife (*panti*). Hence we say, 'Oneself (*sva*) is like half a potsherd', as indeed Yajnavalkya used to say. That is why space is filled up with woman. He copulated with her, and thence were human beings born.(2)

The spiritual condition for which the Hindu mystic craves and strives in order to be prepared for the beatification of the Divine Vision seems to be more or less identical with what has been indicated before in both Christian and Sufi experience. The Divine Vision takes place only when the soul of the lover passes beyond the thought of self or when, as an Upanishad puts it, 'the knots of the heart are sundered. All doubts disappear. All actions cease to exist'.(3) Moreover, even the virtues and moral values which can pave the way for the Hindu mystic to contact the Ultimate Reality and to have a glimpse of the Universal Soul are largely the same as those which are characteristics of the mystic way in Christianity and Islam. An access to Divine manifestation needs, as a first and fundamental step, purification of the heart and transformation of the individual self through self-renunciation, as *The Bhagavad-Gita* reveals

1- *The Bhagavad-Gita*, XV.7., p. 602.

2- *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, I,iv,3.

3- S. Patel, *Hinduism, Religion and Way of Life*, p. 37.

Abandoning completely all desires originating in the will for particularized ends, curbing the collection of sense - functioning on every side.(1)

Self-renunciation is more often than not identified with love as the great poet of India, Tagore, exquisitely demonstrates in this dramatic dialogue in a poem entitled "Love and Renunciation":

Love says: "Renunciation, your creed is one of lies!"
"You are the chief illusion, Love," Austerity replies;
"To those who seek salvation I say, Your own good shun."
Love answers: "After all, then, you and I are one!"(2)

The implications of Tagore's poetic dialogue appear to be in very close accord with Narada's aphorism that 'the renunciation of *Dharma* becomes the supreme *Dharma*. Absence of all rules is the highest rule of Love'.(3) The purification of the soul of the Brahman who seeks the knowledge of the Self requires the silencing of the passions, the suppressing of the senses and the sublimation of spiritual faculties; hence Kabir says:

THE lock of error shuts the gate, open
it with the key of love :
Thus by opening the door, thou shalt
wake the Beloved.
Kabir says: "O brother! do not pass
by such good fortune as this."(4)

and in another place he adds:

If there be lust, how can love be there?
Where there is love, there is no lust.(5)

Charity and compassion participate in the process of purification. They are at the same time effective tools for piercing the veil of ignorance so that the Hindu devotee may reach

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- 1- *The Bhagavad-Gita*, VI, 24., p. 300.
 - 2- *Rabindranath Tagore*, *The Augustan Books of Modern Poetry*, ed. Edward Thompson, London, 1925, p. 19.
 - 3- Narada, *The Philosophy of Love (Bhakti-Sutras of Devarsi Narada)*, ed. H. Poddar, Orissa Cement Ltd. Delhi, 1983, p. 196.
 - 4- Kabir, *One Hundred Poems*, XXXVIII, pp. 45,6.
 - 5- *Ibid.*, XXXVI, p. 44.

the self-vanishing state in which the holy love can be perceived. Thus, charity and compassion enable the devotee to purify his body and soul so that God may enter 'into a clean body and a clean or sinless mind. The body is to be made a temple for the Divine, a tabernacle of the Lord and He should be housed in a clean body and sinless mind'.(1) According to Shandilya, a great ancient seer, bhakti 'gives a rare delight to any person, washes away the dirt of frustration or perversion of the mind, purifies the body and cools the spirit.'(2)

It is also believed that self-renunciation takes the form of comprehensive surrender by the Hinhu mystic to Vishnu as the first step in the ladder of *bhakti*. (3) But this surrender must not give rise to any feeling of humiliation at all. Its function is essentially directed to eradicate human vanity since the elimination of the ego corresponds to the illumination of the holy knowledge gained through the path of love. And as a result 'begging becomes the greatest boon in Devotion or Love' and since *bhakti* is wholly 'based on the mercy of the object of devotion, it makes a devotee modest, polite and decent.'(4)

Taking this gateway of the absence of the self which leads first to the holy knowledge and eventually to the love of God, a Hindu mystic is not to look intentionally forward to heaven or to hope to escape hell. Despite the fact that to some Hindus, like this world, heaven and hell in their reality are states of mind, to others their existence is to be materially conceived in the hereafter. However, those mystics who believe in the material existence of them have a deeply-rooted belief that 'everything is

1- S. Patel, *Hinduism, Religion and Way of Life*, p. 44.

2- R.P. Mishr, *Hinduism, the Faith of the Future*, p. 54.

3- Frits Staal, 'Superstructures', *UM*, p. 95.

4- Cited in Mishr, *Op.Cit.*, p. 84.

pre-established and only the capacity for spiritual love of Rama is a guarantee of grace, freedom from illusion and pride, and the suppression of desire.'(1) Obviously, this Hindu idea of loving God without fear of Hell or desire for Paradise is as much typical as the Sufi idea of loving God out of love, especially as manifested in the case of Rabi'a and Bayazid Bistami. There is no wonder, therefore, if Mishr states that 'a very prominent trait of Bhakti was its close relationship with the Love of the Sufis'.(2) Moreover, 'intense love' says Handa, 'for the ideal without any spirit of bargaining or any idea of reward or punishment'(3) is a fundamental requisite for a Hindu mystic to travel safely and successfully through the path of Divine Love.

1.4 PLOTINIAN FLIGHT OF THE ALONE TO THE ALONE

Plotinus(4) sees love as the divine instinct of the soul which enables it to realize its own original nature, and to ascend to its former state of Edenic eternity. According to his point of view, 'veritable love' or the 'sharp desire' (EN: I.6.7), as he puts it, is the vehicle of the divine vision and 'exists to be the medium between desire and that object of desire. It is the eye of the desirer; by its power what loves is enabled to see the loved thing' (EN: III.5.2).

The existence of this Plotinian veritable love depends totally upon the nature of the soul of man and its power to overcome all the obstructing barriers standing in the way and to fulfil its

1- Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, p. 313.

2- *Op.Cit.*, p. 47.

3- D.N. Handa, *Concept of Hinduism*, Embassy Book Company, New Delhi, 1979, p. 12.

4- Quotations from Plotinus are mainly extracted from Plotinus, *Enneads*, translated by Stephen Mackenna, Charles T. Branford Company, Boston, Massachusetts, 1916.

desire for union with the Absolute, for the 'emotional state for which we make this "Love" responsible rises in souls aspiring to be knit in the closest union with some beautiful object' (*EN*: III.5.1). During the earthly manifestation of the soul, it is a stranger in exile, ever pining to return to its original home, ever yearning to regain its forgotten state of eternity, and ever aspiring to be reunited with its source. Hence the apparent realities in our material world are just images for or shadows of the Reality formerly perceived by the soul before its fallen state; these worldly manifestations should therefore be regarded by mystics as only indications or representations of the higher realm of Reality, which can be attained, however, in this terrestrial world through the mystical path of contemplation. In other words, those who are not mystics, who hanker after the fleeting glitter of material gains, and who seek only the satisfaction of their bodily pleasures, certainly confuse the image with the Reality, and the Reality is consequently hidden from them:

There are Souls to whom earthly beauty is a leading to the memory of that in the higher realm and these love the earthly as an image; those that have not attained to this memory do not understand what is happening within them, and take the image for the reality.

(*EN*: III.5.1)

Plotinus defines the mystic as one of whose soul has 'felt burning within itself the flame of love for What is There [the Place of Vision] to know, the passion of the lover resting on the bosom of his love' (*EN*: VI.9.4). It is within the reach of those refined, contemplative souls of mystics, the lovers of the upward reality who are taking the 'flight of the Alone to the Alone' (*EN*: VI.9.2) to seize hold of the primal source of Love. They can find it

through a 'tendency of the Soul towards pure beauty, in a recognition, in a kinship, in an unreasoned consciousness of friendly relation', since 'nothing absolutely void of good would ever go seeking the good' (*EN*: III.5.10). Realizing this primal source of love, the individual soul will subsequently be guided to the Good. And since love is eternal, being 'born in the banquet of the gods', its eternity is shared by the soul in which it dwells, for love 'springs from the intention of the Soul towards its Best, towards the Good; as long as Soul has been, Love has been' (*EN*: III.5.10).

Plotinus's idea of the All-Soul - the third phase of the Plotinian system of the Divine Triad of emanation (the One, the Divine Mind or Intellectual Principle, and the All-Soul) - entails much the same idea of the purification or purgation of the soul that most mystics profess and adopt as an essential step towards contemplation of God. Plotinus holds that the human soul is nothing but the All-Soul set in touch with the lower. When this lower is rooted out of the human soul, nothing will remain except the All-Soul, which is entirely divine. To Plotinus, the Divine-Soul is divided into three phases. The first phase is the Intellectualive-Soul, which is one with the All-Mind or Universal Mind, is utterly untouched by Matter, and has its being in the eternal contemplation of the Divine: to live by it is to live as a god.

Despite differences of terminology, this idea of Plotinus is esteemed and embraced by the majority of the mystics of all cultures. Living as a god or God through purification with the 'body's turmoil stilled' is an idea preached, for example, by Hindu scriptures, Eckhart, Rumi, Ibn Al'arabi, and others. It

was, in my view, the cause of the persecution of Bayazid Bistami and the execution of Halaj, for Halaj declared in public 'I am the Truth, e.g. God'(1), and said, when transported beyond measure in his highest ecstasy,

I am He whom I love, and whom I love is I.
We are two spirits dwelling in one body.
If thou seest me, thou seest Him, and if
Thou seest Him, thou seest us both.(2)

while Bayazid Bistami overemotionally exclaimed 'Glory to me! Within this mantle there is none but God'.(3)

The second phase of the Plotinian All-Soul is the "Reasoning-Soul" which is held by Plotinus as separable from the body but not separated. It gains knowledge by means of "Discursive-Reasoning". The criteria by which it has access to knowledge are doubt and logic, and that is why its knowledge is described as Sense-Knowledge. So it deals basically with the mental element of sensation. Finally, the third and lowest phase of the All-Soul is called the "Unreasoning-Soul". This soul leads an animal life. Its satisfaction lies mainly in the gratification of fleshly appetites. Hankering after physical enjoyment, this phase of the All-Soul stands for the bare fact of life, which goes as low as the life of the plant.

Only when man reaches the phase of the Intellective-Soul is he able to contemplate God or the 'One', and to live as a god. At this high phase of the soul all hindrances have been done away with, and the 'lower' no longer exists. In other words, when the soul is entirely detached from the senses (whether physical or

1- Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 79.

2- Quoted by R. Chaudhury, *Sufism and Vedanta*, pt. II: *Some Great Sufis and Their Doctrines*, Prachyavani Mandira, Calcuta, 1948, p. 58.

3- A.J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, p. 97.

mental sensation), and when the temptations of the mundane world exert no power upon its life, it is capable of being raised to the contemplation of God.

The only means by which the Plotinian One, of which no attribute can be affirmed, is reached, is mystic contemplation: 'We penetrate to It only by mystic contemplation, the senses sealed' (EN: VI.8.2). More relevant to the link between the Intellective-Soul of Plotinus and the purity of the heart or purification of other mystics are the steps of purification laid down by Plotinus. The following passage illustrates these steps of the ritual procedure followed by those being initiated into the mysteries, which lead to Beauty itself:

for those that will take the upward path, who will set all their forces towards it, who will divest themselves of all that we have put on in our descent:- so, to those that approach the Holy Celebrations of the Mysteries, there are appointed purifications and the laying aside of the garments worn before, and the entry in nakedness - until, passing, on the upward way, all that is other than the God, each in the solitude of himself shall behold that solitary dwelling Existence, the Apart, the Unmingled, the Pure, that from Which all things depend, for Which all look and live and act and know, the Source of Life and of Intellection and of Being.

(EN: 1.6.7)

Taking this upward path by casting away the temptations of this world, the 'frequenters of Beauty' will be able to reach the desired stage at which they really deserve to be loved in return, or rather the consummation of the union of love will be achieved. Setting aside Plotinus's conception of the One for the time being, the resemblance between his idea of purification and that of all the mystics alluded to before is striking. The essential content of his idea is also found in the wording of other mystics. To paraphrase him, earthliness weighs hard upon the soul's

aspiration; only the spirit free from sin and corruption shall touch the spirit; God will only come into a pure soul; the lower appetitive soul, which is the seat of passion and lust, constitutes the stumbling-block in the way to union with God; and

Casting the body's vest aside
My soul into the boughs does glide.(1)

More to the point, the whole idea of the All- Soul appears to be in complete harmony with the threefold classification of the soul conceived in Hinduism and referred to by Zaehner as 'elect spirits, the majority of souls, souls of hopeless depravity',(2) together with the three categories of the soul known in Sufism as a) the animal or sensual; b) the intelligential (discursive reason); and c) the transcendental (Universal Reason) which displays itself in prophets and saints. (3)

Plotinus goes on to elucidate the blessings waiting for those true lovers of Beauty, and to describe as well the nature of the union of love as conceived by them:

For This, the Beauty supreme, the absolute, and the primal, fashions Its lovers to Beauty and makes them also worthy of love. And for This, the sternest and the uttermost combat is set before the Souls; all our labour is for This, lest we be left without part in this noblest vision, which to attain is to be blessed in the blissful sight. which to fail of is to fail utterly.

For not he that has failed of the joy that is in colour or in visible forms, not he that has failed of power or of honours or of kingdom has failed. but only he that has failed of only This, for Whose winning he should renounce kingdoms and command over earth and ocean and sky, if only, spurning the world of sense from beneath his feet, and straining to This, he may see.

(EN: I.6.7)

1- Andrew Marvell, in *The Quest for Reality*, p. 70.
2- R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, p. 61.
3- Nicholson's Notes in *RPM*, p. 61.

1.5 NATURE MYSTICISM

Relevant to the theme of ecstasy in loveliness, or beauty as an object in contemplation of the Divine Reality, is what is generally known as 'nature mysticism'. The focus here will be on the meaning of this type of mysticism, if it is a distinct type, and on its universality. The term is essentially applied to states in which the individual consciousness seems to be altered through contemplating or gazing at some natural forms. Stace points to the fact that the contemplation of running water caused St. Ignatius of Loyola to pass into a state of mystical consciousness in which he 'came to apprehend spiritual things', and that this transformation of consciousness was well-known to Boehme through gazing at a polished surface.(1)

The term also includes an abrupt transformation of the individual self or a sudden intoxicating loss of personality and a sinking, as it were, into a harmonious ecstatic unity with the whole of nature. William James refers to this state of transfiguration of the mind, or the soul or consciousness, when he says, 'certain aspects of nature seem to have a peculiar power of awakening such mystical moods'.(2) Stace, too, asserts the existence of such experiences in the mainstream of mysticism(3), while Richard Woods puts the question: "Can there be a 'natural' mystical experience devoid of any consciousness of God's presence?"(4) Obviously Woods' question implies that there is 'nature mysticism', though he wonders whether it is devoid or full of consciousness of God's presence.

1- W.T. Stace, *MP*, p. 70.

2- W. James, *VRE*, p.394.

3- W.T. Stace, *MP*, p. 80.

4- R. Woods, Introduction to *UM*, p. 10.

A direct example of this sort of identification of the soul with nature, without any implication of consciousness of the presence of God or gods, can be found in this description from W.H. Hudson who calls himself a natural man and who has actually experienced Nature in all its weathers, aspects and manifestations as a fascinated lover:

Apart from the aesthetic feelings which the object or scene or atmosphere conditions may rouse...there is a sense of the *thing itself* - of the tree or wood, the rock, river, sea, mountain, the soil, clay or gravel, or sand or chalk, the cloud, the rain, and what not - something, let us say, penetrative, special, individual, as if the quality of the thing itself had entered into us, changing us, affecting body and mind.(1)

The literature of mysticism in all cultures certainly abounds with records of this sort of mystical state of mind aroused by nature or any of its forms. Dispute arises mainly through the insistence of some scholars in ascribing them to a particular school of thought and categorizing them as a distinctive and separate type of mysticism.

Whatever the direct or indirect Platonic influence upon a large number of mystics of various religions, the mystics who have such states of consciousness nevertheless pertain to all creeds, and in most cases they seem to be neither pantheistic nor Neoplatonic. It is also true that some mystics are judged as Platonic, though they themselves are not aware of what Platonism is. It could also be added that there are many mystics who are neither doctrinal nor acquainted with any credal system except that of their own religion: yet, when they interpret their experiences, they seem to belong to other schools of thought about which they know nothing.

1- W.H. Hudson, *A Hind in Richmond Park*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1929, pp. 33-4.

The conception of the phenomenal world as reflections, mirrors, manifestations of the Original Beauty is undoubtedly Platonic. But at the same time it is independently Islamic, as has been established above. On the whole, I am bound to agree with Coomaraswamy that the function of analogies is not to prove 'the influence of one system of thought upon another, but the coherence of the metaphysical tradition in the world and at all times'.(1)

Clearly, Hinduism preceded Platonism in time, and above all not all Hinduism is pantheism.(2) Notwithstanding, nature constitutes a prominent part in the contemplation of the Hindu mystic directed towards union with the Universal Self, Brahman. So one of the interpreters of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which crystallises so much of Hindu tradition, writes that the Godhead (Brahman or Atman) 'is present in man, in the mouse, in the stone, in the flash of lightning'.(3) In an identical spirit Kabir declares:

BETWEEN the poles of the conscious and the
unconscious, there has the mind made a swing:
Thereon hang all beings, and all worlds,
and the swing never ceases its sway.
Millions of beings are there: the sun
and the moon in their courses are there
Millions of ages pass, and the swing goes on.
All swing! the sky and the earth and the water;
and the Lord Himself taking form:
And the sight of this has made Kabir a servant.(4)

In fact, to the Hindu mystic, nature represents 'the living abode of the living God. Love and Beauty are the clearly experienced abstract forms of God'.(5)

1- Cited in D. T. Suzuki, *Mysticism, Christian and Buddhist*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1957, p. 13.

2- See the three theories of God's relationship with the world in Swami Yatiswarananda, *The Divine Life*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1936, pp. 15-18.

3- Agnes Arber, *The Manifold and the One*, pp. 32-3.

4- Kabir, *One Hundred Poems*, XVI., p. 16.

5- R.P. Mishr, *Hinduism, the Faith of the Future*, p. 40.

Within the fold of Christian mysticism, nature is not always conceived in pantheistic terms. It is neither God, nor identified with God, but one of God's creatures. Its magnitude, mystery, and beauty testify to the majesty, omnipotence and beauty of the Creator. Thus when the sea flowed, as it were, in Traherne's veins, and when he was 'clothed with the heavens and crowned with stars', he sang, rejoiced and delighted in God, for the world became a 'mirror of infinite beauty a temple of majesty the Paradise of God ... the place of angels and the Gate of Heaven'.(1) The message of the apparent beautiful leads to the latent Whole Beauty. Undoubtedly, this is a Platonic idea by doctrine, but it is at the same time a spontaneous mystical truth apprehended by direct experience. The inner reality of the mystic is congenial to what is acknowledged as Platonic. In St. John of the Cross, the Neoplatonic idea of phenomenal loveliness as reflection infused with the prototype Beauty is magnificently conveyed in this remarkable poetic conversation:

QUESTION TO THE CREATURES

You forest, thicket, dene,
Which my beloved set in close array;
You meadow-land so green,
Spangled with blossoms gay,
Tell me, oh, tell me, has he pass'd your way?

ANSWER OF THE CREATURES

Rare gifts he scattered
As through these woods and groves he pass'd apace,
Turning, as on he sped,
And clothing every place
With loveliest reflection of his face.(2)

Needless to say St. John of the Cross is a *great Christian* mystic. Moreover, Browning, described as a nature mystic since he sees God 'In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and

1- Cited in E. Herman, *The Meaning and Value of Mysticism*,
p. 209.

2- St. John of the Cross, *Works*, vol. II., p. 443.

in the clod'(1), significantly and definitely refers to 'what I call God / and fools call Nature'.(2) Mme Guyon is also decisive and affirms that

Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,
.....
Their form and beauty but augment my woe
I seek the Giver of those charms they show.(3)

Tennyson, different in temperament, expresses the same outlook:

I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I marked Him in the flowers of His fields.(4)

To illuminate the conception of the phenomenal world as a bridge to the Real Being and its existence as sustained through the infusion of God's Being into its Not-Being, as conceived by Christian and Muslim mystics and many of other creeds as well, it is appropriate to quote Emerson:

Beholding in many souls the traits of the divine beauty, and separating in each soul that which is divine from the world, the lover ascends to the highest beauty, to the love and knowledge of the Divinity, by steps on this ladder of created souls.(5)

Space does not permit us to illustrate and cite more prominent examples of Christian "Nature Mysticism". In short, this type of experience of nature is most fully elaborated in Christianity in the writings of St. Francis, Wordsworth, and Blake. In a later chapter we will deal briefly with Wordsworth and in more detail with Blake.

Plotinus does not take a different standpoint. The material forms of the beautiful are nothing but reflected signs of the

1- *Saul*, XVII, *Works*, vol. IV., p. 257.
2- *The Ring and the Book*, bk. x, l. 1073, 4. *Works*, ed. Sir F.G. Kenyon, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1912, vol. vi., p. 191.
3- Quoted from M. Smith, *Rabi'a the Mystic*, p. 63.
4- A. Tennyson, *The Passing of Arthur*, 1.9.
5- Quoted in R.A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 110.

eternal One. The Divine is not to be contemplated as an object outside itself. After rising to the realm of vision of the mighty inaccessible Beauty, the mystic should

arise and withdraw into himself, foregoing all that is known by the eyes, turning away for ever from the material beauty that once made his joy. When he perceives those shapes of grace that show in body, let him not pursue: he must know them for copies, vestiges, shadows, and hasten away towards That they tell of.

(EN: 1.6.8)

1.6 MYSTICAL REALITY IN THE UNION OF LOVE

Quite apart from the disparities among religious and non-religious creeds, and without taking into account the disputable issue over the vagueness or clarity of the conception of the term "God", mystical experiences, viewed in the light of the previous exposition, converge universally at the point of a loving union between a craving part and a craved-for Whole, distinct from one another in Christian and Islamic traditions, and undifferentiated in Hinduism and Neoplatonism in the sense that the part also contains the whole. Hence, mysticism, in its widest sense, may be safely defined as the consciousness of One Reality through the union of love. This must inevitably require us to throw some light on the nature of this "union of love" with special attention to its objectivity and/or subjectivity.

William James puts forward the idea that mystical states of consciousness are 'excitements like the emotions of love or ambitions, gifts to our spirit by means of which facts already objectively before us fall into a new expressiveness and make a

new connection with our active life'.(1) A closely similar or identical point of view is expressed by Bertrand Russell who directly identifies mysticism with mere emotions and feelings:

there is an element of wisdom to be learned from the mystical way of feeling, which does not seem to be attainable in any other manner this emotion, as clouring and informing all other thoughts and feelings, is the inspirer of whatever is best in Man.(2)

The two definitions may not yield any essential difference at first sight. Both James and Russell are certainly sympathetic with mysticism in general. But, while James links mystical states to the "emotions of love" in a manner of comparison, he actually admits its aspect of objectivity. On the other hand, though Russell sees the mystical "element of wisdom" as an inspiration, he emphasizes only its subjectivity. Perhaps this is what makes W.T. Stace refrain from agreeing completely with Russell's definition of mysticism as only an emotion. Stace argues that Russell's description may be true as regards the subjective side of mystical states because emotions are subjective, and that since mystics always have a tendency to interpret their states in terms of perceptions, therefore, 'like all perceptions, they have their own emotional tinge'.(3) At the other extreme, Spinoza strictly holds that the mystical union, as Inge understands and puts it, consists in the 'intellectual love of God'.(4)

To begin with, four main peculiarities commonly characterize the mystical language, so to speak, the first of which seems to be the reason for confusing mysticism with pure emotion. It is a fact that mystics as well as sympathetic writers on the subject are

1- W. James, *VRE*, p. 427.

2- Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1917, pp. 11-2.

3- W.T. Stace, *MP*, p. 15.

4- W.R. Inge, *SEM*, p. 29.

often inclined to use terms which give rise to the impression of emotionalism. A.J. Arberry speaks of 'the universal yearning of human spirit', Enid Starkie 'the stage of man's eternal yearning', St. John of the Cross 'the yearnings of love of the soul', Richard Rolle 'the fire of love and the bashful lover', Gerson 'the stretching up of the soul into God through the yearning of love', Rabi'a 'two kinds of passionate love', the whole bulk of the Sufis 'disinterested love or spiritual marriage', Kabir 'the drunken lover', Plotinus 'veritable love and sharp desire', not to mention the rest of the mystics dealt with above. Needless to say as long as one speaks of a union of love, it is natural to employ terms such as these, which can be seen as either symptoms or synonyms of love. However, this is solely the emotional aspect of mystical expressions.

Secondly, there is the repetitive insistence of mystics, from far and wide, that human thinking lacks the proper potentialities by which the mystical vision can be adequately communicated especially to non-mystics. The assumption is in fact accepted and maintained by many commentators on the subject as well. Like Underhill, James, Stace, Arberry, Schimmel and Smith, Inge strongly holds a brief for this claim and affirms that even the memory is not actually able to preserve and represent the Divine vision as it happens, and what can be conveyed is merely a pale shadow of it, and regrettably, sometimes even that pale shadow cannot be reproduced due either to the shortcoming of language or the imperfection of the human understanding:

We are unable to conceive clearly of a Being in whom Power, Wisdom, and Goodness are one, because this unification is still an unrealised ideal in ourselves, nor can we see it fully realised in the world around us. The doctrine must therefore remain a "mystery" to us, that is, a truth which we can apprehend but not comprehend, a truth

which we can only represent by means of inadequate symbols.(1)

This argument of Inge finds much support in the writings of mystics themselves. The literature on mysticism of almost all creeds is indeed full of adjectives like 'indescribable', 'incommunicable', 'inexpressible', 'unspeakable' and the most common 'ineffable' going side by side with other phrases precisely suggestive of the same connotation. The mystic sometimes employs such expressions metaphorically or as a manner of speaking, but in most cases they are used literally out of his realization that the depth of the experience far surpasses the limitations of language. Peter Malekin, himself a mystic, does not seem to approve of this claim. His antithesis is based on the conviction that in principle mystical experience is no more or less communicable than any other experience because all language works on the basis of shared experience: 'a brown cow' is a meaningless phrase to a man born blind who has no experience of cows.(2) Malekin proceeds to explain that all language virtually misrepresents all experience, through imprecision, and because part of the experience is somebody else's mind. The difference with mysticism is simply that relatively few people are aware of having had 'mystical' experience. Of those few even fewer are skilled with words, just as most people cannot convey everyday experiences in words. The last part of Malekin's argument cannot stand, I am bound to say, the clear evidence that many mystics who are recognized as great literary figures by any standard, and whose outstanding command of words is unquestionable, are not exempted from this category of those who cannot communicate their mystical vision. Tennyson, the

1- W.R. Inge, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1907, pp. 28-9.

2- P. Malekin, "Mysticism and Scholarship", *Studies in Mystical Literature*, vol. 1. No. 4., 1981, p. 294. The rest of his opinion was developed in a personal discussion on this point.

Poet Laureate of his Victorian era, describes his mystical experience of nature as 'utterly beyond words....and such as no language may declare'.(1) Charles Kingsly, a great literary figure, sees it as 'indescribable'.(2) Though he is believed by Horstmann to be 'the true father of English literature'(3), Richard Rolle admits his inadequacy 'to describe even slightly the smallest part of this joy. For who can describe ineffable favour?'(4) Plotinus too says his piece on the issue: 'language fails even for the adequate discussion of the Transcendent, much more for defining it' (*EN*: VI.8.8). Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, Boehme, Rumi, Al-Ghazzali and Kabir are no exception. Even Malekin himself in his account of his own mystical experience of Light, uses some phrases which suggest either his awareness of the difficulty of interpretation or at least the uncertainty of the impression his language may exert upon the reader: 'I will attempt to convey the least inaccurate of idea that I can', and also 'I can put it no other way'.(5) To cut it short, it is generally believed by most mystics that only the mystic understands the mystic, which bears out Malekin's idea of the basis of "shared experience".

Because of this 'claimed' impossibility or difficulty of communicating the vision of the Divine truth, two other qualities of mystical language come forth: the obvious paradoxicality, and the resorting to symbolism and mythology. As far as paradoxicality is concerned, most mystical descriptions are virtually replete with self-contradictory phrases such as 'the

1- W. James, *VRE*, p. 384-5.

2- In W. James, *VRE*, p. 383.

3- Quoted by Clifton Wolters in the introduction to Rolle, *FL*, p. 9.

4- R. Rolle, *FL*, p. 150.

5- W. James, *VRE*, p. 283,287.

whispering silence', 'the formless form', 'the unmoved mover', 'the dazzling obscurity', 'the shore that hath no shore beyond it', 'the sleepless sleep and the soundless sound', 'I live, yet not I', 'the dark of god's white curse', 'the fruitful emptiness', 'the bottom of the bottomless' and what not. This paradoxicality really characterizes the writings of almost all mystics. Great mystics who are great literary figures are not excluded, either.

Symbols and myths utilized in mystical writings tend to revolve round one focal point; the relationship of the soul with the invisible (e.g. 'God' as its source) and with the visible (e.g. world of generation and the body). Due to the various cultural backgrounds, the symbolic and mythological approaches certainly differ not only from one culture to another but also from one mystic to another. Yet, in principle all coalesce as genuine attempts to illustrate the two-sided relationship of the soul.

It is obvious that mystical experience is, positively or negatively, related to religion. So the One Reality attained by mystics, despite its oneness in essence, takes as numerous forms as the varieties of credal interpretations will permit and assume. On the level of these credal formulae, the conception of Allah to the Muslim is incompatible with that of the Holy Trinity to the Christian. Both, in turn, are at odds with the Void to the Buddhist, Brahman to the Hindu, or even the Plotinian Triad to the Neoplatonist. This is possibly the contribution of discord made by the process of interpreting mystical experience in terms of theology. But in most cases, the mystic at his best appears to be no blind devotee or adherent to the form of the dogma he belongs to. His touch-stone consists mainly in his own vision of the Truth. Within this context, therefore, his relation to the creed

he embraces before having mystical experience is liable to distinct modes of developmental possibility according to his new standard of judgment: 1) continued devotion to it as it is, with sustained loyalty to its rites; 2) devotional sincerity to it with a fervent endeavour to reform what seems to him distortion or corruption and to revive its fundamental roots; 3) rejection of its formalities without conversion to another creed; 4) conversion to another creed which could be in some cases his own invention. Moved by the inward impulse of his own experience, the mystic seems at first to be experimental. Some mystics remain experimental and express their experiences spontaneously, though they sometimes pin their faith on one doctrine or another. Others become doctrinal, or rather more confident, systematic, and sophisticated than before in their doctrines. But, whether the mystic is doctrinal or experimental, the indelible impression of the personal experience is the first and most reliable source for him to draw upon. This may explain why most mystics, if not all, tend to be eclectic in their interpretations. Their eclecticism bears witness to the commonness and the oneness of the Truth they perceive through their visions.

An implication of the agreement in the interpretations of the experience of the majority of mystics is their unanimous distinction between the Nothing aspect and the Something aspect of God despite the large number of terms alluding to this differentiation. The Nothing aspect which is 'unmanifest' signifies the state in which the mystic loses himself, if I may say so, in the transcendence of God beyond any subject-object relationship (the Godhead of Eckhart, Suso and Ruysbroeck; the 'divine Darkness' or the 'Super-Essential Godhead' of Dionysius; the '*Ungrund*' or bottomless abyss of Boehme; the 'From myself I

fainted away' of St. John of the Cross; the 'Non-Existence' of Rumi; the 'Not-Being' and the Transcendent of the Sufis; the 'Void' of the Buddhists; the 'Beyond-Being' or the 'No attribute can be affirmed of It' of Plotinus; the 'Not this, not this' of the *Upanishads*, etc.). The other aspect is apparent through the veil of a subject-object relationship in which subject mirrors object, object mirrors subject (the 'God' of Eckhart; the 'divine Light' of Dionysius; the 'Beloved' of St. John and many others; the 'bottom of the bottomless' of Boehme; the 'O Thou I' of Bistami and Halaj; the 'Closer than the jugular vein' of the Sufis; the 'Buddha of Eternal Light' of the Buddhists; the 'Universal Life' of Plotinus; the '*tat tvam asi*' or 'That you are' of the *Upanishads*; the love of Krishna of the Hindus, etc.). In the end the two aspects sound to be inextricably associated as two sides of the same coin.

Although this casts a little light on the intellectual dimension and nature of the union of love, the unifying vision which constitutes, in my opinion, the core of mystical experience must be discussed in more detail. As a representative of the intellectual type of Christian mystics, Eckhart appears to be far from being a pantheist, at least in this interpretation of the union cited by Suzuki who repudiates the charges of heresy and pantheism of which Eckhart has been accused:

Between the only begotten Son and the soul there is no distinction". This is true. For how could anything white be distinct from or divided from whiteness?....A holy soul is one with God, according to John 17:21, That they all may be one in us, even as we are one. Still the creature is not the creator, nor is the just man.(1)

With a special concentration on the human incompetence to

1- D.T. Suzuki, *Mysticism, Christian and Buddhist*, p. 11.

apprehend the real Nature of the Super-Essential Godhead even with intellectual contact, Dionysius describes the unity as 'formless' since it transcends by far the feeble comprehension of man. Therefore we 'must instead describe It as a Super-Unity which is neither One nor Many and yet contains in an undifferentiated state that Numerical Principle, which we can only grasp in its partial forms as Unity and Plurality'.(1)

Ibn Al'arabi seems to be more radically pantheistic than Eckhart and Dionysius, despite the fact that Islam is more dogmatic and more sternly resistant of any esoteric doctrine than Christianity. Above all, Christian mystics could find a historical justification in Jesus Christ for likening man to God - a principle diametrically opposite to Islamic foundations. Yet, Ibn Al'arabi most explicitly interprets the vision in terms of a thorough identification of man with God, and God with man:

When one thing permeates another, the one becomes hidden in the other. If the Creator is manifest, the created is hidden. Then all the names of God like Seer and Hearer become the names of the created. If the created is manifest, then God is hidden in it, and sight and hearing of the created become God's sight and hearing..... God, considered absolutely, is beyond relation and therefore beyond knowledge - inconceivable and ineffable. From this point of view, God, in a sense, is not God.(2)

The same note is struck in Abu Yazid Bistami, but it is rather Indian than Platonic: "That which I was I am no more, for 'I' and 'God' is a denial of the unity of God. Since I am no more, the high God is His own mirror".(3)

In this connection Ibn Al'arabi and Bistami come, with varying degrees, to terms with the Brahman and the Neoplatonist. To the

1- Dionysius, *DNMT*, p. 5.

2- S. Husaini, *Ibn Al'arabi*, pp. 57-8 .

3- Cited in Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, pp. 17-8.

Brahman the vision is conceived as a sheer identification of the individual self with the Universal Self, the Real of the real, where he realizes his immortality in a unitive state which is beyond dualities, space, time and causation. He becomes the whole universe, seeing his soul 'oned' with all beings and all beings 'oned' with his soul: 'One whose Self is united by yoga sees the Self as abiding in all beings and all beings as abiding in the Self, everywhere seeing the same'.(1) But in *The Upanishads* there is neither seer nor seen in the state of the absolute oneness of Brahman-Atman or in the state of 'deep sleep':

Conscious of neither within nor without, nor of both together, not a mass of wisdom, neither wise nor unwise, unseen, one with whom there is no commerce, impalpable, devoid of distinguishing mark, unthinkable, indescribable, its essence the firm conviction of the oneness of itself, bringing all development to an end, tranquil and mild, devoid of duality That is the Self: that is what should be known.(2)

The interpretation of the union in Hinduism as 'Atman sees Atman' is congruous with 'the seer' becomes 'the seen' or the oneness in the Divine of Plotinus. Yet, to Plotinus the union is not perfected if the seer still perceives any form of vision because 'to see the divine as something external is to be outside of it; to become it is to be most truly in beauty' (*EN*: V.8.11). There is no vision to be recognized by the soul when it becomes 'one within itself and one with the One; perfectly assimilated to the object of its contemplation' (*EN*: VI.9.3).

Orthodox Sufis, unlike Ibn Al'arabi who influenced many heterodox Sufis, are not at variance with the Christian doctrine that the only union possible in our life between man and God is

1- *The Bhagavad-Gita*, vi. 29., p. 303.

2- *Mandukya Upanishad*, 1.7. in *Hindu Scriptures*, p. 201.

the elimination of the human will in God's will through unconditioned submission of man to the divine will. St. John of the Cross assents to this understanding of the union as the abnegation of the individual will in the will of God through love and grace. St. John calls it the 'supernatural transformation of the soul with God' which

comes to pass when the two wills - namely that of the soul and that of God - are conformed together in one. And thus, when the soul rids itself totally of that which is repugnant to the Divine will and conforms not with it, it is transformed in God through love.(1)

This passage of St. John is alluded to by Gerald Brenan and Ruth Burrows [using other translations] from slightly different standpoints. Burrows intentionally uses it in order to connect St. John's apprehension of the union with God to that of St. Teresa with a view to illuminate the orthodox doctrine of the union according to both of them. The two saints, as Burrows spells it out, believe that the presence of God can be conceived 'only by Grace' through the soul's growing likeness to the Divine through the doctrine of 'dying' to the self, and by means of 'wedding two things, an act of surrender on the part of the soul and a pure favour, something God does that seals the soul as his very own'.(2) Viewing the matter from another angle. Brenan points out that as a rule St. John 'speaks of it [union with God] in much warmer terms as a complete transformation of the soul into God and of God into the soul by means of Love so that " the one gives possession of himself to the other and each abandons himself to the other and exchanges himself for the other, and thus each lives in the other, and the one is the other, and both are one by

1- *Ascent to Mount Carmel*, 1.11,3. *Works*, pp. 79-80.

2- Ruth Burrows, *Interior Castle Explored*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1981, pp. 77-80.

the transformation of love" *Spiritual Canticle*, 12,7)'.(1)

Viewed in the light of these seemingly clashing interpretations, the unifying vision appears to have "two" aspects. On the one hand, it is the utter identification of man or the soul with "God" without distinction, or the maximum effacement of the subject-object relationship. On the other hand, it is the identification of man's will with that of God, which retains the limits of differentiation between man and God. In this framework, I tend to believe that it is misleading to consider the two groups of interpretation different types of mystical experience. More precisely, they are two sides or aspects of the same vision. In the last resort, both are one, or rather both reveal the reality of one union, that is, the union of love between the Divine and the human soul. It must be remembered that religious teachings presumably, though working outside the experience, play the leading role in curbing the freedom of imagination of some mystics in the interpretation of their vision. There is no contradiction here in saying that the pre-established dogmas of religion are only subordinate to the actual experience. Once there arises a clash between both, the mystic certainly takes the side of his own vision, even if this may cause him much trouble.

There is still one final aspect of the mystical vision to be considered, that is the misunderstanding and the confusion of the mystical vision with imagery and fancy. It is undeniable fact that mystics, even the great among them, have often been subjected to dubious visions and supernatural appearances. Putting our trust in the judgments of recognized great mystics, we must

1- Gerald Brenan, *St. John of the Cross: His Life and Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, 1973, pp. 97-8.

conclude that to hear voices, to talk to angels or even to God (not in the sense of litany or prayers), or to see shapes and forms of any sort, is to confuse genuine mystical experience with mere imagery. 'Eckhart and Ruysbroeck' says Stace, 'and many other mystics warn us that sensuous imagery must be forcibly extruded by a mind which seeks the goal of the mystic'.(1)

Helen White cites many passages from Swedenborg in which, we are told, he had many excursions into the world of spirits and angels, and into "heavens and hells". He saw heaven opened with a "most clear shining light", and was first permitted to set his eyes on and to listen to the angels conversing with each other. After a while he himself was able to converse with the angels.(2) In St. Teresa's *Life* (Chapters XIII, XXXI), *Interior Castle* (Second Mansion), and *Conceptions of Love of God* (Chapter II) there are many records of this sort of dubious vision in which the Devil tried with certain temptations to distract her from her endeavour to achieve union with God. Also, Richard Rolle was said to have been 'troubled by a beautiful woman who turned out to be the devil, for she vanished as he signed himself with the Cross, and recollected the Precious Blood'.(3) From the Sufi tradition A.J. Arberry cites a description from Bistami identical to that of Swedenborg. Bistami was transformed into a bird which was permitted to fly in 'the air of the Absolute' and to be raised before God and then both talked to each other with great intimacy.(4) Like St. Teresa, the great Sufi Abdul Qadir Jilani reported part of the Satanic vision. It started when the sky was suddenly filled with a "dazzling" light and a human frame appeared

1- W.T. Stace, *MP*, p. 49.

2- White, *MWB*, pp. 115,142-5.

3- Clifton Wolters in his introduction to Rolle, *FL*, p. 14.

4- A.J. Arberry, *Sufism, an Account of the Mystics of Islam*, pp. 54-5.

before him and said, 'I am Lord, thy God. I have made everything prohibited lawful unto thee'. Jilani was not deceived, and discovered by his insight it was the Devil who said to him, 'I had misled seventy mystics with this device, but God saved thee on account of thy knowledge and piety'.(1)

The approach and reaction to such sensuous visions has varied from one mystic to another. On the one hand, Swedenborg, for instance, values his own supernatural visions as indications of a divine message ordained to him by the Lord. Bistami too has the same conviction. He believes himself to be so perfect that he is physically annihilated into God. On the other hand, there is a semi-consensus among all great mystics to regard these visions as not mystical. Should they be perceived, they would not be confused with genuine mystical vision. St. Teresa reconized some of them as mere hallucinations, and others were tricks played by the Devil. At the same time she accepted others as gifts bestowed by God.

As a rule, great mystics deal with these visions cautiously and meticulously whether they are diabolical or godly. The One of Plotinus does not take any form. God to St. John of the Cross is not 'comprised in any image'. Allah to the Sufis, even to some heterodox ones, cannot be contained in any particular or distinct form. To the Brahman such visions of forms are conceived only as tidings preceding the union:

Fog, smoke, sun, fire and wind,
Fire-flies, lightning, crystal, and the moon, -
In Yoga these are the visions (rupa) that anticipate
The [fuller] revelations [seen] in Brahman.(2)

1- Nadwi, *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, pp. 183-4.

2- *Svetasvatra Upanishad*, 2. 11. in *Hindu Scriptures*, p. 206.

It is, by some writers on the subject, taken for granted that mystical experience has nothing to do with seeing visions. This may be true to some extent. Seeing visions is in itself not a mystical experience, but they may occur as part of a mystical experience. As long as they do not distort the essential aim of the mystic nor prevent him from going on to achieve his union with the Divine, they can be accepted as subjective elements of divine beatification.

To conclude, mysticism is neither a pure emotion as Russell likes to call it, nor a mere exciting sentiment as James sees it. Nor is it a completely intellectual process as Spinoza and others understand it. If cultural environment and credal doctrines play a vital role in mystical experience, this role is certainly played outside the real moments at which the mystical state is in process, since in the highest states of mystical consciousness 'the intellect and senses both swoon away'.(1) It is in this fact that the essence of the universality of the phenomenon lies. Thus Evelyn Underhill is honestly right in beholding no 'wide difference between the Brahman, Sufi, or Christian mystics at their best'.(2) The same idea is echoed by Helen White with reference to all creeds: 'in the essentials of their undertaking and of their achievement, Brahman and Buddhist, Catholic and Protestant, Mohammedan and Greek, of two centuries ago or of thirty centuries ago meet and agree... and however widely divergent the circumstances under which great mystics have appeared, in certain fundamental respects they have been very much alike'.(3) Those who achieve the union of love by means of contemplation and process of purification are mystics, and those

1- W. James, *VRE*, p. 412.

2- Evelyn Underhill, "The Essentials of Mysticism", *UM*, p. 28.

3- White, *MWB*, pp. 54-5.

who are spontaneously and abruptly granted it are also mystics and we 'cannot refuse the title of mystic to any of these; because in every case their aim is union between God and the soul'.(1)

Finally, to quote Stace, and whether he states it ironically or seriously, it sounds acceptable to me

It has been suggested that all men, or nearly all men, are in some sense or other rudimentary or unevolved mystics, although in most of us the mystical consciousness is so far buried in the unconscious that it appears in the surface levels of our minds merely in the guise of vague feelings of sympathetic response to the clearer call of the mystic.(2)

1- Evelyn Underhill, *Op.Cit.*, p. 29.
2- W.T. Stace, *MP*, p. 21.

CHAPTER TWO

.....

ASSESSMENT OF RAINE'S VISIONS IN THE LIGHT OF MYSTICAL CHARACTERISTICS

To love is the only way to penetrate into a thing. To understand God, one must love Him; to understand a woman, one must love her; understanding is in proportion to love. The only means, thus, to understand a work of art is to become the lover of it. This is possible, as the work is a being that has a soul and manifests this by a language that one can learn.

(G.-Albert Aurier, "Essays on a New Method of Criticism")

* * * * *

"Peace, and be at peace with your thoughts and visions.
These things had to come to you to accept them.
This is your share of the eternal burden,
The perpetual glory. This is one moment,
But know that another
Shall pierce you with a sudden painful joy
When the figure of God's purpose is made complete.

(T.S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*)

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". . . it is necessary that the lyric poet's life should be known, that we should understand that his poetry is no rootless flower but the speech of man".

(W.B. Yeats, lecture on 'Contemporary Poetry')

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2.1 KATHLEEN RAINE: A POLEMICAL ISSUE

Harvey Netterville has propounded the claim that Kathleen Raine is not a 'mystic but a visionary, and her interest in the work of other poets is confined to those who are also visionaries.'(1) A fairly similar viewpoint has been articulated by John Press who has identified Raine together with George Barker, David Gascoyne and Vernon Watkins as 'romantic visionaries, whose view of the world was ritualistic and religious, even though none of them, except Watkins, was an orthodox Christian.'(2)

At the other extreme, Evan Owen has appraised Raine's "mystic intensity" as clearly demonstrated in her pantheistic propensity throughout her early verse. Owen has pointed out that this pantheism of Raine's early poetry "broadens out to cover the whole universe, and the object of her veneration is no longer the individual microcosm; it has become the Creator who is above and beyond the miracle of the finite."(3) In a similar vein, Peter Russell has suggested that the mystical characteristic of Raine consists basically in her being a more or less religious poet 'without a sectarian creed', and in being so she is surely on equal footing with many mystics before her.(4) Viewing the matter from a different angle, Harriet Zinnes has announced her partial rejection of Raine as a mystic. Under the influence of her overtly uttered dissatisfaction with mysticism in general and with

1- Harvey Netterville, "Kathleen Raine: The Heart in Flower", Ph.D. Dissertation, The Florida State University, 1981, p. 29.

2- John Press, *A Map of Modern English Verse*, (fifth impression) Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 232-33.

3- Evan Owen, "The Poetry of Kathleen Raine", *Poetry*, vol. LXXX. No. I., 1952, p. 35.

4- Peter Russell, "Kathleen Raine's New Poems", *Southern Review*, NS2. 1966, p. 724.

Raine's use of mystical terms and theory of poetry in particular, Zinnes has put forward the point of view that Raine is a mystic but one who "uses frequently without new illumination, the traditional mystic signs: the wind, rose, day, star, rocks, angels, bird, sun."(1)

In the middle of these two extremes stand other critics who have discerned in Raine's poetic approach an amalgamation of both mystic and visionary. Paying tribute to Raine's clarification and purity of style, Ralph Mills has stated that "her reliance on dreams and visionary experience never leads to careless composition".(2) Nevertheless, Mills has elsewhere emphatically argued that Raine consistently draws on her own sources of "mystical revelations".(3)

This linking of Kathleen Raine to both visionaries and mystics has been emphasized by Erika Duncan who has been greatly impressed by Raine's "mystical serenity" when they first met in an interview.(4) In a later judgment, Duncan has seen Raine as a companion of "mystical thinkers and religious visionaries."(5) The implication of Duncan's argument can be also deduced from G.S. Fraser who has regarded Raine as a poet whose approach displays a combination of a "trained botanist and geologist with neo-Platonic mysticism". However, he has proceeded to assert to the notion that her poems have been the production of a "rapt visionary, but

1- Harriet Zinnes, "Kathleen Raine Collected", *Prairie Schooner*, vol. 31. 1957, p. 290.

2- Ralph Mills, "The Visionary Poetry of Kathleen Raine", *Renascence*, vol. XIV. No. 3. Spring 1962, p. 141.

3- *Ibid.*, p. 144.

4- Erika Duncan, "Portrait of Kathleen Raine", *Forum*, vol. 5 (4)., 1981, p. 512.

5- *Ibid.*, p. 517.

not of a saint."(1)

It is obvious that we have here three different opinions about Kathleen Raine's attitude as manifested in her work. First, she is ranked as a visionary. Secondly, she is categorized as a mystic. Thirdly, she is placed in general terms among visionaries and mystics as well. Presumably Raine could pertain to one of these three varying standpoints. At the same time she could possibly not belong to any of them. So, these clashing views and conflicting judgments have to be handled with a certain amount of caution. Netterville's statement lacks, as I think, the accent of certainty since he has elsewhere confessed that he had a "limited understanding of mysticism"(2) , and his reliable authority was a personal letter sent to him by Raine which will be fully discussed later. Some other statements mentioned above do not seem to draw any sharp line between a visionary and a mystic, supposing that a visionary should be a mystic or vice versa, and thus confusing one with the other. To avoid jumping to conclusions, it is reasonable, I believe, to postpone till later the discussion of Harriet Zinnes's own explicit attitude towards mysticism.

In truth, it is not an easy task to differentiate between a mystic whose experience is sometimes accompanied by visions which are not essential to his experience and a visionary whose visions permanently play the leading role in his life and career. Moreover, in spite of the fact that there is no black and white rule for the recognition of mystics, our guiding light is the definition of mysticism with the characteristics presented in the

1- G.S. Fraser, "Kathleen Raine", *Contemporary Poets*, (Third Edition), ed. by J. Vinson and D. L. Kirk Patrick, Macmillan, London, 1980, p. 1225.

2- Netterville, "K. Raine: The Heart in Flower", p. 22.

first chapter. Therefore, it is of importance here to analyse and examine the events experienced and recorded by Kathleen Raine in her own autobiography. The attempt aims to identify these experiences as either mystical phenomena attained during her eager, painful and storm-tossed voyage in search of the "unknown absolute", or as only visions accompanying other non-mystical psychological states of consciousness and belonging to infinitely varied unguessed regions lying within the dreaming mind of a visionary. Before engaging in this task of detailed analysis of Raine's visions, it is helpful and necessary to present an outline of the criteria by which they will be judged. This outline is basically drawn from the detailed exposition of the mystical phenomenon in the first chapter. It is also at the same time corroborated by three lists of common characteristics of mysticism presented by three recognized writers on the subject, namely Bucke, James and Stace.(1)

Mystical language is, as evidenced in the first chapter, coloured with four main peculiarities: 1) a sense of elevated emotion related to the language of love, 2) difficulty and sometimes impossibility of communication, 3) paradoxicality, and 4) resorting to symbolism and/or mythology. These four properties cannot be exclusive, of course, to mystical writings, for the reason that they may characterize other accounts of various types of experiences and events. Also they can be taken in separation, in the sense that it is not necessary to find them collectively in a single mystical description. As a result, they are not considered so much essential as the characteristic of the unifying vision with its concomitants (e.g. sense of ecstasy or joyfulness,

1- The three lists are fully included in the appendices.

of holiness, of illumination, of objective reality) is. In other words, the absence of any of the four qualities of phrasing does not impugn the mystical value of an account as long as the key element of mystical experience, which is the unifying vision or the field of vision, exists. The reverse is true. It is also possible that some characteristics may not be explicitly presented or directly set forth. They can, however, be conceived by implication or inferred by suggestion.

Finally, it has been said that seeing things, hearing voices, or conversing with angels or devils are not mystical experiences in themselves. Nevertheless, they might be considered by-product visions taking place outside the mystical vision as 'intoxicating consolations', so to speak. That they are outward signs of a genuine mystical experience does not imply that these sensory visions are necessarily meaningless, valueless, or unproductive, especially to the artist mystic. At best, when perfectly controlled, they provide the artist mystic with an inexhaustible source for his art, stimulate and intensify his imagination, and 'confer [upon him] a convinced knowledge of some department of the spiritual life before unknown'.(1) Evelyn Underhill is explicit in her assertion that these sensory visions of a mystic are, if not the products of diseased dreams or hallucinations, the 'artistic expressions and creative results (a) of thought, (b) of intuition, (c) of direct perception'.(2)

1- Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, (Fourth Edition),
Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, 1912, p. 323.
2- *Ibid.*, p. 326.

2.2 THE HYACINTH: THE CARDINAL VISION

One of the most significant and important visions described by Raine in *The Land Unknown* is the experience of the hyacinth. In her own words, she delineates the experience as follows:

I kept always on the table where I wrote my poems a bowl with different beautiful kinds of moss and lycopodium and long and deeply did I gaze at those forms, and into their luminous smaragdine green. There was also a hyacinth growing in an amethyst glass; I was sitting alone, in an evening, at my table, the Aladdin lamp lit, the fire of logs burning in the hearth. All was still. I was looking at the hyacinth, and as I gazed at the form of its petals and strength of their curve as they open and curl back to reveal the mysterious flower-centres with their anthers and eye-like hearts, abruptly I found that I was no longer looking *at* it, but *was* it; a distinct, indescribable, but in no way vague, still less emotional, shift of consciousness into the plant itself. Or rather I and the plant were one and indistinguishable; as if the plant were a part of my consciousness. I dared scarcely to breath, held in a kind of fine attention in which I could sense the very flow of life in the cells. I was not perceiving the flower but living it. I was aware of the life of the plant as a slow flow or circulation of a vital current of liquid light of the utmost purity. I could apprehend as a simple essence formal structure and dynamic process. This dynamic form was, as it seemed, of a spiritual not a material order; or of a finer matter, or of matter itself perceived as spirit. There was nothing emotional about this experience which was, on the contrary, an almost mathematical apprehension of a complex and organized whole, apprehended *as* a whole. This whole was living; and as such inspired a sense of immaculate holiness ... The experience lasted for some time - I have no idea how long - and I returned to dull common consciousness with a sense of diminution.

(*LU*, pp. 118,19)

This passage has been quoted at length for the reason that it contains, without jumping to conclusions, the fundamental perspectives of a genuine mystical experience and any omission could result in detriment to its value. To begin with, it has been indicated that mystical experience of nature may be brought

about by gazing at natural objects. The hyacinth, as a flower of course, is a natural object gazed at by Raine, the experiencer. The atmosphere was full of tranquillity which paved the way for the vision to take place, since it is generally believed that 'periods of solitude and quietness during the day are of very great help'(1) in encouraging such experience. Solitude and tranquillity are fulfilled in Raine's narration; 'I was sitting alone', 'All was still'.

Stace discriminates between two types of mystical experience. The one is "extrovertive" looking outward through the senses, and the other is "introvertive" looking inward into mind. Although there is no sharp line to be drawn between the two types, the extrovertive mystical state is chiefly marked by its spontaneous, unsought, effortless and unexpected occurrence, whereas the introvertive mystical state is "acquired" in the sense that it is usually sought and preceded by 'deliberate exercises, disciplines, or techniques which have sometimes involved long periods of sustained effort'.(2) Accordingly and due to the element of suddenness or "passivity", to use William James' term, or the "instantaneousness of the awakening" of Bucke, the hyacinth vision can be conveniently categorized as extrovertive. This is borne out by the adverb 'abruptly'; besides there was no indication of any deliberate action on Raine's part to have had the experience take place.

As far as the characteristic of ineffability is concerned, Raine is definitely clear in stating that the apprehension was 'indescribable, but in no way vague'. Also it could be sensed

1- P. Malekin, "Mysticism and Scholarship", p. 287.

2- T. Stace, *MP*, p. 61.

through her use of the phrases 'as if' and 'as it seemed'. Paradoxicality is suggested in words such as 'I was looking at the hyacinth... I was no longer looking at it', and 'matter itself perceived as spirit'. Despite Raine's emphasis that her perception was 'less emotional', and that 'there was nothing emotional about this experience', the sense of elevated emotion as a mystical element can be recognized throughout the account in general. It is in particular self-evident in these phrases 'a kind of fine attention', 'a finer matter', and 'vital current of liquid light of the utmost purity'.

The focus of attention must be directed now to the unifying vision with its concomitants. Fortunately, it is explicit in this instance and can be traced without difficulty. Nothing can confirm the actual achievement of the union between Raine and the flower more than these unvarnished statements: 'I was not perceiving the flower but living it...I was no longer looking at it, but *was* it'. The nature of the subject-object relationship was 'indistinguishable', though 'distinct', in which the plant was a part of her consciousness. What she realized was devoid of vagueness, but rather, in her note of inner objectivity, a 'mathematical' apprehension of a 'complex and organized whole, apprehended *as* a whole'. In the same vein of directness, the sense of holiness is brought out: 'This whole was living; and as such inspired a sense of immaculate holiness'. The characteristic of a sense of illumination - equivalent of James' noetic quality, of Bucke's intellectual illumination and of Stace's sense of reality or objectivity - is manifested in Raine's immediate commentary referring to the experience as 'not some strong emotion or excitement but a clarity in which all is minutely perceived as

if by finer sense' (*LU*, p. 188), and later she expounds that 'In these matters to know once is to know for ever' (*LU*, p. 120). Another implication the experience contains is the sense of ecstasy, which is equivalent of Stace's feeling of blessedness, joy or happiness, and is perhaps what Bucke calls 'subjective light'. This can be deduced from the last sentence in the account: 'I returned to dull common consciousness with a sense of diminution'. Logically, therefore, the consciousness of the experience had been ecstatic and distinctive, and the sense had been one of elevation.

The feeling of diminution, among other negative exasperating feelings, is an element of the aftermath of mystical experience. It is reported in varying degrees by many mystics. Evelyn Underhill, for instance, confirms its actual occurrence in the life of many great mystics (e.g. St. Teresa, Ruysbroeck, Tauler, Suso, Law, and Madame Guyon among others):

During the time in which the illuminated consciousness is fully established, the self, as a rule, is perfectly content: believing that in its vision of eternity, its intense and loving consciousness of God, it has reached the goal of its quest. Sooner or later, however, psychic fatigue sets in; the state of illumination begins to break up, the complementary negative consciousness appears, and shows itself as an overwhelming sense of darkness and deprivation. This sense is so deep and strong that it inhibits all consciousness of the Transcendent; and plunges the self into the state of negation and misery which is called the Dark Night.(1)

It must be remembered here that Underhill's "Dark Night" is somehow connected to 'the Dark Night of the Soul' of St. John of the Cross. The *Dark Night* of St. John is a passive spiritual stage, intended for initiators whose souls are firmly established

1- Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 455.

upon the supersensual plane. Those initiators 'have already climbed the path of the *Ascent* and are in a more advanced state of perfection'.(1) On the other hand, there is no misunderstanding or confusion in Underhill's term, which alludes to the period of depressive feelings such as dullness, stress and lassitude that might follow an ecstatic period of 'sustained mystical activity'. Underhill points out that these periods of rapid oscillation between a joyous and a painful consciousness were a common feature of the mystic way as an 'incident of the movement to union', as a spiritual aspect of the growth of the 'New Man', or as a 'Game of Love', in which 'God plays, as it were, "hide and seek" with the questing soul'.(2) Moreover, on the psychological level, Underhill sees the "Dark Night" as a 'moment in the history of mental development, governed by the more or less mechanical laws which so conveniently explain to him [the mystic] the psychic life of man'.(3) To put it differently, this is known in almost all mystical traditions as 'putting the mystic to the test'.

Finally, 'transiency' is another mystical mark put forward exclusively by William James. It means that a mystical state cannot last for long and the reproduction of its quality by the memory is often imperfect. But when the experience recurs its quality is recognized at once. Interesting enough, Raine's description is typical of William James' mark: 'The experience lasted for some time - I have no idea how long - and yet it seemed at the time not strange but infinitely familiar' (*LU*, pp. 119-20).

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- 1- Alian Cugno, *Saint John of the Cross*, trans. by Barbara Wall, Burns & Oates, London, 1982, p. 81.
 - 2- *Op.Cit.*, p. 457.
 - 3- *Ibid.*, p. 455.

It should be evident now that the hyacinth experience was not a vision of a visionary. It was beyond doubt a true and genuine mystical experience, which had all the typical features. Indeed, Kathleen Raine herself was so aware of this fact that she literally called it 'Nature Mysticism' (*LU*, p. 118).

Another transfiguration of consciousness occurred immediately in the wake of the hyacinth vision. It was as if the robust impression exerted by the hyacinth were still working on Raine's mind so that it might have produced this striking vision of "the self out of the body" in a closely related manner:

At about the time of my hyacinth vision I had an immediate experience of what might be the human equivalent of the plant-soul I had perceived. I was lying in bed, thinking, no doubt, of my absent lover. I say this lest it should be thought that my experience was in any way religious or related to prayer or to moral virtue. Abruptly, although my physical body was lying down, I found myself, at the same time, sitting upright, my arms outstretched: but not my physical arms. This body which seemed to have emerged from within the physical envelope like a moth from a chrysalis seemed infinitely more myself than the physical envelope which it had left. It had a sense of lightness, clarity and freedom, a freshness comparable with the flower as I had seen it: not at all like that shadowy tenuous self we are in dreams. All seemed not less but more clear, of a quality more real than the real. So surprised was I to find myself half out of my body that I found myself back in it again. The return to the physical body was like putting on some old sack, rough and crude and barely conscious, constricted and dull; this has never happened to me since, but again, once is enough.
(*LU*, pp. 120-1)

Compared to the hyacinth vision which could be proved to contain all the required characteristics of mystical experience, this vision of "the self out of the body" probably appears, at first sight, to lack some fundamental features which could help make it mystical. According to the criteria enumerated above, the identification of this vision with mystical experiences lies in

the following characteristics: that it came to Raine unexpectedly and abruptly while she was thinking of her absent lover - the element of suddenness or passivity; that it seemed to Raine that what she apprehended was the perfection of reality: 'All seemed not less but more clear, of a quality more real than the real' - the element of sense of objectivity; that it took place as an immediate experience, a fusion of emotion and perception: 'a sense of lightness, clarity and freedom' - inner subjectivity or noetic quality; that it had a sense of happiness or ecstasy implied in Raine's words 'the return to the physical body was like putting on some old sack, rough and crude'; and that it had the element of paradoxicality manifested in the core of the vision when Raine found herself lying down and sitting upright at the same time. If Raine's words such as "clarity", "freedom", "freshness" and "more real than the real" could be understood as a suggestion of a feeling of holiness in some sense of the word, it would add another mystical characteristic to those mentioned above.

There is also a sign of ineffability to be deduced from a linking sentence immediately following this account to introduce another intuition. Raine has started the second vision by this sentence: 'Another insight is more difficult to describe' (*LU*, p. 190). The comparative "more difficult" suggests that what is preceded must be "less difficult" than what is coming forth, but both should have the same quality of "difficulty" in varying degrees. Consequently, one may infer that the experience of the self out of the body was difficult to describe, though less difficult than the experience of the Realization of the *Tao* which is to follow. In this way the characteristic of ineffability, I suppose, would be more or less presented.

So far the core of mystical experience which is the union or the unifying vision is yet to be proven. This may or may not be implied in the introductory sentence of the description, which should be given careful attention: 'At about the time of my hyacinth vision I had an immediate experience of what might be the human equivalent of the plant-soul I had perceived'. The interconnection of the two visions is clear. The plant-soul she had perceived is certainly indicative of the hyacinth. She experienced the 'inner' plant to the effect that they both shared in one life. Both were a living 'whole'. As a corollary, she found her 'inner' (or at least more inward) self to which 'the human equivalent' might be a reference.

There is, however, another possible, though far-fetched, interpretation. Since what she perceived in the hyacinth was described as an 'almost mathematical apprehension of a complex and organized whole', it follows that she and the plant were spiritually and materially alike in both essence and form. As a result, the plant, by virtue of its 'indistinguishable' unity with her, might be seen as human. More specifically, the plant took, as it were, the human concrete shape of 'herself'. In other words, the plant-soul, being transmuted and fused into herself after the fulfillment of the oneness of the subject and object in the hyacinth, came out of her 'inner' self in a human form to assure her that the material and spiritual fusion of both previously realized was real. Considering the short time between both experiences and while the effect of the first was still felt, this literal personalization of the plant may be possible. In such a way of interpretation the unifying vision could be maintained, and thereby the experience might be described as

mystical.

On the other hand, if these suppositions may be coloured with doubts and neither could have failed to occur to Raine, who equally might not have meant quite what has been explained or rather speculated upon above, one thing nevertheless remains certain about the experience; it definitely contains some mystical characteristics and lacks the essential one. The vision could be simply an epiphenomenon of the hyacinth. Therefore, it can be best classified as an 'incomplete, or incipient, case of extrovertive mysticism', as Stace puts it, on the grounds that 'there do exist experiences which are atypical or borderline'.(1)

2.3 THE HOLLYHOCKS AND THE PHENOMENA OF LIGHT

In *Places of Day and Night*, a book of memoirs and a part of her autobiography, Raine describes a number of experiences and visions most of which took place in her childhood and at the threshold of her teens. These recorded events differ indeed from each other both in form and in content. But as a whole, they project as landmarks on the way of the poet's spiritual journey. Indeed, one of the events has been regarded, even by Raine herself, as an illusion, presumably produced by the trick of her diseased senses. Yet Raine has identified it as a 'quite distinct impression that remains of an excursion outside my body' (*FDN*, p. 35). Moreover, there is an obvious note of uncertainty echoed by Raine about the actual feasibility of this vision, which she calls 'Death - as Known by the Soul': "ONCE I WAS SO FAR ADVANCED

1- T. Stace, *MP*, p. 84.

into death, that I was for a time without the world at all, without any foothold for my senses on the thin texture that upholds human life. Or so it seems to me as I remember or imagine an event that perhaps never took place' (*FDN*, p. 35).

Such an event can, of course, be interpreted from many points of view. Still, the prime concern is to illustrate its major effect, which has since then been to bestow upon her the poetic insight to penetrate through 'many beautiful fields and trees and flowers and streams and birds' to such an extent that 'the waters of life have flowed past [her] and through [her]' (*FDN*, p. 40). The experience pushed her a step further into the world of nature, which informed a great deal of her verse, and inculcated in her the sense of belonging to the inanimate objects in the universe, which helped her imagination to thrive. It also gave rise to her firm belief that solipsism, with its absolute egoism, is 'mere arguable nonsense', when compared to 'the more vital truth - that we are not isolated, in body or in mind, and enter into the extremest ends of our universe in our capacity to experience it, in ourselves, and in the leaves, the trunk, the very roots of that vine, of which we are the branches - the tree of life on which we grow' ('The Tarn, or Bereavement', *FDN*, p. 50).

Raine has narrated another event, or rather a ghost-haunted presentiment in which she 'knew, felt, the unseen, unknown, evil element, like damp air, like blackness, surging and boiling round [her]' (*FDN*, p. 22). Being extremely fraught with awe, terror and fear of even the "Holy Ghost" in so far as seeing the "Angels" as awfully terrible in a church, the House of God, Raine, the child, probably fell under the dubious impression of a diabolical

freak. Therefore, this frightful presentiment came to an end by her effective resort to prayers, so that she might keep 'the unknown away by the power of God who has nothing to fear, since for him there is no unknown' (*FDN*, p. 23).

Of this flowing stream of visions and experiences running consecutively through *Faces of Day and Night* the most significant and obviously relevant here appears to be the one entitled 'Flowers, or Entity'. The experience is largely identical, at least in appearance, with the hyacinth vision analysed above, in spite of the expectedly polemical issue concerning the time of its occurrence; it happened to Raine when she was only three years old or perhaps a little younger:

I know that something was behind the hollyhocks, not only a wooden fence, but a world that went on and on, without ever coming to the end of itself. It was simply the world, and it was there, all of it, no matter what. This knowledge was not at all frightening, for in any case the world was beyond the hollyhocks, and I in front of them. They were the here and now, the world was everywhere else.

The record of the vision has not finished yet. But, it is of vital importance to direct our attention here to the present tense in which the verb "to know" has been written at the very beginning of the foregoing passage. Surely, Raine has deliberately put it down in this way so as to impart some specific idea preoccupying her mind. This present tense of the verb, especially in the context of portraying an event of the very far past, implies the persistence and continuity of Raine's overwhelmingly recurring belief in what she had seen and conceived for the first time; that is, the eternal message of the beautiful through the dark red hollyhocks. Raine "knows" now, as she "knew" then, that the unfading and endless message of 'the here and now' is, as it was

and will be, spreading everywhere before the enlightened eye that can discover and appreciate it. In other words, the realization of the message of the beautiful is beyond the ability of the physical eye to grasp. It can be held with the spiritual eye, the mind's eye, the imagination, or rather, as she puts it 'the magic in the eye of childhood; that sees and believes', and not 'by just looking at it through a glass lens' ('Illusions', *FDN*, p. 3). Here is the rest of the record of the experience abridged:

But from that world beyond, extending from my flower to everywhere and everything beyond, from the sky and the day, the sunshine flooded, and shone and glittered upon the dark red petals. I have seen that same light since, that was reflected from the glossy ridges of the hollyhock petals, upon many other surfaces; upon the glossy wings of flies; upon innumerable blades of grass, in the dry summer; upon brass, water, old tins on rubbish-dumps; no matter where, for it is everywhere, the golden light of the sun itself ... the experience of the flower was a constant, absolute, and complete thing in itself ... The flower was a face, a statement ... the flower is absolute like Mona Lisa or the Sphinx, those riddles that are their own answers. Flowers were, for me, a first experience and knowledge of things in themselves perfect, of faces, one might say, with which the world looks at us, and we at the world's face...here nature has opened itself, and exposed its essence to be seen and known.

(*FDN*, pp. 6 8)

If Kathleen Raine had not mentioned the childish age at which she had undergone this experience, there would be no difficulty in classifying it as a genuine mystical experience, in as much as the report contains all the mystical characteristics needed to prove that. Indeed, such a stumbling block is difficult to overcome, but it is worth making an attempt. Chronologically speaking, there had been a long period of time between the time of having the experience and the time of writing it - Kathleen Raine was born in 1908, which implies that the experience took place about

1911, whereas the account of it was published in 1972.(1) Obviously there is a possible mingling of the experience of the child with the idea and thought acquired and developed by the mature writer, though equally the essence of the experience may perhaps not be susceptible to change on the part of the writer or liable to refutation on the part of the reader. Stored in memory for such a long time, the freshness and vitality emanating from its description give rise to two probabilities: either it recurred sporadically up to her age of maturity - the hyacinth experience in its essential content bears out this hypothesis - or it had such a really enduring impact upon her mind that oblivion could not deform or obliterate the truth of its perception. In either case, the problematic issue of Raine's childish age, I think, may be reasonably resolved.

On the other hand, the vision can be conceived from a spiritual point of view. Spiritually speaking, it is known a priori that eternal reality is too subtle for our bodily senses to perceive. The exclusive means by which we attain and conceive this perennial truth is, therefore, the soul. It is also agreed that the soul is

1- *Faces of Day and Night* was probably written some 26 years before the time of its publication, that is to say about 1946. Robin Skelton in his Introductory Note to the book illustrates this fact:

In the early forties Kathleen Raine wrote a series of memories and essays which were collected together under the title of *Faces of Day and Night* and announced for publication in 1946 by Edition Poetry London. The book was set up in type but before it could appear Edition Poetry London ceased to exist and *Faces of Day and Night* was never published. Miss Raine did not herself possess a manuscript of the book but some ten years later the printer was tracked down and it was discovered that the papier-mache moulds were still in existence; from these a typescript was made and it is from this that the book has been set for this edition.

eternal. Its eternity signifies that its perceiving faculty is not vulnerable to change with years, for in eternity there is no time, no age. It remains eternally the same. It is only the body with its decaying quality that is amenable to the measurements of time. So, the three years were of the age of Raine's time-measured body, not of her soul's eternity that has neither beginning nor end. To give evidence of this timeless faculty of the soul which lies, beyond and above the ordinary bodily senses, an incident of William Blake's life might be mentioned: when Blake was fourteen years old, he rejected William Ryland as a master engraver to be apprenticed to. This was after Blake and his father had paid Ryland a visit at his studio. The reason Blake gave for his rejection was that 'Ryland had the mark of the gallows on him; 12 years later Ryland was hanged for forgery'.(1) Of course, Blake's instance has no bearing on any mystical interpretation, but rather indicates the existence of a faculty more penetrating than any other of our terrestrial senses; that is the ageless, timeless faculty of the soul. More to the point, William Wordsworth in 'Intimations of Immortality' accepts in retrospect and vigorously asserts this kind of childhood's "opening bloom" experience, arising not only without difficulty but also in "glorious might":

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and freshness of a dream.(2)

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- 1- Michael Stapleton, "William Blake", *The Cambridge Guide to English Literature*, Book Club Associates, London, 1983, p. 81.
 - 2- W. Wordsworth, 'Ode. Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', in *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems (1800-1807)*, ed. Jared Curtis, Cornell University Press, New York, 1983, p. 271.

Apart from this seeming dilemma of Raine's age, it is certain that the experience, as vividly narrated, manifests itself as mystical. Moreover, the experience in its content illuminates some significant points that should be taken into account when dealing with mysticism in the thought and work of Kathleen Raine.

First, it was her earliest experience of natural objects, represented by the hollyhock flowers, that established her abiding faith in the interrelation and kinship of man and nature. This inauguration into the world of nature provided her with the first concrete evidence that every inanimate thing in the universe is in itself a living entity and that

These apparent entities are neither good nor evil, neither angelic nor ghostly; they are the illusions that are natural to us, and essential to life; things in themselves, nature made known, and recognisable; perfect statements, whose truth is not contingent, but absolute. If they are illusions they are so, as we ourselves are; for on them, we base our seemingly solid world - these are our *terra firma*.

(*FDN*, p. 11)

Secondly, the exhilaration of entering into the heart of the flower, the inebriation of experiencing its inner life, and the felicity of marrying with its essence and entity felt by Kathie, the child, have left durable and tremendous imprints on the thought of Kathleen Raine, the mature poet and thinker.

Thirdly, and bearing on her mystical vision, there is an obvious emphasis on the 'light' that 'shone on the deep red flower petals' at which she was looking throughout the account. Presumably, this light is reminiscent of 'the slow flow or circulation of a vital current of liquid light of the utmost purity' of the hyacinth experience. But, in both experiences the

sources of light are distinct from each other; in the hyacinth it was the inner light that comes from within through the transfiguration of her own consciousness, while in the hollyhocks it was explicitly the 'golden light of the sun'.

Kathleen Raine's description of her own vision of light proves to have a great deal in common with other descriptions made by many mystics of almost all traditions. Jacob Boehme is said to have realized the existence of 'heavenly, or spiritual Light' at a very early age when he was in the cobbler's school. The Light he discovered was by no means external. It radiated from within. 'Outwardly', relates Shepheard, 'it was dull weather, clouded and dim. But as the long loneliness stilled his mind a shining peace began to transfigure all that he saw. Then it came to him, that this Light and joy, the happiest of all things, were rising from the silence within, and that the mind looking outward projected its happiness upon external things'.(1) St. Augustine was also acquainted with the phenomenon of light. Evelyn Underhill calls his vision of light, in which he had enjoyed for an instant the beatific vision of God, the 'Platonic experience in introversion' or the 'Plotinian contemplation of the One'(2), in which he saw with the eye of the soul 'the light that never changes ... It was not the common light which all flesh can see, nor was it greater yet of the same kind, as if the light of day were to grow brighter and brighter and flood all space'.(3) Among the numerous mystical experiences cited by William James in his lecture "Mysticism", the phenomena of light are noted as having been sporadically reported

1- Harold B. Shepheard, *In Jacob Bohme's School*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1926, pp. 20-21.

2- Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1914, pp. 299-300.

3- Cited in Underhill, *Ibid.*

by mystics. J. Trevor, for example, was 'bathed in a warm glow of light' through his perception of the immediate presence of God in his 'flashes of consciousness'.(1) Similarly, Dr. Bucke makes the "subjective light" the first of the marks of the Cosmic Sense. It means that the experiencer abruptly has the apprehension of being immersed in a flame, or rose-colored cloud. Bucke speaks of his own experience in the third person: 'All at once, without warning of any kind, he found himself wrapped around as it were by a flame-colored cloud. For an instance he thought of fire, some sudden conflagration in the great city; the next, he knew that the light was within himself'.(2)

Of particular interest in this connection is Peter Malekin's analysis of his own experiences of light. First, Malekin and Raine have something in common regarding the conception of "God". Both are somehow in doubt about the existence of a personal, or at least a historical God. For Malekin, 'if He/She [God] exists anywhere, then it is in that light'(3), which he experienced. And for Raine, though she believes in the biblical verse that it is a 'terrible [dreadful] thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (*LU*, p. 104)(4), which implies a faith in a personal God, she is not in favour of using the term "God", which seems to her 'too theological' and more vague than other terms like love, *Anima Mundi*, life-forces, or the Divine Humanity among others. Secondly, Malekin's analysis contains many examples of the various phenomena of light which could be of great help in categorizing the types of mystical light.

1- W. James, *VRE*, p. 397.

2- Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness*, pp. 9-10.

3- P. Malekin, 'Mysticism and Scholarship', p.289.

4- Hebrews 10:31. -

According to Malekin, Dionysius discriminates between three types of light: 'the ultimate unitive light, ... the light of the angelic orders, who [show forth the Divine Radiance], and thirdly the light of the [great, all bright and ever-shining sun, which is the visible image of the Divine Goodness, faintly re-echoing the activity of the Good]'.(1)

The phenomena of light have been known to and embraced by Sufis from the very beginning of the Islamic tradition. The relation between the soul's various degrees of light on one part and with the Transcendental Light on the other is revealed in the Kor'an. God is the Light prevailing the whole universe, illumining the souls of His creatures through their inmost being. His Universal Light is so pure and so intense that no physical, created eye can bear Its Uncreated Radiance. No substance of matter can stand Its Appearance. No intellect can formulate, even imaginatively, any real conception of Its true Nature. Only through the transformation of the soul can the splendour of this Light be perceived, and that is the reason why 'the mountain was shattered and Moses fell down in a swoon' (Kor'an, VII: 143), at the manifestation of a reflected Glory of God's Light at Mount Sinai. This Islamic doctrine of light stems first from the Kor'anic Revelation that:

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: The glass as it were a brilliant star: lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose Oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! God doth guide whom He will to His Light.
(Kor'an, XXIV: 35)

1- Op.Cit, pp. 288-9.



Secondly, it comes from the saying of the Prophet that: 'God has Seventy Thousand Veils of Light and Darkness: were He to withdraw their curtain, then would the splendours of His Aspect (or Countenance, or Face, *Wajh*) surely consume everyone who apprehend Him with his sight'.(1)

Al-Ghazali, the greatest of the Sufis, elucidates the Kor'anic phrase 'Light upon Light' as a spiritual implication of an infinite chain of lights in front of which our human knowledge is reduced to ignorance. The human soul, as having five faculties or spirits - the sensory, the imaginative, the intelligential, the discursive (or ratiocinative) and the transcendental prophetic, is connected to the five symbols of the Niche, Glass, Lamp, Tree and Oil in the same order. Thus, for the human soul there is a graded succession of Lights, whereas the 'Ultimate Light is the final Fountain-head, who is Light in and by Himself, not a light kindled from other lights'.(2) The spiritual eye is the only adapted perceiving faculty to catch some revealed glimpses of the Light. As the source of enlightenment, this infinite Light emancipates the recipient from the dark veil of the senses, and elevates him up to the higher realm of reality.

In the Platonic tradition we find the Intelligible Sun or light accessible through recollection or anemnesis by means of which the cave can be lit up and the shadows fade away. The enlightened soul realizes the Light Unchangeable as an ideal radiating from its source. But in its state of blindness, the soul is stuck to the shadows forgetting the origin of the light. So, it ascribes

1- Quoted in A.Y. Ali, 'Mystic Interpretation of the Verse of Light', in *The Holy Qur'an*, The Islamic Foundation, London, 1975, p. 920.

2- *Ibid.*, p. 921.

the forgotten source of the light to earthly things on which it shines. Thus what the soul, in forgetfulness, perceives is a reflection and not a recollected archetype.

Plotinus too speaks of the 'veritable Light' which is neither amenable to space measures nor subject to circumscription by any form. It is not again 'diffused as a thing void of term, but ever unmeasurable as something greater than all measure and more than all quantity'.(1) When the lover apprehends and gets hold of this light, he realizes the Beauty Supreme. As a result, he is full of confidence since his guide becomes his own vision of light. All what he needs is only to 'strain and see'.

In conclusion, it is obvious that the 'Ultimate Light' of Al-Ghazali is in essence the equivalent of Dionysius' ultimate unitive light which 'contains within Itself, in a simple form, the entire ultimate principle of light; and is the Transcendent Archetype of Light.... [which] conjoineth together all spiritual and rational beings, uniting them in one'.(2) Both of them, in turn, have a marked affinity with the Eastern Orthodox term 'Uncreated Light' - which Malekin holds as the most accurate term to apply to his experience.(3)

Referring back to the phenomenon of light slightly described in Raine's hyacinth vision, any of the three terms above can categorize it in a valid way. It is also akin to Boehme's heavenly light that shines from within. On the other hand, the light of the hollyhocks is related to Dionysius' light of the great, all-bright and ever-shining sun. This category of light is

1- Plotinus, 'Beauty', *EN*, (I.6.9).

2- Dionysius, *DNMT*, pp. 94-5.

3- P. Malekin, 'Mysticism and Scholarship', p. 294.

classified by Meister Eckhart as the 'light of glory' in which the soul 'divines the noble nature of all things in God, for all that ever issued forth or is issuing forth or ever shall, has in God eternal life and being; not defective as it is in creatures but as his very being for it it is his nature'.(1) At the same time, it appears identical to Plato's intelligible sun outside the cave, of Bucke's subjective light, and most probably of what St. Symeon refers to as the sun's imitation of the light of God.

2.4 A REALIZATION OF TAO

In *The Land Unknown*, Kathleen Raine reports another important experience of a different kind of perception. She calls it an 'insight' or 'intuition' which was 'purely qualitative'. It was a transforming apprehension that

came from the wind, which blows with such unbroken force down the dales; the incessant rain drifting like a curtain; and along with the flow of wind the flow of water in the beck, swollen with all rivulets of the fells, pouring itself towards the lake. It was a realization of the *Tao*, one might say, of the power of the elements finding their way not by effort but by effortlessness. I saw that human beings are forever striving against the great current on which we are carried, whose power is so immeasurably great that in resisting we can destroy only ourselves; but if we go with it, that strength is ours, that energy sustains us.

(*LU*, pp. 121-22)

Brief as its description is, this intuitive vision cannot be restricted to a mystical interpretation only. It is, for instance, open to a Jungian analysis which seems too impressive to be overlooked. The crux of this insight is made clear by Raine's

1- P. Malekin, *Ibid.*, p. 289.

direct statement at the end of the account, which has embodied an explicit emphasis on her awareness of the Taoist tenets. What she realized is that hoped-for unitive cooperation or harmony which can be obtained through a mutual understanding between man and natural agents seen and exposed here as wind, dales, rain, beck, rivulets...etc. On the human part, wisdom requires from man to relinquish his self-delusion of being the only master in the universe. He should yield to the 'immeasurably great' forces of nature without exerting himself so as to gain control over them, since in resisting he is not only the loser but the master of his own downfall.

Paradoxically speaking, the human surrender to nature is the stronghold and the potent weapon with which man can achieve his victory, not over nature, but over himself. Man's enemies lurk in his material ambition, his deceptive arrogance, and his ignorance of his being an integral part of the whole of nature. Only when he realizes the truth of his kinship with nature can he attain his mystical union with it. And as a result its 'strength' will be his and its 'energy' will protect and sustain him. This paradoxicality, a typical mystical characteristic, is a revealed reality, 'truth' or 'truism', to use Raine's term, in which the 'power of the elements', we are told, enables them peacefully to find 'their way not by effort but by effortlessness'. Here we are reminded of Hopkins' dilemma of contrast in the middle of which he was caught up. But unlike Raine, he did not find the solution for the problem of man's ineffectiveness or human 'eunuchoid' as contrasted with nature's fruitful and rhythmical ways:

..See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again

With fretty chevil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build - but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes
Mine, O thou Lord of life, send my roots raine.(1)

According to the sayings of Lao Tzu, who may or may not be the author(2) of the *Tao Te Ching* - the central text of the philosophy of Taoism - things in the universe bring out their potentialities when they are left to their own natural course of evolution. Their flourishing development and nourished growth are due to their own intrinsic rhythm of finding their own natural ways. Their destiny is to live in such a way that they ought not to be deformed by any outside intervention, and their peaceful fate should not be violated by the use of tools invented by man:

The soft and weak can overcome the hard and strong.
As the fish should not leave the deep
So should the sharp implements of a nation not be
shown to anyone.

(*Tao*, ch. 36, p. 59)

So, when 'implements are shown', comments Chu Ta-Kao, 'all will be a loss, just as fish have left water against Nature'.(3) Everything in the world, despite its apparent delicacy, frailty, pliancy or even impotence, has a devastating power latent in its depth. When aroused in revolt, this subsistent power turns out to be too destructive for man to resist.

Commenting on these lines, Ch'en Ku-ying holds that 'things which seem to be soft and weak, because of their internal consolidation, in fact tend to be more pliable and more durable. On the other hand, those things which seem to be brittle and strong, because of their external exposure and vulnerability, tend

1- Hopkins, "Thou art indeed just, Lord".

2- See in this respect Lionel Giles in Foreword to *Tao Te Ching*, p. 9.

3- Chu Ta-Kao in *Tao*, p. 122.

to have a more tentative existence'(1):

The weakest things in the world can overmatch the
strong things in the world.
Nothing in the world can be compared to water for its
weak and yielding nature; yet in attacking the hard
and the strong nothing proves better than it. For
these is no other alternative to it.

(*Tao*, ch. 78, p. 108)

Ch'en Ku-ying explains why Lao Tzu uses the example of water in this context: 'Over an extended period of time, the smallest trickle of water can reduce a giant boulder to gravel. Flood waters and tidal waves can raze man's proudest structures in seconds'.(2) This Taoist conception of the overwhelming competence of water hidden in its seeming suppleness illustrates what Raine refers to as 'the great current on which we are carried, whose power is so immeasurably great that in resisting we can destroy only ourselves'. Man should not be guided by his self-deceit. Adherence to the side of force not only leads to the destruction of the self but also prevents man from gaining his eternal happiness. The gates of paradise are shut by man's pride in his power. When he removes his blindness by modesty, compassion and love, he can regain the paradise of his childhood - a perpetual state that can be regained by keeping to the side of tractableness:

He who knows the masculine and yet keeps to the feminine
Will become a channel drawing all the world towards it;
Being a channel of the world, he will not be severed
from the eternal virtue,
And then he can return again to the state of infancy.

(*Tao*, ch. 28, p. 48)

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- 1- Ch'en Ku-ying, *Lao Tzu: Text, Notes, and Comments*,
trans. and adapted by Rhett Y.W. Young and Roger T.
Ames, Chinese Materials Center, INC. San Francisco,
1977, p. 185.
2- *Ibid.*, p. 304.

Although he may be physically and mentally powerful, the wise man, or 'Sage', to use the Taoist term, should not use his power, or "aggressiveness and pugnacity"(1), to divide the wholeness of things into small fragments. Disintegration of any object in the universe results in the disintegration of its function which is to be in a state of perfection. Commenting on the above quoted passage, Yen Fu says: 'wholeness is the state of entirety and simplicity. Though, when cut and carved, it may serve lesser purposes, it then can no longer answer the purpose of great function, for which only wholeness itself is qualified'.(2) Pinpointing the real cause of the spiritual crisis of modern man, Seyyed Nasr refers to this malfunctioning intervention of man into the fate of nature as understood by Taoists: 'Nature, as the direct effect of Tao and its laws, stands as opposed to the trivialities of human artefacts and the artificiality with which man surrounds himself'.(3) Kathleen Raine realizes this gloomy fact of the soulless world of today, where the 'technological Utopia' replaces the spiritual truth. In her essay "What is Man?", her sadness over the pervasive material view of the world, or the 'desert-islands' painted by 'clever cynics' for the mass of mankind (*IJP*, p. 3), is abundantly clear. Man is stripped of his dream of the real Utopia, and offered, instead, 'the trash of the machines'. In this 'hell of spiritual meaninglessness' that promises 'the worker-ants' a *Utopia* to be found 'in every packet of this or that', the world of nature is

1- Ch'en Ku-ying understands the masculine or masculinity as a metaphor for aggressiveness and pugnacity, while the feminine or femininity as a metaphor for gentleness and submissiveness, (*Ibid.*, p. 155).

2- Yen Fu in *Tao*, p. 120.

3- Seyyed H. Nasr, *Man and Nature*, Mandala Books, London, 1976, p. 85.

degraded to the same level of 'oil and coal and steel' (*IJP*, p. 3). This, in turn, reduces man to the same level of degradation, since 'thinking is something computers do, where "the brain" is synonymous with mind and thought' (*IJP*, p.3).

So, it is not the function of man to change the function of other creatures, but he should relinquish his egocentric habit of subjugating nature.

Let Tao reign over the world, and no spirits will show
their ghostly power.
Not that the spirits have no powers,
But their powers will not harm men.
(*Tao*, ch. 60, p. 87)

Worldly temptations are the magnetic power that drag man eventually towards the realm of eternal death. Man's accumulation of 'emoluments', and his excessiveness in physical pleasures militate against his eternal happiness. This Taoist idea is, very likely, a corollary and supplement to the principles of keeping to the 'feminine' for gaining eternal happiness, and of being the 'channel of the world' towards which the actions of others are directed. The more ardently tempted to live by satisfying his material needs and physical appetites man is, the faster he approaches the realm of spiritual death, and the more sizable the gap between him and eternal life. The materially-minded man walks the path of death of his own accord. Therefore, the wise man has to avoid any confrontation with worldly temptations if he longs for a spiritual state of eternity:

only those who do nothing for the purpose of living are better than those who prize their lives. For I have heard that he who knows well how to conserve life, when travelling on land, does not meet the rhinoceros or the tiger; when going to a battle he is not attacked by arms

and weapons. The rhinoceros can find nowhere to drive his horn; the tiger can find nowhere to put his claws; the weapons can find nowhere to thrust their blades. Why is it so? Because he is beyond the region of death.

(*Tao*, ch. 50, p. 76).

Wang Pi comments on this passage that: 'Men seek too eagerly to live, and their effort takes them beyond the limit of life and still further into the limit of death. The best conserver of life does nothing on purpose to seek to live and therefore he keeps away from the region of death'.(1)

This is exactly the very same spiritual 'truth' that Raine realized: we should not seek to live by effort, for by 'effortlessness' we 'sustain' ourselves and live eternally.

The differences and disorders of the universe result chiefly from the deviation from Tao, whereas the perfection of the self and its harmony with the whole universe stem fundamentally from the unquestioning submission to the 'Revealed, Hidden, Infinite, Great form' that is Tao itself and to which all things eventually return home. This hoped-for harmonized stage of the Taoist Utopia can be fulfilled through the understanding of, and in obedience to the following hierarchy of the Taoist laws:

Man follows the laws of earth;
Earth follows the laws of heaven;
Heaven follows the laws of Tao;
Tao follows the laws of its intrinsic nature.

(*Tao*, ch. 25, p. 44)

'To live in peace and harmony', says Seyyed Nasr, 'with nature or the Earth, one must live in harmony with Heaven, and in order to attain this end one must live according to the Tao and in

1- Wang Pi in *Tao*, p. 124. For a further explanation of Lao Tzu's passage see Ch'en Ku-ying's notes and comments in *Lao Tzu*, pp. 230-31.

conformity with it'.(1) Yet, through self-conceit, vanity and arrogance man always creates by himself and in himself the obstacles that hinder him from reaching the eternal state of Utopia. These man-made obstacles blind him to the truth of the natural laws he should maintain and obey. Therefore, man is led astray by his arrogant adherence to the material laws of self-interest, neglecting his spiritual self-interest. For the Taoist, spiritual self-interest does not contradict the laws of the universal eternal Utopia. The paradox lies in the tenet that by material self-denial man can establish his everlasting spiritual self-welfare:

Heaven is lasting and earth enduring.
The reason why they are lasting and enduring is that
they do not live for themselves;
Therefore they live long.
In the same way the Sage keeps himself behind and
he is in the front;
He forgets himself and he is preserved.
Is it not because he is not self-interested
That his self-interest is established.

(*Tao*, ch. 7, p. 24)

From keeping to backwardness springs advancement, from self-forgetfulness comes self-preservation, and from dispossession proceeds possession; each negative movement is counterbalanced by a positive consequence. The man of insight is not incognizant of this paradoxical principle. He is aware of the incessant discordance between the materially sought self-interest and the spiritually longed- for eternal happiness. To give up one is to keep the other and vice versa as Ch'u Ta-Kao pinpoints in this analogy: 'Although heaven and earth seem to have given life to all creatures, they do not strive for their self-existence, therefore

1- Seyyed Nasr, *Man and Nature*, p. 85.

they live long and never die'.(1) Needless to say this principle tends to be in full accord with most mystics' belief in self-denial, and in particular with the idea of the soul's desire to be nothing in order to come to the total possession of all.

Raine's declaration of her 'realization of the *Tao*' seems, at first sight, to contradict the first character of Tao as expressed by Lao Tzu in the opening chapter of the *Tao Te Ching*. For him, the real Tao cannot be defined or expressed: 'The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao, / The name that can be defined is not the unchanging name' (*Tao*, ch. 1, p. 17). And in another chapter we read: 'Tao, while hidden, is nameless' (*Tao*, ch. 41, p. 66). Raine has already named what she realized as the *Tao* and defined it as 'the power of elements finding their way not by effort but by effortlessness'. As a matter of fact Raine has not violated this principle of Tao since Tao is Absolute and paradoxically a way at the same time, or as Seyyed Nasr puts it, 'the Tao is both the Principle, the way to attain the Principle and also the order of things'.(2) If the Absolute cannot be defined, the way can through, of course, a revealed realization. It is, perhaps, what Raine meant by using the definite article and the italics in writing "the *Tao*", as if she intended to say "the way". Consequently, what has been defined by Raine is the manifestations which follow the eternal Tao:

The great virtue as manifested is but following Tao.
Tao is a thing that is both invisible and intangible,
Intangible and invisible, yet there are forms in it,
Invisible and intangible, yet there is substance in it.
(*Tao*, ch. 21, p. 40)

1- Ch'u Ta-Kao, *Tao*,, p. 117.

2- Seyyed Nasr, *Man and Nature*, p. 85.

2.5 A JUNGIAN ANALYSIS

The need for a Jungian analysis of Raine's realization of the *Tao* appears too urgent to be overlooked in this place. Its suitability for application arises from the impact Jung has exerted upon Raine's thought, the implications of which are clear in her works in general and throughout the account of this vision in particular. Netterville finds this impact so enormous that the Jungian patterns or forms have participated in formulating Raine's vision and art.(1) This might prove true. The influence of Jung upon Raine's mind can be easily noticed in her numerous admiring references and allusions to his ideas in support of hers in her critical writings, particularly throughout her book, *Defending Ancient Springs*. (2) In her introduction to *Farewell Happy Fields*, Jung stands as the one unique guide she tried convincingly to follow in his promulgated rule of life: 'Find your myth, then live it'.(*FHF*, p. 8) Raine is even more explicit in her assertion that Jung is one of the 'two, or perhaps three' contemporary minds to whom she is most indebted (*IJP*, p. 25). Above all, Jung is certainly one of the few Raine paid tribute to poetically; she wrote the poem 'Homage to C.G. Jung' (*LC*, p. 42) in recognition of his influence.

For these reasons it is essential to appreciate the Jungian psychological view as regards this vision and the next one as well. The concurrence of Raine's conception of the function of words with that of Jung is posed at the start of the account:

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- 1- Netterville, 'K. Raine: the Heart in Flower', p. 10.
 - 2- In fact, she refers to Jung in most of the essays contained. See, for instance, pp. 3, 47, 90, 99, 114, 120, 126, 128, and 171.

'words themselves mean nothing, but are only signs pointing to things perceived and experienced' (*LU*, p. 121). This is exactly what Jung asserts in his essay "Approaching the Unconscious": 'The mere use of words is futile when you do not know what they stand for'.(1) In both minds, Raine's and Jung's, words acquire their significance and value only when they are working in their 'symbol-producing function', otherwise the mere words 'will be empty and valueless'.(2)

The symbol-producing function is related to the Self as an exponent of the Jungian theory of the process of individuation illustrates. In her essay "The Self: Symbols of Totality", Dr. von Franz argues that our human existence will never find its expression and satisfaction in terms of 'isolated instincts or purposive mechanism' because man's main purpose is to be human, not to eat, drink or have sex. It is above and beyond these instincts that 'our inner psychic reality', says Dr. von Franz, 'serves to manifest a living mystery that can be expressed only by a symbol, and for its expression the unconscious often chooses the powerful image of the Cosmic Man'.(3) Towards this archetypal symbol or image of the Self the whole inner psychic reality of each individual is attracted. There are many ways, forms, figures or personifications in which the Self can assume this archetypal symbol, of which the the powerful figure of the Cosmic Man is one. The Self in its process of individuation, in its continual orientation towards perfection, can take the form of a wise old man or woman, of a spirit of nature, of the Great or the First Man, of the Great Mother or earth mother, of an animal, of a

1- Jung, *MHS*, p. 96.
2- Jung, *MHS*, p. 96.
3- Jung, *MHS*, p. 202.

plant, of a stone, or even of an 'active imagination', besides of course the image of the Cosmic Man. In any form of these archetypal symbols the essence is always one. The appearance of any symbolic figure, whichever the Self assumes, signifies the fulfilment of the process of individuation in which the conscious and the unconscious of a human being have reached the point of reconciliation; of living together in a unified oneness. The ideas of the 'basic archetype of completeness' and the 'image of totality' are reflected by any symbolic personification in which the Self appears. This psychological assumption is clearly expressed by von Franz in analysing the symbol of Adam - one of the many forms the Self can assume. The figure of Adam represents the 'idea of a total oneness of all human existence, beyond all individual units'.(1)

The image of the Great Man or the Cosmic Man is also thought by the Jungians to be universally revealed. By virtue of its universality it is not exclusive to a certain figure or a particular form. It may, therefore, take the shape of a superior figure in the tradition or the religion to which the individual mind belongs. Thus it is presumably identified with Christ in a Christian Self, with Krishna in a Brahman mind, with the Buddha in a Buddhist psyche, and so on. On the other hand, since the image of the Cosmic Man is a kind of expression of the basic mystery of our life, and its symbol stands for that which is perfect, whole and complete, it is 'often conceived of as a bisexual being'.(2)

Another personification of the Self is the possibility of its assumption of a superior female figure related to the tradition

1- Jung, *MHS*, p. 200.

2- Jung, *MHS*, p. 204.

adopted by a woman's mind. Added to this, the Self can assume the form of an animal, a deer for instance in a woman's meditation. In this case the animal stands for the 'instinctive nature and its connectedness with one's surroundings'.(1) Furthermore, the 'urge of individuation' may turn out in a veiled form in the sense that it could be hidden in an obsessive passion felt for a particular person.

Whether veiled or unveiled, all these symbolic forms and personifications of the psyche contain the possible fulfilment of perfection and wholeness. But this creatively active aspect of the psychic nucleus seems to be conditioned. It can come into play only when the ego manages to eradicate all purposive and wishful aims and tries to reach a deeper and more basic form of existence: 'the ego must be able to listen attentively and to give itself, without any further design or purpose, to that inner urge towards growth'.(2)

In the light of this exposition of the Jungian analysis, Raine's realization of the *Tao* tends to present a difficult problem. What Raine realized is not a personification of *Tao* because *Tao* is not personal like Christ, Krishna, the Buddha or Mohamed. For Raine, she is definitely clear in confirming that what she perceived was the *Tao*, the way, and not a figure of a "man" called *Tao*. Such being the case the *Tao* cannot conform to the Jungian Cosmic Man or any of his forms of personification. Rather, it would be equivalent to what the Jungians call an 'active imagination' - another archetypal form of the perfection of the psyche.

1- Jung, *MHS*, p. 207.

2- Jung, *MHS*, pp. 162-3.

Nevertheless, Tao is often called by Lao Tzu 'the Mystic Mother' (*Tao*, ch. p. 22) or 'the Mother of the Universe' (*Tao* ch. p. 44), and more often than not 'Tao is a thing' (*Tao* ., ch. p. 40) always taking the pronoun "it". Consequently, there is the Taoist possibility that Tao may be revealed through a symbolic personification. In Raine's case, if it can be supposed that the inner nucleus of her psyche shows itself in the form of Tao, this form must be the content of the scene she describes as the *Tao* ; the agents of nature and the people carried on the current. In either case, Raine's Tao might function as a Jungian symbolic archetype, if not a personification in the first case. Its function is to achieve the total oneness in the culmination of the individuation process, expressing the only immortal part that lives within her individual human being and redeeming her by leading her out of creation and its sufferings, back into her original eternal sphere.(1) In the lump, the message of Raine's Tao is the same message of almost any symbolic figure for Jung; the perfection of reality.

The emphasis now must be shifted to investigate the mystical characteristics in Raine's 'superior insight' of the realization of the *Tao* . The account possesses all the basic marks that characterize an extrovertive mystical experience. In her description the attention is drawn to the change of the tenses of the verbs in the key statement of the account. The sentence begins with the clause 'I saw' indicating that she is going to tell of an event from the past. On the contrary, all the verbs which describe what she "saw" are formulated in the present tense: 'human beings are', 'we are', 'whose power is', 'we can destroy',

1- von Franz in Jung *MHS*, p. 202.

'we go with', 'strength is' and 'sustains us'. Obviously, using verbs in one sentence in such a way is intentional on the part of the writer. The idea behind is certainly to communicate her firm conviction of what she saw as a perpetual reality in which human beings are "forever" striving against the great current on which we are carried. What she saw is still being seen by her because it is the truth. This points to the mystical characteristic of the sense of objectivity and perpetual reality.

The element of ineffability is easily and directly recognized throughout the account: 'insight [which] is more difficult to describe', 'words themselves mean nothing', 'the thinning of the words themselves' and 'I can only remotely indicate, not define'. The characteristic of the holiness or divinity of what is apprehended, which can be interwoven in this instance with the mark of blessedness, is implied in Raine's comment that 'it occurred to me at about that time one might pray.... Prayer could only do nothing, or do good'.

As above explained, the phrase 'the power of elements finding their way not by effort but by effortlessness' alludes to the feature of paradoxicality. Above all, the experience is, I believe, an embodiment of a concrete apprehension of a living spirit or "Presence" that enlivens every thing. This living Presence constructs the core of the experience because what was revealed is the realization that 'our only strength is that of the great tides and forces of the cosmos' (*LU*, p. 122). This truth is very much in tune with what Dionysius the Areopagite believes in as a reality: 'Personality is a finite thing. The very essence of my personal state lies in the fact that I am not the whole

universe but a member thereof'.(1)

In this way the unifying vision is, therefore, reflected in the combined efforts and joint forces between man and the great powers of the universe so that the harmonious oneness may be fulfilled. The unifying vision can also be comprehended through the Jungian analysis in which the Self, showing itself in the form of Tao, or "the *Tao*", achieves its oneness through the union of the conscious and the unconscious. Behind this, for the Jungians, lies the principle of a total oneness of all human existence beyond all individual units.

2.6 THE EPIPHANY OF THE TREE

One of Raine's interesting visions that might also be taken into consideration in the present discussion is the experience she calls "the epiphany of the Tree". It is by far the most prominent vision recorded in *The Lion's Mouth*, the last book of her autobiography. Though distinct, the vision closely resembles the hyacinth episode, except in so far as the sense of unitary consciousness is not directly intelligible, but rather understood by implication.

The importance of the vision of the tree arises from two main reasons. First, it is connected to and synchronizes with one of Raine's most glamorous, if not the greatest and most influential, love stories. Hence, it cannot be ignored as irrelevant, especially since Raine's concept of love is a major variable in her spiritual order. Secondly, the vision in itself, as well as

1- Dionysius, *DNMT*, p. 4.

its juxtaposition with Raine's love for Gavin Maxwell, inspired her to produce some remarkable poetic work, such as the poem "Northumbrian Sequence", and the complete volume of verse entitled *On a Deserted Shore*, not to mention many scattered poems in her late volumes. After meeting Gavin Maxwell for the first time and recognizing him as native to her soul's lost paradise, Raine had the vision of the tree:

Was it that very day, or a few days later, that I was standing in my bedroom late at night before going to bed; and I could see, for that time, into two worlds, as if, waking, one were at the same time to explore a dream. But the quality was different from that of all but a few dreams. As I had once held my breath to see the flow of immortal life in a hyacinth, so did I to see the Tree, though it stood in inner space, not in nature. May-tree or Rowan, it bore its clusters of white flowers. In it was a blackbird and at the foot the sleeping figure of a young boy of about twelve years old. The tree was on the summit of a hill, and I was aware of the flow of waters into its roots, gathered from the darkness and cold storms I knew to be raging below. The tree itself, the laden branches, the singing of the bird and the flow of life from chaos and cold to form and flower was all, I knew, taking place in the mind of the sleeper; and was his thought, his dream raising the tree and its flowers continually into being. I saw neither serpent nor wall round the garden; my tree stood wild and free, uncircumscribed and without any symbol of evil.

(*LM*, pp. 15-16)

The acquaintance with Raine's vision of the hyacinth is again essential here so as not to oppugn the mystical qualities of this vision of the tree. As for the characteristics previously defined, the description quoted above seems to be, at first sight, devoid of most of them. Still, especially in the light of the hyacinth episode, it may be recognized as mystical. Perhaps, this is the sort of difficulty posed in Raine's writings in general and in her visions in particular. Her visions and experiences, though

sometimes different in form or content, construct a whole coherent structure whose parts are so interwoven that it may be hard, irrelevant, and even unfair to judge one part without linking it to the context of the whole. For this reason, the epiphany of the Tree ought not to be taken in isolation. The assumption is clear through Raine's repetitive reference to the hyacinth here as elsewhere.

A sense of objectivity as typical as that illustrated in the hyacinth episode is made tangible through the words 'As I had once held my breath to see the flow of immortal life in a hyacinth, so did I to see the Tree', and also 'I was aware of the flow of waters into its roots'. Seeing 'into two worlds', as Raine puts it, is enough evidence to imply the mystical paradoxicality as a characteristic. But above all, the paradox is evidently intensified by Raine's portrayal of the Tree as standing in 'inner space, not in nature'. While the account does not demonstrate in a direct way any sense of ineffability, yet, there is a note of uncertainty about Raine's own interpretation of the vision. This is implicit in her use of the phrase 'as if' in the opening sentence. More to the point is Raine's immediate commentary on the vision, in which she exhibits a shadow of her latent awareness of ineffability: 'What do such visions mean? No explanation could ever "mean" as much as the experience itself' (*LM*, p. 16). The mystical element of suddenness is made clear in Raine's comment, 'because these things had come to me unsought - the vision of the Tree, the meeting with Gavin like a messenger from home - I thought them Heaven-sent' (*LM*, p. 16). The phrase "Heaven-sent", together with the sentence "nothing in that world is a mere thing, or object, but sacred", gives a direct indication of a

sense of holiness, as well as an implicit suggestion of a feeling of joyfulness.

The next point to consider is the unifying vision. Although it is not directly expressed, it can be comprehended on two levels of interpretation. First, Raine's identification of the vision of the Tree with the vision of the hyacinth, allows the former to be interpreted, at least in essence, in the light of the latter. Their marked similarity and interconnection suggest that if the account of the Tree omits certain details, they might be implied by the description of the hyacinth. Raine states in the hyacinth account that: 'I could sense the very flow of life in the cells. I was not perceiving the flower but living it'. This could be very likely embodied in the sentence 'I was aware of the flow of waters into its roots' from the vision of the Tree, considering its identification with the hyacinth. Above all, the reality perceived by Raine is defined as 'the same I had in the hyacinth'. And as a result, the existence of the unifying vision can be confirmed.

The second level of interpretation is Jungian, according to which the tree is an archetypal form of the completeness and perfection of the psyche. Seeing the tree in a vision, in a dream or even in thought signifies that the seer shares what Jung calls 'psychic identity', or 'mystical participation' with it.(1) In this connection, the sleeping figure of the young boy appearing in Raine's vision of the Tree can be recognized as 'the animus', in Jungian terms. This Jungian animus refers to the male personification of the unconscious, the inner mind or soul in a

1- Jung, *MHS*, p. 45.

woman as opposed to the 'anima' in a man's psyche. Its function (either animus or anima) is to fathom the divine will and to link the individual with 'the spirit world', with 'the gods' or with whatever the individual believes in as God.(1) Most probably, this is applicable to what Raine alludes to in the sentence 'The tree itself, the laden branches, the singing of the bird and the flow of life from chaos and cold to form and flower and fruit was all, I knew, taking place in the mind of the sleeper; all was his thought, his dream raising the tree and its flowers continually into being'.

Such being the case, the unifying vision actually exists, but in the mind of the sleeper. According to Jungian theory, the sleeper's mind is Raine's, on the ground that the sleeper is psychologically Raine's animus. Through either interpretation, the unifying vision can be evidenced, and as a result the mystical characteristics are obviously completed.

In order to illustrate how important the vision of the Tree is to her verse and life, Raine points out that 'the vision seemed above all to concern poetry, the oracular bird-voice' and that 'I made a vow that this time I would do nothing wrong, nothing not in obedience to the senders of that vision' (*LM*, p. 21). This statement is of significance when approaching Raine's conception of love later.

During her Catholic period, Kathleen Raine had another vision when she was in The Farm Street Jesuit church. It is relevant here to cast some light upon this vision in an attempt to distinguish between the mystical vision and some other shifts of

1- "The Animus: the Man Within", *MHS*, pp. 189-195.

the consciousness of a visionary. Like the vision called 'Death - as Known by the Soul' or the fear of the Holy Ghost referred to earlier, this experience appears to fall into another psychological category differing from that that concerns mysticism. Raine calls it 'the experience of the nun' in which:

I seemed, while at the same time remaining myself, to be a young nun; younger than I was myself at the time, and standing, so it seemed, in a pleasant sunny garden or orchard of blossoming fruit-tree; in France, as it seemed to me. The nun was wearing a black habit with a white head-dress, somewhat stiff and projecting ... It was odd how vividly clear the feeling of the shaped-head dress was to me, though I could not see it. The young nun was radiantly happy, with a lightness of heart and uplifting joy. At the same time I was able to compare from within - to measure, as it were - my own being with hers; and I knew myself, for all my experience of sorrow and evil, to know much more, to possess a much greater reach and scope of experience than she; though I had lost that bird-like innocent joy which she, in her smaller sphere, had been able to attain or retain.

(*LU*, p. 198)

There is neither union nor even an inkling of love to be comprehended in this vision. It seems more likely to be a speechless dialogue between two states of the same mind, or rather a sort of a silent dramatic soliloquy. Two figures of the same character were tacitly, as it were, blaming each other like what may happen in a sudden fit of some kind of schizophrenia. Though the nun did not seem to be aware of Kathleen Raine's presence, her jubilant appearance and exultant movements transmitted a message of tantalization to Raine, and forced her to make the comparison between their two disintegral states of being. The nun (as though in a pantomimic way) piqued herself upon her unimpeachable innocence and radiant happiness compared to Raine's experience of 'sorrow and evil'. Whereas Raine took a pride in her larger scope of experience as opposed to the nun's 'smaller sphere'. Thus, the

central idea of the vision is not perfection but disintegration, not love but antagonism. This disconnection between the two figures' thought, feelings and states of being was possibly stimulated by the inner unrest that stood up against Raine's attempt to become a Catholic convert. Her immediate initiation into the learning of the imagination, as the exclusive means of understanding and communicating the truth she felt within at the time, was at variance with the external Christian form she had then taken on. The possibility of the psychological struggle between the old belief and the new one might not be ruled out. At this point, it is appropriate to quote Raine's own commentary on the experience:

I do not tell this experience as "evidence" for reincarnation - it might be taken so, but there could be many possible explanations; insight, for example, of a telepathic kind into another soul, of the present or of the past, to whom I was for the moment attuned, in some respect. Or it would have been simply a symbolic configuration, a kind of waking dream. I tell it not for its curiosity but for its content as an experience; for it expressed the plain truth of my real situation: I was trying to evade, to hide myself in the clothing of a novice, from my true destiny.

(*LU*, p. 198)

The indication of the struggle is clear in the last sentence. This also bears out the conclusion that the experience of the nun, though relevant to some poems as we will see later, can be interpreted in terms of psychological phenomena other than mystical vision. But one thing must be borne in mind; having such a vision does not diminish or negate the actual occurrence of the genuine mystical vision to Raine.

It could be added that in her spiritual attitude, Raine believes in some other psychological and intellectual phenomena.

She has, for instance, a deeply-rooted belief in the principle of reincarnation, which builds up one of the main bases for her poetic approach. She believes she herself lives many other lives one of which is her mother's: 'my own life has been like a series of lives whose stories are like so many reincarnations' (*LU*, p. 107). Also, she has not ruled out the possibility of taking the experience of the nun as "evidence" for reincarnation. For her, reincarnation is not restricted to human beings, but it is manifested and embodied in the rebirth of every natural form in the universe. It is the life cycle that cannot be broken at any point, as will be seen later in some detail.

As a reader of psychology Raine believes in, and actually underwent, some other psychological phenomena such as somnambulism and telepathy, to say nothing of her abiding belief in dreams. Raine gives an example of the reality of her dreams in her telepathic dream concerning the death of her dear friend, Humphrey Jennings. She did not know of his death at the time; but she had a dream on the night he died. She describes this dream as 'the first occasion on which I was certain that some telepathic communication had reached me from the dead. The symbolic dress of such dreams is no doubt given by the dreamer; but the content surely not' (*LU*, p. 170).

2.7 TOWARDS SETTLEMENT AND PRECAUTION

With regard to Netterville's argument that Raine is not a mystic but a visionary, he builds up his assessment on a personal letter sent to him by Raine. In this letter Raine points out that she hates the word 'mystical':

I dislike the word "mystical" with its too exclusive suggestion of a certain Christian school of *Blaktic* [i.e. Bhaktic] experience of God, to the exclusion of *gnosis* which for me has always been of great importance. But I would say that the creative act "unites", in Yeats' words, "for certain moments the sleeping and waking mind." Or in Jungian terms; unites the personal with the transpersonal self; the ego with the "collective unconscious". The old idea of the muse represents a psychological reality, which I have certainly experienced on many occasions. (In my case I speak of "the Daimon", in the Platonic sense.) Yes, we can at certain times summon the Daimon; or be summoned. It is an attitude of mind that can become more or less habitual. It comes, for me, *as* I write rather than before I write.(1)

First of all, one's liking or disliking a state of being gives no indication of whether one is or is not in that state. A person who likes poetry is not necessarily a poet, and a forlorn lover may be expected to dislike the word 'love', which does not mean he is not a lover. This principle is known a priori and needs no evidence for its application to all or most states of being. However, it is clear from the passage above that Raine does not dislike the word "mystical" as she understands it, but as it is understood by and confined to a "certain Christian school of [*Bhaktic*] experience of God".

Her objection is not to the genuine mystical state, but to the misuse of the term 'mystical'. For this reason she gives her own

1- Netterville, "K. Raine: the Heart in Flower", p. 23.

definition of what she believes to be a mystical state, though she does not name it as such, and prefers to call it the 'creative act'. But quite apart from terminology, this creative act is defined by her as the impetus that 'unites' the personal and transpersonal self in Jungian terms, or the sleeping and waking mind in Yeatsian terms. In both definitions there lies, I think, the core of mystical experience, that is the unifying vision in the union of love with "God", however different the meaning of the term from creed to creed. To Raine it is in this instance "the Daimon" in the Platonic sense, to Jung the "collective unconscious" as well as the transpersonal self, and to Yeats the *Anima Mundi*. Moreover, even Jung himself calls this union 'mystical participation'(1), which is identical to Raine's use of the same term *participation mystique* (*LU*, p. 136) to describe some of her own experiences.

Furthermore, in many other places in her work, Raine makes use of the word "mystical" or one of its derivatives so as to define some of her own visions, e.g. 'nature mysticism' alluding to the hyacinth experience, 'mystic hours' referring to the vision of the Tree, not to mention the use of the word in her poems. This adds further weight to the point that her dislike for the word provides no evidence for her not being a mystic. Her declared dislike for the word 'mystical' is clearly provoked by its associations with parochial dogmatic standpoints which insist on making the term 'mysticism' another synonym for the term 'devotion' in religion. In addition, Raine is perhaps aware of the fact that the term 'mysticism' has been frequently employed in so insignificant, vague, and commonplace a sense that people have grown used to

1- Jung, *MHS*, p. 4.

applying it wrongly, indiscriminately, cynically, or even contemptuously to any strange experience or weird event beyond their understanding.

Finally, Harvey Netterville was actually misled by the term *Bhaktic*, in Raine's letter. Despite the significance of the term in the letter, Netterville seems to have paid no attention to it. This is clearly borne out by the misspelling of the term as *Blaktic*. When she wrote this letter, Kathleen Raine was thinking of the Spanish mystics, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, who are always, she believes, forcing mysticism into a particular Christian pattern. Also she had in mind those Christian writers on mysticism who persistently try to bring mystical experience down to mere sectarianism, always referring back to the Spanish school of mysticism as an exclusive example of the genuine mystical phenomenon.(1) Raine is, in fact, against the idea of the appearance of the divine in any specific form; for the real mystical experience comes as it will, it cannot be forced into this or that form. So, this particularization of the experience of God sets bounds to the Divine whose form is infinite and fathomless, and limits the universality of the Absolute. As there is no human control over the form, she finds it absurd to accept the notion that if the Divine does not appear in the form of the Virgin Mary, for instance, the vision is not mystical. For her, this assumption dogmatically excludes other great spiritual traditions from the mystical arena, and stigmatizes mysticism as sheer fanatic emotionalism. So, it is not surprising if gnosis, as well as Jung's psychology, has always been of great importance

1- This view was expressed to the author of this thesis by Raine in an interview on 9th January, 1987.

for her, and closer to the inspiration she has derived from the variety of her immediate experience than any dogmatism. Like Raine, Evelyn Underhill too asserts the variety of forms in which the divine appears: 'supersensual intuitions - the contact between man's finite being and the Infinite Being in which it is immersed - can express themselves by means of almost any kind of sensory automatism'.(1)

On the other hand, Raine expresses her great appreciation of the term *Bhaktic* as used in Hinduism, since through it the Supreme God shows himself in many ways. Her admiration for the term is abundantly clear in her essay 'Yeats and Kabir', especially in the passage quoted in the first chapter of this thesis.(2) Mystics like Eckhart, Boehme, Rumi, Kabir, and Plotinus are highly appreciated by Raine. They are really great mystics, for they are universal in their spiritual vision. In substance, they are closer to Blake and Yeats. Hence, they are closer to her heart and mind.

It must be emphasized now that Netterville's conclusion is more or less a *non sequitur*, since nothing can be deduced from Raine's letter to repudiate the conspicuous fact that she is a mystic despite her explicit dislike of the word 'mystical'. She expresses her feeling towards the term and explains why her feeling is one of dislike. Her explanation implies not only that she has a profound understanding of the meaning of mysticism at its best, but also that she is one of the genuine mystics. On this Netterville paradoxically agrees. He states that 'Raine is a mystic in the general sense' of Rufus M. Jones' definition of

1- Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 321.

2- See p. 44.

mysticism.(1) In his notes, Netterville refers to Jones' definition of mysticism as a 'doctrine of union with the absolute' in which God is 'Absolute Reality, Pure Being, Perfect Form' with no possibility of change, and the human soul, which contains something 'unsundered from the absolute', can inevitably know 'super-empiricle [empirical] reality' because when it 'sinks to its deepest center, it is one with that reality'.(2) According to this definition, Netterville holds Raine as a mystic in the general sense of the term. But he would, I presume, be more accurate if he replaced the word 'general' by the word 'universal' in his statement. Jones' definition is, in my view, extremely valid for most previously established cases of both extrovertive and introvertive types of mysticism, including that of Raine.

To conclude, Kathleen Raine is a mystic who has other non-mystical visions, and who also believes in dreams, telepathy, palm-reading, and fortune-telling, among other phenomena. But, none of these non-mystical visions or psychological phenomena impugns her genuine mystical experience. In this connection, *mutatis mutandis*, she is like St. Teresa who had some diabolical visions besides her genuine mystical ones, or like the Sufi, Rabi'a who had her own dreams as distinct from her mystical visions. So, Raine can be appropriately regarded as a visionary mystic whose view is that:

What we have lived for may prove to be some few occasions, perhaps some single event, in which we have known ourselves to be agents of, and participators in, a life greater than our own. Our deepest realizations, whether of knowledge or of love, are not our own inventions or

1- Netterville, 'K. Raine: the Heart in Flower', p. 23.

2- Ibid., p. 43.

discoveries or plans, but come, as it seems, by revelation.

(*LM*, p. 5)

The next point for consideration is Harriet Zinnes' argument, previously referred to. Dissatisfied with Kathleen Raine's approach of using the traditional mystic signs in her poetry, Zinnes believes that Raine's approach lacks 'not only Blake's turbulent and abundant imagery but his profound belief in contraries'.(1) Regardless of the comparison made between Raine and Blake, with its controversial validity(2), Zinnes' interpretation of mysticism requires some attention. In her opinion, the mystical vision is something out of date and hard to accept in the present time. The following passage bears witness to her attitude towards mysticism and the mystic who, in her view,

Looks to a dream, to childhood, to the collective unconscious, even to the supposed pure, innocent life of birds and animals, who, through some uncanny, and ironically enough, anthropomorphic fashion, seem imbued with the "eternal mind".....I must say that the mystical notion that animals can contain such unambiguous innocence and eternal love (wisdom) is rather hard to take today.(3)

In her unsympathetic way of approaching mysticism, Zinnes seems to have no clear idea of mystical vision except as 'signs' of nature decorating a poem of a 'dreamer'. Indeed, she makes no distinction between Piaget's theory of animism in the development of the child's thought and the *one* mystical characteristic of objectivity or feeling of life in natural objects apprehended

1- Harriet Zinnes, 'Kathleen Raine Collected', p. 290.

2- Kathleen Raine has never made a claim that she is equal to Blake. He is her "master", and all what she hopes for is to be judged as a good and loyal "secretary" of him, since her utmost pride is taken in her scholarship on him.

3- Op.Cit., 291.

through the unifying vision of a mystic. Moreover, what she holds as "uncanny" and "ironical" in our contemporary life is nevertheless the truth for many, mystics and nonmystics alike.

As if she were aware of this subjectively deprecatory kind of criticism, Kathleen Raine replies in a poem entitled 'In Answer to a Letter Asking me for Volumes of my Early Poems' that: 'the truth we tell/ Few believe, and many hate' (L C, p. 33) Similarly but more boldly, a reader of Thomas Taylor the Platonist refers to Taylor's Platonic ideas as spiritually made 'for the benefit of the uncorrupted and judicious few'.(1) Quoting Chalcidius in his commentary on *Timaeus* that "no man would seek God or aspire to Piety unless he had first seen the sky and the stars", Peter Russell in his essay on Raine's verse adds that 'Fools may laugh her out of court as fools laughed at William Blake, but these will be fools "Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise."'(2) In the same spirit Wordsworth in "Ode. Intimations of Immortality" speaks of the 'truths that wake/ To perish never'. To him these 'truths' are inherent in natural forms, and 'the meanest flower that blows can give/ Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.'(3) Remarkable also is the answer of Blake himself: 'When I tell any Truth it is not for the sake of Convincing those who do not know it but for the sake of defendig those who Do.'(4)

Relevant to Zinnes' disinclination for mysticism is the issue of natural "signs" utilized in a poem. The attribution of life to

1- T. W., 'A Brief Notion of MR. Thomas Taylor, the Celebrated Platonist, with a complete list of his published works', Harjette and Savill, Printess, Charing Cross, 1828, p. 1.

2- Peter Russell, 'Kathleen Raine's New Poems', p. 725.

3- Wordsworth, *Poems, in Two Volumes*, p. 277.

4- Blake, "Public Address", *CPPWB*, p. 578.

natural objects or seeing the whole inanimate creation potentially endowed with life constitutes only one dimension of the mystical experience and not the whole content of it. However, the interflowing sense of life of the mystic and the contemplated object is by no means identical to the child's ascribing of life to inert things on the basis of their movement or activity. The existence of such signs as the wind, day, night, stars, flowers, rocks, birds and the like in a poem does not echo a mystical note in itself. They are mystical signs in so far as they are fused to impart the harmonious unity as a mystical truth behind their concrete appearance.

It is abundantly clear that poems expressing a very wide-ranging variety of themes are often adorned with many forms of nature. These natural forms are sometimes delineated metaphorically in an anthropomorphic fashion. However, this does not denote that the forms are conceived mystically. For the purpose of illustration, here is Christopher Marlowe disseminating a lot of these signs in two lines of his well-known poem 'The Passionate Shepherd to his Love':

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves, hills and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.(1)

The idea communicated through these six natural forms is surely far from being mystical. It is the rejoicing of nature for the consummation of love. On the same theme of human love, Christina Rossetti, the loveliness and serenity of whose verse is by some

1- Quoted from Fredrick S. Boas, *Christopher Marlowe, a biological and critical study*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 220.

critics compared to that of Raine(1), spells out a galaxy of natural forms to give utterance to her heart's utmost happiness for the reunion with her lover. Her extreme exultation and overwhelming ecstasy transcend all the felicitous states of the natural portrait she depicts in these lines of her beautiful poem 'A Birthday':

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.(2)

For Robert Herrick, natural forms are conceived of neither for celebrating the beauty of nature nor for conveying a revealed mystical apprehension of truth latent in them. They have only the capacity to display an illustrative function from which we should learn a useful lesson. Their apparent ephemerality and fast decay urge the lovers to seize every opportunity to enjoy the present day and to trust the least possible to the future, as the familiar theme of *carpe diem* preaches:

Our life is short; and our dayes run
As fast as do's the Sunne:
And as a vapour, or a drop of raine
Once lost, can ne'r be found againe.(3)

Thus, it is easy to cite numberless poems that contain such signs of nature expressing various themes, among them the

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- 1- Tom Disch, 'The Science of the Sublime', *The Times Literary Supplement*, August, 14th, 1981, p. 930.
 - 2- *The Complete Poems of Christina Rossetti*, vol. 1, ed. by R.W. Crump, Louisiana State University Press, 1979, pp. 36-7.
 - 3- "Corinna's going a Maying", *The Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. by L.C. Martin, Oxford University Press, London, 1965, p. 69.

rejoicing of nature in its visible loveliness and the celebration of it for its own sake. However, the preoccupation of a mystic poet, if it is basically restricted to nature, is to discover by revelation the invisible behind and above the visible. Through his probing insight he is to offer us a genuine vision of what is beyond the reach of our imperfect mortal eyes. He has to show us the divine function of these signs as he apprehends it through his inspired moments of revealed reality.

For example, Blake, who is compared to Raine by Zinnes, is perhaps best known as a mystic through the visions aroused by natural scenes and forms. For him, leaf, worm, flea, tendrill, rock, cloud, spider, lamb, tiger are nothing but embodiments of the depths of spiritual life: "Every thing possible to be believ'd is an image of truth".(1) Because they are alive, these forms of nature are laden with holiness: "Every thing that lives is holy". This Blakean spiritualization of natural forms is evinced in "the little winged fly, smaller than a grain of sand" that "has a heart like thee: a brain open to heaven & hell".(2) So, it is latent in the smallest as much as in the greatest of these forms so that he sees in an hour of 'Eternity' "a World in a Grain of Sand/ And a Heaven in a Wild Flower".(3)

Added to this, Blake's most explicit and simplest example of his personal experience of the vision of light is evoked by the latent truth of these natural forms and his discovery of their intimate and integral relation to man. This outstanding example is to be found in a poem inclosed in a letter to Thomas Butts in

1- *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "Proverbs of Hell",
in *CPPWB*, p. 37.

2- *Milton*, bk. I., in *CPPWB*, p. 114.

3- "Auguries of Innocence", *CPPWB*, p. 490.

which Blake describes his "first" natural vision of light that once "Appear'd on the sea":

To my Friend Butts I write
My first Vision of Light.
.....

I each particle gazed,
Astonish'd, Amazed;
For each was a Man
Human-form'd. Swift I ran,
For they beckon'd to me
Remote by the Sea,
Saying: "Each grain of sand,
Every Stone on the Land,
Each rock & each hill,
Each fountain & rill,
Each herb & each tree,
Mountain, hill, earth, and sea,
Cloud, Meteor, and Star,
Are Men seen Afar."(1)

Without much difference in spirit either from Blake or from most mystics of natural vision, Kathleen Raine has been granted the spiritual reality hidden behind the 'living forms' of nature. The poem 'Seed' from her first volume of verse, *Stone and Flower*, is a clear example of this mystical type of the contemplation of the physical and ephemeral that leads up to the perception of the spiritual and eternal:

From star to star, from sun and spring and leaf,
and almost audible flowers whose sound is silence,
and in the common meadows, springs the seed of life.

Now the lilies open, and the rose
released by summer from the harmless graves
that, centuries deep, are in the air we breathe,
and in our earth, and in our daily bread.

External and innate dimensions hold
the living forms, but not the force of life,
for that interior and holy tree
that in the heart of hearts outlives the world
spreads earthly shade into eternity.

(*SF*, p. 49)

1- Blake, "[To] Mr [Thomas] Butts", *CPPWB*, p. 712.

The significance of quoting this poem from Raine's first volume lies in the fact that though her poem appears in line with Blake's in import, Raine had not yet familiarized herself with Blake's "golden string" at this time. She arrived at the same mystical truth independently. Only through her own original vision did she discover in a spontaneous way that the star, sun, earth, summer and other 'living forms' are nothing but 'external' elaborations of one 'interior' truth. This truth is the oneness of the eternal source of all created things. This truth also constitutes the heart of Raine's poetic work, as we will see later. At this point I am bound to say that Zinnes's statement is probably intended to be a stick with which to beat Raine's 'professed theory of poetry'(1) rather than an objective, or at least non-subjective, interpretation of mysticism.

1- H. Zinnes, 'Kathleen Raine Collected', p. 291.

CHAPTER THREE

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MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AS MANIFESTED IN RAINE'S POETRY

"The divine kingdom is seated in the inmost recesses of the spirit. Accordingly, the soul, which is the noblest of creatures, is enabled to find, to know, and to love God."

(Tauler, in Scott, *Aspects of Christian Mysticism*)

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"One that seeks to penetrate the nature of the Divine Mind must see deeply into the nature of his own Soul, into the Divinest part of himself".

(Plotinus, *EN*)

* * * * *

My bosom grac'd with each gay flow'r,
I grasp the bowl, my nymph in glee;
The monarch of the world this hour,
Is but a slave compar'd to me.

(Hafiz, *Fifty Poems*)

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3.1 A MESSAGE FROM ETERNITY

One of the most striking peculiarities in Kathleen Raine's poetry consists in her absolute commitment and loyalty to her visions and dreams. Her early poetic achievements tend to be determined by her first penetration into the spiritual world revealed in the hollyhocks vision culminating in the hyacinth vision. Deepened by the *Tao* and assured by the Tree, both visions gave rise to the underlying constructive principle controlling most of Raine's canon of verse. Though the epiphany of the Tree ushered in the period of her more structured and more sophisticated thought, it was more or less an augmentation of the same inspired truth realized through the earlier visions.

The poem that can be read most mystically, and compared to the corresponding prose account and by virtue of its complete description of the actual vision, is "The Hyacinth" in Raine's first volume of verse, *Stone and Flower*, published in 1943. It is not only the title of the poem that gives the clue to its close connection to the prose record of the experience, but also the belief that any sound attempt to paraphrase the poem will inevitably result in the same account of the vision presented in prose. There is also a substantial piece of evidence to add weight to this notion. It is doubtless a mistaken course to follow with absolute accuracy the chronological sequence of events in Raine's writing. This is due to her strong disbelief in the time order: 'chronology has little to do with recollection' (*FHF*, p. 160), and in another place 'What to the immortal signifies number or months or years?' ("Told in Dream", *LC*, p. 53). Yet, fortunately, in this particular instance the reader of

Raine's work can easily recognize the coincidence of the time at which the experience occurred with the time of the writing and publication of the poem. *Stone and Flower* was published in 1943, but the title page indicates that the poems it contains were written in the period 1935-43; besides, the poem 'the Hyacinth' was dedicated to James Madge, Raine's son who has been used to growing hyacinth, while *The Land Unknown* reveals that the experience happened during her living at Martindale when France fell (*LU*, p. 118), that is to say approximately 1940. From this it is clear that the poem was an immediate reaction to the vision.

The poet, or rather the persona of 'The Hyacinth' is able to discover through contemplating the flower the divine and never-failing source of life hidden behind the material world of space and time. In Platonic terms, the imperfect copy down here is revealed as a reminder of the perfect divine prototype above there:

Time opens in a flower of bells
the mysteries of its hidden bed,
the altar of the ageless cells
whose generations never have been dead.

So flower angels from the holy head,
so on the wand of darkness bright worlds hang.
Love laid the elements at the vital root,
unhindered out of love these flowers spring.

The breath of life shapes darkness into leaves,
each new-born cell
drinks from the star-filled well
the dark milk of the sky's peace.

The hyacinth springs on a dark star -
I see eternity give place to love.
It is the world unfolding into flower
the rose of life, the lily and the dove.

(*SAF*, p. 24)

Here the reader of the poem is offered two different universes independent of each other in essence and function. The one is the

ephemeral space-time world in which we live and which we feel with our ordinary senses. The other is the essential spiritual world perceived with the enlightened mind's eyes when attuned to it. At the very beginning of the poem we are told that the only function of 'the rough world of earth' ("Short Poems", *OH*, p. 81) is to be an object of contemplation so as to lead to the other world of eternal reality. Contemplation is held by many mystics to be a guide to the higher reality. Plotinus, among others, sees contemplation of the concrete beautiful as the best (sometimes the only) vehicle for the aspirant to achieve union with the One, the Absolute, the Beautiful, and the Good - there are multifarious mystical terms used to refer to this very same reality. For Raine, to see those 'flower-faces' in the here and now through the mind's eye is 'to know, to enter into total relationship with, to participate in the essential being of each *I am*' (*FHF*, p. 13). Ralph Mills argues for contemplation as a primary requisite for Raine's inspiration upon which her cosmology is built. He points out that her piercing insight into an ordinary landscape and her contemplation of the 'pattern made by the elements in [the] pastoral world leads to revelation'.(1)

In the poem, after finishing its 'task', so to speak, which is to 'open' the hidden mysteries of the flower, the world of space and time begins to vanish and leave room for the eternal, 'ageless'. The visible concrete and physical darkness are transmuted into the invisible transcendental and spiritual brightness envisaged here as the 'world unfolding into flower'. Needless to say this disclosure of the universal all-inclusive one embodied in the heart of the beautiful, of which the hyacinth is a

1- Mills, 'The Visionary Poetry of Kathleen Raine', p. 144.

representative, by means of contemplation, is generally recognized as the ultimate goal of the mystics - if we leave aside the question of the variety of terms used to interpret the reality attained. Raine's perception of the hyacinth is exactly what David Mitchell calls "a *transfigured* nature, a nature transparent to the spiritual states it 'symbolizes with'".(1)

In this connection the clearest and most direct example to illustrate this sense of the unity of the universe can be found, I think, in the following description given by Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic, and cited by Helen White:

All parts of the universe are interwoven and tied together with a sacred bond. And no one thing is foreign or unrelated to another. This general connection gives unity and ornament to the world. For the world, take it altogether, is but one. There is but one sort of matter to make it of; one God that pervades it; and one law to guide it, the common reason of all rational beings; and one truth; if, indeed, beings of the same kind, and endued with the same reason, have one and the same reflection....Now that is always good and reasonable which makes for the service of the universe.(2)

There is, of course, a gulf of difference fixed between the Stoic reliance on discursive reason as a means to understand and to realize this cosmic unity and Raine's professed faculty of the Imagination as creative power to reach the same end. But whether by reason or intellect or imagination or any other faculty, the truth professed by almost all mystics is one in essence.

As far as the mystical characteristics in 'The Hyacinth' are concerned, the element of paradoxicality can be confirmed in the lines 'generations never have been dead', 'on the wand of darkness bright worlds hang' and 'the dark milk of the sky's peace'. The

1- David Mitchell, "Nature as Theophany", *Temenos*,
No. 7., 1986, p. 97.

2- H. White, *MWB*, p. 97.

'altar', 'angels', 'the holy head' and 'the sky's peace' correspond to what Raine has described in the prose account as a 'sense of immaculate holiness' which is too a mystical characteristic. The feeling of blessedness, joyfulness or happiness can be sensed by implication in the verb to 'flower' in the second stanza. By its potential connotation, the verb suggests the *joie de vivre* arising from the process of blossoming and of birth. The consequence is, thereby, a delightful procession of images crystallizing this overflowing sense of blessedness; 'bright worlds', 'flowers spring', 'new-born cell', 'the star-filled well' 'the rose of life'. In Raine's view these manifestations give pleasure not only out of her pure identification with their realm of being, but above all out of the realization of the one organic unity of her physical existence with theirs. For her, the substance of all natural elaborations is made of her own substance: 'Once such bird was I Nature is your nature' ("Lyric", *SF*, p. 7), so 'How could form of wave and leaf and wing/ Not please the mind of wing and leaf?' ("Tir Na'n Oge", *OP*, p. 57)

Furthermore, this sense of joyfulness is reflected in the use of the beautiful music of the perfect masculine rhyme: bells, cells/ bed, dead/ cell, well/ love, dove; in the melodic device of consonance (sometimes called consonantal assonance or rhyme, or dissonance): hang, spring/ leaves, peace/ star, flower; and in the imperfect pararhyme: head, root. Taken together with the associations and implications of the poem's images, this is presumably what Evelyn Underhill refers to as the 'suggestive and allusive' quality of the language of the mystical artist. Through this suggestive quality the poet 'approaches the methods of music'

so as to 'operate a kind of enchantment which dilates the consciousness of the hearer to a point at which it is able to apprehend new aspects of the world'.(1)

The existence of the first person pronoun 'I' in the last stanza does not deny the poem its sense of objectivity but rather emphasises it. What has been seen is supposed to be the process of the creation of the world in its eternity. In this sense, the creation of the world must certainly include the seer herself or itself if we accept that the seer is the soul of the poet as long as the seen is spiritually apprehended. In other words, the seen and the seer bear to one another the dynamic relation of one organic unity in which we have 'seer and seen consuming in one light' ("Fire", *TP*, p. 3). Plotinus describes such an apprehension as the sense of complete identification with the object beyond any sense of dualism, in which the seer is 'no longer the seer, but the seen'.(2) The union is also in accord both with Ibn Al'arabi's "the one becomes hidden in the other" and with the Brahman's unitive state of the individual self with the Universal Self.(3)

Thus the unifying vision is realized. In the prose account the ambient unitary consciousness is plainly confirmed by the sentence 'I was not perceiving the flower but living it'. While in the poem it is suggested through the poetic way of indirectness; 'It is the world unfolding into flower', which means loosely the world including me, the whole of which I am an integral part. This is in fact reminiscent of Dionysius' words on the finiteness of

1- Underhill, "The Mystic as Creative Artist", *UM*, p. 403.

2- "On the Intellectual Beauty", *EN*, V.8.11.

3- See above, p. 64.

individuality, in which he sees the essence of personality as lying in man's realization of the reality that he is not, man being not 'the whole universe but a member thereof'.(1) The poem stands out as a perfect example for Gerald Bullett's definition of mystical experience as an 'intuition of something wonderful beyond one's imagining but to which one intimately belongs. Its normal effect is to induce a sense of that unifying principle in things, of which love is the outward and visible sign'.(2)

In truth, Raine's growing perception of cosmic consciousness since the hyacinth has increasingly possessed her mind and heart. The spiritual comprehension of the divine truth, embodied in the invisible thread that coalesces the whole congeries of created objects beyond the space-time world into the all-inclusive one, is presented in most of her poems, the earliest and the latest alike. In *The Lost Country*, a fairly recent volume of verse, the idea of cosmic consciousness is predominant, as instanced in the poem 'childhood', where the eternal message of the beautiful is absorbed with perfect clarity and embraced with boundless love:

I see all, am all, all.
I leap along the line of the horizon hill,
I am a cloud in the high sky,
I trace the veins of intricate fern.

I am bird-world, leaf-life, I am wasp-world hung
Under low berry-branch of hidden thorn.

(*L C*, p. 21)

From the same mystical mode of the poet's cosmic consciousness, in which 'the Quest, and the Way and the Seeker are one'(3), the same idea is repeatedly communicated in *The Oracle in the Heart*. All creatures are visibly manifold in form. But in essence each

1- See above, pp. 118-9.

2- Gerald Bullett, *The English Mystics*, p. 48.

3- M. Smith, *Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East*, p. 9.

living microcosm reflects the integration of the universal wholeness behind the appearance of its own individual unit. When the veil of the dark illusory caverned world of space and time is swept aside, the primordial reality is effulgent: 'within the life of the whole, the life of every part is in turn a living whole', and 'the world itself [is] a whole made up of wholes, since life is indivisible and entire in all its parts'(1):

Forest is multitude,
But one tree all, one apple-bud
Opens the flower of the world, infinite
Golden stamens and rose petals, here.
("Short Poems", *OH*, p. 78)

In both the passage and the stanza just quoted, as in many others of Raine's, Proclus would recognize a vision upholding his doctrine that there are "three sorts of *Wholes* - the first, anterior to the parts; the second, composed of parts; the third, knitting into one stuff the parts and the whole".(2) Inge explains the third sense as 'the whole resides in the parts, as well as the parts in the whole'.(3)

And again in one of her latest volumes of verse, *The Oval Portrait*, the same principle is steadily maintained. It is explicitly expressed with the use of the very same image of 'the breath of life' depicted in "The Hyacinth":

Closer than breath of life
These skies, these seas
On whose waters I am a wave,
Of whose air I am a tune,
Of whose earth I am grass,
Of whose fire I am eyes?
("Tir Na'n Oge", *OP*, p. 57)

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- 1- K. Raine, *Blake and England*, W. Heffer and Sons Ltd., Cambridge, 1960, p. 3.
 - 2- Cited in W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, (The Bampton Lectures, 1899), Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1918, p. 34.
 - 3- *Ibid.*, p. 35.

The reiteration of the same image of "the breath of life" is not accidental. Despite the very long span of time between the two poems, the later declares the same truth conveyed by the earlier some thirty-five years before. This total congruence of the two images is a clear indication of how so deeply her inner truth has been inscribed in her mind, so that even its symbol is never subject to change. It proves that there has been no hazy recollection of the archetypal 'breath of life' as one of the "portions of eternity" discerned 'in imaginative vision'.(1)

That the image is originally Brahman in the first place cannot be repudiated. Raine herself is well aware of this fact. She alludes to the Hindu myth from which the image may come; 'the world is breathed out of Brahma, who after a certain time breathes it into himself again'.(2) Yet, the image is not exclusive to a particular creed. Its parallels exist in the writings of Christian mystics long before the intimate familiarity with Hindu mythology and religion was established in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.(3) Blake and many of the Romantics frequently use the image (e.g. Blake's "the Breath Divine" and "The Breath of Heaven", Shelley's "the breath of universal Being" and the "Circling .. breath of life", Wordsworth's "A Being breathing thoughtful breath"). In another place, Wordsworth speaks of "Nature's self, which is the breath of God;/ Or His pure Word by miracle revealed".(4) Sufi poets also employ the image. Rumi, for instance, alludes to the "Divine breath" which creates

1- K. Raine, *William Blake*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1970, p. 7.

2- "Yeats's Debt to William Blake", *DAS*, p. 86.

3- Richard Anderson, 'Hindu Myths in Mallarme': Un Coup De Des', *Comparative Literature*, vol. XIX., 1967, p. 28.

4- *The Fourteen-Book Prelude*, bk. V. 223-4. ed. by W. J.B. Owen, Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 99.

"a soul other than the human soul"(1), and so does Shamsi Tabriz who celebrates the coming of the "breath" to his soul.(2) And above all the image is used in the sacred Scriptures of both religions, especially as regards the creation of the soul discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. Yet, it is suggested that the image is not a "symbol" in the ordinary sense, for there is a cosmic breath which our breathing reflects.

For Raine, the formulation of the image is sometimes slightly altered, as in the poem "The Hollow Hill, No. 6", when it becomes 'the breath of the spirit' (*HH*, p. 23), and sometimes it is abridged to be only "the breath". Yet, in any case its meaning remains the same. So there is no wonder if this unchangeable image constitutes a part of her terms referring to love, the operative principle indwelling in the world of generation.

Whose being is the breath of life,
The terra firma that we tread,
The divine body that we eat,
The incarnation that we live.
("*Ex Nihilo*", *TP*, p. 21)

The same can be said about Raine's continual preference for the verb "to unfold". Raine is inclined to use it as a predicate whenever there is a mystery to be deciphered throughout her writings. In "Mandala" we find 'The mystery [begins] to unfold' (*TP*, p. 8). In "Golden Flowers" there are 'a hundred flowers with golden petals' "unfolded" by 'the sun-filled gloaming of Sgriol' when a 'shadow [is] withdrawn' (*HH*, pp. 8-9). Also in "Question and Answer", when asking the flower, 'the answer unfolds in eloquent petals about the centre' (*TP*, p. 34), and in "The Tree in Tubs" the 'budding evergreen of time' is "unfolded" in her

1- Rumi, "The Faithful Are One Soul", *RPM*, p. 51.

2- Shamsi Tabriz, *Selected Poems*, p. 127.

thought (*LT*, p. 7). These are only examples of the intimate deep relation between Raine's mind and the verb "to unfold" exhibited throughout her work, from 'The Hyacinth' to the latest book of verse. The verb is significantly preferred. Besides its meaning of revealing what is hidden and devolving from a centre outwards, it is unique in its suggestive quality. First, in its root (i.e. to fold), it involves love and intimate affection, because it means 'to embrace'. None of the near synonyms of the verb such as 'to disclose', 'to reveal', 'to unveil' can communicate this suggestive sense of love. So what was folded in love is now unfolded for the sake of the lover who will realize that he is no more than a "fold" of this truth which is 'embrace passing through embrace' (*LC*, p. 30). The verb, therefore, commensurates most adequately with the depth of the feeling of love that is held in the highest respect by Raine.

Secondly, it is noticeable from Raine's attitude that the verb is always associated with the unity of the truth "unfolding" in a flower or its petals; 'Petal on petal unfolding rose from nowhere' ("Rose", *HH*, p. 7), "Mary in her arms/ Holds all heaven in earth's unfolded rose" ("Heaven's Immanence", *LT*, p. 31), and as obvious in the previously mentioned examples. This inseparable bond between the verb and the truth radiating from a flower (any flower, not a specific one) reveals the profuse scientific knowledge of Kathleen Raine, the biologist, in selecting the most accurate verb apt to the revelation of a truth related to flowers, since a flower grows petal by petal, or rather fold by fold. The verb in this way is utilized *in extenso* because one of its meanings is 'to evolve'. So, Erika Duncan does not exaggerate when she pays tribute to Raine's perfect use of words and

describes it as a 'language which transcends its function and turns into form'.(1) This consistency of most of Raine's images, symbols, myths or even simple words characterizes the heart of her poetry, and at the same time crystallizes the trend of her thought.

3.2 GIVE ME TO A GOD, OR I WILL DIE

Kathleen Raine does not really make direct reference to God either in the poem or in the prose description of the vision of the hyacinth. Nevertheless, the reader of the poem is confronted with 'the holy head' and 'love', the creator, that 'laid the elements at the vital root' and to which 'eternity [gives] place.' Surely, without forcing the conclusion it is clear that Kathleen Raine believes in "God", or to be more specific, in some god: 'Give me to a god, or I will die' ("Desire", *SF*, p. 15). For this reason she is always in search for that god 'who has gone far away/ And yet still at evening in the green world lingers ("London Trees", *SF*, p. 53). Inevitably, Kathleen Raine, like any convert, has passed through several unstable stages of spiritual development so as to reach finally her firm conceptualization of the god she believes in.

As has been said before, Raine is not interested in the order of time in dating the events of her personal life. Yet, there are some hints in her autobiography that can be of some help in tracing the sequence of certain events. In *The Land Unknown*, we are told that only after the Second World War had come to an end, did she actually begin to take hold of Blake's 'end of the golden string'. From then on she set out to avail herself of many other

1- Erika Duncan, 'A Portrait of Kathleen Raine', p. 516.

sources of imagination. She had valuable access to Thomas Taylor the Platonist. In Rene Guenon, the Muslim convert, she found that 'knowledge absolute of which every metaphysical tradition is an expression'. She also discovered in Coomaraswamy's writings a view of the arts as the proper language of knowledge absolute. As a whole she was fully saturated with the learning of the imagination through entering her 'shrine of wisdom' found in Watkins's bookshop (*LU*, pp. 200-4). Hence, she was neither well acquainted with Blake nor properly qualified with these esoteric sources of knowledge till approximately 1945. Long before her fruitful approach to this 'shrine of wisdom' and prior to the hyacinth vision, Raine had read Boehme and Julian of Norwich, two Christian mystics of great stature (*LU*, p. 91). Consequently and logically enough, the experience of the hyacinth had occurred and the poem 'Hyacinth' had been written before the stage of Raine's immersion in the esoteric traditions that immediately gave rise to her assertion of the interior reality of pantheism. In another letter sent to Netterville, Raine herself gives clear cut testimony to this fact. She indicates that she had read none of the Neoplatonists prior to her work on *Blake and Tradition* except Plotinus, whose work she had read in 1940-41.(1) This is not surprising because the poem 'The Hyacinth', written about the same time, is thoroughly Plotinian in principle. In addition, Kathleen Raine published her first *Collected Poems* in 1956, containing selected poems from her early volumes *Stone and Flower* (1943), *Living in Time* (1946), *The Pythoness* (1949), and the whole of *The Year One* (1952). She took advantage of the opportunity to cast out what she calls 'work that should never

1- Netterville, "Kathleen Raine, the Heart in Flower", p. 175.

have been published'.(1) Among these discarded works were the Christian poems containing ecclesiastical symbols. The reason for casting them out was based on her own judgment that 'no Christian poetry is likely to be pure at this time'.(2) Another relevant reason was her feeling of the inferiority of *Living in Time*, associated to her Catholic period: 'my second volume of poems was much inferior to my first, cut off as I was from my roots, and replanted in the alien soil of London and the Church' (*LU*, p. 200). Notwithstanding this intentional omission of what Raine believed to be ecclesiastical, Biblical references and Christian symbols still exist in many poems contained in the first *Collected Poems*. For instance 'The Red Light' has its reference to Jesus Christ and the principle of forgiveness. Together with its title, the poem 'Good Friday' alludes to Bethlehem. In 'Sorrow' grief is Biblically conceived as "God's human nature". Poems such as 'Question and Answer', 'Fire', 'See, See, Where Christ's Blood Streams in the Firmament', 'Pas Perdue', 'Whitsuntide 1942', 'Lenten Flowers', 'Written in Exile' among others - all are somehow hued with Christian colour. In one of these poems entitled 'Nocturne' and kept from *Stone and Flower*, Raine says:

And errant night upon the table finds
that bread and wine upon the holy stone,
the body of the dead, and the unborn,
.....
what sun, what sin, decrees the grail to fade?
(*CPa*, p. 11; *SF*, p. 18)

Had Raine's attempt of rectification aimed at obliterating all ecclesiastical symbols from her early poems, it would not have

1- Introduction to *CPa*, p. xiii. A full list of poems discarded from both *CPa* and *CPb* is presented in the appendices of this thesis.

2 - *CPa*, p. xiv.

been successful by any standard. A reading of her first *Collected Poems*, without any preceding access to the individual volumes it contains, would give the general impression of a Christian poet who is fascinated by Neoplatonic ideas. On the whole, in these four early volumes of Raine's verse, individually or collectively and with little reservation concerning *The Year One*, Christianity and Neoplatonism live side by side in tolerance in fluctuating degrees from one volume to another. And both the Biblical tradition and mythological heritage co-exist in peace, though the latter overweighs the former. A few poems seem wholly Christian, some Neoplatonic, and others an amalgamation of both traditions as we will see in detail. But in either case the saving grace always lies in Raine's own interior world, intuitive insight and spiritual vision, that tend to dominate as her outstanding speciality. Whenever a Christian symbol is apt for elaborating the truth of her innate process of interiorization, it is adopted and poetically utilized.

The poem 'Word Made Flesh' is one of the many self-explanatory examples of Raine's typical habit of adapting only one Christian term, that is the 'Word', the second person in the Trinity, to impart the Neoplatonic idea of the Logos, the active living principle that can be traced in every thing in the universe, the most minute and the greatest alike:

Word whose breath is the world-circling atmosphere,
Word that utters the world that turns the wind,
Word that articulates the bird that speeds upon the air,
Word that blazes out the trumpet of the sun,
Whose silence is the violin-music of the stars,
Whose melody is the dawn, and harmony the night,
.....
Word inscribed on stone mountain range upon range
of stone,
Word that is fire of the sun and fire within
Order of atoms, crystalline symmetry.

(*CPa*, p. 76; *TP*, p. 11)

It is of interest and to Raine's credit that although the above quoted poem consists of eight stanzas and can be considered medium in terms of length compared to most of her poems, it is magnificently made up of one sentence. This is significant because the structure of the poem is built in such a way that it fortifies Raine's idea of the one infinite circular flow of life latent in the visible world of the manifold. At the same time, it constitutes a part of the whole image of the spirit that unites the multiplicity of all created things in the universe including presumably the poem itself. The harmonious unity of the creatures whose living flow is endless is not to be divided into parts and neither is the poem, the structure of which is exquisitely built on the one sentence declaring a single 'Statement of mystery, how shall we name/ A spirit clothed in world, a world made man?' (*TP*, p. 76). But after all the poem by virtue of its title 'Word Made Flesh' displays an emotional link to Raine's old belief that 'The seed is the word of God' (Luke 8:11), though it was written in the period of her rejection of Christianity.

Although the poem 'The Hyacinth' reveals more or less the early Plotinian impact upon Raine's approach, it can be concluded from the previous discussion that 'the holy head' is likely to be the God of Christianity. Perhaps it is not conceived as the 'Godhead' of Eckhart, Suso or Ruysbroeck, nor as the 'Super-Essential Godhead' of Dionysius, nor as the '*Ungrund*' of Boehme. The analogy, however, may be valid if we take into consideration the sheer fact that Raine was writing at the time without outward dictation. She was not so sophisticated as to interpret her vision in terms of these highly intellectual Christian mystics. Considering her spontaneity of interpretation, the 'holy head' is

likely to be the equivalent to the Godhead in the wide sense of the word. It could also be added that since the rose is a traditional symbol of Christ, and the dove stands for the Holy Spirit, Raine's concept *pro hac vice* might be close to Kingsley's perception of nature as "radiant with divine meaning pattern of the moral and spiritual life inaugurated by Christ Himself".(1) Therefore, it is possibly identified with what Ralph J. Mills describes as a 'divine and eternal centre which is at once Christ and the infinite circumference of God.'(2) Nevertheless, it is surely love that corresponds to the Christian God, despite the absence of any highly philosophical or religious terms:

Things work the good of those who love,
(For God, it has been said, is Love,
A word no less mysterious and strange
Than the unutterable Name.)

("Before the Accuser", *OP*, p.48)

Some mystics, under the impressive dazzlement of the abruption of the vision, have the inclination to interpret it in preconceptive terms. Also because of their supposed incapability of describing the reality realized, they readily ascribe it to God. Starbuck, a nature mystic like Raine, is an example of this kind of mystic: 'I say God to describe what is indescribable. I felt myself one with the grass, the trees, birds, insects, everything in Nature'.(3) The passage suggests Starbuck's uncertainty of what he underwent, but his religious sense drove him to jump to the conclusion that it must be "God" as long as he saw it as 'indescribable'. As regards Raine, the lines above reveal that she is no exception, though more sceptical about the term "God". And that is why she prefers to use the general term "Love".

1- Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 121-2.

2- *Op.Cit.*, p. 147.

3- Quoted from W. James, *VRE*, p. 396.

Additionally, Raine has vehemently tried to convince us that the vision of the hyacinth had nothing to do with a religious sense, for she was thinking only of her absent lover and the visions occurred all of a sudden. Yet, at the end of her account, including her description of the 'intuition' of the realization of the *Tao*, she has admitted that she felt a tendency to pray though she has not explained to whom the prayers could have been offered. Presumably, she would have offered her prayers to the same God to whom she had been conventionally taught to pray, as she had done before when she drove away the diabolical freak that occurred to her in the church (*FDN*, p. 23).

This apparent hesitation between what Raine had naturally inherited by being born in a Christian environment and above all brought up by a Christian father, specifically Methodist, on one part, and what she felt as her inner reality to be found in Plato and Plotinus on the other, marks the second stage of Raine's spritual development. It may be accurately described as the stage of temporary reconciliation of the two creeds, or rather of the Christian-Neoplatonic poet, so to speak. A clear example of this reconciliation between the two traditions at the time concerned can be found in the following stanza from 'The Speech of Birds', a poem significantly dedicated to her dear Catholic friend Helen Sutherland in the same volume containing 'the Hyacinth':

Our words, our concepts, only name
A world of shadows; for the truth is plain
That visited Jacob in a dream,
And Moses, from the burning desert heard,
Or angels in annunciation bring.

(*SF*, p. 52)

The first two lines posit a direct statement of a Platonic truth. The world of generation in which we live is neither real nor

perfect. It is a 'world of shadows', of reflections, and of imperfect images. Then comes a 'plain' Christian truth consisting in the perfect reality is that conceived through revelation. It is evidenced in Jacob's ladder seen in his dream, in Moses' fire at Mount Sinai, and in the Annunciation of the angel to the Virgin Mary: 'when the angel came, she knew his face' (*TP*, p. 36). After Blake's fashion, Kathleen Raine, however, has in a later era come to the conclusion that these Biblical truths (she refers to 'the Job of the Bible') move 'in a world of imagination', which is superior to any personal episode.(1) It is this mixture of the two traditions in Raine's mind that probably makes Netterville attribute 'The Hyacinth' to her Neoplatonism rather than to her Christian faith. He points out that 'the ending of the poem, while not literally a picture of the eternal Eden, is a symbolic representation of that world's essence which makes possible this world's beauty'.(2) The interplay of the two creeds may also cause Evan Owen to use the general term the 'Creator' who is 'above and beyond the miracle of the finite'(3) to refer to the god in the poem.

It is evident now at this second stage of Raine's religious development that the Christian background constitutes, consciously or unconsciously, a dimension in the structure of her spiritual world in spite of her continual rejection of it. On the other hand, the Neoplatonic dimension of her spiritual structure at this stage was mainly based on an inner sense of belonging revealed through her personal experience and inspired by the

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- 1- *The Human Face of God: William Blake and the Book of Job*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1982, p. 11.
 - 2- Netterville, *Op.Cit.*, p. 169.
 - 3- Evan Owen, "The Poetry of Kathleen Raine", p. 35.

independent Imagination. It was much more a natural propensity than an external cultural or philosophical effect. In other words, it was not a coherent systematic structure of the doctrine taught, discovered, and acquired by omnivorous reading of the Neoplatonists. Even her first access to Plotinus was at the hands of Inge, a great Christian theologian. Raine illustrates this fact when she states:

What I in reality believed was the doctrine of the neoPlatonists, of which, however, I knew at that time very little: I had read Inge on Plotinus, a little of Plato, but not the Enneads, and none of the other Platonic philosophers. But I could say the creed, after my fasion; and how else, after all, should a poet believe in symbols?
(*LU*, p. 183)

As a matter of fact, Raine's fairly autogenous orientation towards Neoplatonism was not yet interwoven with or fortified by the 'knowledge absolute' later drawn from various esoteric sources. But surely she was fully aware of, and inwardly attuned to, Plotinus' "flight of the alone to the Alone", a condition she was always seeking and striving to attain (*LU*, p. 128). This spontaneous realization of her interior reality was expressed in her early life as a need to break away from her father's excessively conventional social and religious pattern, and to extricate herself from his moral strictness. Only when she could escape from her father's down-to-earth values, has she been able to use her wings, for his ethics could be "admirable values for those who walk, but irrelevant" for those who seek to fly (*FHF*, p. 170). Accordingly, Raine began to see herself as a seer whose message lies in the exploration of and penetration into the secrets of 'the only beloved', the living mystery. She had to resort to the trustworthy sanctuary of her imagination as a means

of giving wings to her soul so as to enjoy the 'flight of the alone to the Alone'. But because she was not well equipped yet with what she internally believed in, her spiritual wings were wounded as an inevitable consequence. The visibility became so blurred under the pressure of the world round her that she had to come down to earth to start her third stage of spiritual development.

This happened when Raine made an "unconscious" attempt to become a Catholic convert during her close friendship with Antonia White and Helen Sutherland and under the 'chivalrous' impression of Graham Greene: 'To this day I do not know what it was that drove me to take the desperate step of becoming a Catholic convert' (*LU*, p. 181). Obviously, the conversion to Catholicism has had little influence upon Raine's poetry, or rather a negative impact on her imaginative faculty. This is the reason why she even rejected most of the poems created from this period in her first and second *Collected Poems*. The volume of verse that can most plausibly be considered an embodiment of this Catholic period is *Living in Time* (1), although it cannot be considered fully Christian. Several poems in this volume demonstrate Christian ideas in one way or another. 'Christmas Night 1941' has its plain reference to the festival of Christ's Nativity and the end of human sufferings at His hands:

Mary with gentle breast
In dark descent
Gives what men need,
Gives all - to care,
Pain, love, imprisonment,
The night's 'no more'.

(*LT*, p .5)

1- *LT* originally consisted of thirty four poems twenty of which were omitted in *CPa* on the basis of being Christian or personal. In *CPb* only five poems remain from the volume.

'Winter Solstice'(1) ends with 'That bridegroom, kind once again, / Northward to me returning' (*LT*, p. 6), and the pattern of the tree extends to become the pattern of man that in turn reaches the pattern of Christ. The image of the Christian tree of life that is rooted in Christ and thought to be in the Garden of Eden, can also be found in 'The Tree of Heaven', in which we must observe again the importance attached to the verb "to unfold":

Pattern of tree and man, unfold within me -
Branch where the veins run, quicken at the heart,
Be felt in every nerve, and fruitful at the breast,
Vine, pattern of Christ, interior quiet,
Quicken this barrenness, flower in my desert!
(*LT*, p. 14)

Here Raine keeps company with many Christian mystics. Like the hyacinth or any flower for Raine, the tree is a symbol of the unity of the universe. It is always Neoplatonically or rather pantheistically conceived by Raine. But in this instance Raine's tree is in line with Hopkins's "felled ash tree" which was for him a 'creature, an emblem of stemmed oneness testifying to the unity of being between Creator and creation; its key lay in the interior law of stem- shape, power rendered visible'.(2) This is true, because Raine herself even in a later period of her more advanced spirituality believes that 'These living forms lead to the creator' (*OH*, p. 24). Wordsworth uses the symbol of the tree in *The Prelude* to communicate the same truth; the multitude phenomena are "workings of the same mind, the features/ Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree".(3) In the Sufi tradition, the tree is also a symbol of unity. Hence, Rumi refers to the "Apple-tree" that sprouts the "Divine fruit" as an analogy of the Divine

1- This poem was excluded from *CPa*, and later reintroduced in *CPb*.

2- Alan Heuser, *The Shaping Vision of Gerald Manley Hopkins*, Oxford University Press, 1958, pp. 35-6.

3- *The Prelude*, bk. VI, 637-8, p.131.

attributes within the "Perfect Man".(1)

Remarkable also is the image of the tree in the second line of the stanza cited above, 'Branch where the veins run'. This dynamic image of animating the tree is both literally and metaphorically portrayed. It is a perpetual image in Raine's mind; 'If trees and fields are green, their veins run blood' ("A Strange Evening", *SF*, p. 35). More to the point, the image is a corollary related to the comprehensive image of 'the breath of life'. So, it adds much weight to the coherence of the poet's symbolic pattern and strengthens the notion that the source of her imagery is mostly one, namely her own vision, regardless of which creed she adopts at different times.

The immediate effect of Kathleen Raine's temporary devotion to Catholicism is plainly crystallized in the poem 'Four Poems of Mary Magdalene'. From the title it is obvious that this poem with its four sections is based part and parcel on the Biblical story of the woman identified with the sinner in Luke (7: 37-50). She was also one of those women 'cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary [called Magdalene] from whom seven demons had come out' (Luke 8:2). The poem is actually a poetical narrative of this story. Raine's keen interest in the Christian doctrine of forgiveness, which she always admires and highly regards throughout her life and career, is the focal point of the poem. So it was Christ's "radiance" that turned the woman who "had endured the lust of men" into "pure transparency" (*LT*, p. 24). Moreover, throughout the poem 'Farewell to a Soldier' the poet sings Christ's praise in whom 'all is perfect', 'May we be one', and Who

..... with our souls and bodies
Makes heaven and earth;

1- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 185.

Our architect, our king, he with our lives
The power and glory of his state prepares.
(*LT*, pp. 8-9)

Other clear examples of the condensed utilization of the Christian symbols and references in *Living in Time* as a representation of Raine's Catholic period can be found in 'The Carmelites', 'The Goddess', 'the Rose,' 'Heaven's Immanence' where 'Mary who has no longing, in her arms/ Holds all heaven in earth's unfolded rose (*LT*, p. 31), 'London Night' alluding to 'Christ's imagined resurrection' and 'Ecce Homo' in which we are told:

And on the holy cross, by Him outpoured
The life-stream of entire creation flowed
Down from those veins whose life flows in us all.
(*LT*, p. 33)

Raine's conversion to Catholicism was neither a step forward in her pilgrimage towards the spiritual goal she was yearning to attain, nor a religious turning back to a divine well from which she could satisfy her imagination. More likely, especially in her own view, it was a demotion of what she had previously considered transcendental, and a set-back on the journey of subduing the self to a larger whole, or as she puts it 'submission of the self to the Self' (*LU*, p. 189). Alienated from herself, abandoned by her daimon, and cut off from the roots of her inner predisposition to the perennial truth, she realized that she was simulating some person other than herself. So she came to the conclusion that 'it was all a make-believe in which I could not make myself believe; I could not wed the reality of my inner life to the forms' (*LU*, p. 196). Here, the interpretation of the vision of the nun in terms of psychological conflict rather than in terms of love gains another piece of consolidating evidence.

Dissuading herself from accepting Christianity as a substitute for the learning of the imagination, Raine found herself

surrendering the inferior which is barren of either spiritual illumination or poetic inspiration and preferring the better which is the source of both: 'the self-imposed rule of the dedicated poet is higher and better than the merely external discipline these Carmelites assume' (*LU*, p. 190). This self-imposed rule of the dedicated poet, whose poetry 'defines and justifies her being'(1), could not find in the Christian mythology what was needed to guarantee its validity:

although I could argue myself into a logical acceptance of Christianity, never could I argue myself into a love for the Christian mythology; even, with sorrow I admit it, for the figure of Jesus as presented by the Church; the dwelling on wounds and mutilations and martyrdoms. So deep was my early distaste for, and fear of, the Christian religion that although my mind could be persuaded, my imagination continued to reject Christianity.

(*LU*, p. 184)

She discovered in Blake's relation to Christianity the same dilemma she was striving hard to solve. That explains the reason why she gave herself wholeheartedly up to Blake once his "end of the golden string" showed up. Blake is rightly a genius, and for her an inspired "prophet". Thus the "golden string" must be the clue to the inspirational solution for her spiritual unrest, an unrest that Blake had faced before: 'in communicating his own vision he struggled with a language of theology and symbol which had lost all meaning, or which had suffered distortion, in his endeavour to recreate in Christian terms a valid language'.(2) Similarly, the spirit of the poet, for her, was imprisoned in the dogmatism of Catholicism, stifling the imagination and stunning the 'knowledge absolute.' Even on the level of personal relationship there was neither soil for the imagination to grow

1 - James Olney, "Kathleen Raine's Poetry", *The New Republic*, 18 Dec. 1976, p. 29.

2 - K. Raine, *The Human Face of God*, p. 10.

in, nor a sanctuary for the soul to guarantee its absolute freedom, nor even a fruitful intellectual discourse for her interior truth to flourish on. Raine emphasizes this fact courageously when she openly admits that she has never felt 'complete kinship of spirit with any Christian, though with Indian friends, and with a few others, Platonists like myself, or Buddhists, like Marco Pallis, all that I could never explain to any Christian is taken for granted without any explanation at all' (*LU*, p. 197). She was also aware that the same lack of understanding was mutual between her Christian friends and herself.

For these reasons, Raine's rejection of Christianity can be seen as inevitable: a change was due in the direction of her spiritual course to extricate herself from this temporary spiritual predicament. Consequently, she began to revitalize the temporarily unemployed capacity of her imagination that had almost been completely paralyzed by sacramental obligations and sticking to external rites. She was also absorbed in the process of reviving her previous and forgotten conviction of the inner reality. In doing so she had to resort to her own experience of the soul as a direct source of contact with this revealed inner reality on the one hand, and on the other to draw at the same time from contributory sources of the traditions of the 'knowledge absolute' to which her perennial truth belongs and with which the flight to the Alone is always safe and secured:

Only now it is the Christian Saints who are departing from their shrines. We must, it seems, now meet the gods on other grounds; in the psyche, as Jung affirmed. "Reality" cannot be defined, but only experienced; and if for other ages reality took up its abode in cult images and liturgy, for ours it is not so; if we meet the gods it is within.

(*LM*, p. 136)

Meeting God, or the gods, within is by no means confined to mystics of a certain creed. More specifically, the principle is professed and embraced by the mystics of Christianity and Islam. Boehme, Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, Rumi, Ibn Al'arabi, Al-Ghazali among many others are well acquainted with it. St. Augustine encouraged aspirant mystics to sink into the depths of their souls in order to find God.(1) Thus the difference in this respect between Christian and Muslim mystics on one part and the mystics of other creeds on the other lies mainly in the various interpretations of the nature of God.

At any rate, the conformity of Raine's spiritual realization of the god-within principle with her creative process in writing poetry is remarkably demonstrated with the publication of *The Pythoness*, the volume that followed *Living in Time*, which had reflected her Catholic period. The best example of this reawakened consciousness of the poet, who 'out of nothingness has gazed/ On the beloved face' ("The Herm", *TP*, p. 32), can be found in the poem 'Storm', one of the opening poems in the book:

God in me is the fury on the bare heath
God in me shakes the interior kingdom of my heaven.
God in me is the fire wherein I burn.

God in me swirling cloud and driving rain
God in me cries a lonely nameless bird
God in me beats my head upon a stone.

God in me the four elements of storm
Raging in the shelterless landscape of the mind
Outside the barred doors of my Goneril heart.

(*TP*, p. 5)

Realizing the truth of herself and/or itself, in case the voice belongs to the soul, the agony of repentance is clearly terrifying. The process of purification through the intolerably

1 - Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 35.

furious burning fire, the shaking of heaven, 'swirling cloud and driving rain', the bitterness of loneliness, the beating of the head upon a stone, the raging storm, and the barred doors is a necessity as a stepping stone to the eternal unity with the god. 'Goneril heart' suggests the recognition by the poet or the soul of the tragic cold rejection of the former Platonic state of paradise that is the cause of the agonizing separation from the god. When all the elements of nature, including man, come to terms with each other and are peacefully united with and round the radiating centre, the god within, perfection is achieved and the former paradise is regained. Only then is 'Goneril' permitted to enjoy her 'interior kingdom of heaven'. Moreover, the image of 'the four elements of storm' implies the number four as a Jungian symbol of wholeness and completeness of the Self.

From a Christian point of view, Herman calls this process of interiorization "introversion" as distinct from "introspection". For Herman, the latter is a periodical examination of the soul to "see how it is getting on", whereas the former is a "turning inwards, from the circumference to the centre" in order to converse "with the Word, the Spirit, the indwelling Christ, call it what we will, speaking in the deep places of the soul, purging it from its stains and unreality and guiding it into paths of wisdom, peace and love".(1) Christian as it seems, the approach does not rule out for Herman the possibility of calling "it what we will". So, apart from the terminology - whether it is the indwelling Christ or the god within - it is to this category of interpreting the mystic's sinking into the deep recesses of his soul that the poem "Storm" belongs.

1- Herman, *Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, pp. 110-11.

This poem may appropriately be supplemented by another poem from the same volume entitled 'Mandala' which seems an explicit illustration of the implicit idea of the god within suggested in the former and which is also an example of Jung's influence upon Raine's thought, as well as possibly a poetic version of her mystical experience of the hollyhocks or light, especially in its first stanza:

The centre of the mandala is everywhere,
Wherever the eye falls
The mystery begins to unfold; it is there,
The growing-point of love, an ever-opening rose
Perceived as light on leaf or shadow under,
And in the brooding heart the wings stir
Of the bird whose flight is through a thousand skies.
.....

The centre of the mandala is the secret
We have always known:
Sometimes a hazel-nut in the palm of the hand,
Sometimes it covers the whole sky,
Or rains down on a city
Making strange places all familiar
Because the light that touches them is our own.
The centre of the mandala is possibility
Of incarnation, seed of the tree
About whose beams the myriad stars turn,
I the infinity where all selves converge
Into the perennial circle of the sun.

(TP. p. 8)

Here, the principle of the god within at the radiating centre of the mandala is much clearer than it is in the poem 'Storm'. From the very beginning of the poem the unity of the universe in and round the symbolic circular figure of the mandala is 'everywhere/ wherever the eye falls'. The mandala is a Hindu-Buddhist symbol which stands for the world or universe around the spaceless space of inner divinity. Traditionally contemplation of it was designed to lead the aspirant to the divinity within his/her own mind as well as the 'external' universe. But according to the Jungians, not all mandalas are in circular shapes. There is a variety of representations of the mandala. It may take a form of a spiral,

quadrangle, square or circular figure. It may also be represented by any geometric pattern of four corners or an eight-rayed star. In any form it is usually a symbol of conscious realization of inner totality, while the totality itself is most often manifested in circular forms.(1)

Relevant to 'The Hyacinth' is the image of love depicted in 'Mandala'. Love in this poem is identified with the centre of the mandala, and, in turn, with the Creator that 'laid the elements at the vital root.' Although the figure of the mandala is apparently conveying the idea of the infinite 'perennial circle' of the god within, Raine intensifies the image with another archetypal symbol found in Jung's writings also to represent the mandala, as if it were a mandala within a mandala: 'rains down on a city/ making strange places all familiar'. According to the Jungians the 'city' symbolizes a place of revelation. In the poem it is not a specific city because of the indefinite article 'a'. Therefore it corresponds 'in its ground plan to a mandala' and 'represents that "region of the soul" in the middle of which the Self (the psyche's innermost centre and totality) has its abode'.(2) Commenting on the last stanza of the poem Mills states that:

Without difficulty, she [Raine] reads the image [mandala] in the legendary axletree around which the earth revolves, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge; and, finally, in the birth of man and the lower orders of creation into the world And the poetess herself becomes the medium through whom this vision passes and returns to God, celebrated by his ancient image of the sun.(3)

In the poem, there is also another significant reference to the

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- 1- Jolande Jacobi, "Symbols of an Individual Analysis", in Jung, *MHS*, pp. 215, 227, 289-302.
 - 2- Jung, *MHS*, p. 293.
 - 3- Mills, *Op.Cit.*, p. 147.

bird "whose flight is through a thousand skies". This bird may be linked with the phoenix (referred to in the poem below), as well as with the Hindu "garuda", the bird of Visnu, the preserver of the universe.(1) Like the god of fire, Agni (destructive fire and heavenly light), and the sun (material and intelligible), garuda has two aspects. The universe is often symbolized as a bird in Hinduism, one wing representing the relative or manifest universe, the other the absolute, while the body is the sacred word. The universe exists as a whole propelled by both wings. But because Raine emphasizes the doctrine of incarnation, the reference to the bird in the poem "Mandala" may also involve the phoenix, as she explicitly mentions it in the poem "The Pythoness".

The Pythoness, as a volume, represents, to a certain extent, the poetic beginning of Raine's recovery and coming back to her inner spiritual reality. This instauration of her quest for perennial wisdom has determined her attitude towards 'the esoteric tradition of neo-Platonism, Cabbala. Theosophy'. Raine's increased familiarity with Platonism and mythology is best shown in the poem "The Pythoness":

I am that serpent-haunted cave
Whose navel breeds the fates of men.
All wisdom issues from a hole in the earth:
The gods form in my darkness, and dissolve again.

From my blind womb all kingdoms come,
And from my grave seven sleepers prophesy.
No babe unborn but wakens to my dream,
No lover but at last entombed in me shall lie.

I am that feared and longed-for burning place
Where man and phoenix are consumed away,
And from my low polluted bed arise
New sons, new suns, new skies.

(TP, p. 37)

1- Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, trans. *Hindu Myths*,
Penguin Books, 1975, p. 343.

The pythoness is, of course, a reference to the god-possessed oracle of Apollo at Delphi(1) , who spoke with the hiss of a python, as did all the sybils. The python is the great snake or dragon killed by Apollo.(2) Though the serpent symbolizes the Devil in the Christian tradition, it stands for knowledge and wisdom in other traditions. Therefore, the pythoness, the priestess of the oracle, utters the truth in our phenomenal world, which is nothing but 'that serpent-haunted cave' with which the poet identifies herself. The poem as a whole is an oracular pronouncement of the doctrine of incarnation uttered with a Platonic overtone, despite the Christian and Muslim allusion to the 'seven sleepers' in the cave of Ephesus. Presumably, it is this Christian reference as well as the doctrine of incarnation that makes Owen understand "The Pythoness" as an identification of the poet with both 'the redeeming Christ and the devouring Pythoness'.(3) Also, Garnier and Genet point out that Raine is following the path which from incarnation leads her to death, from death to birth in a spiral journey.(4) The image of the phoenix, the fabulous Arabian bird of resurrection that was worshipped in ancient Egypt, intensifies the poet's idea of incarnation, especially since the bird is closely connected with man in the mention of "burning place".

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- 1- Robert Graves, *Greek Myths*, (Second Edition) Cassell & Company Ltd., London, 1958, pp. 76,178.
 - 2- Robert Wolverson, *An Outline of Classical Mythology*, Littlefield, Adams & Co., New Jersey, 1975, p. 44.
 - 3- Op.Cit., p. 34.
 - 4- C. Garnier et J. Genet, "Le Mythe de l'Eden et la tradition neoplatonicienne dans la poesie de Kathleen Raine", *Poetes anglais contemporains*, Centre de Recherches de Litt. & Ling., Paris, 1982, p. 125.

Nevertheless, *The Pythoness* still has a few Christian allusions flickering here and there without being essential to any of the poems. On the whole, they represent a small proportion of the volume. Should a Christian symbol or a Biblical reference be used, it would appear contingent in most cases, though in a few poems it would be manipulated simply because of its fitness to participate in the clarification of the fundamental idea of the poem, as evidenced in the poem 'Word Made Flesh' previously discussed. The rule has, of course, a few exceptions which could prove equivocal. One example of these exceptions is 'Lenten Flowers' which has its strictly intelligible reference to the Christian doctrine of the Crucifixion and the Christian tree rooted in Christ

Primrose, anemone, bluebell, moss
Grow in the kingdom of the cross
And the ash-tree's purple bud
Dresses the spear that sheds his blood
With the thorns that pierce his brow
Soft encircling petals grow
For in each flower the secret lies
Of the tree that crucifies.
Garden by the water clear
All must die that enter here!

(*TP*, p. 4)

The images of 'the kingdom of the cross', 'the spear that sheds his blood', 'the thorns that pierce his brow', and 'the tree that crucifies' are absolutely Christian. But the verbs 'grow, dresses, sheds, pierce and crucifies' come all in the present tense. So, they do not tell a particular historical event of Christianity, but rather portray a picture of a continual everyday truth. On this assumption, this poem can be conceived partly as an expression of the Platonic idea of the world of shadows, the idea that implies death-in-life and life-in-death because the passgate to this eternal garden is supposed to be death as

suggested in the last two lines. On the other hand, there is the possibility that the poem involves the Theosophical interpretation of the crucifixion which professes that Christ, or the divine spirit in man, is crucified upon the cross of time and space. The same can be said about the poem 'Tree 1947' in so far as the images of "Eden" and of the "tree" are concerned:

This is the tree that grew from sleep to Eden,
Bore blossom and babe, and a million million summers
Its leaves have whispered passion's language to lovers
(*TP*, p. 29)

Though the apparent Christian allusions in these lines sound irrefutable, the image of 'Eden' as a Christian term is later depicted in Neoplatonic colours. It is connected to the 'spring' that could possibly be called to mind here, and above all it is bluntly 'the lost innocence/ Of flowers'. This makes the identification of 'Eden' with the Neoplatonic paradise, which is a state of mind, closer than with the Christian Eden which is a promised actual reward in the world to come.

Certainly, to Raine, the veil was withdrawn to reveal fully her inner life, and to persuade her to accept convincingly and confidently, after some breaks in the spiritual pattern, her role as a non-sectarian poet recognizing that all her 'attempts to exchange poetry for religion or to sacrifice it on the altar of human passion have proved in the end to be grandiose evasion' (*LU*, p. 207).

The fourth stage of Raine's spiritual development begins with a gradual extinction of the old picture of the historical god. He is no longer specifically 'the beloved Lord', 'the universal babe' or 'the King of Fishes', or any other terms that seem liable to

theological interpretations. But instead, she goes further to cultivate a larger conception of God under several attributes and names that indicate and utter the very same truth of the god within, such as 'the beloved face or mystery', 'the essential fire', 'the centre of the mandala', 'the divine world or presence', and 'the life-force', among others:

Many of us who would not use the word God nevertheless lived by faith in the life-force itself, and to that life-force abandoned ourselves At the same moment that I fell passionately in love, I believed in - remembered rather - the divine world. To say "in God" would be too theological a word for that insight into the sacramental essence of life.

(*LU*, pp. 92, 97)

In *The Year One*, the poem 'The Holy Shroud' stands clearly as a transitional point between the old conception of God and the new image of the revealed one. The image of the incarnate god's face is ambiguously apprehended, indistinctly looked at, adumbratively seen, and paradoxically depicted. However hard we try to see his face, however closely we look at it, we cannot get hold of it. Yet it still occupies our mind and we, or some of us, are still gravitated to its old shadowy picture. The incarnate god seems indifferent to our longing for seeing his face and does not pay any attention to our needs, which is why he becomes just a shadow:

Face of the long-dead
Floating up from under the deep waves
Of time, that we try to see,
To draw towards us by closer looking, that fades
And will not become more clear than shadow,
Mist gathering always like dusk round a dead king,
That face, however closely we look, is always departing,
Neither questions nor answers us. It is still,
It is whole, has known, loved, suffered all,
And un-known all again.
That face of man
Un-knows us now; whatever being passed
Beyond that holy shroud into the mind of God

No longer sees this earth: we are alone.

(*YO*, p. 40)

This dimly and pessemistically perceived picture of the incarnate god who exists and cannot be found, who sees and is blind at the same time, who knows and is ignorant too, stimulates Raine to lose her faith in him and to uproot his old image from her mind. The feeling of the continual extinction of the relation between man and God lies in Raine's realization that every 'civilization, not excepting European Christendom, comes to its term. Only the eternal is ever living, not any one of its expressions in time' (*LU*, pp. 187-88). The 'holy shroud' is the image of the incarnate god who 'has gone far away.' This image represents the keynote of the poem. Self-contradictory as it seems, it significantly suggests, from Raine's point of view, the barrenness, sterility and futility of the relationship between that god and those who still believe in him. In a nutshell, the 'shroud', like the veil, symbolizes the mortal body, or whatever impedes the soul's union with the Beloved according to the Neoplatonists including Raine. But paradoxically enough, this mortal body of the god is described as 'holy'. Its holiness springs from the Christian faith in its existence at least in some believers' minds. But to their disappointment, 'that face of man/ Un-knows us now' and 'No longer sees this earth'. We are left to the sheer fact of our loneliness; 'we are alone'. Raine is so aware of this spiritual frustration and feeling of loneliness on the part of man and of the 'holy' desertion on the part of the god that she blends the god's mortality with his holiness. Owing to the barrier of this presumed holiness of the incarnate god, the soul is impeded from realizing the real God within, the 'beloved mystery', the 'life-force', or the 'divine world'.

As a direct result of this discovery, Raine looked with unremitting fervour for the alternative. She found it in the satisfaction of the imagination: 'I found in the archaic religions a world infinitely more satisfying to my imagination, and my own long thoughts blended and intertwined with cloud and sea and sky undefiled by the stifling human community below' (*FHF*, p. 167).

In *The Year One*, Christian references and symbols, to my reading and understanding, are hardly found. Most probably this is the reason why it was the only volume of poems Raine kept in her two *Collected Poems* as a whole without omitting any of its poems. In addition to the poem 'The Holy Shroud' discussed above there are two slight Biblical allusions: in the poem 'Rock' there is 'The long longed-for night of the bridegroom's coming' (*YO*, p. 53), and in the poem 'Water' there is a reference to the original sin in 'the memory-trace of a preceding state ... /Of man's first disobedience' (*YO*, p. 54).

In this volume Raine's vision of the unity of the elements of nature seems sharper than before. The structure of her cosmology is built with more confidence. Nothing from outside her faith in the 'life-force' disturbs her delight in contemplating the 'Book of Nature' and in listening to her "inner voice". to use Eliot's term. Even the variety of the themes she deals with does not distract her from the absorption into the divine world, revealed to her through her own experience of the soul, which is always mingled with ideas drawn from her sources of 'knowledge absolute', but not from what she rejects as Christian. Perhaps, the best example to illustrate Raine's coherent structure of the spiritual world can be found in the poem 'Spell of Creation'. The universal

vision in this poem is *au fond* identified with that described in 'The Hyacinth'. In 'Spell of Creation' the central principle controlling the creation of all particulars of nature is love, akin to the creator in 'The Hyacinth' that 'laid the elements at the vital root'. Similarly, 'the world unfolding into flower' of 'The Hyacinth' is the same as the world of the 'Spell of Creation' that is 'unfolding into other created things, beginning with a flower, ending with a flower:

Within the flower there lies a seed,
Within the seed there springs a tree,
Within the tree spreads a wood.
In the wood there burns a fire,
And in the fire there melts a stone,
Within the stone a ring of iron,
Within the ring there lies an O
Within the O there looks an eye,
In the eye there swims a sea,
And in the sea reflected sky,
And in the sky there shines the sun,
Within the sun a bird of gold,
Within the bird there beats a heart,
And from the heart there flows a song,
And in the song there sings a word,
In the word there speaks a world,
A word of joy, a world of grief,
From joy and grief there springs my love.

So far, as in "Seed", "Word Made Flesh" and elsewhere, the doctrine of Incarnation is vividly conveyed in a perfect symmetrical sequence. The life of every creature leads to another creature's life; a flower to a seed, to a tree, to a wood, to a fire, and so on. All forces of life are effortlessly and fruitfully moving in genuine attraction towards each other intertwined with the thread of the spiritual power of love latent and hidden in them and pulsing at the heart of the world, as well as at the heart of the mandala of the poem itself:

Oh love, my love, there springs a world,
And on the world there shines a sun
And in the sun there burns a fire,
Within the fire consumes my heart

And in my heart there beats a bird,
And in the bird there wakes an eye,
Within the eye, earth, sea and sky,
Earth, sky, sea within an O
Like the seed within the flower.

(YO, p. 21)

The beginning is the ending or rather there is neither a beginning nor an ending; a flower creates a seed and a seed creates a flower. It is the spiritual power of the mysteries of love around which and by which the creation moves. The only difference between the two poems consists in the fact that there is not any allusion to a 'holy head' in the poem 'The Spell of Creation' as in 'The Hyacinth'. The reason for this lies certainly in her more surefooted approach to her vision than before. As has been indicated before, Raine in "The Hyacinth" expresses the vision, albeit spontaneously, within the framework of her Christian belief mixed with her small acquaintance with the "knowledge absolute". But in "The Spell of Creation", she relies more confidently on her own inner reality, as well as her various sources of the 'knowledge absolute' - in this particular instance it is the idea of the Oriental mandala whether drawn indirectly from Jung or directly from other Oriental traditions - without interference from her previous Christian orientation or from even the sentimentality that could occur in the first and second stages of her spiritual development.

From first to last in *The Year One* Raine's conception of 'God' is completely different from that held in the preceding three volumes of verse. It is no longer drawn from a mixture of both Christian and Neoplatonic traditions; it is only

The god that in the ascending tree, bird, stone,
River and mountain, wind and rain
Has remained hidden since the world began,
The power that overflows and shatters every form,
Calls on death to come, to break the imperfect mould.
("Northumbrian Sequence", VI, YO, p. 13)

The "ascending tree" could be a reference to the Vedantic image of the cosmic Ashwattha tree in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Its branches spread below and above. They are "nourished by the modalities of nature"(1), and therefore, they testify to the existence of a cyclic cosmic flow in their relative aspect, and to "the Inner Controller" in their transcendental one. This tree is also said to have its roots above and its branches below, an identical image of the Cabbalistic Tree of God. Again, Rumi describes the Kor'anic tree whose 'root is firmly fixed, and its branches in the heavens' (XIV.24) as the 'tree of fortune' whose 'boughs reaching to the Seven Heaven', which mystics climb up in true visions, and which is opposed to 'the crooked pear-tree of illusion'.(2)

Moreover, in *The Oval Portrait* the idea of the god within, revealed to Raine through the mystical vision at some privileged moments, is clearly expressed in the poem 'Before the Accuser':

Yet I have tried, these many years,
To open that closed book, to read
The sentence of the god within
Who judges all, searched memory
For comfort, and found none,
For all that I have done and been
Was marred by ignorance or passion
Save for certain moments, given,
As it seems, from beyond time, a vision
I had not merited, nor earned,
So great the beauty I have seen.
(OP, p. 48)

In fact, 'Northumbrian Sequence' emerges as the longest poem Raine has produced, considering that *On a Deserted Shore* is not one poem but rather a complete volume of poems with numerical titles. Opening *The Year One*, the poem is divided into six movements or sections dealing with various themes, among them Plato's anamnesis of the soul and its lost Eden, life as a dream, the tree of life with which the poet identifies herself as a

1- *The Bhagavad-Gita*, (XV.2), p. 597.

2- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 140.

revelation through a mystical vision, and Raine's pantheistic conceptualization of the god within. These movements or sections of the poem also have Latin numbers as titles. In the first two movements of the poem, the image of the 'dance' seems more salient than other images. For Raine, it must be remembered, the image of the dance is one of her many symbols such as the rose, the sphere, the tree, standing for the harmonious unity and the perfect wholeness of man and the universe. In movement number I she says:

I was never still,
I turned upon the axis of my joy,
I was the lonely dancer on the hill.
(YO, p. 1)

The tone of the persona becomes much more joyful, in spite of the tragic fate of Pentheus suggested by the myth, in the second stanza of movement II:

I weave upon the empty floor of space
The bridal dance, I dance the mysteries
That set the house of Pentheus ablaze,
His radiance shines into my darkest place.
(YO, p. 3)

The myth of Pentheus must of necessity be analysed here to make the idea of the above quoted stanza clear. According to mythology Pentheus was the one who denied Dionysus' deity and believed in the power and progress of man, and as a result of his foolish and self-conceited challenge to the nature of things he brought distortion and finally destruction upon himself. He was murdered by his mother, Agave(1), who was possessed by the god whom her son scorned.(2) Raine's idea now seems definitely clear and her spiritual message, derived from the message of the beautiful, is decisively organized, appealing to the modern man (Pentheus) not

1- Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "Land and Sacrifice in the *Odyssey*: A Study of Religious and Mythical Meanings", *Myth, Religion and Society*, ed R. Gordon, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 82.
2- Marcel Detienne, "Between Beasts and Gods", in *Ibid.*, p. 224.

to be deceived by the world of appearances (the human material achievements under the name of civilization) that will cause him self-destruction and eternal death, but to resort instead to the real beloved 'mysteries' (Dionysus), the 'true' god of eternity, the perennial truth through which and by which man can attain his perfection and regain his lost paradise. The 'darkest place' in the stanza stands for our phenomenal world, whose darkness arises quite simply from the 'disappearance of the idea of an intelligible world (to use Plato's phrase) a spiritual order, a world of the soul'(1) and in which the 'word beauty and the idea of the beautiful, has ceased to count for anything' (*DAS*, p. 157), while the 'ugly and the vulgar enable us not to feel, not to think, not to live; they save us from the anguish of living' (*DAS*, p. 162). This well-realized spiritual reality of the beautiful with its radiant message is transparently expressed in *The Year One* and strongly countenanced in the volumes to follow till *The Oracle in the Heart*, 1975-8.

At this point, two major observations must be made. First, Kathleen Raine has claimed that the word "God" is too theological, and considered herself one of those who 'would not use the word'. This claim cannot be taken for granted. In my opinion, it seems either enthusiastic enough or ambitious enough to lack the accent of accuracy. Despite her assiduous and deliberate endeavour to replace the word by many other terms and symbols, the word itself proves irreplaceable in her writings and inexpungible from her mind either before or after rejecting Christianity. Accumulative evidence to substantiate this point can easily be found throughout her work. But we should also observe that she has refrained from using the word "Christ" for a long time although she may refer to

1- Raine, "The Use of the Beautiful", *DAS*, p. 162.

Him by a suggestive image as in 'Who kept faith with the High King of an inner kingdom'.(1) So, what has been changed is not "the word" but the conceptual content of it, as has been previously analysed.

Secondly, she could not avoid using ecclesiastical symbols which she had discarded before as alien to her imagination. For instance, in the poem mentioned above she keeps abreast with Yeats' "The Second Coming" when she hopes for 'the lost kingdom that will come again'. The whole imagery in the last stanza of "Contemporary Image" stems from ecclesiastical soil. The poem tells of a "King" whose kingdom is "Not of this world" and "In the last days we see again his face".(2) Raine's approach to "God" in this poem differs from that adopted in 'The Holy Shroud'. In the latter, as has been said, the god is responsible for our loneliness and our spiritual barrenness. In the former the shroud is invented by man's spiritual ignorance blinding him to the truth, and that is why the King's "brow [is] still bleeding from the crown/ We set upon his head two thousand years ago".(3)

Certainly, what Raine has broken with is not the eternal expressions of the spirit of Christianity, but the external forms that are far from being spiritual.

But with the publication of *The Cathedral in The Heart* (a sequence of poems written on the 900th anniversary of Winchester Cathedral) in 1979, Raine's spiritual pattern, in regard to both her conception of God and her refraining from the employment of

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- 1- "Clonalis", *Three Poems Witten in Ireland August 1972*, Poem-of-the-Month Club, London, 1973, (No. 2).
 - 2- *Six Dreams and Other Poems*, Enitharmon Press, London, 1968, (No. VII).
 - 3- *Ibid.*

Biblical references, seems to be suddenly broken again after some twenty-seven years of pantheistic settlement. Despite the more profound approach of the Neoplatonic ideas and the much deeper attitude towards the use of ecclesiastical symbols, the volume concerned is reminiscent of *Living in Time* in so far as both volumes are abundant with poems of essentially Christian orientation. For instance, poem number 1 is entitled 'Vision of Mourning Mother'.(1) Although the title would have its obvious reference to what the Catholics call 'Mary the Mother of God', or to 'the Mother of Sorrows' - the subject of many musical works in the European tradition - a reader acquainted with Raine's thought, especially so long after her departure from Christianity, would expect her to deal with the well-known mythical story of Demeter and Persephone. But instead, Christian sentiment embodied in Christian prayer and the Holy Grail overtly dominate the poem, though the quest of the Holy Grail is seen by De Rougemont as another form of the quest of the Golden Fleece, won by Jason and his Argonauts in Greek mythology.(2) But above all, the central idea of the poem is the celebration of a Christian mystical vision of a bereaved mother, in which her soul is beatified with a communion with Jesus Christ:

In the presence of God:
One who had lost all, her only son,
Kneeling by her bed in prayer
From night's plenitude received
Into her hand the Holy Grail;
In that small saucer of drop of blood,
That one drop Jesus Christ had shed for her,
God was that dark, that nothing that was all.
Spritual beings from some sphere
Nearer to ours, enabled her to bear

-
- 1- All poems in *The Cathedral in the Heart* are sequentially numbered, but some also have titles.
 - 2- Denis De Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, Harper Colophon Books, New York and London, 1974, p. 62.

That presence absolute. More
She could not tell to one
Who did not doubt, but had not known
The true communion of the soul.

(*CPb*, p. 304)

Most mystics of all creeds would find something in common in Raine's paradoxical clause, "that nothing that was all". And more precisely, almost all Christian mystics would somehow approve of the poem as a typical mystical expression. But, the voice of the poet in this poem takes the role of a narrator which suggests that the experience is not hers, and she might have heard it from some of her friends and then recalled and versified it for the sake of celebrating the 900th anniversary of Winchester Cathedral as the subtitle of the volume reveals. Although this is clearly borne out by the last two lines (the 'one who did not doubt', being the poet), the assumption can be strongly substantiated by one of the stories Raine heard and recorded in *The Lion's Mouth* in which:

An English friend, not even a Protestant, not a believer at all, described to me how, on a visit to Prague, she had seen, in one of the churches there, an old woman praying. Her eyes were fixed in loving adoration upon some baroque Christ; and my friend distinctly saw the lips of the statue move in answer.

(*LM*, p. 136)

In such stories Raine believes, but her belief arises from her idea that the outward form is the vehicle of reality shown, given, by the 'One Mind' (*LM*, 137-38). According to the above story there is a possibility that the central idea of the poem 'Vision of a Mourning Mother' has nothing to do with Raine's own vision but rather is drawn from such a story.

Whether this assumption proves right or wrong, Christian sentiment prevails throughout *The Cathedral in the Heart*. In poem number 8 entitled 'La Cathedrale Engloutie' we are distantly

reminded of Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach' and 'the sea of faith' with its retreat and withdrawal. Though Raine's approach is different from that of Arnold, the ideas converge in the mourning over the glorious past of Christianity when the 'slow solemnity of chords'

Tells of a grandeur drowned
That once rose high above a Christian land,
Shrine of a mystery withdrawn
Under the sea of time.

(*CPb*, p. 305)

Raine believes that the reason 'why many have abandoned churches' lies in the fact that churches themselves had 'abandoned spiritual knowledge'.(1) Nevertheless, this fact does not prevent the glimpses of eternity from gleaming sometimes in those enlightened eyes 'gifted with treasures from hidden treasures/ Of the great fallen kingdom lost under lidded night'.(2) Moreover, in poem number 10 there is a reference to the 'Holy mother and holy child', whereas poem number 2 imparts a profound Christian emotion in a nostalgic recollection of her visit to Durham Cathedral with her grandfather when she was a child:

That gentle toil-worn Durham man
Geoge Raine, my grandfather,
Held me up in his arms to put my hand upon
The lion's mouth, knocker of an ancient door.
'Sanctuary': a new word for a child.
Outlaw, murderer,
Let them but reach that door were safe, he told.
I did not know what refuge there
Poor fugitives had found; only that all
With those within God's house was well.

(*CPb*, p. 304)

The idea that all "within God's house was well" does not accord with her childhood's vision in the church, which filled her with fright of even the Holy Ghost; rather the poem as a whole may have

1- Raine, *The Human Face of God*, p. 10.

2- "The Crypt", *Six Dreams and Other Poems*, (No. I).

its symbolic and emotional roots in her dream of Humphrey Jennings's death, in which she found herself in a chantry-chapel and heard, as it seemed to her, Humphrey's voice telling her that she would leave her 'sanctuary' sooner or later:

the "sanctuary" I knew to be this life, in which I was hiding. The symbol of my dream was one of those small beautiful sixteenth-century chantry-chapels to be seen in the cathedrals of the south of England (in Winchester, for example) but to me the emotion associated with the "sanctuary" comes from the lion's-head knocker of Durham Cathedral.

(*LU*, p. 171)

The connection seems clear; Durham Cathedral is the symbolic representation of the celebration of Winchester Cathedral. Both have their existence as a symbol of the 'sanctuary' in the poem and in the dream as well. In one respect, there is one explanation that does not make *The Cathedral in the Heart* appear as a turning back on Raine's spiritual order. It is connected to the whole pattern, however Christian it seems, by its rendering of the revealed quality of the sacred. To Raine, this quality of the sacred can be discovered in any form, or in other words the function of the form is to lead to the discovery of the sacred. Thus, the cathedral, any cathedral whether in Durham or in Winchester, as a building is only a form measured by time and circumscribed by place, but its significance lies in its eternal sacred expression. Therefore, the eternally real cathedral is deeply founded in the heart, as the title of the volume suggests, and as she puts it in another place: 'the Catholic Church, itself at best only a symbol and a creation of "the church in the hearts of men"' (*LU*, p. 186). Furthermore, for Raine the heart is the place of holiness, as well as the equivalent of the soul. We do not approach God physically but spiritually; "our spiritual senses

are awakened, so that we begin to 'see' God as we grow in purity of heart".(1) This is, I think, what Raine tries to convey in the first poem of the volume:

Here find
Shrine and sanctuary
Who seek in time and place
A house not built with hands,
Imaged in wood and stone
That harmony unseen,
That visionary land.
(*CPb*, p. 303)

In my mind, I imagine Raine when pronouncing the word 'Here' pointing at her heart where man can find the 'shrine' of the sacred and the 'sanctuary' from the profane. The 'harmony unseen' is not a specific house built with human hands, but it lies beyond the forms of 'wood and stone', and the only instrument by which to attain it is the creative power of the imagination, since

The eye is blind
Seeing but walls and roof
That hide the mouldering dead,
But to the inward sight
A vision binds the stone,
Through glass the angels beam
Upon this house of life.
(*CPb*, p. 303)

Viewed in this light, Raine still maintains her very same spiritual device of discovering the reality behind the appearances. 'Physical appearances' remarks Ralph Mills, 'are not the end of [Raine's] perception, but yield intimations of a spiritual realm underlying matter'.(2) The organic physical eye is imperfect because its limited ability is to see only the decaying forms of 'walls and roof', whereas the unseen and invisible can be

1- J. Clark, "Augustine, Anselm, and Walter Hilton",
in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England*,
University of Exeter, 1982, p. 105.
2- *Op.Cit.*, p. 144.

revealed, seen and made visible 'to the inward sight'. Consequently, the variety of appearing forms does not make any difference as long as the reality behind them is one, that is to say, the world 'unfolding' in the heart of the flower, 'the cathedral in the heart', 'the oracle in the heart', love at the heart of the mandala, Tao in the heart of the universe, and above all 'the god within': all are inspiring rays, so-to-say, of the one Light radiating from the One Mind:

But not in time
Sacred space
Of apse and nave
What are those walls
But a shadow cast
By the light of the world
That builds in dream
The house of souls
Where no foot falls?
When time has taken
Grain by grain
The church of stone
Still will remain
Laid up in heaven
That holy ground,
That high theme.
("No. 11", *CPb*, p. 306)

Whatever value lies in Raine's slightly new approach, it does not touch the essence of her spiritual structure but rather enriches her flexibility of mood and style by utilizing, to give expression to her inner reality, images and symbols of which she had deprived her poems for a long time. The use of the Biblical references is not a setback on Raine's part. But it is, I believe, a reinforcement of the idea that her spiritual vision is universal, drawn from any 'holy ground' producing 'That high theme'. Though Raine's unpublished volume of poems, "The Kingdom According to St. John", is based on her meditation on the Gospel, the poems do not indicate any deflection from her Neoplatonic

course: besides she insists that they are no more than the outcome of her fascination for "the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven".(1) She affirmed this fact categorically.(2)

To sum up, Cahleen Raine has passed through four main stages in her spiritual development. The first stage was Christianity, being the religion in which she was born and brought up. There is not much of Raine's poetic work related to this early period. However, it constitutes the material of at least two books of her autobiography; *Farewell Happy Fields* and *Faces of Day and Night*. The second stage was marked by Raine's vacillation between Christianity as the inherited religion of her civilization on the one hand and the learning of the imagination that was rejecting Christianity on the other hand. The perennial truth she believed in at this stage came from a combination of her own vision, experience, and intuition, buttressed by a very little of the Platonic and Plotinian ideas. *Stone and Flower*, her first volume of poems, can be fairly considered representative of this second stage. The third stage was the turning of the conflict in favour of Catholicism. In this period, Raine made an attempt to produce religious poems drawn from what seemed to her a devotion to Christianity. The attempt was doomed to failure because she was deserted by her daimon, and as a result deprived of her inner source of imagination. Nevertheless, this Catholic stage, against all odds, was a grace in disguise. It had its bright side. Besides it widened her horizon of experience, it was a fruitful lesson that taught her to root out any doubts about the certainty and credibility of the truth engendered by the imagination. . At

1- See appendices, p. 382.

2- The personal interview.

the same time, but for her experience of conversion, the reliability upon the sources of the 'knowledge absolute' would not have been so strong in backing her imagination. So it was a necessary step towards her spiritual settlement. *Living in Time* reflects the influences of this stage upon Raine's poetic production, and from it she included only five poems in her second *Collected Poems*. The fourth stage was impressed by a complete rejection of Christianity, followed by confidence-building measures for the adherence to the 'knowledge absolute', taking advantage of any tradition that could nourish the imagination including, to a very slight extent, Christianity and Islam, as long as this tradition or that comes to terms with the controlling principle of her spiritual pattern that:

the nature of the Most High, the Logos, might become incarnate in human form. If a divine order exist at all, such an Incarnation must be possible, once, or many times, as the Indian religions teach; or every time, as Blake believed.

(*LU*, p. 183)

The clearest poetic representation of this period seems to be *The Year One*, the only volume of her poems that has not suffered omission either in the first or second *Collected Poems*.

3.3 POETICAL APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF LIGHT

In the poem 'Message from Home', the last poem in *The Year One*, the implications of the Platonic anamnesis of the lost Edenic state of the soul constitute the central theme suggested by the obvious use of many myths. Nevertheless, the first stanza of the poem serves sufficiently as a poetic record indicative of the mystical experience entitled 'Flower, or Entity' in *Faces of Day and Night*, examined before:

Do you remember, when you were first a child,
Nothing in the world seemed strange to you?
You perceived, for the first time, shapes already familiar,
And seeing, you knew that you have always known
The lichen on the rock, fern-leaves, the flowers of thyme,
As if the elements newly met in your body,
Caught up into the momentary vortex of your living
Still kept the knowledge of a former state,
In you retained recollection of cloud and ocean,
The branching tree, the dancing flame.
(YO, p. 62)

Regardless of any debate arising from the questions, who is the child here, Kathie or Kore, and which 'former state' is meant, Raine's childhood or her soul's Edenic state, the stanza undoubtedly speaks of a perception of an original organic unity of the flowers disclosed to a 'child' for the first time. In this perception, to quote Raine herself, 'the circumference of consciousness was the circumference of the perceptible world; the world perceived was that consciousness, that consciousness the world: there was no distinction between seer and seen, knowledge and its object. All was mine, became myself' (*FHF*, p. 14). Such a description gives substantial evidence for the effect Plotinus exerts upon her thought. His definition of the mystical vision as an identification of the subject with the object in which the seer-seen relationship has no existence is so close to

Raine's mind that she employs the identical Plotinian terms. The mutual penetration and fusion of the subject and object - in Raine's case of nature and herself, constitutes the underlying principle and the core of mystical vision. Without the existence of this field of vision, no experience can be entitled to be called mystical. This unifying vision constantly recurs in Raine's poems, sometimes by implication, sometimes directly expressed, as in the following lines from the poem 'Seventh Day':

All that nature is, receive and recognize,
Pleased with the sky, the falling water and the flowers,
With bird and fish and the striations of stone.
Every natural form, living and moving
Delights these eyes that are no longer mine
That open upon earth and sky pure vision.
Nature sees, sees itself, is both seer and seen.
(YO, p. 49)

The 'pure vision', as presented in the stanza quoted from 'Message from Home', however, does not seem to refer to the hollyhocks as expected, but rather it contains individually specific forms such as the lichen on the rock, fern-leaves and flowers of thyme. At the same time it is enhanced to include collectively and generally 'the elements' which had newly met in the child's body. Despite this fact, the hollyhocks can be implicitly recognized in the third line of the stanza: 'You perceived, for the first time, shapes already familiar'. As long as shapes or forms are, in Raine's view, created things, and 'Of all created things the source is one' - a line in the same poem, it follows from this principle that the hollyhocks are included under the familiar shapes. In other words, if shapes are different in kind and species on the physical level, they are spiritually undifferentiated since each constitutes a whole of the whole or the one harmonious unity within which 'each centre of

life unfolds its own unity of form in perfect and minute precision. The whole is made up not of parts but of wholes. Nature a whole made up of wholes, perfection in the most minute particle sense can pursue' (*FHF*, p. 15). Shelley's lines, "Every grain/ Is sentient in both unity and part"(1), convey a truth identical to that paraphrased by Raine.

Viewed in this light, it does not make any difference whether the flowers were the hollyhocks or the flowers of the thyme provided that there exists the perfect message of the unity of the beautiful: 'the heather and thyme, grey lichen and green grasshoppers unfolded each to its term of perfection' (*FHF*, p. 18). Upon such underlying ground the whole bulk of Raine's mystical vision is based, however the description may vary from one vision to another. It is the same world unfolding into the hyacinth, revealing the perpetual perfection of the unity of the macrocosm and microcosm, which springs from the function of Yeats' Concord as opposed to the Discord:

Shakespeare's King Richard in his prison
Could not check the disordered tune
Of the sour discordant world;
But heard with the true inward ear
A concord that could mend his state,
Sweeten the music of men's lives
And bring his kingdom under rule.
(*"A House of Music"*, *LC*, p. 11)

Yeats' idea of Concord and Discord seems to be well digested in Raine's mind as shown by the above quoted lines, as well as her commentary upon Yeats' *A Vision*, in which she notes that Yeats quotes Simplicius' remarks that:

..... the Concord of Empedocles fabricates all things into "an homogenous sphere", and then Discord separates the elements and so makes the world we inhabit, but even

1- *Queen Mab*, IV.143,4, in *Works*, vol.I., ed. by R.Ingpen and W. Peck, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1965, p. 94.

the sphere formed by Concord is not the changeless eternity, for Concord or Love but offers us the image of that which is changeless.(1)

From the above quoted passage it is clear that the Concord that unites all things into 'an homogenous sphere' is identical with the Love, that in Raine's terms, 'laid the elements at the vital root', and that lies at the centre of the mandala. This bears witness to the fact that Raine's mystical experiences proceed from one single source of revelation in spite of the differences in the expressions, terms or symbols used to convey each vision. The vision in itself is her own, but its expression may be influenced by other sources with which she is familiar. For example, the two following passages taken from two different volumes suggest the same idea of the eternal unity:

Of all created things the source is one,
Simple, single as love; remember
The cell and seed of life, the sphere
That is, of child, white bird, and small blue dragon-fly
Green fern, and the gold four-petalled tormentilla
The ultimate memory.

("Message From Home", *YO*, p. 63)

and:

Complexities that ebb and flow
From original concord grow
Texture perceptible to sense.

("A House of Music", *LC*, p. 12)

In the first passage love plays the same note played by concord in the second passage. Both are creators of the eternal unity of being. Therefore, the essence is one although the terms differ. The harmonious rapport of the universe is the function of one spiritual power taking various names of which love and concord are synonyms. Moreover, if the second passage refers to Yeats' Concord, the first passage in its attachment to the minute in

1- K. Raine, *Death-in-Life and Life-in-Death*, p. 44.

order to embrace the great, to the finite in order to perceive the infinite, and to the transient in order to attain the eternal, is not only a reminiscence of Blake's opening stanza in 'Auguries of Innocence':

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. (1)

but is also reminiscent of the idea of the Buddha that "reveals his presence in each speck of dust", and of Brahman, the transcendent that manifests itself in "a stone, mouse, flash of lightning".(2) Blake's grain of sand and wild flower as well as Raine's cell, seed, bird, blue dragon-fly, green fern are forms of the harmony of nature that is

in continual motion and metamorphosis, the coming and going of forms in time. The whole organic life - the soul of nature - is engaged in nothing else but the embodiment and unfolding of forms, in all the intricate and complex delicacy of veining, colouring, feathering, spot, stripe, notch, fleck and scale: how should the creatures not in some sense know and enjoy what they are about, what, indeed, they simply are, intricate patternings and evolving forms of mathematical art?

(*FHF*, p. 16)

On returning to the first stanza of the poem 'Message from Home', the unifying vision of light is referred to in the last line as 'the dancing flame'. Like some other mystics, Raine sometimes uses terms such as fire, flame, the sun's rays to connote light as a source of creation seen in her vision. In the two lines below the reader is told that light is the source as well as the dwelling of the angels as celestial creatures:

In the beginning the light,

1- Blake, *CPPWB*, p. 490.

2- Arber, *The Manifold and the One*, p. 32.

And they in their beginning dwell.
(*"Swedenborg's Angels"*, *OH*, p.27)

While in the following stanza the image of fire and flame signifies the same idea of coming from and returning to the source of creation:

All begins in fire and ends in fire.
The fountains and the cool springs return to flame
And at the sun's approaching wheel, the dew
Ascends the rainbow circle into the sole white.
(*"Fire"*, *TP*, p. 3)

And the same conception is applicable to the sun's rays in the above stanza, which certainly complies with Plato's intelligible sun outside the shadows of the cave: 'Remember earth breathed you into her with the air, with sun's rays' (*"Message from Home"*, *YO*, p. 62). As a result, the image of 'the dancing flame' is in all probability a reference to the light perceived in Raine's experience of the hollyhocks. In addition to that, the image is beautifully intensified by the adjective 'dancing' and specified by the definite article 'the' in such a way that the poet fuses two symbols of the unity of being into one unifying image as though she wanted to say that even the symbols are participants in the unity of being. Symbolically, especially in Raine's view, the dance is a representation of the unity of being, as well as a Jungian archetypal image of the wholeness and completeness of the Self.(1) On this score, Raine in her essay on Yeats and Kabir holds that 'the ultimate meaning of the dance is beyond courtship: it is unity of being within the harmony of the entire manifested cosmos, rooted in God'.(2) More to the point, Richard Anderson's elaborate description of the icon of Siva displays how masterly Raine turns her massive learning of the Hindu tradition into an attractive mixed image. The Indian icon shows Siva, Lord of

1- Jung, "The Importance of Dreams", *MHS*, p. 34.
2- "Yeats and Kabir", p. 26.

Dancers, with four arms, ringed with flames, performing the Natanda dance. As Lord of Dancers, Siva stands as the "demon" of the arts. The Hindus regard the dance "as the least inhibited, the most sublime form of expression, a magic rite achieving perfect harmony between body and soul".(1) With such an elaboration, Raine's image of the "dancing flame" gains much more beauty. Thus, like the flower and the light with its symbolic figures, the dance or the dancer symbolizes the unifying vision of the eternal world realized by the soul at the privileged and blessed moments of its bright transfiguration;

The world, the changing world stands still while lovers kiss,
And then moves on - what was our fugitive bliss,
The dancer's ecstasy, the vision, and rose?
There is no end, no ending-steps of a dance, petals of flowers,
Phrases of music, rays of the sun, the hours,
Succeed each other, and the perfect sphere
Turns in our hearts the past and future, near and far,
Our single soul, atom, and universe.

("The Sphere", *SF*, p. 58)

Here, Raine adds a new image of perfection; 'the perfect sphere' that 'turns in our hearts the past and future, near and far'. Probably, this is the reason why the sphere as an image of the unity of being is sometimes connected with the light in Raine's vision of the eternal truth:

I drink with my eyes a sphere
Charged with light, or rain
On tip of briar
Rose-leaf poised
To fall, tinctured with green.

("Short Poems", *OH*, p. 77)

The image of the sphere, with its connected images of the spindle, the whorl, the star and the music(2), plays a major role in Raine's imaginative life, especially as cultivated by Platonic tradition. The poem "The Sphere", cited above, provides

1- Richard Anderson, *Op.Cit.*, p. 32.

2- See Otto Brendel, *Symbolism of the Sphere*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1977, pp. 50-69.

unequivocal evidence for the poet's imaginative versatility. It testifies not only to her ability to use material things 'as a means to enable the senses to grasp the phenomenal aspects of the eternal forms involved'(1), but also to her mastery in investing this short poem with such a beautiful amalgamation of so many archetypes from her mental paradise. The kiss symbolizes the reality of the union of love beyond the space-time world, since the temporal world vanishes or comes to a halt while lovers enjoy their 'fugitive bliss' in privileged moments of eternity. The "fugitive bliss" is not exclusive to the kiss, but is also closely associated with the dancer, the flowers, the vision, the music, the sun, and above all 'the perfect sphere', which is the universe that contains all other images according to the myth of Er in Plato's *Republic*. Critchlow indicates that the shape of Plato's universe 'was made spherical as this is the most perfect of all figures'.(2) According to the same myth, the sphere is closely linked to the unitary cosmic light(3):

Invisible to one another
Our souls are spheres, Plato said,
And fancy sees bright bubbles lifting and spinning
Rainbow-mirroring pictures of earth and sky:
Plurality of worlds. Or suppose each sphere
Bounded by universal light that must return
To close our space and time, light ending where
 light began.
But plenitude of natural space
Is but an image of the imageless
Plenitude of soul:
Imagination is our only place.

Another figure of the sphere
Speaks to the living sense
That recognises truth in images,
Zodiac of the *unus mundus*. We, the many

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- 1- Joseph Chairi, *Realism and Imagination*, Barrie and Rockliff, 1960, p. 47.
 - 2- Keith Critchlow, *The Soul as Sphere and Androgyne*, Golgonooza Press, Ipswich, 1980. p. 10.
 - 3- Plato, the *Republic*, (X. 613-7), trans. by F.M. Conford, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1961, pp. 342-6.

Rays from the one centre each some single course
Must take among the innumerable ways;
("Spheres", *OH*, p. 50)

With regard to the fundamental features of the eternal light perceived and depicted by Raine throughout her poetry, they seem to be Plotinian root and branch. To begin with, Plotinus also tends to use other terms such as fire, flame, radiating Beauty, and the sun in order to signify the 'only veritable Light which is not measured by space'.(1)

According to Plotinus, the vision of the light cannot be perceived with the organic eye but it is for 'those only who see with the soul's sight, and when 'the sense-bound life' ceases to exist. Therefore 'you must close the eyes and call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birth-right of all, which few turn to use'.(2) These Plotinian ideas can easily be found in Raine's writing. She believes that the "living light of the eyes is that of the soul's country, not the body's" (*LM*, p. 17), which suggests Plotinus' "the soul's sight", and she often calls it imagination's sight, or mind's eye. In the poem 'Hieros Gamos' she expresses the idea of the possibility of perceiving the light not with the organic eyes, but with other faculties (e.g. the mind's eye, the soul's sight) while the organic eyes may be closed and even blinded:

They need no mirror of art whose bodies invest immortal joy,
Love for every beholding beauty in imagination's sight.

It is said that some born blind
Can with sensitive finger-tips perceive the light,
All senses grown one sense, as angels, full of eyes.
(*LC*, p. 45)

Moreover, Plotinus' idea of the sense-bound life that must cease

1- "Beauty", *EN*, (I.6.9).
2- *EN*, (I.6.8).

to exist in order that the soul may attain the vision of Light which is not circumscribed by space-time measurement is not far from Raine's mind and thought from the very start of her writing career. It is explicitly formulated in a poem entitled "Tu Non Se' in Tena, Si Come Tu Credi ..."

Those nameless clouds that storm and swirl
about the mountain are the veil
that from sightless eyes shall fall

when senses faint into the ground,
and time and place go down the wind.

(*SF*, p. 23)

The 'sightless eyes' is, at first glance, a contradictory image because sightless eyes cannot see, while the poet emphasizes their ability to pierce through the veil and glimpse the truth. On the contrary, however, the image is extremely accurate. The veil is always associated with the imperfect ordinary sight of the eyes. Once there is no ordinary sight, which is one of the 'senses' that should 'faint into the ground', the veil will fall and what is behind it will be grasped by the spiritual faculty adapted to it. Although the notion of rejecting the physical senses for the sake of realizing the spiritual vision is considered Neoplatonic, it is also one of the underlying principles guiding most of the mystics of all creeds to achieve union with 'God', and it is firmly believed in by Raine as one of the central ideas moulding her work.

The delightful intoxication of the soul through its undifferentiated unity with the divine light is confined to those who advance towards a mystical order of contemplation, and as a result is inaccessible and even harmful to those who look at it with their imperfect finite eyes. For those who have the spiritual strength to see, Being, to quote Plotinus again,

[appear] before them from some unseen place and rising loftily over them pours its light upon all things, so that all gleams in its radiance; it upholds some beings, and they see; the lower are dazzled and turn away, unfit to gaze upon that sun, the trouble falling the more heavily on those most remote'.(1)

Raine gives strict poetic expression to this Plotinian idea in a stanza from the poem 'Winter Fire':

Flames more fluent than water of a mountain stream,
Flames more delicate and swift than air,
Flames more impassible than walls of stone,
Destructive and irrevocable as time.

(*LT*, p. 13)

and the essential function of these flames is to set free 'all the shining elements of the soul' (*LT*, p. 13). Apparently, the first two lines of the stanza introduce the hidden essence of the flames as mystically caught by the contemplative eye, that is to say the mystic's eye of Plotinus that enables him to catch the flame of love. Raine's flames are presented in their superlative qualities of fluency, delicacy and swiftness, because they are caught by the spiritual power of a mystical desire to be united with them. Raine's flames are similar to "the flame of Love" that sets Rumi alight with inspiration(2), and to Shelley's beaming fire that consumes "the last clouds of cold mortality."(3) But most probably, Raine is acquainted with Boehme's "sweet loving fire", in which the soul rejoices.(4) Boehme's fire is kindled by love, growing "hotter and hotter" to consume "all that which it toucheth", and in its great process of perfection, "it should even cost" the lover his "temporal life" because it is "stronger than death and hell".(5)

1 - "On the Intellectual Beauty", *EN*, (V.8.10).

2- "The Song of the Reed", *RPM*, p. 31.

3- *Adonais*, LIV.485-6., in *Works*, p. 405.

4- *The Signature of All Things*, p. 257.

5- *Ibid.*

On the other hand, the last two lines in the poem imply the other face of the flames in their impassability, destruction and irrevocability, as felt by the finite physical eye of the lower, who 'are dazzled and turn away, unfit to gaze upon that sun.' In the Indian tradition Agni (the fire god) has an inner sacred and an outer destructive aspect.(1) Traditionally speaking, fire is connected with lust as well as with purification. Its association with lust implies a symbol of destruction. In *The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot refers in many places to the destructive fire of several forms of lust as, opposed to the purgatorial fire whose function is to refine the soul. So, it is a matter of spiritual choice between either fire as Eliot formulates it in *Little Gidding* :

The Only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre -
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

.....
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.(2)

This may be reminiscent of the furious burning fire of Raine in the poem "Storm" where God within her is 'the fire wherein' she burns. In another place, Raine emphasizes this double-face of the flames caught as blessings by 'the eyes of the desirer,' in Plotinian terms, on the one hand, and as torture by the eyes of the lower, who are imprisoned in their phenomenal and ephemeral physical senses;

All that that begins in darkness kindles
Into the burning of desire
And from desire into sight,
Seer and seen consuming in one light
When rocks melt in the sun, and mountains pour
Into those flames that to the bound are hell

1- *The Bhagavad-Gita*, XI.39., p. 500.
2- T.S. Eliot, *Little Gidding*, IV, Faber and Faber, London, p. 14.

But to the freed elements, pure delight.

Our forms are fearful of the fires that burn away
Self and identity, but in the dark of the heart
The candle of the soul still for the bridegroom burns,
And in the hidden electron of the water
Consumes the zeal of burning for the last day.
("Fire", *TP*, p. 3)

The reference to the bridegroom in the second stanza appears obviously Christian. But, it may also be understood as a Neoplatonic reference to the soul's former state of the eternal paradise, and its yearning for returning to the bridegroom as a symbol of the state of spiritual marriage in which the soul is divorced from the body by death to consummate its marriage with the Alone. Here the poem gives clear utterance to the Plotinian doctrine of light with a new application to our modern world. In this world of cold, positivistic and rationalistic indifference to the higher reality of the soul, with its constricted outlook on the 'real' divine world beyond and above the appearing forms, the soul is repressed and deprived of the burning of the 'candle'. Those who turn their back on this hidden reality fear 'the fires' because they blindly take the form for the essence. For them the flames are 'hell'. For the Alchemists, fire burns the mortal nature away, and is the agent of transmutation. Paracelsus believes that "nothing could be accomplished without it; it made manifest whatever was hidden and destroyed all that was imperfect".(1 Whereas the enlightened eye enjoys these fires in pure delight because the realization of these fires is its ultimate goal, wherein are 'Seer and seen consuming in one light,' and in which 'self and identity' are fused and transmuted into the one being desired by the soul. It is presumably the spiritual

1- Bryan Aubrey, "The Influence of Jacob Boehme on William Blake", p. 80.

state at which 'the fire and the rose are one', as Eliot brilliantly puts it(1), though for him the fire and the rose are two faces of love (divine and natural respectively)(2), while for Raine both are archetypal symbols for the unity of being. Finally, this poem supports the assumption that the fire, the flame, and the sun are basically alternative connotations of light in Raine's terminology, as they are in the terminology of most mystics including, of course, Plotinus and Blake.

In a mystical paradox, Raine identifies herself, or her soul, with 'the world's ashes, and the kindling fire' ("The Traveller", *TP*, p. 53), another reminiscence of the image of the phoenix identified with the poet or man in general in the poem "The Pythoness". But, these two seemingly conflicting images do not support the supposition that the persona in this line is only the soul, because the soul does not belong to 'the world's ashes' as long as it is believed to be eternal and its eternity springs from and lives in 'the kindling fire.' So, it is the body with its ephemerality that pertains to the world's ashes, and therefore the two paradoxical images refer to man as soul and body, that is to say, to Raine herself as a human being and not only her soul. The following lines presumably make this fact clear where we find that the kindling fire is celestial although it is 'kindled in the solar plexus';

And soul streams away out of the top of the head
Like flame in a lamp-glass carried in the draught
Of the celestial fire kindled in the solar plexus.
("The Human Form Divine", *TP*, p. 28)

Despite the fact that 'the solar plexus' reflects Raine's precise biological knowledge, which fortifies most of her verse, the image

1- T.S. Eliot, *Op.Cit.*, V. p. 16.
2- Evan Owen, *Op.Cit.*, p. 34.

is perfectly used here to serve the spiritual significance behind the combination of the biological term. In fact, the phrase 'the solar plexus' means the complex of radiating nerves at the pit of the stomach in terms of biological anatomy, and figuratively the phrase is a metaphor of the human body. On the other hand, taken separately the adjective 'solar' means pertaining to the sun, while 'plexus' means a network, and in this way the 'solar plexus' can be a metaphor of the whole universe, all that is living under the domain of, concerned with, determined by, the sun. This physiological image evokes in the mind Richard Rolle's perpetual image of 'the fire of love'. For Rolle the fire is physical as well as spiritual. He surprisingly felt his heart begin to warm; 'It was real warmth too, not imaginary, and it felt as if it were actually on fire ... I had to keep feeling my breast to make sure there was no physical reason for it! But I realized that it came entirely from within, that this fire of love had no cause, material or sinful, but was the gift of my Maker'.(1)

The poem "The human Form Divine" testifies to Raine's access to the Hindu tradition. It refers to the fire or heat/energy which begins to circulate round the physiology and has seven main centres. In the heart centre the heat is associated with love. In the *sahasrara* - which is the centre at the apex of the skull, 'the top seat of consciousness' and 'the seventh and the highest plane of awareness'(2) - it is associated with the divine marriage and the perfection of wisdom. It is the holy Mount Kailas in the Trans-Himalayas that is regarded as the "aptest and the most

1 - Richard Rolle, *FL*, p. 45.

2- Swami Chidbhavananda, *Facets of Brahman or the Hindu Gods*, Independent Publishing Company, London, 1971, p. 156.

inspiring earthly representation of the *sahasrara*. (1) From the *sahasrara* a spiritual flame, as it were, seems to rise and is recorded in many Hindu Statues. The Tibetan Buddhists hold that the enlightened soul leaves the body 'through the top of the head'.

The flame of this celestial fire is kindled in the whole universe and pours its radiance on endless variations of things to disclose its ever-recurrent message: 'Sun on stone/ Telling of presence' ("Short Search for Truth", *OH*, p. 87). This presence of the sun is glorified due to its divinity: 'Their watery shapes shrines of the sun's glory' ("Cloud", *OP*, p. 62). The image of this universal light is summed in Shelley's beautiful line, "The Light whose smile kindles the Universe"(2), in which he discerns all existing things as constituting one whole pattern.

The glorification of the sun is one of the many celebrations of light made by Raine throughout her verse, which has its deep roots in the first mystical experience of light that occurred to her through contemplating the hollyhocks when she was a child. In the discussion of the prose account of the experience, this light was classified as 'the light of glory, in Meister Eckhart's term, or Dionysius' "the golden light of the sun", or St. Symeon's "the sun's imitation of the light of God". The classification seems to be valid for the light expressed in her poetry by virtue of its features indicated above.

Moreover, there are other features corroborating this classification. First, the beauty of the light is beyond our

1- *Ibid.*, p. 157.

2- Shelley, *Adonais*, LIV. 478, in *Works*, vol.II., p. 405.

ordinary sense of measurements to appreciate. So, it needs an introvertive return to the centre of the soul until the darkness from without is eliminated. Like Boehme's heavenly light, when it obstrudes from within, it makes strange places familiar, and the dull outward atmosphere becomes most blissful since it 'is a different light from ours, they say/ More beautiful' ("The Hollow Hill", 5, *HH*, p. 22). This could be suggestive of Plotinus' "veritable Light" which transcends any human scale of measuring Its Beauty. Secondly, the light is everywhere and cannot be withheld from any aspirant, on the ground that it is universal and eternally potential: 'Glory to the universal light that walks the ever-running waves' ("Turner's Seas", *OP*, p. 55). The universality of the light is also maintained by Rumi, though its blessing reception is conditional: "God sprinkled His Light over all spirits, but only the blest held up their skirts to receive it".(1) Thirdly, the purity and divinity of the light are immaculate, as exhibited in the poem "Seen from the Window of a Railway-Carriage": 'Pure forms of light, divine body in repose' (*LC*, p. 26). Also because it is 'different from ours', it is devoid of any imperfect earthly quality. So, it is heavenly and celestial as in "Nocturne": 'the light of heaven/ he sleeps within' *SF*, p. 37). Finally, the light is by Raine given an attribute of the Christian and Moslem God used in both the Bible and the Kor'an. It is the 'Almighty' that is paid an unusual respect by Raine in capitalizing it:

Six calices yellow gold,
Fire-gold one, seven
Lamps of the Almighty, Flame
Today in my garden, blown
Poppies in the wind.
In the beginning kindled they

1- "The Children of Light", *RPM*, p. 42.

Burn on.

("Short Poems", *OH*, p. 81)

This short poem shows Raine's constant inclination to blend her vision of light with her vision of the flower into one unifying vision. In a way this again evokes Eliot's image of the state of oneness of the fire and the rose, however different the connotation of the rose for Raine and Eliot.

Obviously, from this discussion Raine's conception of light, has been established since her first mystical vision of the hollyhocks. Indeed, in her writing the conception of light is always affected by her enormous reading, but this does not negate the fact that the inspiration, the perception, the vision are her very own. She is always loyal to her vision, and she is never misled by any source that may cause her to deviate from what she spiritually perceives, however great her admiration for that source may be. Ploninian as she seems in moulding the doctrine of light, she is one who has actually gone through the vision before knowing or hearing of Plotinus:

The wisdom I have read in one green blade
Ephemeral, yet from the beginning
Opening world without end into here and now
A myriad leaves broadcast from the book of wisdom blow
About the earth, each written
With meaning the poet wants language to translate.
("Flower-Sermon", *OH*, p. 29)

It is this 'intuitional apprehension of unity, truth, beauty and love in the universe of being as it is presented to a human mind'(1) that informs Raine's verse. In short, it is her own perception, the transfiguration of her own consciousness, that leads her to discover the 'wisdom' read in the book of nature. It is also her own innate interiorization that reveals to her the

1- David Knowles, *What is Mysticism*, Burns and Oatws Ltd., London, 1967, p. 122.

everlasting truth of the light she enjoyed for the first time in the vision of the hollyhocks 'briefly lit by the undying flame' (*OH*, p. 71), and therefore:

In mind's eye stands the mirage of the world
Every blade of grass a lamina of flame and throne of power,
A self-renewing form through whose green stillness speed
Manifold, subtle, free from sorrow, the thoughts of wisdom.
("Two Reflections on the Magia", 2, *HH*, p. 44)

To be beatified with this *philosophi perennis* and to 'know [it] at firsthand - not to guess, believe or accept, but to be certain - is the highest achievement of human consciousness, and the ultimate object of mysticism'.(1)

3.4 POETIC APPROACH TO THE REALIZATION OF THE TAO

There are many allusions in Raine's poems to her spiritual vision of the realization of the Tao. The experience, discussed and analysed before, contains some features or characteristics of Tao, the "original source of all temporal phenomena".(2) The most important of these aspects of Tao is the conception of the powers of the natural elements to find their own ways peacefully and the subdivisions or corollaries arising from that conception. Perhaps, the simplest and most direct example reflecting this conception can be found in these lines from *Stone and Flower* :

here on the mountain top, the wind and snow
urge us to fall, and go the way they go.
The way is clear, the end we shall not know,
the sea will carry us where tides run and currents flow.
("The Fall", p. 14)

Indeed, the central idea of the poem 'The Fall' from which these

1- Evelyn Underhill, "The Essentials of Mysticism", *UM*, p. 30.

2- Yong Cheon Kim, "Taoism", in *Oriental Thought*,
Littlefield, Adams & Company, New Jersey, 1981, p. 64.

lines are taken is the Neoplatonic theme of the fall of the soul into this world of generation. Nevertheless, the attitude running through these lines is essentially Taoist. The elements of nature (the mountain, the wind, the snow and the sea) are taking their natural course and we, in turn, should not resist and should 'go the way they go.' Surely, we cannot predict what will happen because 'the end we shall not know' and therefore, let the sea 'carry us where tides run and currents flow.' It is the hidden law of natural things that 'move violently to their places, smoothly in their places' (*LU*, p. 116), and it is foolish to stand in their way. In the poem 'In the Beck,' there is a reference to Tao, the Absolute that 'moves' and is 'motionless', which could be taken as the Plotinian One that is 'active' and 'inactive' at the same time. The apparent pliancy and deceptive delicacy of water hides the irresistible and devastating power of its current which is 'so immeasurably great that in resisting we can destroy only ourselves':

Against the flowing stream, its life keeps pace
with death - the impulse and flash of grace
hiding in its stillness, moves, to be motionless.
(*SF*, p. 34)

The same principle is suggested in this stanza from 'The Invisible Spectrum':

Learn, if I dare, the order of the wind,
Fire, tempest and the sea.
Learn if I dare into what mode of being
The leaf falls from the tree.
(*TP*, p. 3)

In the same vein, Raine expresses the latent power of water through one beautiful line containing six adjectives ascribed to water in the poem 'There Shall Be No More Sea':

These rolling flowing plunging breaking everlasting weaving

waters
Moved by tumultuous invisible currents of the air
Seem liquid light, seem flaming sun-ocean pouring fire,
And heavy streaming windbeaten waves
Consubstantial with glint and gold-dazzle flashed from
glassy crests.
On turbulence of light we float.

(L C, p. 30)

Obviously, the vision of light and the vision of the realization of the Tao are infused in this stanza. Both are united to give utterance to one truth; the existence of a divine and moving spirit that controls the universe. The 'invisible currents of air,' the 'liquid light' control the movements of the 'waters,' and on this light 'we float.'

The heirarchy of the Taoist interplaying law of obedience is demonstrated in the poem 'London Trees' although the poem as a whole is a cry against the war in a Neoplatonic tone full of doubts about the Christian God. The last stanza expresses the circle of obeying the Taoist laws which "stimulate and guide the development of the myriad things"(1). This Taoist circle contains man, earth, and heaven, as well as Tao, "the Eternal Ground of Being" and the absolute indwelling principle in the cosmos:

Obedient still to Him, the toiling trees
Lift up their fountains, where still waters rise
Upwards into life, filled from the surrounding skies
To quench the sorrows thirsting in the world's eyes.
(SF, p. 53)

There is no doubt that 'Him' in this stanza is meant to be Christ. But at the same time this 'Him' is not approved of because He 'has gone away' and left the bereaved women without any comfort in spite of their prayers, as the preceding stanza suggests. Therefore, and probably in Raine's mind, He is supposed to be replaced by another divine principle that deserves and

1- Lao Tzu, p. 56.

participates in this universal law of obedience involving 'the toiling trees,' the rising 'waters', 'the surrounding skies' and the sorrowful women as human beings. And again, the same principle of the spiritual balance of the universe that arises from the Taoist laws of obedience and leads in turn to the Taoist Utopia or the universal harmony is referred to in the poem 'Water', whose central idea is the Platonic myth of the descent of the soul into the body:

There is a stream that flowed before the first beginning
Of bounding form that circumscribes
Protophyte and protozoon.
The passive permeable sea obeys,
Reflects, rises and falls as forces of moon and wind
Draw this way or that its weight of waves;
But the mutable water holds no trace
Of crest or ripple or whirlpool; the wave breaks,
Scatters in a thousand instantaneous drops
That fall in sphere and ovoid, film-spun bubbles
Upheld in momentary equilibrium of strain and stress
In the ever-changing network woven between stars
(YO, p. 54)

This dramatically depicted natural scene of the 'permeable sea' which lies at the mercy of the 'forces of moon and wind' seems to be looked at from three varying angles by the penetrating acute eyes of the observer. First, it is caught by the sharp angle of the eye of a scientist who has the accurate biological knowledge of 'protophyte and protozoon'. Secondly, it is discerned by the sensitive discriminating eyes of the poet who is deeply touched by the fascinating details of the view in front of her; the rising and falling of the sea, the drawn and broken waves, the scattered drops, and the 'crest or ripple or whirlpool'. Here, nature is perceived by the poet's imagination, or rather, the imagination permits apocalyptic nature to get itself, to use Frye's words, "inside the mind of an infinite man who builds his cities out of

the Milky Way".(1) Finally, it is grasped by the mind's eye of a mystic, who is a Neoplatonist and a Taoist at the same time. The sea here is a Neoplatonic symbol of the material world, though it is also a Sufi symbol of the world of mortality, of blinding trouble and of selfish passion, darkening the soul and blotting out the light. Sensuous ideas and lust are sometimes associated with water in Rumi's "spiritual way", which led him to Heaven after he had "Cut off the water and cleansed the river-bed".(2) Another major Neoplatonic element is self-evident in the first three lines of the stanza. They convey a Neoplatonic truth regarding the preceding state of the soul before its descent into the body. Here, this Edenic state of the soul is symbolically referred to as a 'stream that flowed before' the creation of the world of generation. In the poem "The Fall" the images of 'the eternal fall of water' and 'the waterfall of freedom' cascading from the sky to the sea function also as symbols of the state of the soul before its descent. On the other hand, the body is figuratively portrayed as the 'bounding form that circumscribes/ Protophyte and protozoon'. The stanza after that ends with the Taoist principle of the harmonious action of the universe resulting from abiding by the natural laws of obedience, according to which each form of being takes its natural course freely:

Each centred in its own peculiar secret joy,
Each joy given being by a peculiar wisdom
Pertaining to its nature like a dimension,
O like a world, enclosed within a spirit.
("The Company", *YO*, p. 47)

This will lead eventually to uniformity, 'equilibrium', the keynote in the stanza in discussion. 'Momentary' as this

1- Quoted in W. K. Wimsatt, "Northrop Frye: Criticism as Myth", *Days Of the Leopards*, Yale University Press, 1976, pp. 75,6.
2- "The Ladder to Heaven", *RPM*, p. 52.

equilibrium is, its existence is the revealed reality behind the manifestations of the scene of the 'permeable sea'. Raine is not only in line with the Taoists as regards this principle, but also she seems to typify their terminology as far as the term "equilibrium" is concerned: 'Where Tao is, equilibrium is./ When Tao is lost, - come all the differences of things'.(1)

The Taoist conception of cosmic perfection, therefore, prevents man from impeding the course of nature in all created things. Man is not entitled to distort the destiny, for which things are created. Absolute freedom is the well of their flourishing, from which man's happiness springs as a result. Unfortunately, the story of the relation between man and nature proves the reverse. Man is always intervening to reshape the course of nature by using 'sharp implements'. His selfish intervention leads him at least to shake off the natural balance, and at most to bring about his own self-destruction. In the poem 'This Body of Death', Raine gives utterance to this Taoist principle:

Each creature is the signature of its action.
The gull swoops, shaped by wind and hunger,
Eyes and scavenging beak, and strong white wings
Turned to a fine edge of beauty and power by wind
and water.
Scream and wing-beat utter the holy truth of its being.
Man acts amiss.

(YO, p. 48)

The poet pinpoints the actual cause of man's spiritual failure. The responsibility for the disturbance and imbalance in the universe is laid upon man's shoulders. He 'acts amiss' and disrupts the beautiful wholeness of things. Wisdom requires man to leave the 'gull', as an example of all created forms, to 'utter the holy truth of its being' and to enjoy the beautiful function

1- Tao, p. 37.

of its existence. This holy truth cannot be uttered under any form of bondage. So absolute freedom is essential for the 'gull' to communicate the message of the holy and of the beautiful: 'Freedom, it is, unbounded' ("Night Thought", *HH*, p. 2).

Absolute freedom for the gull means absolute freedom for man's soul, for Platonism furnishes the basis for Raine's conceptual image of the soul as a winged creature. In her imagery, the soul in Eden always takes the shape of a delicate, gentle and beautiful winged creature that enjoys freedom, indifference and purity. The poet frequently hesitates in her identification of this free winged creature. There is no specific form of it. In the poem "The Summit", which is one of five poems dedicated to Mary and John-Donald Macleod and entitled "Bheinn Naomh", the soul is depicted as a butterfly "Blown up against the summit [to meet] the snow" (*HH*, p. 11). The same identification is suggested in the poem "Blue Butterflies' Eyed Wings" (*OP*, p. 51). The poet more often than not recognizes this winged creature as an unspecified bird "that can cross the distance of interior skies" ('Winged Eros', *CP*, p. 65). But, there are numerous specifications of this bird; sometimes it is the swan that spreads "over the frozen loch unearthly music" ('Man', *HH*, p. 11), and sometimes it is the "single swallow" ('A Strange Evening', *CP*, p. 27). In the fifth section of the poem "The Hollow Hill", though the colour of the bird is white, it is not a gull, a gannet, a tern or a swan, but rather "Another kind of bird/ [that] Into the emptiness untrammelled soar[s]" (*HH*, p. 23). In its state of absolute freedom from the bondage of the sensible world, the soul is also identified as a bird in the Sufi tradition. Hafiz, for example, sees his soul in its emancipation from the "snares of the world"

as "a homing bird, yearning for Paradise".(1)

Returning to man's attitude towards nature, in modern terms, man's acting amiss comes in the form of the hideous and soulless face of materialism, of positivism, or of rationalism. For Raine, these doctrines avail only the animal instincts of man, and cannot be of any help for the spiritual life because the soul 'has other ends, another nature' (*LM*, p. 23).

As a matter of fact, the reader who is familiar with Taoism can trace without difficulty one or more characters of Tao in a considerable number of Raine's poems. Another clear example, worth discussing in this respect, is the poem 'The Marriage of Psyche', especially in the last stanza of the section entitled 'The House':

And waking found rivers and waves my servants,
Sun and clouds and winds, bird-messengers,
And all the flocks of his hills and shoals of his seas
I rest, in the heat of the day, in the light shadow of
leaves
And voices of air and water speak to me.
(*YO*, p. 50)

The lines reveal the perpetual universal harmony as visualized by the inward sight of the poet. Hardly is any mystical doctrine devoid of it, to the extent that demarcation sometimes seems impossible. But here, behind this apparent Neoplatonic edifice of cosmic symmetry, there is one word that makes these lines more Taoist than Neoplatonic. This word is "servants" in the first line of the stanza. It is, in my opinion, the keyword in these lines. Taken in relation to the context of the whole stanza, it evokes in the reader's mind a host of Taoist ideas. It epitomizes the principle of keeping to the feminine in order to maintain eternal felicity through the paradoxicality of taming the powerful

1- Hafiz, *Fifty Poems*, p. 116.

masculine natural agents by adopting the road of flexibility and humbleness. The relinquishment of everything will eventually result in the possession of all in return. Concomitantly, man will become the 'channel of the world' supported by the actions of other cosmic elements. In their intrinsic nature lies the seed of 'obedience' to the Taoist law according to which they yield happily to "serve" man, and the ultimate rapport is fulfilled. The import of the word "obedience" should not be enigmatized in this context. Unlike Christianity and Islam, there is no personal God to obey in Taoism. So obedience is subsistent in the very nature of things. Things move of their own nature according to Tao, the "logos", or rather according to their own autogenous and self-originating course of existence. Their absolute freedom to live their destiny involves their self propelled obedience to the laws of Tao.

So, when waking, the poet found 'rivers and waves' and all other elements of nature her 'servants'. The word here does not suggest a sense of servitude such as its ordinary meaning in the dictionary implies. The natural elements are not 'servants' taking service with the poet as a 'master'. Still, they serve, but in the same way the bridegroom serves willingly, lovingly and happily his bride and vice versa, if I may say so. The relationship between the part (the poet or Psyche) and the whole (the universe or Love's home) necessitates a mutual compassionate service that guarantees and safeguards the eternal marriage. This significant implication of the word is precisely what Cleanth Brooks refers to as the indirection of the words as a poetic device through which the poet explores the potentialities of words

that we could not find in their ordinary use.(1)

The central idea of the stanza, after all, remains the common nucleus to which mystical doctrines bear their testimony consensually despite their other variances. It is the perfect mystical union of the Self with the universe, however different the two terms are from one creed to another. Suzuki holds that the conception of the Absolute Tao is in perfect accord with Eckhart's notion of the Godhead as distinguished from God. Accordingly, Suzuki defines the Absolute Tao as the 'Godhead who sets itself up on "pure nothingness".'(2) Other commentators on Taoism see it as a form of Nature Mysticism because it professes the "idea of union with Nature", and because is often "identical with Nature".(3)

In the poem 'Northumbrian Sequence', there is only one line that can be a probable reference to the character of the original absolute Tao as described by Lao Tzu, while the whole fourth section of the poem suggests the manifestaions of the formless and indefinable Tao. The line concerned is the first line in this stanza:

Let in the nameless formless power
That beats upon my door.
Let in the ice, let in the snow,
The banshee howling on the moor
The bracken-bush on the bleak hillside,
Let in the dead tonight.
(YO, p. 5)

According to the Taoist the 'Tao, while hidden, is nameless'. Also it is called 'formless form, shapeless shape' in Evans'

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- 1- Cleanth Brooks, "What Does Poetry Communicate?", in *Criticism from Matthew Arnold to the Present Day*, ed. R. Rushdy, The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, Cairo, 1975, p. 261.
 - 2- D.T. Suzuki, *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, pp. 16-7.
 - 3- Kim, *Op.Cit*, p. 70, 66.

translation.(1) Possibly it may be Raine's 'nameless formless power'. But, the whole section of the poem is an invocation to the spirit of the world to 'let in' both the elaborations of nature (wind, rain, moors, storm, trees, snow ... etc) and the phenomena of human passion (fear, pain, desire, love... etc).

1- Cited in Suzuki, *Op.Cit*, p. 19.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOVE : THE SON OF POVERTY AND POSSESSION

The world is full of woodmen, who expel
Love's gentle dryads from the trees of life
And vex the nightingale in every dell.
(Shelley, "The Woodmen and the Nightingale")
* * * * *

At the limits of saying
in the eros-silence
alone with the alone
at the limits of saying
the brain empty and quiet
like shell and like stone
at the limits of saying
the soul flies to the mouth
and the poem is born.
(Robin Fulton, *Contemporary Scottish Poetry*)
* * * * *

And this I know: whether the one True Light,
Kindle to Love, or Wrath consume me quite,
One Glimpse of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.
(Omar Khayyam, *The Ruba'iyat*)
* * * * *

4.1 A PROFILE OF EROS

To appreciate Raine's conception of love, in relation to its actual implementation on the one hand and to its poetic manifestations on the other, it is first necessary to shed some light upon the nature and function of Eros in Platonic and Plotinian doctrines. Much of Plato's doctrine of love is spoken of in the *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus* (1), and is connected to the whole of Plato's philosophical structure in the *Republic*. Notwithstanding Plato's insistence on the confinement of love to the physical relation of homosexuality, with its *pros* and *cons*, physical beauty, without being an end in itself, is a common feature in both Platonic and Plotinian types of love. In principle, it is the stimulus, inciter, the means by which the Platonic marriage of minds, the equivalent of which is the Plotinian marriage of souls, can be eventually consummated as an ultimate goal.

Earthly beauty is an imperfect copy of the original beauty the soul has seen in the higher world before its descent to the world of generation. It is the Platonic doctrine of anemnesis allegorically illustrated by the famous myth of the cave in the *Republic* (2), and briefly alluded to as the soul's recollection of the ideal Beauty in the *Phaedrus*. (3) The soul can recall, remember, recollect the eternal and perfect 'Being which truly is' the moment she comes across it on earth. Thus the

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- 1- Quotations from *Symposium* are taken from Walter Hamilton's translation, Penguin Books, 1951; and from *Phaedrus* are extracted from C. J. Rowe's translation, Aris & Phillips Ltd., Wiltshire, 1986, unless otherwise stated.
 - 2- Plato, *Republic* (VII.514A-521B), pp. 222-230.
 - 3- Plato, *Phaedrus*, (249D-250D), pp. 67-69.

function of the copy is one of reawakening the soul to the archetype. So, love is an 'earthly re-enactment of the divine banquet'.(1) Falling in love with physical beauty is one aspect of the efficacy of Eros. In this case, Eros participates as the son born to his mother, Poverty or Need, not to his father Plenty or Possession, as the myth of his birth in the *Symposium* reveals. If Eros remains attached to bodily desires, and does not prompt the lover to aspire to an elevated sense of a higher spirituality that carries him to the essential beauty of the upper world, he will fail to fulfil his true function, which is to guide the soul to the higher truth. Hence, physical love is nothing but the 'bad crooked bulky horse' that is 'the companion of excess and boastfulness'.(2) The physical lover's "licentious horse" needs to be subjugated and curbed, as the image of the charioteer driving a pair of horses implies in the *Phaedrus*. (3) Therefore, carnal love, though not strictly condemned or rejected by Plato, who is 'no enemy of human pleasure'(4), is a means leading up to a transcendental end. Hence, it is evaluated by Plato as the lowest of the degrees and forms taken by Eros. The divine quality in this case is dependent on the controlling element between the two conflicting horses. Diotima, the wise woman of Socrates in the *Symposium*, praises (as all characters of the dialogue do) and recommends physical love, but as a means, not an end in itself. In this physical love of Diotima the contemplation of the physical beauty of the loved one will lead the lover to the conclusion that

1- Herman Sinaiko, *Love, Knowledge and Discourse in Plato: Dialogue and Dialectic in Phaedrus, Republic, Parmenides*, The University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 96.

2- *Phaedrus*, (253E), p. 75.

3- *Ibid.*

4- Alfred E. Taylor, *Platonism and its Influence*, George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., London, no date, p. 62.

the beauty manifested in all bodies is one and the same. And as a result, his passionate vehemence for one particular person will become enervated and of small interest. It will be overridden by a much more comprehensive conception of beauty. This reality will impress itself upon the true Platonic lover. Consequently, the next stage is the lover's realization that the beauty of the soul is much more valuable than the beauty of the body, and even when a lover comes across a 'virtuous soul' living in a body lacking the glamour of beauty, he will be attracted to it and hold it dear. The eye-catching physical beauty gives way to the soul-absorbing divine beauty. With this new outlook, Eros becomes a moral responsibility and intellectual discipline, through which the lover is committed to 'contemplate beauty as it exists in activities and institutions, and to recognize that here too all beauty is akin, so that he will be led to consider physical beauty taken as a whole a poor thing in comparison'.(1) Once the lover reaches this point of the real appreciation of moral beauty, he has, in his perpetual and diligent endeavour, to move forward to contemplate the beauty of 'the sciences . . . , so that, having his eyes fixed upon beauty in the widest sense, he may no longer be the slave of a base and mean-spirited devotion to an individual example of beauty.(2)

The apprehension of the divine beauty, in its 'limited form in which it is immanent in the transient, imperfect things of this world of becoming'(3), constitutes a more advanced stage in Platonic love as Socrates puts it in the mouth of Diotima. The true Platonic lover is the one who 'sees absolute beauty in its

1- Plato, *Symposium*, p. 92.
2- Plato, *Ibid.*, p. 93.
3- Sinaiko, *Op.Cit.*, p. 96.

essence, pure and unalloyed,' and untainted by 'human flesh and colours and a mass of perishable rubbish'.(1) The Platonic lover's emancipation from the bonds of the sensual passion, promulgated by Diotima in the *Symposium*, is also suggested by the image of the charioteer as the 'highest and, hopefully, the controlling part of the soul' in the *Phaedrus* (2) The lover's memory is "carried back to the nature of beauty, and again sees it standing together with self-control on a holy pedestal".(3) Moreover, this can be supported by a corresponding passage from the *Republic*, in which love is defined by Socrates as a combination of nobility and harmony in a 'temperate and cultivated mind. It must therefore be kept from all contact with licentiousness and frenzy; and where a passion of this rightful sort exists, the lover and his beloved must have nothing to do with the pleasure in question'.(4)

To conclude, the sexual hunger latent in the body is the disturbing element in the relation between soul and body. Though the divinely-inspired and cultivated mind is believed to be the mind of the philosopher whose love for youths is a dimension in Platonic love(5), Eros that is aroused by beautiful individuals is simply considered the first step towards the satisfaction of the soul's yearning for the archetypal beauty. When the bodily desires, 'the bad horse', the 'base and mean-spirited devotion', the 'mass of perishable rubbish', and the symptoms of

1- Plato, *Symposium*, p. 95.

2- Sinaiko, *Op.Cit.*, p. 94.

3- Plato, *Phaedrus*, (254B), p. 77.

4- Plato, *Republic* (III.402-3), pp. 89-90.

5- On homosexuality see Sinaiko's note No. 20. in *Op.cit.*, p. 297; "Homosexuality" in Kenneth Dover's introduction to *Symposium*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp. 3-5; G. L. Dickinson, *Plato and His Dialogues*, pp. 135-6; and Lovingstone, *Greek Ideals and Modern Life*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1935.

'licentiousness and frenzy', are no longer irrational indulgence, Eros functions as the child of his father, Possession or Plenty. Then the soul will perceive the vision of the Form of Beauty itself, in which the unifying knowledge of the truth concerning the whole universe is realized. This is the central idea of the Platonic account of 'the true lover of knowledge', who in his pursuit for the divine reality, cannot be deceived by or delayed among the 'multiplicity of things', sensible appearances and shifting beliefs. Driven by an unflinching passion to apprehend reality, his soul, by its kinship to the divine and immortal, will conceive the essential nature of each thing. When the lover 'has by that means approached real being and entered into union with it, the offspring of this marriage is intelligence and truth; so that at last, having formed knowledge and true life and nourishment, he is at rest from his travail'.(1)

Following this Platonic line of thought, Plotinus sees physical love as a will to 'beget in beauty'. Plotinus discriminates between two phases of love; love in the 'loftier soul' that can be a god ever linking the soul to the divine, and love in the 'mingling soul' that will be a celestial spirit. To the latter belong those who yearn for earthly procreation since they are content with 'the beauty found on earth, the beauty of image and of body; it is because they are strangers to the Archetype, the source of even the attraction they feel towards what is lovely here'.(2) On the other hand, the lovers of the divine beauty are those who strip themselves of corporeal desire and seek to love beauty, even the beauty of a person, for beauty's sake, for this

1- *Ibid.*, (VI. 489,90), pp. 192-3.

2- Plotinus, "On Love", *EN*, (3.5.1).

face of love has nothing to do with the fleshly appetites on the basis of its being 'born before the realm of sense has come into being' (*EN*, 3.5.7). Both facets of love are deeply-rooted in eternity because love in general has been born 'at the banquet of the gods' and its eternity stems from the eternity of the soul, and therefore 'as long as soul had been, Love has been' (*EN*, 3.5.10).

The criterion by which Plotinus seems to differentiate between the divine and the copulative love lies in the characteristic of the beloved, or rather the object of love, for love, as previously indicated, 'exists to be the medium between desire and that object of desire'. To love beauty as materially and sensibly presented is to be out of the divine vision. Plotinus also speaks of the 'Eros that belongs to the supernal Soul' (*EN*, 3.5.3) which cares for nothing but 'the contemplation of the Gods', since it must be harmonized with the Soul from which it exists.

Nevertheless, in carnal love begetting in beauty is more morally restricted in the Plotinian doctrine than it is in the Platonic ladder, even as a starting point. To Plotinus, without practising perfect self-control, it is sinful to enjoy the beauty of earth and to indulge in mere carnality. But there is no sin for the seekers of immortality through their desire of begetting in such beauty as lies within carnal mortal reach. Plotinus, like his master, is no enemy of human enjoyments, besides he is fully aware of the sexual urge. So he sees the desire of the eternal as the driving force in those seekers of the beautiful and the Good through their mortal endeavour towards immortality: 'Nature teaches them to sow the seed and to beget in beauty, to sow

towards eternity, but in beauty through their own kinship with the beautiful. And indeed the eternal of the one stock with the beautiful, the Eternal-Nature is the first shaping of beauty and makes beautiful all that rises from it' (*EN*, 3.5.1). But Eros (to Plotinus, Eros is not only connected with Aphrodite on the basis of his being a companion of her birth, but also he is identified with her) is by no means a form of wantonness.

With Plotinus erotic love should be purged and refined. Although this face of Plotinian love is preoccupied with worldly needs arising from sexual instinct rooted in the flesh as a result of its stemming from the Aphrodite of this universe, such love cannot be justified by lovers or approved of by Plotinus, except through the social and moral values of marriage, and that is the reason why Plotinus does not deny its touch of the upward desire:

This Aphrodite, the secondary soul, is of this universe - not Soul unmingled alone, not Soul, the Absolute, giving birth, therefore, to the Love concerned with the universal life; no, this is the Love presiding over marriages; but it, also, has its touch of the upward desire; and, in the degree of that striving; it stirs and leads upwards the souls of the young and every soul with which it is incorporated in so far as there is a natural tendency to remembrance of the divine. For every soul is striving towards the Good, even the mingling Soul and that of particular beings, for each holds directly from the divine soul, and is its offspring'.

(*EN*, 3.5.3)

On such moral grounds, indulging in physical infatuation outside the bonds of marriage has no bearing on that kind of love proclaimed by Plotinus. Neither does carnal passion outside marriage have any touch of the upward desire which is a desire to beget in beauty, nor does it spring from the secondary soul which is the Aphrodite of this world. It is rightly suggested by some

writers that Plotinus 'sublimates Eros from social orgy to mystical ascent, but it remains the same Eros, a natural impulse to transcend one's own life'.(1)

4.2 A VARIETY OF LOVE EXPERIENCE

Kathleen Raine admits in her autobiography that she never 'belonged to a husband or a lover' (*LU*, p. 110). Nevertheless, love seems to mould a great deal of her attitude towards life and to stand effulgent in her poetic inspiration. Moreover, love, from its carnal level as a starting point to its spiritual fulfillment as an ultimate goal, grows in different stages relevant to her stages of spiritual development. In other words, Raine's conception of love has changed throughout her life and work. For the purpose of elucidating the changes in her conception of love, it is necessary to throw some light upon the three great love stories mentioned in her autobiography - each volume tells of one of these three love affairs.

In *Farewell Happy Fields*, it was Roland Haye, her first lover, who opened her eyes to the world of experience, who roused in her heart and body 'impersonal erotic love' that evoked her virgin passion. During one of Roland's habitual Sunday visits to Raine's house, he declared his love and for the first time kissed her 'only one kiss' before she could refuse, and 'from one moment to the next [she] ceased to be a child and knew instantaneously that [she] was a virgin destined for the wedding night' and then she was 'taken and caught' (*FHF*, p. 135). Though he was her

1- Maio, *St. John of the Cross: the Imagery of Eros*, p. 126.

father's former student, Roland was the first to inculcate in her mind a new culture quite different in kind from her father's Methodism; Chopin's Noturnes and Mazurkas, and his Ballades, the Kennedy Frasers' adaptations of Hebridean songs. He was the first to take her to the Queen's Hall to hear Casals play the Bach 'cello suite, which was her first concert. With him she went to her first Italian restaurant and drank her first alcohol, and it was he who offered her the first bottle of scent, was the first to quote Blake to her, and above all the first to awake in her 'an instantaneous epiphany of the mysteries of womanhood' (*FHF*, p. 136). From then on the two young lovers began to weave rosy dreams of the golden world waiting for them in their would-be marriage house: 'we set out upon our seven years waiting. The wedding night was for us to be the realization of the perfection of all the joy, beauty and freedom of which works of art are but a reflection' (*FHF*, p. 138). Despite all these cherished hopes, it was not Roland, the man, whom Kathleen loved, for we are told, she never loved him, and perhaps never even liked him. Love was then, for some reason or another, far from her thought. Even if some picture of a lover was inscribed in her imagination, it was not Roland's. Yet, she, 'ignorant enough, naive enough, amorous enough, young enough to follow enthralled, trod on his dreams, softly, [she hopes]' (*FHF*, pp. 134, 137). As a point of fact, Raine's attraction to Roland was not so much directed to the particular man as to the 'widening of her own realm of possibility which he seemed empowered to bring about'.(1) Her keen interest was above all in what he provided for her spiritual and intellectual development. This justification may explain Raine's

1- Duncan, "A Portrait of Kathleen Raine", pp. 520-1.

paradoxicality of loving and not loving the man who in her adolescence opened her eyes to what had been previously considered by her *terra incognita*. Regardless of this paradoxical self-judgment, this 'ill-starred' first love, however, came to an end under the influence and authority of her father, who strictly ordered both not to see each other again with the stipulation: 'love in your minds as much as you like, I am only concerned that you do not meet again in the body' (*FHF*, p. 143). At any rate, the dramatic end or the enforced separation of the two "then supposed lovers" did not impair the value of the experience. Roland's love certainly affected Raine's life in many positive ways: it accelerated her spiritual growth, widened the scope of her emotional experience, enhanced the realm of her cultural knowledge, and above all, provided new horizons for her imagination to fly to. With Roland, Raine came to the conviction that love cannot be distinct from a culture; hence their style of love 'was the nostalgia of Chopin; nostalgia for a perfection high beyond hope of attainment, for which we would rather live in mourning for ever than once forget' (*FHF*, p. 133).

As a matter of fact Kathleen Raine entangled herself in two marriages which ended in failure, including her second marriage to Charles Madge, the father of her children. The reason for this marital failure was partly Raine's belief that those husbands were lacking the ability to stimulate her imagination, to which she was wholly committed to fulfil her destiny as a poet. Another reason was her growing idea (after Blake's fashion of course) that marriage in general is a symbol of imprisonment for the poet's soul, and housework is a symbol of enslavement (*LU*, p. 117). She left Charles Madge because of her sudden infatuation for Alastair,

her new godlike Don Juan. Through her erotic love for Alastair, who is thought to be a direct inspiration for her poetry, sexual desire was conceived by Raine as 'an incandescent state in which we look deep into certain aspects of being' (*LU*, p. 102). Referring to this relationship, Raine expatiates on the exhilaration of her spiritual and intellectual life as an elevating influence stemming from this intensive carnal infatuation. In her truthful manner, she demonstrates how fruitfully her physical passion contributed to her insights: 'The whole structure of nature which as a child I had innocently lived, as a student intellectually contemplated, now revealed itself to me burning with an interior light and glory, awe-inspiring' (*LU*, p. 102).

For a Platonic reader, holding the balance between the effects of this kind of love, as declared by Raine, and the details of her account proves a hard row to hoe. Understandably, one's interpretation and views of one's own experience are usually tinged with subjective colours. That with Raine immaculate truthfulness is a characteristic does not suggest that she is always right in her judgment. A clear example of contradiction is her conception of the nature of her relationship with Alastair as a 'sacrificial immolation of mere carnality' (*LU*, p. 102), though the quality of the whole affair, considered in relation to its concrete consequences and outer circumstances, was nothing but mere carnality. This can be corroborated through a short comparison of her two accounts of Roland and Alastair.

There is a kind of similarity between her love for Roland and her infatuation for Alastair insofar as the individual lovers and

the effects of the experiences are concerned. Indeed, she loved Alastair, the beautiful man, while she did not love Roland, the intellectual lover. But in both cases she loved more what the two lovers offered to her imagination. With Roland she shared, consciously or unconsciously, his dreams, whereas with Alastair she did not even care to know him as a person: 'I never noticed what kind of human personality he had; to have done so would have dimmed and obscured the image of the god he for me embodied' (*LU*, p. 102). Roland offered her a new culture, a world of wonders and dreams to aspire to, while Alastair gave her the 'miracle' of his mortal beauty because she was not interested in his immortal soul. Despite her claim that she did not love Roland, she speaks of him with endearment and respect. But Alastair seems to be unspecified in her language: 'In falling in love with this Alastair it was not himself alone, or principally, whom I saw and loved' (*LU*, p. 95). To her, Alastair was, so-to-say, a form like any natural form reflecting the beautiful and nourishing the imagination, a messenger from her childhood and from her ancestors: 'he was the bearer of the race and its living dust, of the pentatonic and hexatonic melodies of Scotland; he was the bright distant mountains of the imagination, the golden country' (*LU*, p. 95).

Viewed in this light, her love affair with Alastair was expectedly short-lived, though somehow it left its mark upon her thought and spiritual growth. This argument is not to repudiate Raine's interpretation of the inner effects of the experience, so much as to lay some grounds for discussing them in the light of Platonic norms. Since Raine is the only person authorized to describe what she has gone through, there is no reason to argue

against the credibility of her paradoxical assumption that as she fell passionately in love with Alastair, she believed in the 'divine world':

Not all my intellectual studies had opened to me the nature of things as did this passionate physical love; and I can only testify to my own experience of the paradox through which the lowest (if physical passion be such) was for me at that time a revelation of the highest. My renewed vision of the holy was in the depths of carnal desire.

(*LU*, p. 97)

The passage, shining with the real glow of a woman in love, is obviously a reference to the Platonic doctrine of anamnesis. Like the lover of beauty in his 'divine madness', Raine's wings began to grow and flutter with 'eagerness to fly upwards' as soon as she was reminded of the true beauty by beholding the beauty of Alastair.⁽¹⁾ Under the increasing impression of the 'miracle' of Alastair's mortal beauty, Raine recognized him as a 'messenger' from her 'lost world', since she loved in him her ancestors, and 'all the echoes and resonances of their lost world and [her] lost world, and [her] lost self and perhaps his lost self' (*LU*, p. 95). But with the exception of this reawakened sense of the archetypal, the whole story, in its form and content, emerges as incongruous with either Plato or Plotinus. The controlling factor in the story lies in the vehement indulgence in physical passion. Each of the two lovers was attentively preoccupied only with the body of the other, without paying the least attention to the partner's spiritual insight or intellectual cultivation. Neither of them managed to play, to use Plato's image, the charioteer in order to deter the licentious crooked horse. Paradoxically, or

1- Plato, *Phaedrus*, (249D), p. 67.

even self-contradictorily, this carnal desire exceeded all her intellectual studies in providing her with the real knowledge of things, so that it was described as a 'revelation of the highest'. To add strength to the contradiction, she is even more explicit in her assertion that she was in no way interested in Alastair's soul or immortality. Nevertheless, she unusually had her holy vision renewed 'in the depth of carnal desire'. To Plato, the lover should not neglect the spiritual aspect of love, which enables him to 'bring forth not mere reflected images of goodness but true goodness, because he will be [if he is not fleshly-minded] in contact not with a reflection [carnality] but with the truth'.(1) The lover's spiritual contact with the truth bestows upon him the 'privilege of being beloved of God, and becoming, if ever a man can, immortal himself'.(2) Judged by Plotinian standards, the polarization of Eros or Aphrodite in this case was towards the 'lower, Matter, the corporeal' (*EN*, 3.5.7), and Eros, therewith, contributes nothing to the lover's spiritual illumination. The travail of the lover of the divine is not how to find his desire's satisfaction, but how to expand it to its absolute potential.

But, this should not blind us to the fact that Raine was fully aware, perhaps retrospectively and not at the time, of the paradox in which the highest and the holy came forth from the 'lowest' and the physical. Inflamed with her physical passion, she had the momentum to go on with her destined task as a poet. The saving grace of this carnal relationship consists in the fact that it nourished and intensified her poetry, especially in the absence of Alastair, and this can be considered a spiritual advantage gained

1- Plato, *Symposium*, p. 95.

2- Plato, *Ibid.*

through her so called 'incandescent state'.

Other aspects of the comparison between Roland's and Alastair's cases are also relevant here. Her experience with Alastair probably relates to the midway stage of the Platonic paradigm for reaching the divine through physical beauty, since Raine, apart from the details of the experience, points out that: 'love, even upon the most carnal level, does, it seems, give wings that carry us above the world of guilt into a state of perception in which all is transfigured into the beautiful and the holy' (*LU*, p. 123). Yet, without taking account of Raine's expressed ideas and interpretation of her two experiences with Roland and with Alastair as they are described, the former experience seems to be more Platonic, and undoubtedly more Plotinian, as will be detailed below, than the latter. Love of the Platonic wisdom, so to speak, and divine beauty, as well as physical love as a starting point, is reflected in the whole edifice of cultural and artistic knowledge of which she availed herself in Roland's experience for the first time in her life: whereas, in the real world, Alastair, as a man compared to Roland, offered her nothing but his 'mortal' body. To her, the tragic separation from Roland, the man who opened for her the 'golden doors', had left her an emotional 'wound' from which, as it seems to her in retrospect after fifty years, she 'never quite recovered' (*FHF*, p. 141). While the ending of Alastair's tale was satisfactorily and even happily accepted by her as if he were a heavy burden from which she was struggling to release herself. To her delight, he never came back, as a result of which she was left blessed with a return to her inner reality. Living with her children for the next years in her solitary disentanglement from the world of mortal lovers, she

found herself 'guarded by a circle of magic force, a place of refuge, of vision, of poetry, and, . . . of beatitude' (*LU*, p. 107). Such being the case, Raine's description of him as "Don Juan" is most accurate according to Kierkegaard's elucidations of Don Juan's love. Don Juan is a "seducer", who does not love one particular woman, but all women can be his victims. He seduces "with the daemonic power of sensuousness", and he has "no tendency of speech or dialogue".(1) His love is "essentially faithless" and "exists only in the moment".(2). Raine's case certainly falls within this category, for the measures and qualities of her lover are identical to those ascribed by Kierkegaard to Don Juan.

The one conclusion that may be conceivably drawn is that though Raine showed no sign of attempted gravitation towards an ideal core, the affair participated positively to her spiritual advantage. First, she became more aware of the real nature of a Platonic love, recognizing this relationship as 'the anguish of [her] unpurged passion' (*LU*, p. 107). Secondly, she actually had some of her visions of the divine in the wake of the desertion. Thirdly, the story, deliberated from all sides, supplied her with an effective shield for her inner reality, and paved the way for what is considered later her everlasting love.

On the spiritual plane, perhaps the only love story that comes into line with the Platonic doctrine of the marriage of 'minds' and the Plotinian marriage of 'souls' is her relationship with the homosexual lover Gavin Maxwell. Raine loved Gavin in her more matured state of what is called "metamotivations of self-

1- S. Kierkegaard, "Don Juan's Secret", in *Philosophies of Love*, ed. D. L. Dorton and M. F. Kille, A Halix Book, New Jersey, 1983, p. 49.

2- *Ibid.*, p. 43.

actualizing individuals".(1) From first to last *The Lion's Mouth* is the record of the outer and inner events of the spiritual drama of Raine's Platonic love with Gavin Maxwell. On the level of its carnal actualization, the relationship seems insignificantly barren, whereas on the spiritual and emotional planes, not to mention its magnificent influence upon her poetic creation, it appears significantly rich.

The story began when Raine uttered by chance the magic sacred word 'Northumberland' at her first meeting with Gavin Maxwell. It was the word that miraculously gave rise to their instant recognition of each other as being kindred souls sharing the very same place of imagination. Like Raine, Gavin belonged partly to Northumberland, and partly to "the legendary land" of her mother's people, namely Scotland. Accompanied by the marvels of her imaginative sanctuary, Raine did not wish any mortal lover to disturb the tranquility of her magic world. But Gavin, as a living soul that came 'by miracle' from her first world, could unexpectedly invade her world and cross 'the magic threshold'. Because Gavin 'come from the places where Eden had been, it was as if he came from Eden itself... Gavin belonged to my own people in the country lost before I was born (*I. M.*, pp. 14-5).

In spite of Gavin's homosexuality and incapability to love her with erotic passion, he was for her 'the man of light' because of the perpetual 'radiance his presence' had for her, and because she saw him with her spiritual eyes not with her bodily eyes. She was not preoccupied with his outward personality - although at heart she rejected homosexuality not out of moral conventional values

1- Abraham H. Maslow, "Eudaimonia", in *Ibid.*, p. 119.

but as something 'against nature'. But above all "the experience had rather, as it seemed, to do with poetry than with any personal fulfilment" (*LM*, p. 17).

One of the facts relevant here is that her infatuation for Alastair and her love for Gavin coalesce in her recognition of both as messengers of her 'lost Eden', hence her proclaimed identification of Alastair as 'moulded of ancestral clay' and of Gavin as the spirit of her lost inheritance (*LM*, p. 28). But the two relationships are diametrically opposite on the spiritual and physical levels. Her main preoccupation with Alastair was focussed on his mortal body and his external beauty, without attention being paid to his immortal soul or even mind. In acting thus she sacrificed the everlasting for the sake of the passing, while the situation was reversed with Gavin: her interest was in his immortality, and in the 'one consciousness' that coalesced them both irrespective of any consideration of mere flesh. Welded to her destiny as a poet, she beholds this relation as the miraculous 'operation of some order other than that of this world [bringing] together two people who were perfectly and providentially fitted to one another' (*LM*, p. 18). So, she gladly suppressed any itching temptation of physical desire: 'I was glad, even, to be free of physical involvement, to be among those lovers *che sono gentili, e non sono pure femmine* Therefore our relationship seemed to me honourable according to the values both of this world and the other' (*LM*, p. 28). The last sentence in this statement seems far from clear. Being 'honourable' according to the values of the 'other world', this kind of love can be interpreted and understood as the Platonic marriage of minds, but "honourable" according to this world's

values seems to be considerably doubtful. Most likely, the relationship was "honourable" to the sense of the truthfulness of giving without expecting any taking, the feeling of dignity in facing Gavin's marriage to another woman, and other moral values revealed throughout the story and honoured by most people such as help, sacrifice, and self-denial. Above all, this kind of love was actually 'honourable' according to her parents' moral values, especially her father's rejection of the fleshly contact when he intruded into her semi-love for Roland and laid a ban on her womanhood. Before she met Gavin, she had never forgiven her parents for their moral disapproval of her relationship with Roland. But through her love for Gavin, of which her father could approve since it is Platonic, she could wholeheartedly reconcile herself with her parents and finally forgive them after a long period of hardening her heart against them, 'and also I felt that at last I had gained the victory on behalf of the caged winged spirit which had inhabited my mother and me' (*LM*, p. 30).

In this way Raine's love for Gavin might come to terms with some values of "this world" though it could be at odds with other values. The nature of a love relationship is naturally susceptible of divergent interpretations. In the first place, a modern western reader might be tempted to think that the stagnation of Raine's physical activity could be due to frigidity, sexual immaturity, depressively perverted sexuality or the like, but nothing would be further from the truth. On the contrary, the pleasure of sexual life was always indulged *in extenso*, ultimately enjoyed, and highly regarded by Raine. She was so willingly and happily indulgent of it that she broke off her marriage to have its utmost enjoyments with Alastair. In her

adolescence, she had experienced the 'epiphany of the mysteries' of her womanhood at the hands of Roland Haye, her first lover. She was, above all, a normal woman who married and gave birth to children. Thus, this point of view is contradicted by the facts of her life.

Next, it could also be argued that Raine was inclined somehow to turn away from the physical as a result of the nature of her relationship with her father, and therefore she contented herself with living at peace in a love that was physically unfulfilled and practically distorted. This is also untenable and can be easily refuted. Her relationship with Gavin was indeed in line with her father's morality. But this was accidental coincidence or mere parallelism. She did not adopt her father's moral values (against which she was always a rebel). She first loved Gavin and only realized afterwards that her ideal love was in accord with her father's code of ethics. Raine was at the time enjoying her absolute freedom. So her indifference to sexuality came as a conviction, or rather a devotion to her spiritual, conceptual and poetic norms, and not as a Hobson's choice. It was her pleasure to keep the relationship in these eternal bounds.

There is, after all, no evidence, except Raine's account, that the relationship remained without physical contact because of the lover's homosexuality. The reverse may be implied. Total frustration and overwhelming disappointment were the immediate reactions of Raine, when Gavin was suddenly married to another woman the moment she hoped and expected him to marry her. One of the reasonable conclusions that could be inferred from Gavin's marriage on the one hand and Raine's feelings of bitterness on the

other is that he might have been physically capable of a heterosexual relationship despite his homosexuality.

Raine was, however, striving for her spiritual paradise for which she made 'the sacrifice of sexual desire; only to love, indeed, can such a sacrifice have any meaning' (*LM*, p. 28). It is Platonically suggested that 'love sees something which the non-lover can never see - the ideal possibility within the beloved which it is his or her destiny to fulfill'.(1) Thus it was not a distorted relationship to be goaded and guided by her interior leanings and to find her inner happiness in the freedom from corporeal involvement. Despite the general attitude and the cynical trend that Platonic love at its highest cannot be lived practically but only theoretically, Raine was prepared to pay the price for what she believed in as her ideals. Plato predicted this crucial situation of the lover of the true Beauty when approaching the full vision of the perfect mysteries. To Plato love of wisdom is the guiding passion in the lover's life, for which he takes no heed of the things below and sacrifice all else to the degree of being considered 'out of his wits' by others for neglecting what they see as real. Drawing close to the divine, the lover is not mad but possessed by a deity.(2) Through this kind of love Raine might attain the final stage of the Platonic pilgrimage inspired by love and known as the love of wisdom in which the lover frees himself from the entanglements of sensuality and lives in the real and not the fleeting world.(3)

1- D.L. Norton and M.F. Kille, "Love as Aspiration towards the Ideal", *Philosophies of Love*, p. 81.

2- Plato, *Phaedrus*, (249E), p. 67.

3- W. Hamilton in introduction to *Symposium*, p. 24.

In conclusion, taking the three love stories of Raine together, Platonic love seems to be fulfilled, reaching its culmination in Gavin's tale. Indeed, sexual feeling is not rejected by Plato, as the general idea about Platonic love wrongly implies, but at the same time it is not the whole or even the most important step in the Platonic ladder of love. It may be taken as a starting point, developing from love of particular examples of physical beauty to physical beauty in general in such a way that it must be sublimated and its sublimation makes it a passion which should 'transform itself, in the better and nobler instances, into objects more and more public and disinterested, until it should lose, or rather find, itself in direct apprehension of a higher world'.(1)

With Alastair, Raine had fully experienced this passion without sublimation, which, in Plato's view, constitutes 'mere lust'. Experiencing and discovering the mysteries of this passion, she could at last find its sublimation in her love for Gavin. With him she was able to reject by her own volition what she was aware of as unreal, trivial, unpurged, and mortal. It must be stressed again that naivety, nescience, immaturity, incompetence of physical fulfilment or frigidity are out of the question. Undoubtedly, Raine was at the time sophisticated enough to be innocent of such charges. She was rather attracted to the highest realm of Platonic love with its reality, magnanimity and immortality as distinct from physical relation.

Moreover, her love for Alastair is entirely incompatible with Plotinus in this respect, whereas her seeming love for Roland

1- Dickinson, *Plato and His Dialogues*, p. 136.

could have been fairly reconciled with the Plotinian love in the mingling soul - begetting in beauty within mortal reach - if their dream of marriage had been fulfilled as they hoped and planned. But, it is also true that both love stories have no bearing on the Plotinian divine love because of their connection, though different in spirit, degree and effect, with carnal desire. Lacking this sexual desire, or at least sublimating it, and laden with the reminiscence of the divine, her love for Gavin is utterly in line with the Plotinian love in the 'loftier soul'. Thus, in her relationship with Gavin, Raine approaches the Platonic vision of the Form of Beauty and reaches the eternity of the Plotinian divine love, or to use Stendhal's words, she reaches "the process of crystallization" in which "the mind discovers fresh perfections in its beloved at every turn of events".(1) This is remarkably manifested in her poetic work, as will be seen later, especially in her poetic *chef-d'oeuvre*, *On a Deserted Shore*, and in almost all her late love poems.

4.3 WHEN THE SKY POURS THE EROTIC TRANCE

As far as love is concerned in Raine's poetry, it seems to take a slightly different course, both in degree and in nature, from that adopted either in her own personal experience or in ideas disseminated in prose. The difference is clear especially in those few poems that deal with physical love. The developmental stages of Platonic love - beginning with carnal desire for a particular person, passing through love for physical beauty in general, and ending with the marriage of noble minds which

1- Marie-Henri B. Stendhal, "The Crystallization of Passion-Love", in *Philosophies of Love*, p. 35.

corresponds the Plotinian marriage of souls - exist throughout her poetic work. Even some of her early subjective love poems are tinged with a measure of the profundity of her innate spiritual orientation and her Platonic approach despite her little knowledge of the doctrine at the time. Raine declares in the introduction of her first *Collected Poems* that: 'Love is important only in Plato's sense, in so far as it gives wings to the imagination - whatever in love is personal and not imaginative, matters not at all' (*CPa*, p. xiv). Like the rejection of ecclesiastical symbols, Platonic love, therefore, constitutes one of the criteria according to which Raine rejected many of her early poems as personal and not imaginative. In her manner of self-criticism(1) she believes that these omitted poems should not have been published at all.

However, for the purpose of illustration, it is relevant here to deal with some of these omitted poems. In one of the poems discarded from *Stone and Flower*, the persona is pining for her absent lover. Looking impatiently forward to his coming, she is burning with desire, lacking tranquillity and peace of mind:

Waiting for the longed-for voice to speak
through the mute telephone, my body grew weak
with the well-known and mortal death, heartbreak.

These lines from the poem 'Passion' portray an ordinary personal situation of a frustrated fleshly-minded lover who is dying for her absent beloved to come or at least to remove her frenzy of despair by a word over the telephone. To this extent the poem has nothing whatsoever to do with any aspiration to ideal love.

1- Raine admitted in the personal interview that she might have been too self-critical in her process of purging her poetry from the personal and ecclesiastical

Accordingly, it can be considered a mere commonplace turning loose of personal emotions. Eros is here conceived in his old Homeric image as the playful god who 'loosens the limbs and damages the mind'.(1) But instead of going on in this trite pathetic mood, the temperament of the poet changes. The poem turns to reveal its spiritual significance and objective centrepiece in a dramatic dialogue, in which the sky "Pours the erotic trance" ('Annunciation', *LT*, p. 7):

Then the sky spoke to me in language clear.
familiar as the heart, than more near.
The sky said to my soul, "you have what you desire.

"know now that you are born along with these
clouds, winds, and stars, and ever-moving seas
and forest dwellers. This your nature is.

Lift up your heart again without fear,
sleep in the tomb, breathe the living air,
this world you with the flower and with the tiger share."

Then I saw every visible substance turn
into immortal, every cell new born
burned with the holy fire of passion

(*SF*, p. 16)

One must argue in favour of the evident versatility of the poet's imagination, especially as she was then *in limine* of her poetic career. Through her clear vision, the poet is able to transmute the purely personal and subjective into the universal and objective in this poem. In the first half of the poem the impression is one of love in its narrow limits of physical gratification through a personal contact, with no sign of heading for an objective core. Whereas in the second half this carnal obsession disappears completely to be replaced by a broader idea of love as 'the holy fire of passion' (in the Alchemist's manner of no transmutation without fire) that burns in every new born

1- *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 407.

cell and turns every mortal object into a thing immortal. It is love as seen with the spiritual eye of the persona; love in its Platonic culmination as reaching its stage of sublimation; and love in its moving spirit that blends all created things into one harmonious structure. Eros no longer functions as a sensuous delight, but 'an aspiration of the lower towards the higher'.(1) He becomes the Plotinian 'eye of the desirer' that goads the lover to undertake the flight to the original 'Fatherland'. Thus the language of the sky is 'clear' and 'familiar' because of the lover's affinity to it, and in another place the language is described as 'more heartfelt than holy book' (*LC*, p. 32).

The truth of the birth of the soul is revealed through the 'flight of the alone to the Alone'. The mystical vision is explicit, in which the sensual is assimilated into the supersensual, and the imperfect image is transmuted into the perfect archetype. In other words, the conceptual core of the vision is the oneness of man with the whole universe. Perhaps, this gives colour to what Raine describes as the 'awe-inspiring interior light and glory' that comes out from the 'intensity of passion' in an 'incandescent state' of sexual desire.

With regard to the 'awe-inspiring' passion that motivates the lover to have the vision of the holy, W.H. Auden in his analysis of the four types of mysticism puts forward a unique and exceptional viewpoint in defining what he calls 'the Vision of Eros'. Auden believes the Vision of Eros to be a 'revelation of creaturely glory', that is 'the glory of a single human being'. Conscious sexuality is always involved in the experience, though

1- Norton and Kille, "Agape: the Divine Bestowal",
in *Philosophies of Love*, p. 153.

it is always 'subordinate to the feeling of awe and reverence in the presence of a sacred being'.(1) The sense of awe and reverence is a result of the lover's feeling of his being inferior to the beloved. Another characteristic of the Vision of Eros is that it 'cannot long survive if the parties enter into an actual sexual relation'.(2)

Though Auden's argument seems to have very little in common with Raine's sense of awe and glory evoked by an intensive passion, and not by a sense of inferiority or unworthiness, it corroborates Raine's notion that sexual passion is a driving force towards the vision of the holy. Hence, Auden concludes with what seems to be exactly Raine's case: 'a flood of psychic energy for actions which are not directly concerned with the beloved at all' is released, and as a result 'the thinker thinks more clearly'.(3)

Returning to sensual love as personally experienced and as compared to Raine's poetic approach, while some poems are purely personal others, even on their subjective level, contain a combination of the tangible mundane and the imaginable transcendental. As regards the purely personal, in a poem entitled 'Leaving Martindale' the persona asks:

Shall

My kiss keep faith
With death and birth,
my joy with pain,
my heaven with earth?

I love you as the air
enfolds the earth,
as darkness holds a star,
as waters, life.

(*SF*, p. 40)

1- Auden, "Four Kinds of Mystical Experience", *UM*, p. 389.

2- *Ibid.*

3- *Ibid.*

None of these simple and hackneyed images can bear witness to the poet's ingenuity in taking advantage of the transient to give utterance to the eternal. Love in this poem, from first to last, is completely physical, even the delicate similes and delightful metaphors used suggest the poet's total concentration upon bodily senses, as in the air that 'enfolds' the earth and darkness that 'holds' a star. The images give the implication of the passionate warmth of a sexual meeting between two lovers embracing, hugging and caressing each other.

Bearing in mind that some of Raine's poems in *Stone and Flower* were written during the euphoria of her carnal relationship with Alastair, so much so that she dedicated the whole volume to him, there is the possibility that her infatuation with him and her complete indulgence in sexual desire might frequently have affected her imaginative capacity and momentarily have impeded her spiritual flight. This assumption perhaps finds support in a corresponding sentence from Raine's record of the experience: 'My eyes seemed now to behold the earth and sky for the first time, although it was not in fact for the first time, but a re-awakening after a long death or sleep of something I had once and for ever known, and had long forgotten' (*LU*, p. 97). It is also consolidated in poems such as 'The Messengers', in which her joy at a kiss made her forget 'the night and day, / And what the angels sent by [her] (*SF*, p. 64); 'The Hands'; and 'Parting', where they love 'in one another the rose that must die (*SF*, p. 67). These poems reflect only a personal experience of carnal love, which is the reason why all were deliberately excluded from her first *Collected Poems*, as not falling within her Platonic

conception of love.

However, compared with the kiss in the above quoted lines, there is another kiss in the same volume which gives an extremely different impression, and is the title of this short poem:

Your perfect kiss, my rose,
and wisdom of desire,
to my momentary form
imparts its deathless power.

Bless with your life the dream
that man has, to remain
in the sweet bed of time,
the cradle of a star
("The Kiss", *SF*, p. 36)

Obviously the kiss here, unlike the kiss in the poem 'Leaving Martindale', has nothing to do with the temporary tactile pleasure of the flesh. It is the palpable expression of perfection, of wisdom, of immortality, of holiness, and of eternity. It is perhaps the embodiment of the spiritually revealed truth the poet realized at the heart of flowers, as a child gazing at the hollyhocks, as a young woman contemplating the hyacinth, and as a spiritual lover beatified with the vision of the rowan tree.

In this respect, Claire Garnier explains that the gaze that the poetess casts on these first flowers, or rather into these flowers, is immediately returned, sent back with a reflection of her own child face, instancing the essence of life latent in the very heart of the process of perception. Garnier proceeds to comment that this reminds him of the painting of Burne-Jones, 'The Walled Garden', which depicts a rose whose heart is a face: 'and these faces of flowers looked at me, all gesturing to me in a time

without beginning or end'.(1)

Referring to the poem, Garnier argues that the rose is itself, by the arrangement of its petals, a kiss and the child in this case incarnates love, and that if the rose is the first to bow at the cradle of the child helping her to read her reflected divine face, the scent of its kiss is forever related in her memory to that of her mother.(2) Garnier's argument seems to have firm grounds, mainly echoed in Raine's conviction that the 'poignant sweetness of the scent of that old-fashioned Alba rose has become for me the first fragrant sweetness of my mother' (*FHF*, p. 80). In her vision of Platonic recollection, she maintains that this sweet fragrance had been known before memory began, and that the 'various scents to my young senses were more than delight, they were indescribable harmonies of knowledge and meaning' (*FHF*, p. 81). Thanks only to the miraculous power of love the harmonious knowledge and meaning can be revealed, because 'Before all worlds this beam of love began, and runs on/ And we and worlds are woven of its rays' ("The Star", *HH*, p. 45).

There is, however, another angle from which this very short poem can be viewed. The poem communicates something significantly uncommon concerning the nature of a kiss. Addressing the rose as 'Your perfect kiss' in the opening line of the poem is not a mere poetic figure of speech employed as an ornamental apostrophe. But it is rather a reality comprehended *in esse* by the creative imagination of the poet: 'The flower that opens its star in the mind's eye/ It is the eye within whose iris the star flowers

1- Claire Garnier, "Kathleen Raine et la fleur talisman", *Poetes anglais contemporains*, ed. by J. Genet & R. Gallet, Centre de Recherches de Litt. & Ling., 1982, p. 101.

2- Ibid.

('Infinite', *LT*, p. 30).

Like Blake's spiritual faculty that enables him to discern "Eternity" in an hour, the inspirational compass of the poet, so-to-say, directs her to discover and to realize the innermost heart lying behind the external form of the rose. Another implication consists in the unusual image of the rose kissing the persona, and not the reverse. This personification of the rose suggests the depth of a relation between two equals. Their equality undoubtedly cannot be conceived in terms of their apparent forms, but rather in terms of internal awareness and recognition of each other as equals in their individuality and as a whole in their integral transformation. Hence, the phrase 'my rose' involves the most intimate affinity of their souls, for the possessive 'my' is not used in the meaning of ownership, but in the sense of close belonging. Each experiences the life of the other in its entirety. Viewed in this light, this may add strength to the interpretation of the vision of 'the soul out of the body' as regards the complete identification of Raine's 'inner' self with the soul-plant. This assumption also calls to mind the Plotinian kinship and equality of the subject (lover) and the object (beloved) created and conceived in the vision of the Beauty Supreme.

Vastly more uncommon than this image of personification is the everlasting effect of the kiss. Its delicate taste seems to be so ineffaceable, being laden with such a 'deathless power', that it renders the kissed persona's 'momentary form' eternal and fills her with immortal sweetness.

The inherent power behind the concrete form of the rose is plainly love perceived in its sublimated phase and on its spiritual scale. The kiss stands for the union of love in which the two souls are fused and transmuted into one state of being, and the subject-object duality no longer exists. The poem, therefore, represents a typical model for what Ralph Inge thinks to be authentic mystical experience: "*the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal*". (1)

For Raine, the spiritual basis for the implementation of this union of love between man and nature lies in the simple fact that man ought 'not only to love nature but to be loved by nature' (*LM*, p. 62). In order to be beatified with the love of nature, the initiate should permeate its heart with 'the ardent look of love', not look at its external forms with 'the cold look of observation' in the manner of the scientist.(2) The idea of this reciprocal love between man and nature is suggested in the poem by the verb 'to impart' which denotes that the rose lovingly gives a share of its 'deathless power' to the persona. Thus the rose, being *en rapport* with the poet, plays its part in the performance of spiritual interpenetration so as to make the poet enjoy its eternity. This assumption is embodied in the poem "Infinite", where love is identified with the eternity of the rose that 'Fills with its implicated whorls/ The hierarchies of being with its petals' (*LT*, p. 30).

The whole structure of Raine's love of nature is empirically built on her initial vision of the beloved nature, which is

1- Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 5.

2- Herman, *Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, p. 109.

intimately linked with her earliest notion of the living entities of the flowers in their intricate patterns. The integral relationship of herself and the world of nature apprehended in the hollyhocks vision, and firmly established in the hyacinth, is always reflected even in her love poems. Through this mutual love the untrammelled vision of "The deep glass of wonders" is revealed "like the expression of a face" ('Night Sky', *HH*, p. 5), and the sign of a small leaf is recognized as a "Messenger to the heart/ From a fair, simple land" ('The Leaf', *OP*, p. 19).

As has been indicated, some of Raine's early poems can be identified as the work of a Christian-Neoplatonic poet. Consequently and logically enough, this spiritual characteristic of the fluctuation, or rather combination of the two doctrines demonstrated in her early trend of thought seems to be palpably reflected in some of her love poems written in this period as well. The most direct example of this sort of love can be found in a poem entitled 'Love Poem'. As Dante sees all things contained and absorbed in his love of Beatrice, in first stanza her human lover's face is the mirror of the universe and his eyes see her as an intergral part of the world, pointing to the microcosm-macrocosm relationship, and then:

When your hand touches mine, it is the earth
That takes me_- the deep grass,
And rocks and rivers; the green graves,
And children still unborn, and ancestors,
In love passed down from hand to hand from God.
Your love comes from the creation of the world,
From those paternal fingers, streaming through the clouds
That break with light the surface of the sea.
(*SF*, p. 51)

From the physical touch of a lover, the persona discovers the spiritual principle underlying the physical world. Physical love

opens her eyes to the inner truth of her identification with the earth with its natural forms of place; 'the deep grass,/ And rocks and rivers', and with time in its three dimensions; the future 'children still unborn', the past 'ancestors', and the present 'Your love comes from the creation of the world'. Speaking on the eternal nature of love as apprehended by Edwin Muir and Plato, Raine remarks that 'lovers are winged ... uplifted into a spiritual order, whose mystery is reflected in the earthly event' (*DAS*, p. 13). One of the early reflections of this spiritual order appears to lie "in the compass of a lover's arms" ('Heaven Immanence', *LT*, p. 31).

The touch of physical love enables the persona in the poem 'Love Poem' to be beatified with the revelation of the transcendental reality hidden behind the ephemeral appearances of our material world. Then through this revealed reality comes the realization of the love of and for God that eternally emanates so as to transmute the finite into the infinite and the mortal into the immortal as demonstrated in the last stanza of the poem:

Here, where I trace your body with my hand,
Loves' presence has no end;
For these, your arms that hold me, are the world's.
In us, the continents. clouds and oceans meet
Our arbitrary selves, extensive with the night,
Lost, in the heart's worship, and the body's sleep.
- ("Love Poem", *SF*, p. 51)

Accordingly, in so far as the quality of love in this poem is concerned, it absolutely transcends sexual instinct. The crux of the poem, though it may or may not be the poet's intention, is the celebration of something beyond the limits of earthly love, which echoes the Plotinian insight of the soul's likeness to the Supreme Exemplar. The body with its senses and desires is extinct while

the heart (to Raine, the place of holiness, as previously indicated) celebrates the revelation of the endless presence of love, by whose fiat the two lovers are 'Lost, in the heart's worship, and the body's sleep'.

At this point Ralph J. Mills remarks that: 'The love portrayed here is surely unconventional, and, in some sense, it is not personal at all - or, better, it is supra-personal'.(1) Moreover, the love conveyed in this poem can be equated to the image of Eros which Maio notices in some poems of St. John of the Cross in which Eros is seen as 'the intermediary which empowers man's conversion from the sensible to the supersensible. It is the upward tendency of the human soul, a real force which drives the soul in the direction of the Ideal world'.(2)

Sex is, indeed, involved in the poem. But it is sex that is gratified through subtle love; an efficacy not a target in itself. The lover here is not stimulated by a 'trivial promiscuous carnality activated by a mere itch for sensation'(3), or by, as Raine puts it in the poem "Heaven Immanence", 'lust impelled towards the end of love' (*LT*, p. 31).

1- Mills, "The Visionary Poetry of K. Raine p. 143.

2- Maio, *Op.Cit.*, p. 63.

3- Bullett, *The English Mystics*, p. 170.

4.4 GROWN FROM ONE ROOT

The seed of love planted in Raine's heart by a physical touch of a particular lover, calling the divine world into existence, sprouts in her mind and generates another aspect of her understanding of erotic love. To elucidate this, the poem "Love Poem" may be supplemented by another remarkable poem whose title is 'The Red Light'. This poem is a crystallised portrait of her emotional and mental habitude accompanying the carnal depths she plumbed. It seems to demonstrate that the fire of human passion is the source of both spiritual and carnal love. The two are related even if the former is piously directed towards God, and the latter is shamefully fulfilled in a house of prostitution. But it must be suggested that the poem is open to a plurality of readings:

The women burn throughout the dead night,
their red signs through the curtained windows peep.
What sacrilegious hand puts out the light,
and for what fallen body do they weep?

Christ, as I die, I own it is for thee,
love, human nature, origin and shame.
The same light in the shrine and brothel see,
wherever human passion lights its flame.

For of that red star are we virgins all,
and the heart is stilled by the red fire
that moves the spirit more than its desire
towards unmoving love, the point of will.
(*SF*, p. 19)

In his attempt to trace the primitive element in this poem, H. Foltinek indentifies it as an 'awareness of an essential factor of religious feeling', and argues that the 'sacred harlots of Syria who once celebrated the death and resurrection of their god in the fertility ritual are the sisters of the Christian nuns who have

forsaken mortal men's love to offer themselves to the incarnate god. Thus the star of Adonis, which is indeed believed to be identical with the star of Bethlehem, points the way to the eternal'.(1) The poem somehow evokes, though on a different level, the Biblical story of the prophet Hosea with Israel. Prompted by the love of God, Hosea described "Israel's submersion in the Canaanite nature religion as 'harlotry', 'leaving Jahweh in order to play the harlot'".(2) Gerhard von Rad sees the term 'harlotry' as an expression of "both the idea of the indissolubility of Jahweh's covenant and abhorrence of fertility rites and sacred prostitution of the cult of Baal".(3)

At any rate, in the light of Foltinek's elucidation of the mythological element used in the poem, the central idea of the poem is that love on all its levels is the guide to the eternal truth, provided that the fire of human passion is the driving force that propels it. There is no difference between love for God attained through a holy ceremony held in an abbey and the so-called love of a whore that commits fornication as a profession in a brothel, since 'The same light [shines] in the shrine and brothel'. Regardless of the morally religious issue of comparing a nun to a prostitute, the idea of degrading even sexual love to the level of prostitution or pleasure-seeking is far from acceptable. According to Plato, physical love is an incentive or a starting point to be developed and sublimated, and if it is not, it is reduced to the level of mere lust. Therefore, if the relatedness of both spiritual love and the lewd sexual act of a

1- Foltinek, "The Primitive Element in the Poetry of Kathleen Raine", p. 2.

2- Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*: vol. II. *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions*, trans. by D.M.G. Stalker, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1975, p. 142.

3- *Ibid.*

whore is what the poem communicates, the explanation must lie in Raine's own experience of love.

It is abundantly probable that the poem was written at the time when Raine was under the enchantment of her purely sexual relationship with Alastair in her account of which carnal love is held in such high esteem that she speaks of it in terms of sacredness: 'My renewed vision of the holy was in the depths of carnal desire' (*LU*, p. 97). Socially and psychologically she was aware of the guilt, so to speak, of her infatuation with Alastair. She presumably suffered some sort of compunction, because of which she had recourse to nature, her 'only beloved', pursuing her peace of mind: 'Perhaps the deeper truth is that nature does not speak of guilt and remorse' (*LU*, p. 115). Thus, there was a sense of guilt and a struggle with her conscience. Most likely, she tried hard to convince herself of the genuineness of what she recognized as the 'lowest', that was supposed to enable her to reach the 'highest'. Unconsciously, her imagination found justification and consolation in the myth of the sacred Harlots of Syria - if indeed she was actually familiar with this myth as Foltinek's interpretation suggests. It is also probable that Raine had in mind the *hetairai* of Greek cities, the superior whores in Corinth. They were called "the prostitutes of Aphrodite", for they "looked up to Aphrodite as their special goddess", who aroused men's desire and maintained their trade.(1) Yet, the idea is that if the sexual activity of a prostitute, which might be considered even by many who live in open societies the most degraded in moral and social terms, is as sacred as a nun's love for God, then any kind

1- Geoffrey Grigson, *The Goddess of Love*, Constable and Company, London, 1976, p. 111.

of love in between the two extremes must have the same degree of holiness. In other words, her passionate appetite for Alastair is certainly less degraded compared to the sexual act fulfilled behind the curtains of a brothel. As a result, the former cannot be denied the good merits of the latter, one of which must be "holiness". The sacred transformation of her 'womanhood' under the magical power of physical love can also be traced back to her earlier experience: 'I felt myself transfigured by my womanhood into something more sacred than my mere self. It is the sense of the sacredness of sexual love that I chiefly remember' (*FHF*, p. 155).

Again, the principle of equating a nun's love to a whore's passion calls to mind Raine's "vision of the nun" previously discussed. From the vision we know the comparison made by Raine between her vast weathly scope of experience and the superficiality and naivety, albeit pure and joyful, of the nun's experience. This could be her ulterior motive that may have unconsciously participated in the formulation of the central idea of the poem in discussion.

It is against this whole picture of her biographical background that the poem can be read most appropriately. Though Raine condemns the body later in her poetic approach in many poems, the image of the 'fallen body' does not indicate a condemnation, but a statement of an existing human fact. The 'red heart' is to be 'stilled' not by self-denial - one of the major methods adopted in the mystic's way - but by the 'red fire' that moves from physical passion to God. From this point of view passion on some level (physical if necessary) is better than the death in life of cold inactive habit. It is a Blakean kind of thought - though not yet

a direct influence acquired from him. Blake holds that 'If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise. Folly is the cloke of knavery';(1) 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom'.(2) Nearly seven centuries before Blake, the same cry was uttered by Omar Khayyam in many of his *Ruba'iyat*: "Better be merry with the fruitful Grape/ Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit".(3)

There is no misconstruction in assuming that the 'sacrilegious hand' must therefore be the hand of the law, of morality, of restraint, of abstinence, of a social reformer or of any form of curbing human passion. Again this calls to mind the Blakean principle of condemning any form of submission to law or morality in restraint of human passion:

Abstinence sows sand all over
The ruddy limbs & flaming hair,
But Desire Gratified
Plants fruits & beauty there.(4)

The parallel is significant in more than one way. Blake's image of the 'ruddy limbs' is somehow equivalent to Raine's 'red heart' that is 'stilled' by the 'red fire' - the state of Blake's 'Desire Gratified'. Similarly, Raine's 'sacrilegious hand' that 'puts out the light' is balanced with Blake's directly stated 'Abstinence', that is remarkably personified by a mixture of an epithet and various metaphors, 'sows sand all over/ The ruddy limbs & flaming hair'. Another point of convergence is Blake's most appreciative preference of a whore's sexuality, to such a degree that the perfect model of a wife should contain 'What in whores [is] always

1- *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, CPPWB, p. 36.

2- "Proverbs of Hell", CPPWB, p. 35.

3- Omar Khayyam, *The Ruba'iyat*, (XXXIX), trans. by Edward Fitzgerald, Airmont, New York, 1970, p. 86.

4- "Day", *Songs and Ballads*, in CPPWB, p. 474.

found/ The lineaments of Gratified desire'.(1) But, unlike Blake who is against all belief in sin (except the sin of rational repression), Raine seems to be aware of two contrasting elements of human nature: love and shame as manifested in the second stanza. Shame results naturally from the realization of guilt. So, Raine does not deny the existence of some sort of sin, which may or may not be morally, religiously or just scrupulously related to the sort of sexual act in this case. In this context Raine is less Blakean, for she proclaims that "sexual passion is the operation of the living God upon the lowest plane of existence" (*LU*, p. 104), besides her Platonic recognition of sexual love as "the lowest". Here, she seems, consciously or unconsciously, in conformity with the Hindu mystics who hold sex and other bodily pleasures to be of a lower nature(2), thereupon, "sublimation of sex means devotion".(3) Also, Raine probably keeps company with Rumi who argues in favour of fleshy pleasures without excess. They are necessary for "flesh and skin" to grow, and "unless they grow, what shall Divine Love consume".(4) But, "the path to salvation", in Rumi's view, is lit when the "flames of lust" are quenched.(5)

This gives the poem another possible dimension of interpretation, especially in so far as the image of the 'sacrilegious hand' is concerned.

Raine is, presumably, making the point that all kinds of love, physical and spiritual, are potentially sacred, if not equally

1- "Several Questions Answerd", *CPPWB*, p. 474.
2- Handa, *Concept of Hinduism*, p. 46.
3- Mishr, *Hinduism, the Faith of the Future*, p. 92.
4- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 81.
5- Rumi, *RPM*, p. 85.

sacred, provided that the impetus is human passion. The 'vision of the harmonious co-existence of all things in the state of Paradise' is attained through any form of love, 'the agent of apokatastasis' (*DAS*, p. 154). The seat of the human passion for Raine is the heart not the body. She is, therefore, keenly preoccupied with the change and transformation of the heart, as long as "What's done by flesh and blood cannot be undone" ('A Bad Dream', *LC*, p. 50). Indulgence in the body's appetites without purification of the heart blindfolds the eyes and bars the lovers from discerning the light which can be eternally found as effulgent in the 'shrine' as in the 'brothel': 'only the pure in heart/ See God' (*OH*, p. 87). The light is not confined to a particular place because its domain is the heart, and its flame can be caught by those who hold it as the 'point of will'. In this connection, Raine's insight resembles that of Hafiz of Shiraz, who strikingly beholds the divine light of God 'Within the Magian tavern', and to his wonder 'In such a place ... Shines out such radiancy'.(1) It is also somehow in line with Kabir's principle: "Lamps burn in every house, O blind one! and you cannot see them".(2)

It is man's failure of spiritual values that underlies what happens to the women of the brothel. The failure could be ascribed to the moral code as well as to the women themselves, being too interested in the 'fallen body' to remember their souls. Morality with its lack of compassion and absence of understanding on the one hand and the women's blindness to see beyond their 'fallen' bodies on the other contribute to the putting out of the

1- Hafiz, *Fifty Poems of Hafiz*, p. 117.

2- Kabir, *One Hundred Poems*, p. 28.

light. Thus the 'sacrilegious hand' can be also taken as a reference to any sort of spiritual failure, whether by the advocates of morality or by the defenders of promiscuity: love 'is of the soul and has no necessary connection with the sexual instinct' (*IJP*, p. 8). The women could restore their state of spiritual virginity through a transforming grace: 'For of that red star are we virgins all'; and their passion can ultimately drive them back to God, the 'unmoving love'. At the very heart of this, the idea of hope, of salvation is implied.

To Raine, the gnostic idea of the rebirth of spiritual virginity is much more important for women to be concerned with than the loss of physical virginity. It is against nature and less than human for a woman to remain virgin and to repress her sexual desire for the sake of a false repulsive "virtue" - a notion emphasized in the following short poem entitled 'Chastity Matters Less Than You Think':

You cannot retrieve
The lost virginity of Eve.
Chaste you may remain
Only by being less than all you are,
An instance of her.

Nor can your fall impair
Nature's virginity, still inviolate
Through millenia of little deaths.
(*TP*, p. 41)

A prima facie impression of this poem could be misleading. Its subject matter will be missed if the reader tries to find in it nothing more than a partial expression in favour of freedom of sex. In the depths of the poet's heart, the simplicity and innocence of nature are much stronger and more appealing to common sense than sham principles of any kind of stern moralism. Ignoring or neglecting the reality of life, that we are sexual

living beings, is nothing but awesome hypocrisy and distasteful pretence, for, Platonically speaking, 'grace does not abolish nature but transforms it by lifting it to a higher level'.(1) This is also a basic tenet of Christian thought. In Thomas Aquinas's terms, "grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it".(2) So, we should be faithful to our human nature. Again, this is reminiscent, and may be an indoctrination in this instance (since Raine had effective access to him at the time), of Blake's principle of sexual gratification. Blake repudiates strongly the then current ideas that "woman's love is a sin", and that it is a disgraceful necessity for a woman to be sexually in love, which is always something "to be spoken of obliquely, in hushed tones, as belonging to our 'lower nature'".(3) Blake indicts cruel morality that denies the claims of the flesh as mere blasphemy. The inferiority of man lies in his hypocritical resistance of sex in the name of ethics. Human honesty demands that man should satisfy his sexual appetites and not be superior to his physical needs:

What is it men in women do require?
The lineaments of Gratified Desire.
What is it women in men do require?
The lineaments of Gratified Desire.(4)

Not only does Raine advocate the freedom of physical love in the poem quoted above, but she also differentiates between the 'fallen' state of the body and virginal nature. The virginity of nature is neither to be shunned or defiled by the phenomenally perpetual process of death, nor is it to be befouled by the fallen

1- Taylor, *Platonism*, p. 80.

2- Daniel Rogers, "Psychotechnological approaches to the Teaching of the *Cloud* -Author and to the Showings of Julian of Norwich", in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England*, University of Exeter, 1982, p. 143.

3- Bullett, *The English Mystics*, p. 170.

4- "Several Questions Answerd", *CPPWB*, pp. 474-5.

body. There is always hope for the restoration of the soul's forgotten state of eternity. Raine is basically preoccupied with the heart wherein chastity resides and gains its real meaning, with the soul with its everlasting search for the paradisaical lost country, and not with the body with its 'clouds of blood that veil our skies' (*OP*, p. 43); or with its 'weary frame/ Gripped hands, failing sense' (*OP*, p. 19). This trend is more firmly established in her late poems. As regards places, buildings and even landscapes, the holiness connected to them depends upon how far they can help Raine's imagination to fly and how close they are to the soul, simply because:

Home is an image written in the soul,
To each its own: the new-born home to a memory,
Bird-souls, sea-souls, and with them bring anew
The isles that formed the souls, and souls the isles
Are ever building, shell by painted shell
And stone by glittering stone.

("Nameless Islets", *HH*, p. 32)

Raine consistently alludes to the heart as the place of the church, the cathedral and even the oracle - the last two phrases forming the titles of her volumes: *The Oracle in the Heart*, and *The Cathedral in the Heart*. Here, she keeps company with many Sufis who believe that the true mosque is to be built in a pure and holy heart, since God does not dwell in a mosque of stone. Shamsi Tabriz, for example, often attains the divine vision by laying 'the spiritual ear at the window of the heart'.(1)

However, this must not be understood as a condemnation of physical love on Raine's part. She undoubtedly appreciates physical love - at least in her early stages of developmental spirituality - as long as it leads to the realization of the

1- Shamsi Tabriz, *Selected Poems*, p. 129.

spiritual ideal as Plato sees it. She definitely discriminates between physical love that is moved by passion (even in a brothel, where the women appear to 'burn' with passion) and the mechanic lust that pursues only sexual relief even if it is fulfilled in a legal but loveless marriage. The former is a starting point in a spiritual pattern, or 'one of the channels through which the eternal beauty enters the world' (*DAS*, p.149). So, 'Love, blind to imperfection, sees only the perfect'.(1) This line echoes exactly a line in Blake's poem "How to Know Love from Deceit", which says: "Love to faults is always blind".(2) While lust, dispirited in its effect, is not only devoid of emotional satisfaction and spiritual blossom, but also breeds humiliation, callousness, consternation and shame, of which she disapproves and is extremely frightened:

I who fear neither death nor sorrow fear the low,
To be dragged down
Where woman lies apathetic under lust.
In unregarded acts perpetuating woe;
And, waking, knew myself debased
In that world where the imagined is the real
(*"A Bad Dream"*, *L C*, p. 50)

In reading such lines, the reader recaptures a temperament and a tone that are quite different from that dominating the poem "The Red Light". The difference in sexuality expressed in the two poems is one of both kind and degree. Sexual act in "The Red Light", however crude, distorted or gross it may seem to others, has within it the seed of love. It shares the same root with spiritual love, though the latter is higher and can contain the former. On the other hand, sexuality stimulated by lust is unreality, as suggested in the last line of the poem just cited.

1- "Soliloquies Upon Love 3", *HH*, p. 66.
2- *CPPWB*, p. 472.

From Raine's marital life another substantial piece of evidence can be drawn to testify that she discriminates between lust and erotic love. The evidence can be found in her first marriage to Hugh Sykes Davies; a relation she has renounced as a 'sin' and condemned as 'fornication' (*LU*, p. 68).

This kind of marriage inflicted upon her disappointment, repugnance, contempt and, above all, spiritual failure. So, Raine, like Blake, sees 'indissoluble marriage [as] an enslavement to lust when law and not love is the bond'.(1) The idea of the emancipation of women from the bonds of marriage can be traced back long before William Blake. Aristophanes in *Ecclesiazusae* dramatizes the notion in the revolt of women against arbitrary laws of marriage. The ideal society the Athenian women aspire to is where: 'All women and men will be common and free,/ No marriage or other restraint there will be'.(2)

It is not from a moral point of view that Raine despises lust as a mere sexual act fulfilled only to satisfy the animal instinct of man, as the 'blind mechanism behaviourists take the world to be', or as 'the blind passive involvement' working when 'the soul is inert' (*LU*, p. 66). She rejects it as a cause of frustration, apathy, and shame. In contrast, erotic love, even if not recognized by others as legitimate, when driven by human passion is a rewarding experience that enables man to mount up in order to discern the reflection of eternity in time, and to probe into the primordial nature of the divine. Moreover, erotic love is highly praised because it brings together 'those who should be brought together, with much wisdom' (*LU*, p. 66).

1- Raine, *William Blake*, (1951), p. 67.

2- Cited in Dickinson, *Op.Cit.*, p. 57.

It is this distinction propounded by Raine here and elsewhere that calls to mind the passive attitude of the people of Eliot's 'The Waste Land' towards the sexual act. Eliot, in his intellectual capacity, portrays many situations and sketches that reflect the mechanical and routinistic nature of modern sexual love. These pictures give the impression that sexual love in the waste land becomes a cold, rotten, and callous habit of automatic lust. First, the "Hyacinth" girl's sexual experience provides her with *nothing* but nothingness, emptiness and intellectual failure: 'I was neither/ Living nor dead, and I knew nothing'.(1) This is also suggested in the seduction of the third Thames-daughter which afflicts her with mental disconnectedness and physical disintegration: 'I can connect nothing with nothing'.(2) Secondly, violence, insensitivity, and sterility are the dominant features of the sexuality practised by the typist and her boy-friend. All her partner's *endeavouring* caresses, embraces and kisses "are unreprieved, if undesired", and his *assaulting*, "Exploring hands encounter no defence". Equally, the girl's terrible boredom and imperviousness are reflected in her friend's attitude: "His vanity requires no response,/ And makes a welcome of indifference".(3) The same impression can be found in the seduction of the second Thames-daughter: "I made no comment. What should I resent". Thirdly, sex becomes artificial mechanism. It is clear in the sketch of the lady in her boudoir using "synthetic perfumes" and "Pressing lidless eyes", while she is impervious to her husband's sexual intercourse, like the typist who, after the sexual act, "smoothes her hair with automatic hand,/ And puts a record on the

1- T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems*,

Faber and Faber, London, 1985, p. 28.

2- *ibid.*, p. 38.

3- *Ibid.*, p. 36.

gramophone".(1) Fourthly, infidelity and adultery, related to and stirred by the material products of modern technology, are other features of sexuality as indicated by Mrs Porter's reception of Sweeny "in the spring". This means that adultery, irrespective of its being a religious sin, is committed under the attraction of material gains and sparkling manufactured articles, and not out of personal allurements for a particular individual. Finally, savage rape, isolation and degradation characterize sexual behaviour in the waste land as implied in the reference to Tereus and "the change of Philomel, by the barbarous king".(2) It is also involved in the seduction of the three Thames-daughters, especially in the terrible image of humiliation felt by the second daughter: "My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart/ Under my feet".(3)

These are the unhealthy effects of modern sexual love, or rather animal lust, viewed and diagnosed by Eliot's insight. Eliot conceives and concretizes his vision of the "unreality" of modern life in the light of a more rigorous and uncompromising religious outlook than that of Raine, an outlook that may in some sense militate against both Raine's and Blake's values, especially their view of the unconfined freedom of sexual love. Nevertheless, he elucidates in "The Waste Land" a great deal of Raine's elements of distinction between sexual love and lust. In one of her most recent books of criticism Raine launches an ironical attack on the current concept of the term "human" as intimately linked to modern sexual promiscuity: "Nothing in our permissive society is held to be more 'human' than the act of sex" (*IJP*, p. 8). Raine, thus, would agree absolutely with Eliot's

1- *Ibid.*, p. 37.

2- For full details of the myth, see Robert Graves, *Greek Myths*, pp. 165-8.

3- *Op.Cit.*, p. 38.

diagnosis of the unreality of modern sexual life as a diseased lust deflected from its natural course. Both are concerned about modern man's massacre of spiritual values in general. But she would consent only in principle to the remedy he offers: '(Come in under the shadow of this red rock)'.(1) She might not disagree with the idea that the cause of this unreality of sexual life is the absence of spiritual values, as Eliot suggests, and that the cure consists in a restoration of the sacred tradition. But she certainly disapproves of this tradition being the morals of Christianity, to which she wholeheartedly prefers the learning of the imagination and the freedom of the soul to grow according to its own innate laws. As a matter of empirical preference, Raine would rather join forces with any tradition of *knowledge absolute* that inhibits the inhibitions which prevent the imagination from flying, or trim the soul's wings.

Raine undoubtedly fears and dispraises lust because of the appalling and damaging effects illustrated above, which have no bearing whatsoever on the welfare of the heart, the prosperity of the mind and the illumination of the soul. So, 'love in the heart', 'wisdom in the mind', and the 'soul's unquenchable desire for God' (*LT*, p. 22) are the measures according to which a human being, regardless of his/her religious or social rank, is able to discern the eternal light and to achieve the union of love with God. The divine light has no grudge, so to speak, against particular places, and it exists everywhere to be caught by the initiates into the path of love - a typical mystical doctrine.

1- *Ibid.*, p. 28.

4.5 LOVE, THE CREATOR

The conception of love as the everlasting creator of all creatures is universally maintained by mystics. With Raine, it has always its Plotinian resonance, and is frequently reiterated in her canon of verse. Plotinus believes that all beings and things emanate by fiat of love and affinity from the One, and their ultimate destiny is to return to their source by the same fiat of love and affinity: "Since there is a Source, all the created must spring from it and in accordance with it".(1)

This doctrine has been propounded by Raine from the very start of her career. The truth of the tremendous power of the "god Eros", who makes the lover see the whole world "transfigured and joyously intensified"(2), was revealed to Raine through her own experience of love. In the poem "Passion", discussed earlier, the truth of love as a creator is implicitly revealed to the poet through the language of the sky. If William Blake had asked his "Tyger", 'Did he who made the Lamb make thee?'(3), and left the question unanswered, Raine's inspired reality, as it seems, unveils the hidden answer. Man, flower, tiger and all other inert and animate objects are created by one creator, that is love, and "this world you with the flower and with the tiger share" (*SF*, p. 16). The conception is finely expressed, as previously indicated, in "The Hyacinth" when 'unhindered out of love these flowers spring'. It is again directly stated in the poem "Still Life" from the same first volume, where the perfection of love,

1- Plotinus, *EN*, V.8.7.

2- Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, Basil Blackwell Ltd., Oxford, 1985, p. 152.

3- Blake, *Songs of Experience*, in *CPPWB*, p. 25.

the creator, is embodied in 'Bird, flower and shell' (*SF*, p. 56).

This process of drawing examples from her earliest volume is intended to substantiate the next point of discussion. In spite of the fact that the idea of love as the creator of created things is not original and reflects to a great extent the influence of both Plotinus and Thomas Taylor, the Platonist(1), upon Raine's thought, it is probably unfair to see the above quoted lines together with "The Hyacinth" as derived from either of the two. Indeed, Raine's idea of love as a creator parallels the doctrine of love in the Orphic theology as conveyed in these lines:

Love is a king by no restraint confin'd,
All all things flow from Love's prolific mind;

For in love's royal body all things lie,
Fire, night and day, earth, water and the sky;

Thus all things love within his breast conceal'd,
And into beauteous light from thence reveal'd.(2)

But, as previously established, she had no access to Thomas Taylor or any of the Platonists at the time of the publication of *Stone and Flower*, which contains many poems communicating the same doctrine. Thus, it is most probable that the idea sprang independently first from her own immediate experience, when she was writing as a spontaneously inspired poet.(3) Then it was under the influence of Plotinus, Plato, and Taylor among others, that the adoption of the idea was gradually fortified and confidently cultivated so that it became one of the central ideas that have

1- K. Raine's love and appreciation for Thomas Taylor seems limitless. His photograph is the only personal photograph in her study. She asserted in the interview that her relation with him is one of a love affair.

2- *Thomas Taylor, the Platonist: Selected Writings*, ed. by K. Raine and G. Mills Harper, Routledge, London, 1969, pp. 177-8.

3- See Raine's comment in Vinson, *Contemporary Poets*, p. 1224.

moulded her poetry, as shown in the following lines from the poem 'EX Nihilo' in her third volume, *The Pythoness*:

And distant constellations move
About the centre of a thought
By the fiat of that love

Whose being is the breath of life
The terra firma that we tread,
The divine body that we eat,
The incarnation that we live.
(*TP*, pp. 20-1)

The poet's passion in these lines transcends ordinary human love. It is actually what is described as 'the love of love , ... an urge going beyond instinct and thereby it gives instinct *the lie*'.(1) Through the power of God, in response to the human craving for his light, man can be endowed by grace with the proper faculty to see the light and to achieve the union of eternal love with the divine. It is this idea that gives Raine her right place among mystics, simply because it lies at the centre of her vision as well as her poetry. The poet consistently reiterates the point in her poems through different approaches. In the poem 'Psyche and the God', the idea is clear through the dialogue between Eros and Psyche, as the myth implies. Here, Eros says:

I am the power
That to dust gives light,

I am the light
That casts the shadow of the world,
And in that shadow you are veiled
In my darkness sevenfold.

(*TP*, p. 50)

Here we find two contrasting images of the god of love, each of which reflects a specific function. Eros, the desire for perfection, is the love that invigorates the soul, removes her

1- De Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, p. 167.

blindness, propels her to undertake the flight to the 'Fatherland', and sets her free from what is alien to the realm of the prototype. So he is 'the power/ That to dust gives light' through illuminating the soul by tearing the veil and releasing it from the mire of the body. The primacy and subtlety of love represented in these lines cannot be apprehended but through a mystical trance. Love here, as with so many mystics of all creeds, is "the Sovereign Alchemy", to use Browne's terms regarding Jami's love, "transmuting the base metal of humanity into the Divine Gold".(1) The interrelation between love (Eros in its purest state) and light alluded to in the poem as one of identification is a characteristic of Raine's conception of love: "... love is the light/That shapes the myriad forms of earth"(2), and by virtue of love the "undying flame/Burns on within the tomb" ('Dreams', *L C*, p. 41). It is also true that the conception as such is maintained by the majority of mystics. It is, for instance, vividly expressed by St. Augustine: 'He who knows the truth, knows that Light, and he who knows that Light knows Eternity. Love knows that Light'.(3)

At the same time, Eros, functioning as the son of his mother, is the shadow, the veil and the darkness. Realizing the immeasurably hidden power of the god of love which enables the lover to see the reality behind the world of shadows by virtue of the spiritual light, Psyche joyfully asks the god to

*... let the hidden will of love
Descend upon me like a dove*

And my seven veils of night

1- Browne, *History of Persia*, p. 442.

2- "Only the Good Hours...", *LT*, p. 37.

3- Cited in Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, p. 300.

Become a sevenfold rainbow bright,
And each beam of love shall raise,
A spirit that shall sing love's praise,
A heart to beat for love's delight,
The petals of an opening world,
And at the centre, love revealed.
(*TP*, p. 51)

The word "dove" is indeed well-known as a symbol of endearment and innocence. It also stands for the Holy Spirit in the Christian tradition, and is used by many Christian poets as such. However, it may be a reference to Eros himself in this particular case without distancing it from its suggestive qualities of endearment, innocence and holiness. In the Platonic tradition Eros is usually called the "Fledging Dove" because his "wings lack down".(1) It could also be added that the dove was the bird of Aphrodite, the mother of Eros (or in Roman nomenclature, Venus and Cupid respectively). Aphrodite was accompanied by doves and sparrows in the air after she had risen from the foam of sea.(2)

In one of the poems written during her Catholic period, there is another slightly different approach to her empirical principle of love the creator. It is intimately related to the very early identification of herself with the 'uncounted multitude/Of the aspects of God' (*OH*, p. 82), which comes from a transcendental touch of sensual love. Then the veil is totally withdrawn so that the aspiring soul may realize the love of God, the Creator. But the word "God" here tends to be imbued with more Christian than Platonic colour, though the difference is certainly one of degree not of substance:

Love was in the beginning - the desire
That made a star.
Made a man.
All that will remain

1- Plato, *Phaedrus*, (252B), p. 73.

2- Robert Graves, *Greek Myths*, p. 49.

Is desire
Returning to God.
(*"The Crystal Skill, II"*, *LT*, p. 3)

These lines bear witness to the fact that Jacob Boehme and Plato were Raine's earliest influences. The idea implied here is in conformity with Boehme's doctrine of the love of God that began with a craving and contained the will and desire arising in the Absolute Godhead.(1) At the same time, it reflects her early marginal understanding of the Platonic doctrine of the emanation from the One and the return of all the created to their source, and of love as a cause for the creation of the world: "God moves the world as an object as a man's love moves a lover".(2)

The reader is repeatedly reminded of the world of 'The Hyacinth' that is 'unfolding into flower' by the power of love. This image of self-disclosure of the divine world in the spiritual sight of the lover, as well as the image of love lying at the heart of all created things, is often depicted in Raine's poems. The two images are combined together in the last three lines of the poems cited above. It should again be emphasized that the repetition of such images of love in Raine's poetry indicates that the essence of the reality perceived in her vision is always the same, and that this sameness of the reality is the axis round which her images consistently rotate. On the spiritual plane, the essence of love lies always in its being a creator, however different its images may seem to be from one poem to another. Drawing on this fundamental principle of love Raine crystallises its various images. In one of her "Short Poems", the unifying vision of the oneness of the self and the cosmos is again

1- See above, p. 3. For further details see Aubrey,
"The Influence of Boehme on Blake", pp. 35-46.
2- Taylor, *Platonism*, p. 116.

expressed through the same myth of Eros and Psyche: "Eros for Psyche builds her house anew/ For every soul the whole/ World near and far" (*OH*, p. 80).

Also, in "The Marriage of Psyche", the poet takes advantage of the same Greek myth to develop the image of the divine world perceived in 'The Hyacinth' into a wider and more comprehensive one. The poem is divided into two sections; 'The House' and 'The Ring'. In the first section, the house of marriage is no specific place, but it is vastly extended to contain the whole universe

furnished with the element of nature:

In my love's house

There are hills and pastures carpeted with flowers,
His roof is the blue sky, his lamp the evening star,
The doors of his house are the winds, and the rain
his curtain.

In his house are many mountains, each alone,
And islands where the sea-birds home.

(*YO*, p. 161)

There are also many other natural things in the house. But more important than the images of created things is the image of the creator, who has given her all these wonders and 'whose face I have never seen,/ But into whose all-enfolding arms I sink in sleep' (*YO*, p. 161). This image of love, or rather of the god of love is precisely the same as the image portrayed in the poem 'Psyche and the God', where Eros is the desire that links the image to the archetype: "I am none you have seen./ ...I am that lies in you,/ Whose the arms wherein you lie" (*TP*, p. 50).

The exact repetition of the image seems to be natural because the poet draws from the very same myth, which she believes to be in accord with her own insight. So, behind this self-evident cause lies perhaps the poet's perpetual loyalty to her own recurrent vision of love as a creator, which makes her mind keep

many a time the same image with this kind of acute accuracy. This assumption is based on her belief that 'In these matters to know once is to know for ever' (*LU*, p. 120).

The second section of the poem ends with a line that is most probably the keynote of the whole poem; in it mystical love as a divine power of transmuting the mortal into the immortal, the earthly into the celestial, is exquisitely depicted: 'Transcendent touch of love summons my world to being' (*YO*, p. 162). This is, I believe, an insight equivalent to what Evelyn Underhill calls the 'deliberate or involuntary translation of the heavenly fact into the earthly image'.(1) Thus, for Raine, as for mystics, love is the "scaffold" by which she is able to ascend to the divine and to behold 'the aspect and vehicle of wisdom'.(2)

As a corollary of the principle of love as a creator of all created things, Raine's poetry is also seen by her as created out of love, in the sense that love is always the inspiring spirit which provides her with an inexhaustible source of images and symbols to enrich her poetry. It is the driving force which spiritually enables her to bring forth the 'nature', to use T. S. Eliot's words, 'of that dark embryo within [her] which gradually takes on the form and speech of a poem'.(3) Raine often lays stress on this special relationship between love and the process she experiences in creating a poem, as shown in this line from the poem 'The Night-Blowing Cereus': "love unfolds a poem to me" (*SF*, p. 26). Also in the poem 'A Strange Evening', love fashions for the lovers a wonderful and infinite bed of sky and

1- Underhill, "The Mystic as Creative Artist", *UM*, p. 410.

2- "Soliloquies Upon Love I", *HH*, p. 63.

3- *Passages from the Writings of T.S. Eliot*, in J. Press, *A Map of Modern English Verse*, p. 86.

trees so that a poem "moves across the leaves" (*SF*, p. 35).

In the light of Raine's firmly established belief in the indissoluble relation between love and the creative process of writing a poem, it is perhaps possible to identify 'the god' in the poem 'Invocation' as the god of love. The theme of the poem is the creation of a poem, and the lines dramatically describe the tremendous impact of the moment of revelation on the mind of the poet. But the poem as a whole is a physical and mental ordeal which closely resembles a breathtaking sacrifice:

There is a poem on the way,
there is a poem all round me,
the poem is in the near future,
the poem is in the upper air
above the foggy atmosphere
it hovers, a spirit
that I would make incarnate.
Let my body sweat
let snakes torment my breast
my eyes be blind, ears deaf, hands distraught
mouth parched, uterus cut out,
belly slashed, back lashed,
tongue slivered into thongs of leather
rain stones inserted in my breast,
head severed,

if only the lips may speak,
if only the god will come.
(*SF*, p. 10)

The process of giving birth to the 'dark embryo' within the poet is, the poem suggests, much more strenuous and exhausting than the exertion of a woman in labour. The terrifying torment of the poet, or of the persona as a poet, at the moment of poetic creation through the 'spirit' that 'hovers' 'above the foggy atmosphere' is physical and mental at the same time. But despite this mental and physical state of anguish, the persona yearns wholeheartedly for the fulfilment of only one wish: 'if only the lips may speak, /if only the god will come', which means if only

the poem will incarnate. Not only will the realization of this wish alleviate the splitting pain, but it will also make the pain appear a trivial price for the pleasure of her communion with the god that will help her create the poem. Thus, given the fruitful relation between love and the creation of poetry, the god invoked by the persona in this poem is likely to be love. As indicated before, this conclusion is mainly based on Raine's faith in love as a creator: 'Of all created things the source is one,/ Simple, single as love', (*YO*, p. 174) and the poem, being a created thing, is no exception. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the god might be what Raine is inclined to call 'the poetic daimon', whose relation is also one of love. Eros is after all recognized in the Platonic tradition as a daimon that inflicts innumerable tortures upon Psyche. At any rate, the poem implies the yearning of a human spirit for mystical communion with some divine power, whether the god of love, the poetic daimon, or God.

It must be remembered that readiness to sacrifice the mundane for the sake of the celestial, as well as the endurance of physical suffering with patience in order to realize spiritual intoxication, is claimed to be a common, indeed prominent attitude in the mystic's life. In Raine's poetry in general and in the later poems in particular, this mystical approach seems to be always maintained. In some poems it is perceptible by implication, and in other directly expressed, as in the following stanza from the poem 'Lachesis':

Needs must these things be; and you and I,
My love, must suffer patiently what we are,
These parts of guilt and grief we play
Who must about our necks the millstone bear.
(*HH*, p. 15)

Similarly, in a poem from *On a Deserted Shore*, the reality of the one eternal love is of inconceivable value and its heavenly joy is incomparable. The joyful sights of the Beauty Supreme waiting for the soul in heaven, or in its Platonic lost country, far surpass all seemingly valuable earthly pleasures, and exceed all our human standards of appreciation:

Cast not before swine-
The rational animal
Oyster's soft aphrodisiac flesh prefers:
Who values then a pearl
At so great price
As to sell all
To purchase one?
(*DS*, No. 54)

The words 'swine' and 'aphrodisiac' as opposed to 'pearl' in this poem are certainly gestures towards a very common mystical truth the poet perceives and tries to communicate. Man is asked to cast aside the glittering and cheap in order to obtain the real and priceless, for "Who chose love's thorns, renounced its rose" ('Song in Sorrow', *LT*, p. 20). But, to Raine disappointment, the majority of people have lost the power of appreciating what is real. The emphatic and imperative tone in the first line reflects her absolute trust in what is real. To use Plato's terms in Hackforth's translation of the *Phaedrus*, "swine" is more or less equivalent to the "black horse" which is 'crooked of frame, a massive jumble of a creature, with thick short neck, snub ... nose, black skin, and grey eyes; hot-blooded consorting with wantonness and vainglory; shaggy of ear, deaf, and hard to control with whip and goad'.(1) So, Plato confirms that when the soul "rose up into what really is", it would treat "with contempt the

1- R. Hackforth, trans. *Plato's Phaedrus*, The Cambridge University Press, 1952, p. 103.

things we now say are".(1)

But the very use of the word "swine" puts the principle in its real mystical light. Plotinus alludes to the very same principle using the image Raine portrays: 'swine foul of body find their joy in foulness' (*EN*, 1.6.6). Also Boehme refers to it in its Biblical connotations: 'God will not cast his pearl before swine; but to the children which draw near to him he gives the pearl and his bread'.(2) In a closely similar spirit, Richard Rolle speaks of the "pious delight of the world" that should be despised, and forgotten by virtue of the intoxication of the "spiritual wine" of love.(3) Using other symbols, Kabir says: "The jewel is lost in the mud, and all are seeking for it".(4) There is also a call from the Poet Nikos Kazantzakis echoing Raine's appeal: "Leave the mud, stand up, give birth to your betters".(5) As illustrated in the first chapter, St. Teresa, John Very, King, Rabi'a, Rumi, and many other mystics assert the same principle. It is also maintained by the Taoists as the paradoxical principle of dispossession from which possession springs. Man's eternal happiness is impeded by excessiveness in physical pleasures, and material ambitions are man's enemies that lead him to the realm of eternal death.

1- Plato, *Phaedrus*, (249C), p. 67.

2- Boehme, *Signature of All Things*, p. 220.

3- Rolle, *FL*, p. 187.

4- Kabir, *One Hundred Poems*, p. 75.

5- Quoted from Ruth Burrows, *Interior Castle Explored*, p. 9..

4.6 OUTSIDE LOVE'S SANCTUARY

Relevantly, another aspect of Raine's conception of love as manifested in her poetry is what Foltinek refers to as 'love given and love taken'.(1) The perfection of the relationship between man and 'God' is fulfilled through the proudly desired death of man and the proudly destructive power of the divine:

Death of the viction is the power of the god.

The perfection of man is the pride of death,
the crystal skull is the perpetuity of life.
The power of the god is the taking of love.

The perfection of light is the destruction of the world,
death and love turn the faces of day and night.
The illumination of the skull is the joy of the god.
("The Crystal Skull", *SF*, p.)

Some understanding of the figure of the crystal skull is necessary. It is an impressive Aztec religious artifact well-known to the visitors of the Mexican collection in the British Museum. The Mexican Aztecs sacrificed human victims (some of them willingly) to the sun god. Foltinek points out that 'No god ranks so high in the Mexican pantheon as the sun god, and the transparent material of the skull with its extraordinary reflecting and focussing capacity suggests to [Raine] the sun as the receiver of sacrifice'.(2) But the poem, however, *par excellence* appeals to the reader's imagination and understanding more than to his erudite knowledge. The reader's lack of this Aztec background does not obscure what the poem essentially communicates, nor does it reduce the delight of its reading: therein lies its universal significance. Through his faith in the

1- Op.Cit., p. 18.

2- Ibid., p. 17.

eternal, man seeks love of the divine whose omnipotence and will should be fulfilled in the maximum sacrificial act of man. In doing so willingly, man proves his boundless love for the divine, and in return, he is granted the eternal love of the divine; for eternity is the graceful gift of the "flux that precedes all life, that we reassume, dying" ('Water', *YO*, p. 166), and also "Through that burning the way lies" ('Death's Country', *HH*, p. 24).

The idea of man's complete submission to God's will and power as a sign of his love for God despite the mysterious ways in which the Supreme behaves is not exclusive to the Aztecs except as a continually ritual activity of their life. As a rule, the history of all religions and creeds records many signs of human sacrifice for the love of the divine Ideal. A well-known instance of such most agonizing sacrifices can be found in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, presented in the story of Abraham and his son, with a difference between the Bible and the Kor'an as to who was the son who was intended to be sacrificed.(1) Sacrifice may take many other forms proclaimed by mystics as means of realizing union with the divine. For Raine only to love any sacrifice, however great, is significant, and "Perfection [has] the value only of love that gave:/ Laid up in Heaven" (*OH*, p. 80). In "Two Reflections on the Magia" she appreciates the sacrifice that has the latent power of unification: "Wisdom's magia in blind love's sacrifice byss into abyss consuming" (*HH*, p. 44).

In another poem with the same title, the idea of human yearning to achieve the union of love with the divine is kept, as are the symbols of the sun, the fire and light, with the exception that

1- According to the Bible, Abraham's son was Isaac, while in the Kor'an it was Ishmael.

the poet overtly refers to the divine as 'God':

All that will be remembered
Is a fire
Rising up to God.

All that will remain
Is desire
Returning to God

All that will remain
Is the love
That burns away the sun.

(The Crystal Skull (II), *LT*, pp. 3,4)

It is unquestionable that the crystal skull of the Aztecs inspired the poet to produce such lines. Yet, the lines as they stand are universal. They can be read in Christian, Neoplatonic, Hindu and even Islamic terms, and in accordance with the principle of light indicated before. Moreover, in the last three lines, it is love that has the eternal consuming fire that 'burns away the sun'. Presumably, the sun here is the outer sun; "the reigning sun" that has no "power and glory" ('Dust', *TP*, p. 18). It is certainly not the Intelligible Sun of Plato, which is the one unitive light, unknowable in itself but the source of knowing in the creature. Yet, love is able to create the harmonious oneness of man and God, and even the oneness of living and dead. So when the lost country is regained, "living and dead/ In love are one" ("Requiem", *LT*, p. 26).

In short, the spiritual significance of the crystal skull, or death, as the gate to eternal life, satisfies Raine's preoccupation with the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul; or as she puts it, 'only death frees the soul from contact with the body and its desires, which obscures the soul's innate

wisdom'.(1) The theme of death-in-life and life-in-death(2) with its corollaries is certainly the unremitting obsession of Raine's life and thought, and the present theme of love is one of its prominent correlations. Perhaps, the most obvious example to illustrate Raine's mingling of the theme of death-in-life and life-in-death with the Platonic experience of love that was its source, can be found in the entire volume of poems, '*On a Deserted Shore*'. In fact, the book, like some other late poems, was written as an elegy over the death of her soul's companion and Platonic lover, Gavin Maxwell, with whom she shares the recollection of '.... an Island salt and bare, / The haunt of Seales and Orcs, and Seamews clang'. (3)

In more than one respect, the volume is reminiscent of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. As a spiritual companion to Raine, Gavin played the same role as Arther Hallam to Tennyson. The subject matter is one in the two poems; the death of a true loved one. The tone, the changes of temperament, the several philosophical themes, and the sequential structure of the poems have a great deal in common. But in no way can *On a Deserted Shore* be seen as an imitation of *In Memoriam*. Responding to the question whether she had *In Memoriam* in mind or not while writing *On a Deserted Shore*, Raine spoke of the possibility that she may or may not have had it in the back of her mind. But she confirmed that after she had finished *On a Deserted Shore*, she re-read *In Memoriam* and re-discovered how fine it was. She also believes that

1- Raine, *Death-in-Life and Life-in-Death*, p. 14.

2- In referring to the theme of the immortality of the soul, Raine sometimes prefers to quote Yeats's lines in 'Byzantium':

I hail the superhuman;

I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.

3- Dedication to Gavin Maxwell in *CPa*.

Tennyson is an underestimated poet.

One of the repeated themes in *On a Deserted Shore*, and throughout her other works, is the immortality of the soul. Through the lover's death, he is granted eternal life and freed from this ephemeral world of space and time, for the death of the body enables the soul to get hold of her "secret alchemy" that "Brings all our ends to her immaculate source" (*DS*, No. 29). The soul of the dead lover has eternally regained its wings, and now it is soaring happily. Whereas, the soul of the mourner is left behind to suffer unremittingly from the loneliness that is too long "For those who wait/ Outside love's sanctuary" (*DS*, No. 89). Sorrow, and despair are akin to this life on the earth: "every way the dark:/ Bands I cannot break" (*DS*, No. 25). Under the weight of its bereavement and desolation, the deserted soul of the persona of the poem feels imprisoned in this world of sorrow, and to add to its grief, the prison is well secured by a high and impassable wall whose gate is invisible:

This empty world too small,
Heart's void too great,
Everywhere visible the wall,
Nowhere the gate.

(*DS*, No. 88)

Even when the gate becomes somehow discernable through some flashes of eternal light, 'Hard is the way/ To your unvisited house' (*DS*, No. 87). In poem No. 93, the sun is not perceived in its colourful image familiar in Raine's imaginative pattern. The poet's previous delightful celebration of the sun, visualized inwardly or outwardly, no longer exists. Neither is it the divine light that radiates love that unites all created things, nor is it the Aztec god that takes in love and gives in love. Its image is

shockingly changed into a ruthless torturer described as 'Love's monster weeping form'. In another poem, the poet's feelings of bleakness, desolation, and dismay are so enormous that her sight is filled with opacity, and as a result the sun is rayless and "gives no light", so she is no longer able to behold the lover's "spirit bright" (*DS*, No. 107).

Raine's love for Gavin Maxwell, as indicated before, was entirely spiritual in the sense that it was Plotinian, as a marriage of souls, and Platonic, as a marriage of minds. Their love did not pertain to the world of the flesh but to the world of the imagination, in which he was the 'man of light' (*DS*, No. 63), and despite his departure to the far eternal world, he is still the very same man of light:

Your garment cast away,
This body's clay
The grave that shrouds from sight
The man of light,
Bright but how far you are.
(*DS*, No. 79)

The word "clay" is quite a positive word. Besides its explicit connotation that life is ephemeral, perishable and fragile, and the real life starts after death, it involves also the idea that life is a stain on the pure "garment" of the soul. It is the equivalent of Yeats' mire, Plato's veil, Plotinus' foulness, and of many other mystics' terms for the worthlessness of the life of generation. In one of her latest unpublished poems, Raine portrays the soul in its "Gold incorruptible" state after being "Freed from the body's mire and clay".⁽¹⁾ Therefore, she eagerly aspires to the day when "Soul from body's grave/ Rises, and looks

1- "St. Matthew, v. 3-16", see appendices p. 396.

down/ Where body lies".(1)

There are enough adequate grounds for considering *The Year One* an embodiment of Raine's spiritual love for Gavin in his lifetime. The happy mood of intensity of passion and the absolute confidence in her spiritual destiny predominating in *The Year One* seems to turn topsy turvy into the desolation of a perplexed mind in some poems of *On a Deserted Shore*, "Banished from that bright dream/ Of heart's truth" (*DS*, No. 35), and therefore whenever she looks for him even in "memory's house" she finds nothing but "vague" rooms (*DS*, No. 69). This mood is totally different from that manifested throughout *The Year One*, most clearly in the poems "Northumbrian Sequence" with its six movements, and *Ano Ergo Sum*. The image of the lover in both volumes, however, remains the same. Such a lover of the soul is not easily replaced by any physical lover, however deprived of carnal gratification the body may be. This is not out of a moral gratitude to a lover, nor out of a cherished memory of his love, but because

Longing of lips and thighs -
A grave apart,
For arms' embrace too wide,
Or fingers' touch.
The language of the flesh
Too faintly cries:
And yet no lover lies
As the dead so close at heart.
(*DS*, No. 46)

Through the vision of the rowan tree, referred to in the previous chapter, not only do the two spiritual lovers realize the immortality of their souls, but they also discover that they are parts of the 'harmony sublime' (*DS*, No. 14) that moves the

1- Unpublished poem, see appendices p.412.

universe, that is to say, their relationship is microcosmic within the macrosom. In this life of generation the two lovers can perceive only temporarily reflected flashes of the sublime harmony, but their dream of the everlasting existence of the harmony can be experienced and eternally lived when 'death breaks the elemental forms' (*DS*, No. 13):

We who from day to day depart
From the country of the heart
In death return
To the fields our feet have travelled, our tears sown:
Sleeper beneath the rowan-tree,
You have become your dream,
Sky, shore, and silver sea.

(*DS*, No. 12)

The dream of eternity that once united the two lovers 'who have seen/ One in other the eternal face' (*DS*, No. 90) is realized by the dead lover leaving Raine barred behind 'Invisible, infinite' 'barriers' (*DS*, No. 10), and hoping to join him, but even 'The suicidal leap/ Invokes a mercy earth denies' (*DS*, No. 38). The long desolate waiting of the soul to be permitted eternal stay in the sanctuary of love widens her sense of antagonism against time. Instead of healing the wounds, time always reopens them, adds fuel to the fire, and assures her that the only way for her perpetual pangs of love to come to an end is the death of the body, which means a return to the country of the heart where the reunion of the two lovers in eternity takes place:

Away, away,
Unhealing time,
Since you can bring no day
When my love and I,
Though I should wait life-long
On lonely shores,
Can meet again.

(*DS*, No. 34)

Compared to the "Waiting for the longed-for voice to speak/ through the mute telephone" expressed in the poem 'Passion', the waiting here is diametrically opposite. There is no waiting for some mortal lover to gratify the body and quench its fire, but for death to open the gate of immortality; another reminder of Blake's "The Door of Death is made of Gold".(1) The body's desire praised before slips into an entire repugnance. This is suggestive of Plato's contrast of the realm of sensible appearances and changing beliefs with the realm of eternal and unchanging Forms, thereby the body is 'only a temporary instrument "used" by the soul which is the real man'.(2) The pent-up ambitions of the poet's soul yearn to be disengaged from the prison of the body so that it may reach its everlasting delightful resting-place. This theme is frequently tackled by Raine throughout her late volumes. It is, for instance, clear in *The Oval Portrait*, in such poems as "Not That I Have Forgotton", "Binah", "November Dream", "Last Things", "It Was Our Solitude We Share"; *The Lost County*, in poems "Message to Gavin", "In Answer to a Letter Asking me for Volumes of my Early Poems"; *The Hollow Hill*, in "Soliloquies Upon Love", "Death's Country", "The Eighth Sphere", among many others.

In spite of the mixed feelings of the loss of the beloved, of the heart's bitterness and despair, of the barrenness of life, of the desolation of the world, and of the irritation with time running through the whole book, there is always cherished hope for the reunion of love flickering here and there. The hope of the persona of the book for this reunion seems to work on two levels: a sporadically short-lived reunion taking place in her earthly

1- "To the Queen", *CPPWB*, p. 480.

2- Taylor, *Op.Cit.*, p. 128.

life; and a forthcoming everlasting reunion attained in the realm of death. On the first level, she meets the dead lover in her imagined "place at heart" (No. 128) when "From Paradise/ The bird's undying voice/ Sings on"(No. 58). Though "The perfect is not in time" ('Last Things', *OP*, p. ..), a glimpse of reality can be gained as a temporary consolation in this mundane world. In some rare privileged moments, the poet perceives time in its eternal cyclic mode, not in its linear and temporal matter-of-fact state. So it is described as "The bright ring of time" (*DS*, No. 97). The change of her attitude towards the mode of time as regards her relationship with the same lover is best expressed in some short untitled poems in *The Oval Portrait*:

My feet in the ever-moving sea:
The same cold waves
Carried us to this shore.
Time joins us still, and space
And living water.
(*OP*, p. 34)

Also on the same level, she meets him in her mystical unifying vision that reminds the reader of her particular vision of the epiphany of the tree that synchronously occurred to the two lovers:

.... if one the whole, and we
Leaves on that that great tree,
And weary time a flow in starry veins,
Nourished from hidden roots, and blossoming boughs
Where birds of heaven rest,
Then no love lost.
(*DS*, No. 19)

in her dreams, as in poem No. 24, and as in this poem, where love is Platonically conceived as 'the encompassing whole within the

context of which all particulars are what they are'(1):

Great the domain of love:
Farther than eye can see
From my small house of life
Realms of your new state encompass me.
(*DS*, No. 106)

And again

Love the centre
Of so great an embrace,
Everywhere is here,
All time, all being
New in perpetual beginning,
Old as the stars ..
("A Love Remembered", *OH*, p. 18)

So does she behold it in her mind's eye through the perception of the unitary light, or "unbounded light" (*DS*, No. 115), in which the two lovers are fused into one realm of being. This sporadic reception of the "presence of the beloved which transsubstantiates the world" (*DAS*, p. 154) enraptures her whenever her mind's eye is attuned to the vision: "In mind's eye/ It may be your return" (*OP*, p. 39).

On the second level, her utmost aspiration and earnest endeavour are for the eternal reunion that will come true through the path of death and the liberation of the soul. This springs from her deeply-rooted faith, partly in the immortality of the soul, and partly in her own unforgettable vision of the 'harmony sublime' envisaged now and then; the constant theme of her thoroughgoing spiritual thinking:

I am content to be
At last what first we were,
Grass of the one hill,
Water of the one pool,
Breath of the same air,

Sight of the single eye.
(*DS*, No. 117)

To conclude, love makes a major contribution to the whole spiritual pattern for Kathleen Raine. The views and ideas expressed in her prose writing about physical love do not seem to be clearly echoed in her canon of verse, even in the excluded poems. Indeed, only very few of her earlier poems give the impression of praising sexual love and of connecting it to the vision of the divine. It is also true that in many places in Raine's prose writings, she emerges as a fervent exponent of Blake's doctrine that: 'Those who restrain desire do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling'.(1) For Raine, the young poet, this was truly adopted in a small number of her poems, though not acquired from. On the whole, these rare exceptions prove that "desire" as connected to the body hardly constitutes a dimension in her poetic achievement, as opposed to her promulgated views in prose. Most probably, her subjective values at the time of her emotional rapture participated in formulating such ideas.

For Raine, the developed poet, there is little, if any, in her late love poems congenial to the carnal depths she plumbed and expressed before. After she had lived in a state and place "where all was radiant with that interior light of which Traherne has written" (*LU*, p. 118), the new chapter of ideas about love has been dominated by the principle that only when the "Consciousness [is] from enshrouding flesh and blood stripped bare" ('Last Things I', *HH*, p. 59) would the soul be able to penetrate the deceptive

1- *The Marriage*, *CPPWB*, p. 34.

opalescent veil of varying perceptions. Throughout her work, particularly after *The Year One*, there is always the anguished cry *de profundis* to "Cast body away".

The word "desire", therefore, no longer belongs to the body, but rather to the soul, the heart and the imagination of the poet. Bodily desire is always contemned by Raine in her late poetry. This significant change in her trend of thought is suggested first in her introduction to *The Land Unknown*, in which she speaks of sin and sinners, and asserts: "I too have changed, and cannot describe beliefs of a former time, as if I still had them". Secondly, it is also reflected in two sentences from the introduction to her *Collected Poems (1935-1980)*: 'Most of the poems in my first three volumes have not stood the test of time I was doubtless a slow learner, perhaps a late developer, as women writers often seem to be' (*CPb*, p. v). Needless to say almost all the poems dealing with physical love are included in these first three volumes. To add texture and colour to this point of view in so far as her altered conception of love is concerned, in a fairly late volume Raine confesses "Before the Accuser" that all that she has done and been was "marred by ignorance or passion", and that the only thing she is proud of is the vision of the Beauty Supreme, which she "had not merited, nor earned" (*OP*, p. 48). An identical note is struck in section 6 of the poem "Whisperings of Anubis", where she testifies to the fact that she has done this "Unawares, yes, but not, not without guilt" (*CPb*, p. 275). Furthermore, in a later volume she plainly admits her previous misunderstanding of the real nature of love. In one

of her latest volumes(1), Raine is totally Plotinian in her understanding of love:

Too late I understood
That love is not in the blood,
But in every simple kindness I denied
To those to whom I owed humanity
Just because they were day by day beside me.
("Verdict", *OH*, p. 36)

In a word, Raine's love, as manifested in her verse, is most decidedly a reflection of Plato's love of divine wisdom, as well as Plotinus's love within 'the unmingling Soul', with which she is in complete harmony: 'Not where we live but where we love, the soul' (*DS*, No.3). So love is

.... the one
Presence, more intimate and near
Than mothering hands or love's embrace
All human love is strange and far
In comparison with this
Being more close than touch or breath,
Being that folds, enfolds, upholds
Me while I am; and since I am,
All being made me, brought me here.
("In My Seventieth Year", *OH*, p. 14)

1- *The Oracle in the Heart* contains poems written in the years 1975-1978, but it was published in 1980.

CHAPTER FIVE

.....

THE GRANDEUR OF THE IMAGINATION

"Not all critical statements or procedures can be equally valid".
(Frye, in Wimsatt, *Days of the Leopards*)

* * * * *

Soul's beauty being most adored,
Men and their business took
The soul's unchanging look;
For the most rich inheritor,
Knowing that none could enter Heaven's door
That loved inferior art. . .
(Yeats, "My Table")

* * * * *

"The Nature of Visionary Fancy, or Imagination, is very little Known. . .' Very little known because consciously possessed by few in our materialist civilization. Yet, with the aid of those who possess a faculty latent in all, we can participate through art in the enjoyment of an interior universe whose exploration is the theme of the religious and mythological art of all ages.

(K. Raine, *William Blake*, 1970)

* * * * *

5.1 DREAMS AS LIVING REALITY

Poetry is the language of the soul (*IJP*, p. 25), or "the soul's house"(1), and art in general is "the city of the soul" (*LM*, p. 112). The same idea is expressed in a personal letter dated 12 January 1987, sent by Raine to the author of this thesis. Upon this premise is built the whole poetic structure of Kathleen Raine's work and round it the particulars of her poetic theory revolve. Even her norms for judging other poets are drawn from this premise. A poem is genuine as long as the poet speaks "the proper language of the soul" (*IJP*, p. 11). Other factors matter less in her living process of creating a poem, because "only when the soul is dead can there no longer be poetry" (*IJP*, p. 25).

Kathleen Raine tends to hold no brief for poetic technicalities as an important criterion by which poetry can be measured. The talk of basic technicalities of English verse is, in her opinion, dull, and lacking 'the sense of wonder or mystery' (*LU*, p. 36). Such exercises in rhetoric have no bearing whatsoever on the genuine creation of poetry. The scrutiny of the imaginative whole of the poem, its *raison d'être*, is much superior to the examination of the individual parts (e.g. figurative methods, rhyme, rhythm, poetic form and the like). It is wrong to focus the attention on the means of art, as modern criticism often does, and to neglect its ends. The point is that the poem is not "the words on the page", since a word is nothing in itself (*IJP*, p. 18). A word is a "sign, a meeting-point of associated ideas often of the most complex kind. A word is not, like the natural creation, intrinsically meaningful and intelligible, and

1- The Kingdom According to St. John, (unpublished, see appendices p.387).

cannot, like these, become an object of contemplation which will yield infinite meaning" (*DAS*, p. 117). Analysing a poem in terms of its construction is nothing but a trifling reflection by literary methodology of the new attitude of scientific quantitative materialism: consequently the work of art in the minds of the linguistic philosophers is no longer seen as "an embodiment, but a body" (*IJP*, pp. 16-20).

In more than one place in her numerous prose writings, Raine communicates her sense of blessedness for not having studied poetry under the guidance of those critics who adopt the "anti-imaginative trend". She confronted the materialistic attitude of literary criticism during her intervening years (*LU*, pp. 109,110). For her, the "Cambridge 'scientific' school of literary criticism of Richards, Empson, .. Leavis" - sometimes the list includes Auden and Day-Lewis, who for her have no concern for spiritual revival, while their fear of the imagination is represented by shifting "the ground of conscience from the inner to the outer world"(1) - does not teach anything but "the denial of the imagination".(2) Their 'scientific' methods of criticism under the instruction: "Never mind the past, or the poet, read the poem word by word and register your own responses" (*IJP*, p. 16) are mainly derived from the predominance of "Cambridge positivism", which has nothing in common with the inner light of inspiration. With William Empson "the metaphysical roots of thought" are disregarded (*DAS*, p. 107), while with Auden, especially in *The Sea and the Mirror*, "what comes from the imagination, from beyond reason's little conquered territory" is

1- *IJP*, pp. 86,90.

2- *DAS*, p. 18 and *IJP*, p. 155.

mistrusted and feared of (*IJP*, p. 90). For Raine, these "so-called" scientific critics are ramifications of Bacon, Newton and Locke, embodiments of Blake's "Urizen", the gathering principle of ignorance that is equivalent to Keats's "aged Apolonius whose wisdom of experience clips the visionary wings of youth" (*IJP*, p. 156).

The poet of insight should not be deceived by that "prestige of ignorance in high places", and should listen only to his inner voice, the voice of the imagination, as the one sure guide in his way to eternity. The adoption of such an assumption does not involve the idea that Raine has ever been careless in her poetic technique. Her justification lies in her absolute belief that the perfect imagination of the poet results in a spontaneously perfect technique. It is the imagination that dictates both form and content, therefore both are gauged by the quality of the poet's own imaginative faculty.

Though apparently open to much criticism, the theory of anti-technicalities, or the inspirational theory of poetry promulgated by Raine stems from her profound belief and deeply rooted trust in the creative power of the imagination. This is in addition an *unacquired* and innate Platonic line of thought. For his outstanding creative power of imagination used in "the expression of ultimate truths", Plato is considered the "prince of poets"(1), and his works are "the truest poetry"(2): though he did not write poetry, his works are replete with poetic metaphor and

1- Peter Malekin, "Art and the Liberation of Mind",
Temnos, No. 5., p. 139.

2- Edwin Muir, quoted in Raine, *DAS*, p. 3.

simile.(1) On the other hand, Plato is wrongly regarded by some critics as the philosopher who conferred no praise upon poets(2), and who "banished the poets from his ideal city for unreliability".(3) Raine, in fact, needed neither Plato nor Blake to tell her about the infinite creative power of the imagination: "I did not need Plato to tell me that the 'real' world is a pale reflection of the divine originals stored in those inaccessible treasuries" (*FHF*, p. 90). In this respect, what she has said about Edwin Muir is literally applicable to her: "the dreams and fantasies came long before Muir had studied the Platonic philosophy. The world of ideas for him was not a doctrine but an experience" (*DAS*, p. 3). It was her own inspirational spontaneity that led her to this unshaken conviction, through which she has later become exceedingly Blakean in her unremitting defence of the imagination. It is in Blake's vision and life that Raine discovered 'a whole imaginative world whose dimensions seem almost boundless ... a territory of untold wealth and vast extent, yielding already rich harvests of wisdom'.(4):

Dark lives are shades that make the picture bright,
Plotinus parabled; some born to sweet delight
And some to endless night, yet all are safe
As through those sweet or deadly dreams we pass,
Lost travellers all, Blake said; and Plato thought

That we ourselves have chosen what will befall.
In the Book of the Dead, the people of dreams,
By will and by compulsion drawn to birth
Live as punishment what each to live desires:
We are ourselves the evil dreams we suffer.

("Lachesis", *HH*, pp. 14,5)

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- 1- J. Moravcsik and P. Temko, *Plato on Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts*, Rowman and Allanheld, New Jersey, 1982, p. ix.
 - 2- For details, see in *Ibid.* James O. Urmson, "Plato and the Poets", pp. 125-36; and Paul Woodruff, "What Could Go Wrong with Inspiration: Why Plato's Poets Fail", pp. 137,150.
 - 3- A.R. Manser, "The Imagination", *The Durham University Journal*, vol. LVIII. No. 1, Dec. 1965, p. 14.
 - 4- K. Raine, *William Blake*, 1951, pp. 8, 17.

In this life Raine's world of imagination and that of dreams seem to be so interdependent and interconnected that a clear cut distinction can hardly be noticed. If imagination to her, as to Blake of course, is held to be the higher reality, dreams, in the world of art into which she came from the world of nature, are real experiences whose content is perceived as 'certainties' ("The Night-Blowing Cereus", *SF*, p. 26), where Plato's "garden of Muses" unfolds its roses of inspired knowledge (*IJP*, p. 98):

.. if one dreamer dreams all lives
That one in all our many knows
How vain our tears, how vain
Our hopes and fears, since dreams are only dreams.
But for the mind what else is real but thought?
Or does the one dreamer of us all
Suffer with each, each dream as real,
Walking the ways of lives obscure
And of lives luminous, veins of the one vine?
(*Spheres*", *OH*, p. 51)

Like Jung, Yeats, the Theophrists and many of the last century French Symbolists, she regards dreams as a means of access to truth, not as falsehood. Dreams are inseparable components of the world of the imagination. It was Edwin Muir who first told her to write poems from dreams, "the knowledge of the night", for he has "been taught by dreams and fantasies". A dream is "so important a part of our reality, an aspect of our world and of ourselves", for in the waking day we live "for little more than half of our time and perhaps even less of our being" (*IJP*, pp. 96-7).

The task of dreams is attesting the certainty of the soul's findings during its journey. The world of dreams is necessary for the soul to remind it of its former state. So, the most creative characteristic in man consists mainly in his capacity to dream. Man's dreaming mind is capable of holding "infinitely varied

unguessed regions of aesthetic and magical" experience. This assumption is abundantly clear in Raine's analogy stating that man was created to be fit for his dream as 'flowers are fit for air' ("In the Beck", *SF*, p. 34). It follows that dreams are "life" for man, since air for flowers corresponds to dream for man. It is in this magical world of dreams that, from the very outset of her life, Kathleen Raine finds her interior truth, the vision of her longed-for paradise. Her paradisaical world of dreams is neither a fool's paradise, nor a wild goose chase. It is the real life the soul must live. It is identical with the atmosphere of Keats's Chamber of Maiden Thought: "that dream of beauty and love that unveils itself to adolescence and ends with the descent into sexuality" (*IJP*, pp. 163-4); Wordsworth's childhood in recollection; or Blake's singing world of innocence before it is spoiled by experience. It is also Dante's dream that created *Divina Commedia*, in which Beatrice is Jung's *anima* and Virgil is "the Cosmic Man". Through dreams the inspired reality, the Sophia Perennis of the transcendental unity of the self and the cosmos(1), is unfolded to be read with the mind's eye:

From a place I came
That was never in time,
From the beat of a heart
That was never in pain.
The sun and the moon,
The wind and the world,
The song and the bird
Travelled my thought
Time out of mind.
Shall I know at last
My lost delight?

("Two Invocations of Death" II, *YO*, p. 141)

The continual contribution of dreams to the whole of Raine's experience of the blossoming and immortality of the soul emerges

1- Tom Disch, "The Science of the Sublime".

as pre-eminent. The consciousness of the existence of the terrestrial world is delusive, and what is perceived through it is temporal and perishable. In comparison, dreams are messages of the eternal. In their shelter the truth is "inviolable" and "The mysteries still are shown, / The dead are living still" ('Dreams', *LC*, p. 41). Even the Kingdom of Heaven is recognized by Raine as "that native country you inhabit only in dreams".(1) Dreams survive even after man's death: 'because, I pass, I pass, while dreams remain' ("Angelus", *SF*, P. 32). The repetition of the clause "I pass" involves an emphatic overtone to convey the idea of the ever-recurring flux of dreams as opposed to the mortality of man's vegetative life. Here Raine seems entirely Blakean, and the parallel with Blake's "Man Passes on, but States remain for ever"(2) is so striking that the later passage might seem a copy of the earlier, especially in the light of Blake's conception of "States" as the dreams and visions of eternity. However, it must be emphasized again that the parallel is more incidental, an overlapping rather than influence by Blake.

Through their archetypal symbols, dreams provide for Raine the message of recollection, of Plato's anemnesis. This message of illumination reawakens the soul to its Edenic state before it was immersed in the state of forgetfulness that is typical of life in the phenomenal world. Raine always stresses this point of the reality, certainty and eternity of dreams compared to the unreality, uncertainty and ephemerality of human life. Dreams take the soul to illumined regions 'Where we ourselves are ghosts' ("London Revisited", *SF*, p. 41). In her perpetual process of

1- K. Raine, *St. Matthew* (unpublished, see appendice p. 395).

2- *A Vision of the Last Judgment*, *CPPWB*, p. 556.

exploring the ways of the soul's flight to the Alone, Raine goes to a further extreme in her assessment of dreams. Bad dreams or nightmares are also thought to be more real than the 'unconnected images' of the 'shadow-world' that people believe to be real: 'even our nightmares are expression of our own reality, stations on our own ways; and on that way it is always good to be' (*LU*, p. 146). So, even in 'A Bad Dream', "all we conceive, [is] reality" (*LC*, p.50). Not only are nightmares conceived as elaborations on the soul's quest for truth, but also mirages have their intrinsic reality. The mind's capacity of perceiving and living an illusion is in itself a proof of the existence of a reality quite different from that experienced by the senses. A mirage can express 'a relative reality, the only reality which we are, at the moment we perceive it, capable of perceiving' (*LU*, pp. 151-2):

But every life's a dream lived out
And every dream a looking-glass
Where what has been enacted, or may be,
Wears semblance of its reality.
("A Bad Dream", *LC*, pp. 50-1)

Setting her heart and mind on the truth she has perceived in dreams, Raine has embarked on her destined mission as a poet of vision. She has prepared herself to sacrifice everything else for the sake of her dream of being a poet of Eden, a singer of the soul's immortality. This mission has cost her an agonizing price. She was fully aware of being one of those people who are 'dangerous to social stability' (*LU*, p. 152) by following the thread of her dreams, and even of being what is considered nothing but a will-o'-the-wisp. Raine's doctrine of the importance and significance of dreams was first evolved from her own experience, corroborated by her interpretations and discoveries in Blake's

world of vision, and fully developed by Jung's psychology. She discovers in Blake the identification of visions with dreams. She puts down the point that Blake's visions, like dreams 'came to him in single symbolic episodes, or images; ... a series of vivid dreams, all relating, perhaps, to an unfolding situation, but not forming consecutive narrative'.(1) Therefore, both visions and dreams are united in the artist's mind, constituting a well of raw materials to draw on according to his or her imaginative capacity. Within this context, dreams are simply one of the means necessary for the artist to scan a *terra incognita* of spiritual life, which lies beyond our mortal reach of sensible perceptions.

Afar from the distasteful clutches of the profane material world in which "death is as meaningless as life" (*IJP*, p. 95), dreams represent the consoling herald of the eternal happiness to come. Materialism, naturalism, behaviourism or any ideology other than the *knowledge absolute* sticks only to the ugly and the vulgar, or to the *other* side of dreams. There is a gulf of difference in kind between the dreams of eternity pertaining to the reality of the soul and the imperfect shifting dream which is this life of generation. Life, for Raine, is a dream, but not of eternity. It is the dream of unreality the majority of people are obsessed with to deepen their forgetfulness of the soul's truth.(2)The function of the archetypal dreams is to reawaken man from the bad dream of the life of shadows. It is to remind him of the immortality of the soul, or "the lost beginning". Life is a secular dream passing away to mortality and nothingness. Hence,

1- *William Blake* (1951), p. 158.

2- This is clearly suggested by her particular choice to translate with R. M. Nadel from the Spanish Caldern's *La Vida es sueno* (*Life is a Dream*), Hamish Hamilton, London, 1968.

the dream of life is nothing but a sham, while the soul's dreams remain because they are the messages of eternity. On the other hand, life, as a terrible dream tarnished with "the world of politician and newscaster", where "the soul's history" falls into oblivion (*IJP*, p. 92), infuriates Raine with its warfare and spiritual alienation: "We are ourselves the evil dreams we suffer" ('Lachesis', *HH*, p. 151). The dream state is recognized as a symbol of the bleakness of the world of generation in which modern man lives, threatening even the *detritus* of his civilization - the "heap of broken images" of Eliot's *Waste Land*, or Yeats' "the ceremony of innocence [which] is drowned"(1) - and confirming every moment the soul's state of insularization from its birth-place:

We need no prophet now to tell us the world's doom;
As in a field the golden flowers bud, open, bloom
And fade as one, a single thought
Passing through the numberless chalices of the sun,

So none tells another, all know as one
Of terror to come.
As one we know, and are calm
Before the storm, though not one woman

Or one man can repudiate the crime
All share, the last of mankind as the first
Falling from what we were, what we would be.(2)

So, the vision evoked by the dreams of the beautiful has no connection to the vulgar dream stimulated by sensual and material ambitions. The instrument by which the dream of reality can be received is the soul (psychologically the psyche) that becomes tuned to the music of the dreamful universe, 'When senses faint

1- Yeats, "The Second Coming", *Collected Poems*, p. 211.

2- "What All Know", *Eighteen Poems*, in *Agenda*, Vol.

24 No. 2., p. 3.

into the ground/ and time and place go down the wind'(1), and when "the 'flood of the five senses' in which materialism drowns and submerges the world of Imagination" ceases to exist (*IJP*, p. 11). Like love, Raine's dreams have nourished her poetry, and poetry is the only reality she cares for. Through dreams "The Archangel Sandalphon, of the Footsteps" has come to her help and rescue in many guises (*LU*, p. 8).

The importance attached by Raine to dreams is clearly reflected in her recurring use of the word "dream" as the title or part of the title of numerous poems, besides its being the keynote in many other poems throughout her work (e.g. "Cattle Dream", "Tiger Dream", "Dreams", "A Dream of Roses", "A Bad Dream", "Told in a Dream", "We walked in the same dream", "Dream, shadow of hope and fear", "Dream", "November Dream", "Dream-Flowers", "Dream Transits", "Dream:8.6'77", "By dream uncomforted", "In my second dream", "One night in a dream", "People of dreams", and "Two Wanderers in a single dream"). Hardly can a volume be found devoid of at least one poem entitled 'Dream' or 'Dreams'.

1- "Tu Non Se' In Terra, Si Come Tu Credi" [You Are not on Earth as You Believe], *SF*, p. 23. But Netterville translates this title in a paraphrase as 'The real ecstasy, the real angels are never in the sensible world of time and space' (p. 157).

5.2 IMAGINATION: ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY

The prototypic ingredients of a dream apprehended by the dreaming mind of a poet (or any artist) compose the raw material that needs a divinely creative imagination to absorb and transmute it into a concretized work of art. This is, in short, the close and living relation between Raine's dreams and imagination. If dreams are conceived as her living reality, 'the artistic creation is transmutation of reality, through the imagination'.(1) This view of the relationship between dreams and imagination is recognized and corroborated by Antos Oras in his commentary on Raine and Blake. Oras holds the imaginings of the artist of vision and of transcendent imagination as not drawn from a void, and "even when he gets them from his dreams, they come from a deeper well than the self - deeper than any level of it".(2) Moreover, Blake, the major influence upon Raine's thought, himself sees the relation of vision and imagination as one of identification: "Vision or Imagination is Representation of what Eternally Exists. Really & Unchangeably".(3)

The conception of the imagination as intimately linked to dreams is interrelated with the very earliest vision of the hollyhocks. Raine's imagination has proved vividly active since her childhood. She has frequently been inspired by many forms of visions and dreams, which is why her deep-seated faith in the power and divinity of the imagination has never been open to doubts. She has, since childhood, been brooding, wondering,

1- Joseph Chairi, *Realism and Imagination*, p. 17.

2- Antos Oras, "Kathleen Raine, the Ancient Springs, and Blake", *Sewanee Review*, No. 80, 1972, p. 200.

3- *A Vision of the Last Judgment*, in *CPPWB*, p. 544.

learning, adding new thoughts, and acquiring new symbols, but she has never shaken the pivotal pillar of her old vision upon which her hypothesis of the imagination rests. In Raine's opinion imagination is not only 'the highest faculty in man' as Chairi puts it(1), but 'the Divine Humanity' itself found in man, as Blake conceives it. If the poet is to speak 'the language of the immortal human soul'(2), the quality of his imagination is the corner stone or the real criterion by which his work should be measured. This is based *in toto* on Blake's assertion that "He who does not imagine in stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing and mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all".(3) In a way, this also comes full circle to her early notion of the Plotinian, generally mystical, principle of the adaptation of the eye to the object of the vision; in which "visions in succession pass and pass/ Before the eye that beholds everywhere all" (*OH*, p. 27).

Through the 'inner journey' of the poet, imagination has been her never-failing guide, enabling her to contemplate awfully and delightfully the marvels of the universe. The "Book of Nature", whose pages are elaborations of the hidden Beauty Supreme that transcends and eludes the range of the mortal eye, is impossible for reason to read, but is rendered tangible before the eye of the imagination:

I've read all the books but one
Only remains sacred: this
Volume of wonders, open
Always before my eyes.
(*OH*, p. 82)

1- *Op.Cit.*, p. 25.

2- Letter to the Editor of *New Departures*. in Disch, *Op.Cit.*

3- *A Descriptive Catalogue*, No.IV. in *CPPWB*, p. 541.

For Blake, reason, or symbolically Urizen as 'the abstract scientific intellect and the head'(1), is the lower faculty of the mind: "a false Body: an Incrustation over [the] Immortal/ Spirit; a Selfhood".(2) The reasoning power in man cannot read anything but "plain" messages. The higher faculty of the mind, whose place has been usurped by reason in most people's minds, is the intuitive and creative imagination, which is also God, or Jesus, the Imagination. Therefore, "plain" messages reinforce man's enslavement to an externalized and rationally conceived God, to "Urizen", the diabolical and idolatrous figment of man's own mind, that "form'd a dividing rule"(3) to inculcate falsely in man the delusion of an external creator. Blake does not believe that God exists apart from man, but God is "the divine essence which exists potentially in every man and woman".(4)

Jesus, the Imagination is neither an external law-giver nor a historically specific figure. Blake goes so far as to see the Hebrew prophets as inspired poets. The Greek poets were for him also inspired, since they spoke divine truths in allegory that were at one with the teachings of the *Old Testament* prophets - a principle in accordance with one of Plato's theories that "the descendants of the gods ... have appeared as poets and spokesmen of heavenly inspiration".(5) For Blake, the ordinary understanding of the *Old Testament* prophets was quite wrong. They spoke not from "messages", but from the divine imagination within them,

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- 1- Martin Nurmi, *William Blake*, University Library, Hatchinson, London, 1975, p. 120.
 - 2- *Milton*, in *CPPWB*, p. 142.
 - 3- *The Book of Urizen*, in *CPPWB*, p. 80.
 - 4- C.M. Bowra, "Songs of Innocence and Experience", in Margaret Bottrall ed., *William Blake, Songs of Innocence and Experience*, MacMillan Press Ltd., London, 1977, p. 145.
 - 5- Plato, *Republic* (11.365), p. 50.

spontaneously, without calculation, at one with the divine base of their own nature. This was revealed to him in the form of his fanciful dinner with his two most admired prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel, in which the former assured him that, "I saw no God, nor heard any, in a finite organical perception".(1) Blake claimed that he did the same and was therefore a genuine representative of the prophetic tradition. In this sense all men are prophets. Here the important point is not Blake's credibility, but his doctrine of the imagination.

Blake's strategy is quite deliberately intended to sidetrack reason, with its connection to the ideologies of Bacon and Newton and the *tabula rasa* of Locke, by producing *difficult* works that cannot be followed by reasoning. However, by making a work beautiful, visually as well as otherwise, the reader is thrown back on to his own innate intuitive imagination, which is resurrected in him as he reads: the aim is "To take off his filthy garments,& Clothe him with Imagination".(2) Furthermore, Blake holds that the divine imagination is alive in children, but becomes killed out through "Rational Demonstration" of the "rotten rags" of a false moral, religious and intellectual education practised "Beneath the Net of Urizen". On this Bowra points out that 'all human beings are in some sense and at some times the children of a divine father, but experience destroys their innocence and makes them follow spectres and illusions'.(3) So Blake directly puts forward his motto: "The Good are attracted by Men's perceptions/ And think not for themselves; Till Experience

1- *The Marriage*, in *CPPWB*, p. 38.

2- *Milton*, in *CPPWB*, p. 142.

3- *Op.Cit.*, p. 140.

teaches them to catch and cage the Fairies and Elves".(1) Under the "deathful Shadow" of the usurping rule of Urizen, the people's ears are "wither'd,& deafen'd,& cold".(2) The self-examination of the spirit, the spiritual interiorization or the rerurn into the depths of the soul can be achieved by the divine imagination. In this lies Blake's great message as "a summons to activity and to that fuller life which comes from exerting the imagination".(3)

Kathleen Raine is unique in her overwhelming admiration and indefatigable enthusiasm for Blake. She is actually so possessed by him that there is no prose work of hers (including even letters and reviews) in which Blake is not evoked or summoned in some way or other. Yet, it is unfair to ascribe her infatuation with Blake to purely emotional motives, since her love has been the outcome of semi-lifelong scholarly studies, in which she has recognized a frame of mind, an insight, a temperament identical to and corroborating hers. The internal process of Blake's writings is wholeheartedly endorsed, and almost literally followed, by Raine in her understanding of the imagination. Her surrender to the 'divine imagination' within herself is *ad infinitum* and unconditioned. Raine sees Blake as he sees himself, as a prophet, and specifically "England's only prophet".(4) Following his footsteps, she fights her battle for "the triumph of the Imagination over false ideologies", that will come as the Last Judgement, which is a central theme of the prophetic poems, *Vala*, *The Four Zoas*, and *Jerusalem*. (5) The restoration of the lost happiness, and the creation of earthly paradise do not lie in

1- "Motto to the Songs of Innocence & of Experience", in CPPWB, p. 499.

2- *Book of Urizen*, in CPPWB, p. 83.

3- Bowra, *Op.Cit.*, p. 137.

4- Raine, "William Blake: Prophet of Albion", p. 263.

5- Raine, introduction to *A Choice of Blake's Verse*, p. 14.

man's material satisfaction, with which modern ideologists hoodwink him, for materialism, in whatever form, does not make man better but better off. In her idealism, the only way out is the Blakean "transmutation of man and his world by the power of the imagination".(1) In keeping with her permanent battle on the side of the imagination, she reiterates the same Blakean belief in her letter to the editor of *New Departures*: "the world can be saved - or ... human beings can be saved from the world - only by Imagination, which ... is the expression of our true humanity".(2) Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that Raine's infinite love for Blake does not prevent her from criticizing him when appropriate. In other words, she is not a blind follower of Blake as much as she is of her own visions. Blake's ideas are the criteria according to which her approach to other poets is determined, since her own visions have been appreciated and substantiated by the same Blakean norms.

Raine's interpretation of Blake's symbols and doctrines as belonging to or drawn from Neoplatonism, though in harmony with other critics' views, runs counter to the interpretations of many contemporary writers. F.R. Leavis, who approaches Blake from a technical viewpoint of "positive culture", warns 'the student against being hopeful of light and profit to be got from the Blake authorities and the Blake literature', because he finds that 'none of the elaborated prophetic works is a successful work of art'.(3) In another place Leavis states that 'Blake's own success had no

1- *Ibid.*, p. 15.

2- Quoted in Disch, Op.Cit.

3- F. R. Leavis, "Justifying One's Valuation of Blake" (A lecture given at Bristol University), *F.R. Leavis's Recent Uncollected Lectures*, ed. A. Suwaillem, Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, Cairo, 1976, p. 129.

influence' compared to Wordsworth, and suggests that Raine approaches Blake 'Blind to [his] genius'.(1) Hagstrum, who describes Raine as mistaking 'the garment for the man', and as reading 'white where Blake reads black'(2), concludes that the 'shadowy and insubstantial pageant of Neoplatonism is an inappropriate and inadequate analogue to Blake's vision'.(3) Cruttwell sees Blake as an "outstanding specimen of the English Eccentric", and the "perennial philosophy" that Raine, as a devoted disciple, tries to resurrect in his work is "an ill-digested corpus of elaborate nonsense".(4) While Oras follows the same line in such a delicate way that he pays tribute to Raine's great efforts in producing her *magnum opus*, *Blake and Tradition*, but he sees her as creating a living Blake of her own.(5)

Tannenbaum, a more recent writer, launches what seems an unfair attack on Raine in order to establish what she had already established and strongly affirmed. Tannenbaum accuses Raine of neglecting the influence of the Bible, especially the doctrine of Incarnation, on Blake's thought and theory of art.(6) This is absolutely untrue. In more than one place in her work, not only in *Blake and Tradition* but also in other works on Blake, Raine asserts that Blake was a good Christian who was not a church goer and who strongly believed in the Bible in his own way, and that

1- *Ibid.*, pp. 144,153.

2- Jean Hagstrum, "Kathleen Raine's Blake", *Modern Philology*, (68), 1970, p. 79.

3- *Ibid.*, p. 82.

4- Patrick Cruttwell, "Blake, Tradition, and Miss Raine", *The Hudson Review*, (23), 1970, pp. 142, 139.

5- Ants Oras, *Op.Cit.*, pp. 204,211.

6- Leslie Tannenbaum, *Biblical Tradition in Blake's Early Prophecies: The Great Code of Art*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 5.

the doctrine of Incarnation, after Swedenborg's fashion, was central to his thought and understanding of the sacred history.(1) Moreover, one of her conclusions, which may not be admired by orthodox Christians, is that "Blake did weld his pantheon within a Christian framework".(2)

On the other hand, Raine's findings have been supported by many other writers, but because the intention is not to discuss her approach to Blake as a whole, it suffices to point out that what makes the feathers fly is not the imaginative genius of Blake, but the discrepancies in tracing the influence of sources upon him, and in interpreting his symbols. As regards Blake's sources, Raine is clear in her assertion that she has found "very little that was not foreseen by my distinguished predecessors Yeats, Damon, Percival, Frye, Saurat, Todd, and others who have studied or are at present studying Blake's sources".(3) It is abundantly clear and to Raine's credit that her writings are always well documented, and a product of semi-lifelong hard work, though the point is not to pass judgment on this vastly complicated and controvesial issue.

As for Raine's interpretations of Blake's symbols and visions, she illustrates the symbols with the spiritual understanding of a kindred spirit, and approaches the visions with the same imaginative eye she believes Blake saw them with. This kind of reading is highly recommended by another scholar of Blake on the assumption that 'Blake can be understood only in so far as his

1- K. Raine, *The Human Face of God*, p. 10.

2- K. Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, (2 vols.),
Routledge, London, 1969, vol.1, p. xxx.

3- *Ibid.*, p. xxxii.

spirit enters into the reader'.(1) Here lies the evidence of how deep Blake's theory of the imagination penetrates her mind and thought, regardless of whether she is right or wrong, an issue which is irrelevant in the present context.

Raine's works on Coleridge, *Coleridge, The Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, *Coleridge: Poems and Prose*, and "Traditional Symbolism in *Kubla Khan*", were fundamentally motivated by her overriding preoccupation with the search for the learning of the imagination. Hence, she has found in him the same imaginative capacity she has discovered in Blake: "With Blake he [Coleridge] shares the honour of having discovered, a century before Freud, the unconscious mind, and many of its characteristics".(2) For her, Coleridge's theory of the imagination is less developed than Blake's. But the affinity of both is profound in so far as they anticipate "Jung's hypothesis of an inner object of knowledge, as distinct from the external data known through the senses".(3) Apart from the influence of the German philosophy of Kant and Schelling upon Coleridge's thought, he is seen by Raine as "more purely Platonic" in his poetry: "He platonized even in his dreams - if *Kubla Khan* was entirely a dream; for the symbolism of the Neoplatonists is central to the poem".(4) In another place he is described as "a Christian in his prose [but] a neo-Platonic in his poems" (*IJP*, p. 22). Moreover, she remarks that Coleridge, as one of the most inspired poets who has ever lived, holds poetry as superior to philosophy: "poetry was, for Coleridge, the highest

1- Mona Wilson, *The Life of William Blake*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, p. 66.

2- K. Raine ed., *The Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, The Grey Walls Press Ltd., London, 1950, p. vi.

3- *Ibid.*

4- K. Raine ed., *Coleridge: Poems and Prose*, Penguin Books, London, 1957, p. 15.

mode of thought, one that includes philosophy, for it is the experience of the total man - of all Jung's four faculties".(1)

Of absorbing interest is Raine's exquisite essay on Keats. It is *par excellence* an elegant poem written in prose rightly defending Keats's imaginative genius. Raine treats Keats with such a uniquely high spirit that the knowledgeable reader will feel as if Raine is writing about herself. In some sense it is so. Keats was known to Raine perhaps long before Blake, when she was still at school. Fascinated by his "vision of the form of Youth", she felt she "could wholly participate" in his experience (*IJP*, p. 155). So Keats constitutes, consciously or unconsciously, an early contributing factor in shaping her conception of the imagination. Due to his imaginative genius, Keats, as Raine remarks, was ranked "low" by the standards of the Cambridge school of "scientific criticism". However, Keats's imagination is seen by Raine as the underlying principle of his verse and characterized as the reverse of "the unweaving operation by means of alchemy which transmutes common things into gold" (*IJP*, p. 156). She points out that Keats conceived "Imagination as a region to be entered - 'the realms of Gold' with its many states and goodly kingdoms, Plato's 'garden of Muses', which is Psyche's inner kindom" (*IJP*, p. 162). The connection made by Raine between Keats's imagination and the Platonic tradition is explicit, though she is fully aware of his repudiation of philosophy. Yet, for her, despite his delight in sensations, he is not a down-to-earth poet, but a Platonic one, who relates "the experience of the senses to an empyrean and spiritual order", - and

1- K. Raine, *Coleridge*, Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd.,
London, 1953, p. 26.

the type of the Platonic lover "who from the adoration of mortal beauty, ascends to the discernment of 'the beautiful itself'" (*IJP*, p. 171). Here Raine is indeed speaking of Keats while keeping her own relationship with Alastair in mind. She elucidates many points of kinship between Keats's imagination and Blake's, and links them to the Platonic tradition. Although Keats died young, his experience of the imagination, Raine believes, is enough evidence for his genius, and another testimony that the imagination is the common source of the poetic genius.

Even the ideal she identifies as cardinal in Hopkins' realism is no less imaginative than that recognized in all the poets of the imagination she handles. She discerns in his realism the "immaculate freshness of the earthly Paradise" given in a symbolically poetic dimension in which "the physical details of the Passion are built up in vivid mental images".(1) Hopkins' macrocosm, somehow like Keats's, is seen "in the mirror of the sense ... with no inward eye"(2) because in his mind, through his Christian incarnationalism, the body and the soul are equally cared for.(3) Thus, under the feeling of the same powerful imaginative impact felt by Blake and others, "if Hopkins", states Raine, "could not permit himself to think as a pantheist he could not prevent himself from feeling as one".(4)

One thing is certain about Raine's idea of Hopkins; he undoubtedly belongs to her general theory of inspirational poetry on the basis of his faithfulness to his poetic inner voice and his

1- K. Raine, *Hopkins' Nature and Human Nature*, The Hopkins Society, University of London, pp. 1,3.

2- *Ibid.*, p. 6.

3- *Ibid.*, pp. 11-2.

4- *Ibid.*, p. 9.

reliance on genuine inspiration, besides he never betrayed "the truth of his vision" or sacrificed it to "a mass audience".(1) This is also a typical characteristic of Raine's attitude. Hopkins' speculations were pursued in "the underworld of the preconscious and primitive, ideal types and mirror images among pagan myth and Pythagorean numbers".(2) There is more in Heuser's conclusion that gives weight to Raine's: "Hopkins' lifelong occupation with Greek scholarship maintained in him a Platonic view of reality, not always caught up by Scotism into a world of Christian truth, nor always turned into Christian poetry".(3)

The contrast between Raine's spiritual and imaginative reading and other contemporary critics' reading is again displayed in Hopkins' case. Herbert Read's views of lyrical and metaphysical poetry, and the poetry of Hopkins are diametrically opposed to those of Raine. He thinks that the word 'lyric' does not convey 'anything at all' and 'has lost most of its original meaning'(4), and that metaphysical poetry, besides its being didactic, is as emotional as lyrical poetry. Therefore, even Dante's *Divina Commedia* is as didactic as all metaphysical poetry.(5) With these presuppositions, which are against Raine's inspirational theory of poetry, Herbert Read approaches Hopkins. His keen interest is focused on Hopkins' 'rhythmical irregularities' and his 'extended use of alliteration'(6), rather than his imaginative genius as discerned by Raine. Similarly I.A. Richards considers Hopkins

1- Heuser, *The Shaping Vision of Gerald Manley Hopkins*, p. 96.

2- *Ibid.*, p. 99.

3- *Ibid.*, pp. 99,100.

4- Herbert Read, *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism*, Faber and Faber, London, 1950, p. 69.

5- *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2.

6- *Ibid.*, p. 339.

'the most obscure of English verse writers'.(1) For Richards, Hopkins' poetry is full of "deliberate oddities" and disturbance of "the usual word order of prose"(2), therefore he finds the analysis of his poetry "hardly possible".(3)

W.B. Yeats occupies a no less high position than that of Blake in Raine's mind, heart, and career. That he is (for her and for many others of course) the greatest poet of this century means that Yeats stands as Raine's second formidable witness for corroborating her theory of the imagination. His view of the world and arts also gives a tremendous weight to hers. Together with Blake's, his opinions and ideas are more often than not incorporated into her prose, or scholarly (she does not like the word "critical", for the reasons mentioned above) writings.(4) Raine has been attracted to and influenced by Yeats, since they have much ground in common.

Yeats and Blake are kindred spirits(5), and as a result Yeats enjoys her love as much as Blake. Both Yeats and Raine, equally fascinated by Blake, are indebted to him, demonstrating their debt in varying degrees. She confirms that "Blake alone remained as an inexhaustible source into [Yeats's] poetic maturity" (*DAS*, p. 66). Yeats himself confirms this in the poem, "An Arc of Grass":

1- I. A. Richards, in *Gerald Manley Hopkins*, ed. Margaret Bottrall, The MacMillan Press Ltd., London, 1975, p. 70.

2- *Ibid.*, p. 71-2.

3- *Ibid.*, p. 77.

4- Even in *Blake and Tradition*, there is always a comparison between the two poets to the extent that the whole of chapter 13 is based on the relation between Yeats' gyres and twenty-eight phases of the moon and Blake's *The Mental Traveller* and twenty-seven Churches as derived from or corresponding to the Platonic gyre. See vol.I. pp. 302-32.

5- This view is affirmed in Hazard Adams, *Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision*, (Chapter I), Russell & Russell, New York, 1968, pp. 1-21.

My self I must remake
Till I am Timon and Lear
Or that William Blake
Who beat upon the wall
Till Truth obeyed his call.(1)

Because of their close affinity of thought, Yeats is the heir of Blake's "golden string" with which both dip their cups into the divine well of the imagination - a view persistently maintained especially in *From Blake to A Vision*, "Yeats' Debt to William Blake", *Death-in-Life and Life-in-Death*, *Yeats*, *The Tarot and the Golden Dawn*, and her second *magnum opus*, *Yeats the Initiate*. Apart from their works on Blake, the two contemporaries have edited and published some of his work.

Like Blake and herself, according to her theory, Yeats is a Neoplatonist, whose poetry is "winged towards knowledge absolute" (*LU*, p. 197), and whose inward ear had heard 'the choir of Love' that includes Plotinus and Plato.(2) More to the point, both Blake and Yeats are alike in their "equating the Imagination of God with the human Imagination".(3) But simply because his thought and poetry are "related to a world-order totally other than the atheist humanism of his time" (*IJP*, p. 19), he has been largely and radically misread by the critics who have lost sight of the Platonic edifice in his poetry. Yeats indeed yearned to live in his imaginative "Byzantium" of the Greek empire, where the Academy of Plato would exist in a Christian society since "religious, aesthetic and practical life were one".(4) Though "Byzantium" can be identified as Blake's "Jerusalem", Yeats's debt to Blake in

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- 1- Yeats, "An Acre of Grass", *The Collected Poems*, MacMillan London Limited, 1981, p. 347.
 - 2- Yeats, "The Delphic Oracle upon Plotinus", *Ibid.*, pp. 306-7.
 - 3- K. Raine, "From Blake to *A Vision*", in *Yeats the Initiate*, p. 168.
 - 4- Yeats, *A Vision*, cited in J. Press, *A Map of Modern English Verse*, "Passages from the Writings of W.B. Yeats", p. 18.

this respect is not the symbol but the doctrine of the religion of art:

The symbol of Byzantium, a city both Hellenic and Christian, is an image more splendidly poetic, as well as more intellectually and historically inclusive, than Blake's purely Biblical Jerusalem; but the thought - the city of the imagination - is Blake's, and the artificers of Yeats's Byzantium are Blake's 'golden builders' who laboured to make London that 'city coming down from heaven'. Yeats had learned from Blake that the Last Judgement is the coming of the kingdom of imagination and the triumph of true over false art.(1)

Yeats is the greatest of the modern poets of symbolism, and therefore he is the greatest of the rare poets who uniquely master the divine language of the soul. It was Yeats who prophesied the renaissance of the "revolt of the soul against intellect - now beginning in the world"(2), and his lifelong endeavour was "to test, to discard or to retain, a great range of symbols and terms drawn from many traditions"(*IJP*, p. 13). In this respect, he was more successful than his master, Blake, for the latter "knew everything except how to find symbolic or linguistic terms to communicate what he knew" (*IJP*, p. 13).

Furthermore. Yeats' vision of the *anima mundi* that may be seen by "the imaginative eye of everyone according to the situation he holds"(3) is in complete accord with Raine's vision of the life force. Like Raine, Yeats holds the view of the peasant who is enchanted by the spiritual essences in the heart of material forms, while the forms themselves seem "but the shadows of some

1- *Yeats the Initiate*, p. 102.

2- A letter to John O'Leary, in *The Letters of W.B. Yeats*, ed. by Allan Wade, Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1954, p. 211.

3- *Yeats the Initiate*, pp. 98,9.

greater reality beyond".(1) So, nature for Yeats, as O'Driscoll points out, is "full of invisible spirits that can be perceived by those willing to look beyond the veil of the senses".(2) The similarity of the two doctrines comes as a result of two common factors. First, the revelations they had through immediate visions, through which they started writing spontaneously, motivated them to explore the metaphysical and mystical writings of the *knowledge absolute*. Though both are eclectic in this endeavour, they absorbed nearly the same sources of this knowledge absolute (e.g. Platonism, Eastern philosophies, Gnosticism, Cabbala, Alchemy, and not to mention their one master, Blake). These sources are elaborately traced by Raine in her latest work, *Yeats the Initiate*. Secondly, they had the same early interior feeling of the need for a philosophy which would give their poetry a solid base. After Yeats' publication of *A Vision* and Raine's *Living in Time*, both poets embarked on studying these esoteric traditions that helped them to formulate a system of thought.

Yeats holds that the function of poetry and arts is "to change what we inwardly are". This is exactly what Raine believes. Both are alike in their fervent vindication of the works of the imagination and in their anticipation of Blake's Last Judgment with which a destruction of bad art will take place and the "stubborn conspiracy of ignorance" will be doomed to failure. For her, Yeats's doctrine of "living our thought" is equated to Blake's living "by the imagination is the supreme art" (*DAS*, p.

1- Robert O'Driscoll, *Symbolism and Some Implications of the Symbolic Approach: W.B. Yeats During the Eighteen-Nineties*, The Dolmen Press, Dublin, 1975, p. 20.

2- *Ibid.*, 21.

68). So, her love for Yeats is profoundly rooted in his being one of the poetic genius as who keep the flame of the imagination kindled, and in him there is always a precedent for glorifying the arts of the imagination, since he affirms that "none could pass Heaven's door/ That loved inferior art".(1) This is what Kermode calls Yeats's "search for the reconciling image", which is also identified by Kermode with Blake's concept of the imagination.(2) So, Yeats, like Blake, condemns "those who deny the reality of the spiritual world" as foolish.(3)

Another element of convergence is the poetic aristocratic language of Yeats as equivalent of Raine's royal language. This "aristocratic" and "royal" language is the language of the truths which are "so lofty that we can only speak of them in symbols and in mysteries".(4) Yeats's principle that "Man can embody truth, but he cannot know it"(5) is poetically echoed by Raine:

Truth - but who can tell a state
Of being? To no question
Is truth as an answer we can formulate.

Our truth is other than we tell,
Not known to us who are
Alas its human face.

.....

What is our lack, that
Where all is in all, yet
We seek?

("Short Search for Truth", *OH*, p. 87)

This is also related in Raine's mind to Dante's doctrine that "poetry was not merely to state true things beautifully, but

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- 1- Yeats, "My Table", *Collected Poems*, p. 228.
 - 2- Frank Kermode, *Romantic Image* (Chapter IV) "The Dancer", Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957, p. 89.
 - 3- O'Driscoll, *Op.Cit.*, p. 71.
 - 4- W.B. Yeats, "Speech at the Matinee of the British Association Friday", in *Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats*, ed. J. Frayne and C. Johnson, The MacMillan Press Ltd., London, 1975, vol. II., p. 370.
 - 5- Yeats, 'To Lady Elizabeth Pelham', in *Letters*, p. 922.

beautiful things truly" (*LU*, p. 160). Taken at its face value, the doctrine of aristocratic and royal language emerges as replete with snoppery, pedantry and arrogance. However, it is far from being anything of the kind if it is taken in relation to the whole context of her conception of the imagination. Since imagination is the divine humanity in every man and woman, then each human being, in whatever social, educational, or cultural rank, can respond perfectly to any imaginative truth. Divine Imagination working within man does not speak in plain ordinary language, but in a majestic language akin to its divinity. So if the imagination is alive in any man, he will respond understandingly to its royal and aristocratic symbols, because they are the archetypes in him: "The spiritual Presences [referring to Yeats, "Among School Children"] are 'self-born' in the sense that they are not made by human knowledge or skill but rather, in Blake's sense, realities of the Imagination, ontological forms of the mind".(1)

Finally, Yeats holds that the striving for immortality involves no abnegation of the sensual world, and that sexuality is "the vehicle for reciprocal relationship between art and life".(2) He takes great pleasure in sexual love, which is evinced in *Words for Music Perhaps*. In this collection, he takes advantage of Blake's symbols "innocence" and "experience" in his attempt to convey his pleasures of sex as in "A Last Confession" and the seven poems entitled "Crazy Jane ...". It goes without saying Raine's ideas of erotic love must find in Yeats's a stronghold as invincible as

1- Raine, "Blake, Yeats and Pythagoras", in *Yeats the Initiate*, p. 306.

2- Stanley Sultan, *Yeats at His Last*, The Dolmen Press, Dublin, 1975, p. 32.

that of Blake. Inflamed by erotic desires, "the poet reveals truth by revealing these desires", and he should "reject a philosophy that does not satisfy them".(1) Viewed in the light of these common elements between Yeats and Raine, it is no wonder that the more she is attacked by the "clap-trap" of criticism for adopting Yeats's views of the world, the more she is convinced of the authenticity of Yeats's vision of the truth as well as of hers. For her, it would be odd to respond otherwise.

In broadening the appeal to her theory of the imagination, Raine adds to her list Dante, Shelley, David Gascoyne, John Perse, Dylan Thomas, Vernon Watkins, among others. But in her book, *David Jones and the Actually Loved and Known*, the word "imagination" seems to slip away from Raine's mind. Surprisingly, she does not use it once in the book. Raine describes Jones' symbols of totality as "gathering up" fragments into "the artifice of eternity".(2) Jones is linked by Raine with Blake for they share the principle that "everything that lives is holy because it is the signature of God", and that "nature even at its most despoiled and bare is 'creaturely', in contrast to machines of destruction".(3) Of course, she recognizes in Jones' inner journey sparks of genuine imagination, though this is not explicitly stated, through his attachment to his native Welsh myths, and his conception of God as "the centre [which] is everywhere and the circumference nowhere, therefore God incarnate is what is "capable

1- Yeats, "Letter to J.B. Yeats, in *Letters*, p. 588.

2- *David Jones and the Actually Loved and Known*, Golgonooza Press, Ipswich, 1978, p. 21. The book was later included in *IJP*, pp. 118-136.

3- *Ibid.*, pp. 22-3.

of being loved and Known".(1)

5.3 POETIC THEORY

From the above review of Raine's "critical" work, her poetic theory can be deduced. To begin with, there is the general Platonic hypothesis that the poet should "write of the soul, of the intellectual beauty, of the living spirit of the world" (*IJP*, p. 18). The illumination of the sacred and not the manipulation of the outer circumstances of the mundane should be the sole objective of the poet. This poetic aim is a completely different thing from that proclaimed by "the majority, who would prefer their poetry to be about honey-bees, rather than metaphysical essences".(2) In order to deal with this transcendental subject matter authentically, and to achieve the spiritual objective successfully, the poet should have certain qualifications, the first of which is innate, while the others are diligently and empirically acquired.

The first of these qualifications is the traditional definition of the poet as a seer, who is able to receive and communicate the gifts of the Platonic Muses: "the man who arrives at the doors of poetry without madness from the Muses, persuaded that expertise will make him a good poet, both he and his poetry of the sane, are eclipsed by that of the mad, imperfect and unfulfilled".(3) The function of the poet is to dig deep beneath the apparent surface of nature and to probe into the inmost recesses of the human soul so as to reveal some sparks of its essential being. Poetry does

1- *Ibid.*, p. 25.

2- Raine, Letter to *New Statesman*, 8 Feb. 1958, p. 170.

3- Plato, *Phaedrus*, (245a), p. 59.

not deal in certainties but with the degree of truth and insight which the poet can reach. This simply because "we do not know what the soul (a psyche) is, only that it is, something of its inexhaustible riches" (DAS, P.126). The true poet is the man of vision. He cannot, therefore, be so without inspiration, since "truth", in Yeats's terms, "cannot be discovered, but revealed", and poetic truth is "not abstract truth, but a kind of vision of reality which satisfies the whole being".(1) It can be revealed by inspiration or by the Platonic *anamnesis*. For Raine, at the level of true imagination, terms of the source of revelation are of no importance. The variety of terms referring to the divine source cannot deny the truth of the oneness of the divine source in essence. The imaginal is equivalent to the Sufi *al-Malakut*, to the Christian Holy Spirit, to the Brahman Universal Self, to the Platonic Muse, to the Plotinian One, to the Blakean Jesus, the Imagination, to the Yeatsean *Anima Mundi* or instructors, or to the Jungian unconscious; the "name varies, the experience is constant" (IJP, p. 22). The term "imaginal" is adopted by Raine from Henry Corbin, who was the first to coin it in the form *mundus imaginalis*, and she equates it to Blake's Imagination.(2) The imaginative vision, or the experience of the 'imaginal form', is a change taking place 'not in the objects but in ourselves', and without it any poet's achievement would be arid and lifeless. This point is also made by Cleanth Brooks who believes the 'death of the imagination [to be] a stage in the death of the spirit'.(3) The role of the poet is to provide us with 'an awareness of our

1- Yeats, *Letters*, p. 588.

2- Raine in the personal interview. See also IJP, pp. 184-5.

3- Cleanth Brooks, *The Hidden God: Studies in Hemingway, Faulkner, Yeats, Eliot, and Warren*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1963, p. 132.

world, not as an object viewed in clinical detachment, not a mere mechanism, but of our world as it involves ourselves - in part a projection of ourselves, in part an impingement upon ourselves'.(1) The same idea of the imaginal form through which the change happens to the artist and not to the object is again stressed by the symbolist artist, Odilon Redon, who arrived at his soul's rapport with the external objects by subjecting himself gently to the coming of the unconscious, to "the fatal rhythm of the impulses of the universe surrounding him", and "to the secret and mysterious laws of the emotions and the heart, without assistance from sterile explanations".(2)

The perfect imagination of the poet will inevitably result in perfect technique and the "royal" language of symbolism. In fact this idea is self-evident in Raine's own poetic achievement, that is to say she actually practises what she preaches. The following stanza is one of multifarious examples in her poetry to prove the point:

From the hollow sphere of space
Echo
Of a lonely voice
That cries, my love, my love.
(DS, Poem No. 2)

The poet's imagination forces her to devote a complete line to one single word, "Echo". Technically, the poet emphatically draws the reader's attention to the suggestive power of the word, which may be regarded by the stylistic critic as a double *meaning* used for poetic decoration. But its significance is much greater than that. It brings to mind the whole drama of the soul expressed in

1- *Ibid.*

2- Herschel Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art*, University of California Press, London, 1968, p. 119.

many myths. It involves the stories of Echo and Narcissus, Isis and Osiris, Demeter and Persephone, and Eros and Psyche. So, the literal meaning of the word as repercussion vanishes through the technique dictated by the perfection of the imagination. *Ex hypothesi*, the perfect imagination produces a perfect, royal, and symbolic language apt to the spiritual realities the poet tries to communicate. Vulgar language in the name of realism conveys nothing but the superficiality of materialistic attitudes, and addresses nothing higher than the sensual appetites in man. Raine has never employed language like that of some modern American poetesses, which Lauter sensitively calls 'impudent'(1), and which reduces poetry to the level of an indecent chat in a pub. An example of this is Anne Sexton, who is supposed to be a visionary poetess and a mythmaker. In her poems, Sexton finds the gods "shut in the lavatory"; remembers her mother's belly "big with another child,/ cancer's baby, big as a football"; or flashes her buttocks to both life and death.(2) In another place the sterility of Jesus' sexuality is portrayed as Jesus' penis is "sewn onto Him like a medal". and He is "healing" Mary Magdalene by lancing her breasts.(3). Presumably, this sort of language may be admired, or described as bold or truthful, but it is certainly not Raine's royal language which is for her a recreation of 'a common language, for the communication of knowledge of spiritual realities, and of the invisible order of the psyche' (*IJP*, p. 13).

1- Estella Lauter, *Women as Mythmakers: Poetry and Visual Art by Twentieth-Century Women*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1984, p. 25.

2- In *Ibid.*

3- *Ibid.*, p. 31. Compare Raine's language and symbols in "The Holy Shroud", *YO*, p. 151., and "Four Poems of Mary Magdalene", *LT*, pp. 22-4.

Corollary to this is an acquired qualification; the poet should be absolutely free. He must keep away from the entanglements of what may inhibit his imagination from flying. The process of providing the soul with invisible sanctuaries and regions of contemplation, by which we can share with the poet the exploration and the enlargement of the scope of our humanity, cannot be fruitful when the poet comes under any form of arbitrary commitment. The point is that the poet should not indulge in a specific religious sect, a certain political doctrine, or any social dogma if he wishes to be a spokesman of spiritual truths: "involvement with a cult may be as dangerous to the poet as involvement in politics; however sincere, such involvement is, for the imagination, at best a symbol and at worst an irrelevance" (*IJP*, p. 22). Raine speaks of another form of involvement, but she confines it to herself in particular and to women poets in general. It is the bonds of marriage that clipped, as has been said before, the wings of her imagination. At the same time, she acknowledges that her rejection of marriage as a spiritual imprisonment is not a rule to be applied to all poets. On the contrary, she has noticed the poetically productive consequences of the marital lives of Eliot, Yeats and some other poets. Relevantly, Raine also thinks that women are not created to be poets, but to be inspiration and assistants to their poet husbands and lovers, and in this they participate marvellously.(1)

Closely related to the understanding of the poet as a seer is Raine's distinction between the poetry *purely* written from experience and the poetry of inspiration. Raine does not deny

1- This standpoint has orally been expressed in the interview, but the reader cannot fail to infer the same suggestive meaning from her introduction to *CPb*, p. v.

that personal experience a raw material for poetry, which some critics accuse her of, but she affirms that without inspiration neither mere experience nor expertise in poetic technicalities will be enough to produce good poetry:

There seems to be a new school of young poets who have never heard of Muse or daimon, and who write only from personal experience. Inspiration is one thing, personal memory quite another; and as Blake never tired of pointing out, memory is not a Muse.(1)

Lyrical poetry is the best form for a poet to maintain in order to communicate poetically the spiritual truth obtained through revelation. In this she is also keeping to her Platonic understanding of poetical theory, and parting company with those critics who believe in the lost meaning of the word "lyric".

Finally, poets of the imagination should be traditional, because novelty does not count as long as the celebration of the spiritual truth, which is eternally unchanging, is the theme of the poet. Raine seems to have something in common with T.S. Eliot's view of tradition as an essential factor in both poetic and critical processes, expressed in his essay, "Tradition and Individual Talent". Eliot believes that the significance and meaningfulness of an artist lie in his relation to his predecessors, that is to say in the relation between the artist and tradition:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead.(2)

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- 1- K. Raine, "The Purity of Poetry", a letter to the Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*, vol. 55. 8 June 1956, p. 345.
 - 2- T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent", *The Sacred Wood*, Faber and Faber, London, 1928, p. 49.

Like Eliot, Raine has been so strongly conscious of literary tradition that she devoted most of her life defending ancient springs as a scholar and critic. Moreover, as a poet, she is "too firmly rooted in the civilization of the past to speak [the traditional poets'] language".(1) Though this view of the importance of tradition in poetry finds much support in modern criticism in general, it is repudiated by some. For example, Philip Larkin, who shares with Raine the view that technique matters less than content, has a contradictory theory as a guiding principle for the poet to embrace:

every poem must be its own sole freshly-created universe, and therefore have no belief in 'tradition' or a common myth-kitty or casual allusions in poems to other poems or poets, which last I find unpleasantly like the talk of literary understrappers. letting you see they know the right people.(2)

Raine's understanding of the poet as traditional entails that the poet should be supported by a philosophy. This seems to be a Yeatsian influence: 'the more precise and learned the thought the greater the beauty, the passion'.(3) In principle, the idea could be accepted and defended. But, Raine confines the idea to one specific philosophy, Neoplatonism, which could easily make it untenable and put the whole idea in question. Her specification of Neoplatonism is certainly a personal preference and a matter of opinion. When she was asked about this specification, which neglects many other great traditions, she answered that what she meant by Neoplatonism did not negate or degrade other great traditions, those especially of the East. All great traditions of

1- G. Fraser, in *Contemporary Poets*, p. 1224.

2- Quoted in John Press, *Op.Cit.*, p. 258.

3- Yeats, "Letter to J.H.C. Grieson", in *Letters*, p. 570.

the *knowledge absolute* were in harmony with Neoplatonism, besides the mutual influence among these traditions was self-evident. And above all, Neoplatonism, Raine believed, came down to the West from the East. Although the last assertion is controversial, it is far from being indefensible.

However, despite the prevalence of the Neoplatonic element in Raine's poetic theory and practice, she is certainly eclectic like Blake and Yeats, her masters. This is corroborated by her own conviction that "Eclecticism in the modern world can scarcely be evaded".(1)

1- *Blake and Tradition*, vol. I.p. xxx.

CONCLUSION

Of one thing I am not ashamed,
who, seeking no conflict, being no prophet,
But speaking for one, found myself unawares engaged
In the Great Battle from which there is no discharge,
Attacked (especially from behind - she's a poetess,
Boehme's, Swedenborg's, Plotinus', Plato's themes
Personal fancies, not to be taken seriously)
By academics who deface the poet's lines
With [sic] in square brackets, preserve his mis-spellings scrupulously,
Read 'the words on the page' oblivious of their meanings.
For imagined Jerusalem they do not care
Whose daydreams are of a University chair:
Blake's golden string can only lead us
Into a labyrinth whose four beasts are dangerous.

I found their paper darts fell wide of the mark
struck by those shot from a bow of burning gold,
Have not surrendered in my time and place
My sector of those intellectual wars
He fought in once; chapter and verse
Sound armour in attack as in defence.
I have been honoured in the name of Blake
With a prophet's reward: to be shot at for his sake.

(Katheen Raine, The Kingdom According
to St. Matthew, unpublished)

* * * * *

Theological dogmas and credal premises are largely responsible for categorizations of mystical experience as plural irreconcilable and unrelated forms, and not as variations or elaborations of the very same essential truth. Misrepresentations or misinterpretations on the part of some mystics have also been a factor contributing to disparity. Yet, a close and objective investigation into the wide variety of formulations of the ' hermeneutic attempts of mystics reveals several fundamental meeting-points common to mystics of all creeds.

First, there is a universal agreement that the quintessence of mystical experience is the realization of an ecstatic union between the human soul and the Divine. Striking also is the mystics' unanimous glorification of the primacy and subtlety of the role of love in attaining this union. This is clear in Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Neoplatonic, and Nature mystics and even mystics of drug-induced experience. But discrepancies about this union arise when the presupposed credal doctrines and theological premises indoctrinate the mystic's interpretation of his vision. Few mystics manage to escape this dogmatic indoctrination, while most mystical hermeneutics are written within a context of ready-made cultural and religious conceptions. Even the writings of those considered heterodox by the orthodox of their religion are tinged in varying degrees with preconceptions, and therefore they are best known as eclectic.

Secondly, there is the mystical convergence at the differentiation between the Nothing or Transcendent aspect and the Something or Immanent aspect of the Divine perceived. However, many different terms are employed to identify these two aspects of

the Divine.(1)

Thirdly, interpretations of the nature of the mystical union of love or the unifying vision are mainly divided into two categories found in any religion or creed but with varying degrees of prevalence: a) an undifferentiated identification, b) a transformation of the soul in the Divine which retains the distinction between the two. The first category professes a complete absorption of the soul into the Divine, in which the subject-object relationship is annihilated. This pantheistic interpretation is adopted by Hindu and Neoplatonic mystics. It is also embraced by some mystics in Christianity and Islam (e.g. Boehme, Eckhart, Ibn Al'arbi, Halaj, and Bistami). In the second category the union is interpreted as the eradication of man's will in God's will by grace, though it is sometimes defined exactly as the first category: the naughting of self-consciousness or the loss of the self in an ecstatic mystery. But theological reluctance to equate man to God prevents mystics who are religion's *ame damnees* from overpassing the teachings of their religion. Yet, in the end the two categories converge in essence at the point of one union between the soul and Divine.

Fourthly, mystical experiences have several common peculiarities akin to the cardinal characteristic of the unifying vision. Four of them characterise mystical language: 1) elevated emotional style, 2) paradoxical formulation, 3) ineffability, and 4) symbolism. Others are ecstatic trance, a sense of holiness, of illumination, and of objective reality.

Fifthly, the mystic's way may appear different from one creed to

1- See above pp.68-69.

another. But in essence all, with the exception of the mystics of drug-induced experiences and some Neoplatonists who may disagree with Plotinus, profess at least three common elements: contemplation, purity of the heart, and the renunciation of the mundane. The shift of normal consciousness into pure consciousness may occur suddenly without any prior preparation. In this case love is the effect of the experience and the driving force to have it again, while love is the initial motive of the deliberately or technically attainable experiences.

Kathleen Raine holds a very low opinion of herself as a mystic, and thinks that her visions are borderline or at best nature mystical states. For some reasons, she also expresses her reluctance to use the word 'mystical' in her writings. Yet, analyzed in the light of the forecited guidelines or common characteristics of mystical states, Raine's visions can be classified into three categories: a) genuine mystical experiences containing typical features of the extrovertive type of mystical states (e.g. the hollyhocks, the hyacinth, the realization of the *Tao*, the epiphany of the tree). b) borderline or atypical visions lacking, or hardly containing, the most vital mystical characteristic, that is to say the unifying vision. Of this type there is only one vision recorded in *The Land Unknown* as 'the soul-out-of-the-body'. c) non-mystical visions pertaining to psychological phenomena other than mysticism (e.g. the fear of the 'Holy Ghost' in the church, 'Death-as Known by the Soul', and the vision of the nun).

As regards the first category, although the hyacinth episode took place a long time after the hollyhocks vision, it is

considered the central vision in Raine's life and verse. Through gazing at a hyacinth (contemplating natural objects is known in mainstream mysticism to occasion mystical states), Raine suddenly underwent a transfiguration of consciousness, in which she *lived* the life of the flower and perceived the plant as part of her consciousness. The account of the hyacinth is in fact laden with all other mystical characteristics. In her early childhood Raine had the vision of the hollyhocks whose description she entitled 'Flowers, or Entity'. It was her first mystical experience and earliest acquaintance with the hidden essence of nature. But to judge from the description, the experience is in harmony with what is known in mystical literature as the phenomenon of light an experience referred to by many great mystics of world creeds. Raine's exhilaration at penetrating the heart of the hyacinth and her earlier inebriation at living the inner life of the hollyhocks provided for her the immediate and unequivocal evidence that everything in the 'universe is endowed with life equal in perfection to that of man.

Shortly after the hyacinth, Raine had another transforming apprehension called 'the realization of the *Tao*'. This intuitive vision is in line with most tenets of Taoism expressed by Lao Tzu, to whom the *Tao Te Ching* is traditionally attributed. Raine's account of the vision is also open to a psychological analysis of a Jungian type. Nevertheless, it contains all the typical characteristics of mystical experience. The vision of the epiphany of the tree happened to Raine when she was more developed and sure-footed about her metaphysical ideas of the world. In essence, it is identical to the hyacinth experience, despite the indirectness in expressing the unifying vision. But it is also

mystical by virtue of the characteristics implied in the account. Its importance in Raine's life lies in its relatedness to her more advanced conception of Platonic love through her relationship with Gavin Maxwell.

The rhapsodic touch that Raine's heart had felt in her earliest transcendental perception and love of nature established the first pillar in her spiritual and imaginative structure. The spontaneous visions of flowers (in whatever form or species) triggered off her inner journey as a poet whose lifelong search is to recapture all instances that reflect the Beauty Supreme and to communicate these glimpses of eternity poetically. So, the flower has become the first and the dearest archetype of the *sophia perennis* for Raine. The poem 'The Hyacinth' is a direct translation of the vision of the hyacinth, and what is revealed in both constitutes a basic dimension in Raine's whole career. Although the symbol of the flower has been widely developed, from the conventional concept of the rose as standing for Christ to the Neoplatonic *anemone pulsatilla*, its function always remains the same: the integrate unity and the perfect creation of the world is reflected in the opening of the flower. Moreover, not only does the flower often symbolize the wholeness of the self in the Jungian process of individuation, but also in its very natural course of blooming lies the truth of reincarnation to be conceived of by the contemplative inward eye, and therewith the eloquent message of eternity is perceptible to the interior ear. From this stems Raine's ardent sense that the substance of natural manifestations is made of her own substance, because they are not solid objects, as generally believed, but living entities.

The tree, as a figure, is no less archetypal than the flower in Raine's conceptual and symbolic pattern. It is a key-symbol representing the microcosm-macrocosm relationship. In her early imaginative structure, the tree is portrayed in Christian colours as the tree of Eden rooted in Christ. In a midway stage of her spiritual development, the tree is Platonically depicted as the tree of knowledge standing for the cycle of life. But later, especially after the vision of the tree, its symbolic connotations include the rediscovery of the virginity of nature, the incarnation of the god within man's divine essence, the integration of the broken particles of the mundane life, and the everlasting reminder of the soul's "lost innocence" written on one page of the "illuminated book" of nature, which is a "presence [that has] neither come nor gone".

Before Raine's pantheistic ideas were fully developed, her spirituality had been liable to the ebbs and flows of current ways of thought. The child's unavoidable inheritance of the religion of the parents constitutes the threshold of Raine's spiritual journey. She was born to a Methodist father, and consequently brought up in a restricted Christian environment. Though there is hardly a poetic work that may belong to this period, her father's restricted Christianity morality restricted the daughter's growing hope of breaking free from the bonds of this inherited religion. Because of her father's dogmas, her love for Roland, her first lover, came to an undesired tragic end. Following this coercive separation, she found herself entangled in a loveless marital relationship she describes as "fornication". These two early emotional wounds helped her feeling of alienation towards Christianity to grow, and her antinomian trend to accelerate. The

internal and external events in this period are the raw material of two books of her autobiography: *Faces of Day and Night* , and *Farewell Happy Fields* .

The second stage is characterized by her poetic spontaneity combined with an obvious fluctuation between the inherited concepts of Christianity and a first-hand apprehension of spiritual knowledge revealed through her own visions. Her poems are also fortified by her study of natural science, and coloured with a little knowledge of Plato, Plotinus, and Boehme. Her conception of love at this stage is related to her relationship with Alastair, in which sexual love is highly regarded and equated to divine love. Raine claims that her vision of the holy was rooted in this erotic love. But as a whole her relationship with Alastair, though not Plotinian, is considered Platonic as a starting-point. Moreover, her declared views about sexual love at this stage are not entirely manifested in her poems except for a small number of poems rejected in *The Collected Poems*. This stage is best represented by *Stone and Flower* , which contains many poems communicating the truth perceived in her early mystical visions.

The spiritual struggle was indecisively and temporarily settled when Raine became a Catholic convert. This desperate attempt characterizes the third stage of her spiritual growth, in which she discovered that she was mistaking the garment for the poet inside the woman and breaking the spiritual pattern of her inner self. In her make-believe she failed to be a religious poet of a Christian tinge, or even to produce any real poetry, for her inspirational daimon abandoned her, and consequently her

imaginative wings were clipped. *Living in Time* is the volume that represents this stage. Realizing the inferiority of the volume, Raine kept only five poems from it in the second *Collected Poems*. The sterility and aridity she felt in her imaginative work during this period drove her to reject Christianity in order to repair the cleavage in her spiritual structure. Her old hidden impulse to set forth her flight to the Plotinian Fatherland and to regain her previous realization of the cosmic all-inclusive one embodied in the "unfolding" of the flower and the flowering of the tree was revived at the hands of William Blake, Thomas Taylor, and many other metaphysical explorers. She was also indebted to C.G. Jung as a contemporary psychologist who belongs to the tradition of *knowledge absolute*.

Raine's scholarship on William Blake enriched her with vast spiritual erudition about many esoteric traditions. But in spite of the fact that she is a peerless exponent of Blakean thought, which she ascribes mainly to Neoplatonism, Raine does not play second fiddle to Blake in her poetry. In other words, her immediate experiences and visions were prior to her acquaintance with Blake, and are the first and most reliable source for her imagination to draw upon. The same is very true about the influence exerted by Yeats upon her. Some poems of Raine may invite a comparison between her and either of the other two poets, but there is always the authenticity of Raine's own vision. *The Pythoness* demonstrates her opening sure-footed steps on the road of a non-sectarian poet. Her symbolic sources are greatly widened, and her handling of the themes shows a new limpidity and depth of insight. Still, a few poems in the volume are overshadowed by ecclesiastical symbols that are not essential to

the content. The volume that reflects her entire pantheistic settlement is *The Year One*, her first poetic masterpiece. No poem from this volume was discarded in the two *Collected Poems*. The true subject of *The Year One*, is the poet's identification with nature, fired by her truly Platonic love for Gavin Maxwell during his lifetime. Her love poems reflect the glimpses of the timeless in the eyes of a Platonic, as well as Plotinian, lover of wisdom. No sign of hankering for the physical can be detected. Raine keeps with this highest stage of Platonic love throughout the volumes to follow.

Despite Raine's range of symbols and myths derived from various esoteric traditions, the flower and the tree remain the most prominent archetypes throughout her late work. Raine's poetic achievement is in fact pervaded by a wealth of symbols sharing the impulse of the *sophia perennis*, represented by the flower: the fusion of the higher apprehension of knowledge and the intense conflagration of love. They are in effect oracular and metaphysical pronouncements of the harmony of all elements in the universe. The dancer (whether taken directly from Hinduism or indirectly through Yeats), the breath of life, the fire (Alchemist or not), the Mandala (drawn directly from the Hindu-Buddhist tradition or indirectly from Jungian patterns), the Tao, the Concord are other recurring archetypes to be added to the flower and the tree. The crystal skull, a Mexican symbol of death that opens a secured gate to eternal life, and Azrael, the angel of death in the Islamic tradition, also contribute to Raine's archetypal language of the soul.

Raine's use of mythology to illustrate and communicate her heightened apprehension of reality is characterised by vivid familiarity, limpidity, and depth of insight. Despite her omnivorous reading, she never appears a pedant in her poetry as regards the myths employed, nor tries to explain *obscurum per obscurius*. Her work needs no appendices to explain what is meant by a myth or a symbol. She works within the context of a well-known mythical tradition. Unlike Blake, she has not invented her myths, but rather, after a Jungian fashion, found her own myth and lived it. Round the myth of the ascent and descent of the soul all Raine's myths (even those taken from outside the Platonic tradition) revolve. Demeter and Persephone stand as Raine's key myth, through which her conviction that the poet inside her is her own mother is repetitively affirmed. As a whole, Raine's poems address the reader's imagination and understanding, appealing to his sense of beauty, and not to his accumulated information.

Raine's poetic theory is really applied in her own poetry, especially after the process of purifying it from what stood outside the pale of her belief in the eternal. Poetry should celebrate spiritual verities. The imagination, not the memory of personal experiences, is the criterion by which the superiority of one poet over another can be measured. Dreams are truth of the timeless, therefore, together with visions, they are materials for the poet's mind to assimilate and transmute. The poet has to keep away from commitment to any religious or political sect. A perfect technique springs from a perfect imaginative capacity, not from knowledge taught by pedantic critics. The poet of the imagination should speak the royal language of the soul, which consists of symbols and myths. The lyrical form, recommended by

Plato, is the best form for communicating the reality of the soul. Also the poet should have a strong and real philosophy to support him. For her, this philosophy is the tradition of Neoplatonism, to which belong great poets of the imagination. This theory of inspirational poetry largely reflects the enormous influence of William Blake, as well as of Yeats, upon Raine. Her mystical approach to the two great poets, among many other poets of the imagination, is at odds with many trends of modern criticism. In a world of overwhelming materialism, in whatever form, and of a prevailing absence of spiritual values, a mystic poet like Kathleen Raine has a fierce battle to fight #... in order to let the oracular voice be heard. In this she is not alone, since all great mystics, even her master, Blake, had to suffer in some way or another from the disbelievers in a spiritual order. Nevertheless, the mystical reality always stands the test of time, and, as Raine decisively puts it in one of her latest unpublished poems,

That immortal voice
Is never silent, sings
As the sun rises,
As trees ascend,
Eloquent in sound of water and wind.
We see its utterance
Move across our days, our skies,
In birds and stars, we taste,
We touch and breathe it, every sense attuned
To harmonies of paradise,
Clouds and mountains, rivers and seas,
Telling all that is.(1)

1- See appendices p. 377-8

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Bucke's List of the Marks of Cosmic Sense (1)

a. The subjective light. The person, suddenly, without warning, has a sense of being immersed in a flame, or rose-colored cloud, or perhaps rather a sense that the mind is itself filled with such a cloud of haze.

b. The moral elevation. At the same instant he is, as it were, bathed in an emotion of joy, assurance, triumph, "salvation." The last word is not strictly correct if taken in its ordinary sense, for the feeling, when fully developed, is not that a particular act of salvation is effected, but that no special "salvation" is needed, the scheme upon which the world is built being itself sufficient. It is this ecstasy, far beyond any that belongs to the merely self conscious life, with which the *poets*, as such, especially occupy themselves.

c. The intellectual illumination. Simultaneously or instantly following the above sense and emotional experiences there comes to the person an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Like a flash there is presented to his consciousness a clear conception (a vision) in outline of the meaning and drift of the universe. He does not come to believe merely; but he sees and knows that the cosmos, which to the self conscious mind seems made up of dead matter, is in fact far otherwise - is in very truth a living presence. ...He sees that the life which is in man is eternal, as all life is eternal; that the soul of man is as immortal as God is; that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all; that the foundation principle of the world is what we call love. ... he [obtains] such a conception of THE WHOLE, or at least of an immense WHOLE, as dwarfs all conception, imagination or speculation, springing from and belonging to ordinary self consciousness, such a conception as makes the old attempts to mentally grasp the universe and its meaning petty and even ridiculous.

d. The sense of immortality. This is not an intellectual conviction, such as comes with the solution of a problem, nor is it an experience such as learning something unknown before. It is far more simple and elementary, and could better be compared to that certainty of distinct individuality, possessed by each one, which comes with and belongs to self consciousness.

e. The loss of the fear of death. With illumination the fear of death which haunts so many men and women at times all their lives falls off like an old cloak - not, however, as a result of reasoning - it simply vanishes.

f. The loss of the sense of sin. It is not that the person escapes from sin; but he no longer sees that there is any sin in the world from which to escape.

g. The suddenness, instantaneousness, of the awakening. It can be

compared with nothing so well as with a dazzling flash of lightning in a dark night, bringing the landscape which had been hidden into clear view.

h. The previous character of the man - intellectual, moral and physical - is an important element in the case [so as to enter the new life].

i. The age of illumination.(1) Should we hear of a case of cosmic consciousness occurring at twenty, for instance, we should at first doubt the truth of the account, and if forced to believe it we should expect the man (if he lived) to prove himself, in some way, a veritable spiritual giant.

j. The added charm to the personality of the person who attains to cosmic consciousness is always, it is believed, a feature in the case. Men and woman are always (?) strongly attracted to the person.

k. The transfiguration of the subject of the change as seen by others when cosmic sense is actually present. This change is similar to that caused in a person's appearance by great joy, but at times (that is, in pronounced cases) it seems to be much more marked than that. In [the] great cases in which illumination is intense the change in question is also intense and may amount to a veritable "transfiguration."(2)

William James' List of Mystical Marks (3)

1. *Ineffability* . The handiest of the marks by which I classify a state of mind as mystical is negative. The subject of it immediately says that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words. It follows from this that its quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others.

2. *Noetic quality* . Although so similar to states of feeling, mystical states seem to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge. They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain; and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time.(4)

3. *Transiency* . Mystical states cannot be sustained for long. Except in rare instances, half an hour, or at most an hour or two, seems to be the limit beyond which they fade into the light of common day. Often, when faded, their quality can but imperfectly be reproduced in memory; but when they recur it is recognized; and from one recurrence to another it is

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- 1 - The average age for cosmic consciousness to appear is thought by Richard Bucke to be thirty-five years. For further detail see *Ibid.* , pp. 51, 80-2.
 - 2 - For Bucke, it seems not necessary for a case to be recognized as a cosmic sense to contain all the marks in the list. Most of the cases he introduces contain some marks and lack others.
 - 3 - W. James, *VRE* , pp. 380-82.
 - 4 - James believes that the first two marks are enough for any state to be called mystical, and that the last two qualities are less sharply marked, but are usually found.

susceptible of continuous development in what is felt as inner richness and importance.

4. *Passivity*. Although the oncoming of mystical states may be facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations, as by fixing the attention, or going through certain bodily performances, or in other ways which manuals of mysticism prescribe; yet when the characteristic sort of consciousness once has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power. This latter peculiarity connects mystical states with certain definite phenomena of secondary or alternative personality, such as prophetic speech, automatic writing, or the mediumistic trance. When these latter conditions are well pronounced, however, there may be no recollection whatever of the phenomenon, and it may have no significance for the subject's usual inner life, to which, as it were, it makes a mere interruption. Mystical states, strictly so called, are never merely interruptive. Some memory of their content always remains, and a profound sense of their importance. They modify the inner life of the subject between the times of their recurrence.

Stace's List of
Common Characteristics of Extrovertive and
Introvertive Mystical States of Mind

a) Extrovertive Type: (1)

1. The unifying vision, expressed abstractly by the formula "All is One." The One is, in extrovertive mysticism, perceived through the physical senses, in or through the multiplicity of objects.
2. The more concrete apprehension of the One as being an inner subjectivity in all things, described variously as life, or consciousness, or a living Presence. The discovery that nothing is "really" dead.
3. Sense of objectivity or reality.
4. Feeling of blessedness, joy, happiness, satisfaction, etc.
5. Feeling that what is apprehended is holy, or sacred, or divine. This is the quality which gives rise to the interpretation of the experience as being an experience of "God". It is the specifically religious element in the experience. It is closely intertwined with, but not identical with, the previously listed characteristic of blessedness and joy.
6. Paradoxicality.
7. Alleged by mystics to be ineffable, incapable of being described in words, etc.

Introvertive Type: (1)

1. The Unitary Consciousness, from which all the multiplicity of sensuous or conceptual or other empirical content has been excluded, so that there remains only a void or empty unity. This is the one basic, essential, nuclear characteristic, from which most of the others inevitably follow.
2. Being nonspatial and nontemporal. This of course follows from the nuclear characteristic just listed.
3. Sense of objectivity or reality.
4. Feelings of blessedness, joy, peace, happiness, etc.
5. Feeling that what is apprehended is holy, sacred, or divine. See my remarks on this [in 5 above]. Perhaps it should be added that this feeling seems less strong in Buddhist mystics than in others, though it is not wholly absent and appears at least in the form of deep reverence for an enlightenment which is regarded as supremely noble. No doubt this is what explains the "atheistic" character of the Hinayana. It should be noted that the feeling of the definitely "divine" is as strongly developed in the pantheistic Hindu mysticism as in the theistic mysticisms of the West and the Near East.
6. Paradoxicality.
7. alleged by mystics to be ineffable.

APPENDIX II

Poems Excluded in *Collected Poems 1935-1980* (1)

* Poems which have been first included in *CPa* .

From *Stone and Flower* (A total of 50 poems) :

Lyric*
The Seal-Woman
"See, see Christ's blood streams in the firmament"*
Invocation*
Cattle Dream*
Tiger Dream*
Maternal Grief*
The Fall*
Desire*
Passion
Far-darting Apollo
Nocturne*(2)
The Red Light*
The Crystal Skull*
Christmas Poem
Harvest*
Tu non se' in terra, si come tu credi....*
The night-Blowing Cereus*
To My Mountain*
At the Waterfall*
Envoi*
A Strange Evening*
The Kiss*
Nocturne*
Returning Autumn*
Leaving Martindale*
London Revisited*
The Wind of Time*
Thought by the Thames in Summer
"Happy the captive and enchanted souls"*
The Tree
Whitsuntide 1942*
Embryon*
Seed*
The silver Stag
Love Poem*

1 - Kathleen Raine rearranged the order of many poems collected in *CPb* . She also changed the Roman numerals into Arabic numbers.

2 - Only the second poem of the three entitled "Nocturne" has been kept, and the spelling of its title has been modified to "Nocturn".

The Speech of Birds*
London Trees*
Prayer
Azrael*
Still Life*
December Night
Contemplation
New Year 1943
Lament
Night Thought*
The messengers
The Hands
Parting
Heroes*

From *Living in Time* (A total of 29 poems)(1) :

Seen in a Glass*
Sorrow*
The Crystal Skull
Christmas Night
The Trees in Tubs*
Annunciation
Farewell to a Soldier
Mourning in Spring
Pas Perdue*
For Posterity*
The Tree of Heaven
The Present
The Carmelites
Samson*
Written in Exile*
Song in Sorrow
Sparrow in March
Four Poems of Mary Magdalene
Requiem
The Spring
Venus*
The Unseen Rose*
Infinite
Heaven's Immanence
Ecce Homo
Winged Eros*
The Goddess
The Rose
Only the Good Hours...
London Night

From *The Pythoness* (A total of 30 poems) :

Water*
Fire*
Storm*
Absolution*
Mandala
Seen in a Glass*
Winter Fire*

1 - The poem "The Winter Solstice" was excluded from *CPa* ,
and later reintroduced in *CPb* .

Formulation
Dust*
Ex nihilo*
The Transit of the Gods*
Encounter*
Worry about Money
The Unacknowledged Fear
The Human Form Divine*
Tree 1947*
The Herm*
In Plato's Cave
Question and Answer*
Optical Illusion*
The Clue*
The Pythoness*
The Invisible Spectrum*
The Tutelary Spirit*
Chastity matters less than you think
Nativity*
A Message to Michael
The Sky of Angels
Psyche and the God
The Transit*

From *The Hollow Hill* (1) (A total of 2 poems and 2 sections) :

Thaumas
The Eighth Sphere
Sections 1 and 6 from "Soliloquies upon Love"

From *Six Dreams and Other Poems* (2) (A total of 5 poems)(3) :

The Sword
The Harmony
The Gulls
A Contemporary Image
Words for the Boatman of Lough Key

From *The Lost Country*. Raine did not actually omit any poem, though she stated that she omitted two. The two poems have been already transferred to *Occasional Poems*. These are "Letter to Pierre Emmanuel" [with an addition to the epigraph beneath the title] (pp. 290-1), and "Ninfa Revisited" (pp. 287-9).

All the poems in *Three Poems Written in Ireland, August 1972* were excluded:

To Friends in Sligo
Clonalis
Culleenamore

-
- 1 - The poem entitled "Dea" has been re-titled "Demeter".
 - 2 - Some of the poems were included in her later volumes, and others were not. The poem "Written in 1967" was given the title "Dreams" in both *LC* and *CPb*.
 - 3 - Raine also excluded the last stanza in the poem "The Crypt", and the last two lines of section II in the poem "By the River Eden".

From *The Oval Portrait* (A total of 10 poems)(1) :

Golden Builders, 1974
Storm Stayed
Deserted Village on Mingulary
Bleak These Native Mountains Rise....
Return to Canna
Borrowing a phrase of yours (from Short Poems)
Long, far..(from Short Poems)
It was our solitude we shared
Tir Na'n Oge
The Accuser Answered

From *The Oracle in the Heart* (A total of 23 poems)(2) :

'I who am what the dead have made'
Book of Hours
Dream Transits
Flower-Sermon
Summer Garden
Fore-Mothers
Verdict
'Too many memories confuse the old'
Abandoned Church on the Isle of Canna
Eden
Spheres
In regions of the memory
Enough is Enough
Statistical Grief
'To each gives all'
'I asked not for the good'
'Little I care'
'Out of season'
'Nightfall'
'Veil'
'You who have gone'
For Jean and Arthur Humphreys
For Murial Bradbrook

-
- 1 - Raine has stated in the Introduction that she omitted 12 poems, but, in fact, she excluded only 10 poems because two poems were transferred under the title *Occasional Poems*. The two poems are "In Memory of a Friend" (pp. 291-3), and "For the Visitor's Book" (pp. 294-5).
 - 2 - Another miscalculation; Raine said she had omitted about 12 poems, whereas the actual figure is 23 poems.

APPENDIX III

KATHLEEN RAINE'S UNPUBLISHED POEMS

POEMS 1984-1986

From time's past
 To place's present
 I return:
 Where once in sun
 Now in shadow
 The one stream
 Flows on.
 * * * * *

Mimosa-Spray

My dear mother
 One mimosa-spray
 Long ago, from an imagined Italy
 She would never see
 Offered her daughter
 From a far-off blossoming tree.

Today
 In a mimosa-grove
 Heavy with flower-gold dust
 I met in memory
 My mother on that day
 When I turned from her
 Love's simplicity.

I who have rifled the world's beauty
 Now will never enter
 That golden garden she offered me.
 * * * * *

A small matter
 Whether I hope
 To be blessed, or despair
 With the lost, on the last
 Or any day.

Enough to be
 Part and particle
 Of the whole
 Wonder and scope
 Of this glory.

Cannot even
 The condemned rejoice
 That the Presence
 Is, and is just?
 * * * * *

A Dream

In last night's dream
 I held my own:
 'I will sell my time
 'But not my soul'
 I said to those
 Purveyors of trash
 Whose help I had
 Implored in vain,
 And left their shop
 To walk alone.
 * * * * *

I came to love,
 To bear witness
 To the glory of being.
 Father, forgive
 That I have not sung
 My note out clear
 In the stars' choring,
 Sadly have trodden
 My steps in the dance,
 And yet I praise.
 * * * * *

Afloat on the silent still current of time
 I drift, on this sofa, softly on Lethe's stream.
 There is bliss in oblivion
 Like the dark of deep meditation
 Merging midnight vigil beyond dream.
 In everlasting arms all men and women
 Returning tired and hurt from the works and days of living.
 * * * * *

That immortal voice
 Is never silent, sings
 As the sun rises,
 As trees ascend,
 Eloquent in sound of water and wind.
 We see its utterance
 Move across our days, our skies,
 In birds and stars, we taste,
 We touch and breathe it, every sense attuned
 To harmonies of paradise,
 Clouds and mountains, rivers and seas,
 Telling all that is.
 * * * * *

RECOVERY

So it is still there,
 The world as before -
 I return , it seems,
 From where nothing is,
 I about to become
 No-one, no-where.

I see again familiar
 Table and chair,
 Beyond the window's spring
 Sunlight, budding green,
 And wonder what these are,
 Or are not, remember
 The story of Lazarus, and wonder
 What he, returning,
 Made of here?
 * * * * *

Another Dream

What, it was put to me,
 If I could have my desire
 Would I ask? For myself
 Nothing, I replied, only
 To serve the One who is.
 It was as if
 I summoned all my power
 To utter that reply
 From a dream-place, unfamiliar,
 Threatening, dire.
 * * * * *

Recovery from an Illness

I ask, does anything remain
 That I should return for
 What can be no long time?
 What here do I need?
 Is there still some poem
 That I can write in praise
 From far away of the once near
 Once dear earth that was home,
 Is where my children are?
 Others will come
 To tell the unending tale,
 To thread the way through the entangled maze
 Of time, that for a time seems real.
 This beautiful earth, this garden
 Where today in the sun I again have been
 Is now too thin a veil
 To cover my naked soul
 From what it knows, and is.
 Maundy Thursday, 1984
 * * * * *

No, I do not despair
 Save for this transient self,
 But not of the love
 That brought me here,

Nor the wisdom that unveils
 Each morning earth's marvels.
 Boundless the realm
 Of the kingdom I have seen.

In this world or elsewhere
 For ever his power
 And glory will appear
 To the numberless living.

May those who come after
 Be blessed always
 As I have been
 And those before.
 * * * * *

Over the years I have gazed my fill
 On nature's never-lifted veil,
 Living thoughts of living joy,
 And love seemed once to have taught me all.

Should not the old be wise, know more?
 But, being without sorrow or desire
 I have forgotten the known way
 Of heaven and earth, of sea and sky,

Can say to come or go,
 To sun and shadow neither yes nor no,
 To growing seed, to withering leaf,
 To good or ill, to birth or death,

Nor who we are, nor if we are
 As I from sun and moon and star
 Am withdrawn into a sleep
 Whose dreams are strange, whose night is deep
 * * * * *

Out of our deepest love and wisdom he is born
 Who lives and dies to rise again,
 Out of our strong desire that he should be
 We have conceived and carried him through time.

He lives because we have imagined him
 Whose signature we bear from the beginning,
 Out of what we are brought into being
 Image and likeness of the ever-living.

In many guises we have depicted him,
 Arcadian shepherd, Gothic king,
 The eternal child, the condemned man,
 Our music glorifies his name.

All tombs are empty – they hold none;
 All wombs hold God, have borne the eternal Son.
 Where He is not, we must become him
 Who is the holy deathless one.

Easter Monday 1984

* * * * *

I had meant to write a different poem,
 But, pausing for a moment in my unweeded garden,
 Noticed, all at once, paradise descending in the morning sun
 Filtered through leaves,
 Enlightening the meagre London ground, touching with green

Transparency the cells of life.
 The blackbird dropped down, robin and sparrow came,
 And the thrush, whose nest is hidden
 Somewhere, it must be, among invading buildings
 Whose walls close in,
 But for the garden birds inexhaustible living waters
 Fill a stone basin from a garden hose.

I think, It will soon be time
 To return to the house, to the day's occupation,
 But here, time neither comes nor goes.
 The birds do not hurry away, their day
 Neither begins nor ends.
 Why can I not stay? Why leave
 Here, where it is always,
 And time leads only away
 From this hidden ever-present simple place
 That once was home?
 * * * * *

In this familiar room
 I am not alone,
 For all I have known,
 Those I have loved
 Are where I am.

What is our being,
 Theirs and mine,
 I who am here,
 They who are no-where
 And yet have been,
 Living and dead
 And those to come
 In unending time?
 * * * * *

CONFRONTATION

I said to the Presence,
 'I, who must die,
 'Who fear the nihil,
 'How can I return,
 'How find the way
 'By which I came,
 'To the place, the time

The Presence replied,
 'I am the all
 'Of those who are nothing,
 'I am the being
 'Of those who have none,
 'It is I you were,
 'I you will be
 'When you are no-one.'

'Let the hour', I said,
 'Of my ending be yours
 'As of my beginning.'
 My death was gone

And I was free
 In sudden joy
 Not my own
 Of my undoing.
 * * * * *

THE PRESENCE

Present, ever-present presence,
 Never have you not been
 Here and now in every now and here,
 And still you bring
 From your treasury of colour, of light
 Of scents, of notes, the evening blackbird's song,
 How clear among the green and fragrant leaves,
 As in childhood always new, anew.
 My hand that writes is ageing, but I too
 Repeat only and again
 The one human song, from memory
 Of a joy, a mode
 Not I but the music knows
 That forms, informs us, utters with our voices
 Concord of heaven and earth, of high and low, who are
 That music of the spheres Pythagoras heard.
 I, living, utter as the blackbird
 In ignorance of what it tells, the undying voice.
 * * * * *

Threading my way, devious in its weaving
 Into the web of the world,
 Time's warp running from far back, and on
 Of lives, crossed life-lines, intercrossed, entangled,
 Knotted, knitted together, ravelled, unravelled,
 Hidden, re-emerging in new design,
 Always growing, unseen or seen
 Patterns we make with one another, distant
 Or near, from immemorial past
 Into unbounded future running unbroken
 Threads so fine and subtle of lives
 We weave and interweave, slender as light,
 Intangible substance of the age-old
 Ever-extending all, makers and made
 Who fell the pull of love, of grief, on every thread.
 * * * * *

They seem to pass,
 My hours and days,
 But all remain
 Where none is gone,

All are in me,
 Are what I am
 And what will be
 When time is done.

I look within,
 And know at heart
 That memory
 Is a sleeping fury

In the womb of time,
 Will wake and tear me
 With a long life's remorse
 That none can spare me.
 * * * * *

THE PRESENCE

1.

So deep a quiet permeates
 The fires and violent winds,
 The uproar, the unceasing waves,
 The wild turmoil
 Of the flaring vortices, the whirling circuits
 That sear and tear those vital nets and strands
 That bind us, human,
 Into world's fragile mesh of love and pain.
 within
 Its vast silence
 The divine darkness
 Hides us.

2.

when we open to the night
 As under a full tide
 Coelenterates their wombs to the water,
 As with a great sea
 We are filled
 With that embracing darkness
 some have named
 The divine lover.

To whom are we wedded,
 And who are we
 Who taste this bliss
 Alone with mystery
 Or lover with lover?
 We know only
 That is is ours.

3.

My only knowledge a desire –
 In ignorance the heart must grope
 But cannot find; yet what is hope
 Unless a memory of the for ever
 Real dreamed in a lifetime's sleep?

4.

There is a door
 Between the inner and the outer night
 That sometimes opens
 Into that great room
 Where beyond times and places
 Are all once dear,
 Once near and known,
 Yet not in any space
 But the eternal presence

In whose embrace
Our many in the one
Beloved being.

5.

always the presence –
But we are absent:
Not memory nor dream
Not in the head or the heart
Nor loins, not in the substance
Of bone or vein
Or cell or molecule
Atom, electron, that burning net
That weaves each moment body's seeming,
But soul that dazzling starless night
Beyond and beyond and beyond
Knows from immemorial being,
Nor by any proof or argument
Can unknown bliss, boundless,
Kabir says, and I,
And every human.

6.

It is not different, 'the love of God'
The saints tell of,
But the same passionate, weeping, guilty love
For ever seeking heaven
Among the lost as ours,
Nor were we wrong
Who saw in some poor, suffering human guise
The divine face.

7.

Why do we fear?
The night stands wide,
Always, not strange to us.
Beyond day our bliss, our term,
Our being fulfilled,
Heart's desire,
Homecoming.

* * * * *

Still in this world
Where I have hurt and harmed
Many I loved too late,

Still the serene
Skies are over me,
Still day and night
Oblivion of sleep, kind dreams,
Presences of simple light
Of day, abundance

Of golden leaves,
Green buds of promise.
Birds visit my garden, fearless,

Flower-stars open to me
As to the blameless:

Punishment is it, or mercy

That I whose heart
Beauty reproaches, days
Prolong remorse's pain,

Still am?
* * * * *

Paradise – still I see
On autumn branches golden leaves
Cling to the blue sky
Just beyond, where I,
Though I remember, cannot be.
* * * * *

In the November dawn
Of this world, I for a time
Seemed where the earth of dream
Was astir with the living roots of flowers to come.
* * * * *

Paper-white narcissi
Who were kind to me
Long ago,
You tell me now
That to the loveless
The dead send no messages
From neglected graves.
* * * * *

Yes, it is present all, always, – but these
Blind, ignorant, sealed senses shut me
From all I love, long for, know, and am,
Weak moth fluttering against invisible pane,
Barrier not brick nor concrete, wood or iron,
Impenetrable because unknownn.
Length of time endurance might outwait
Or world-wide space traverse,
Soar above height,
Drop by drop rain from heaven
Will wear away mountain, but where the way
Away from what I am, who, being this,
So faintly, briefly struggles in vain.
* * * * *

World, what have you done
with all those dear
Women and men
We have loved and known? where
Are their voices, none
Like any other? Time,
Mysterious imperceptible flowing of now,
Where are they hidden? They were
Here, as we are, real
In the present, human and warm, familiar.
Where is the once, and how
Can we reach them there
In the timeless ever-presence

Of their being?

* * * * *

Not harmless body but the loveless heart
Is blind, that sees
As commonplace these skies, these trees

Thaty even here have followed me from the beginning
Down and on through time
To this exhausted London plot, where yet again

Blade and bud unfold from seed
Planted in holy ground
Of earth new-made

Now as always. It is I
Who do not hear the music of the stars
That set my heart to beat through seventy years

In time and space.
Far from the ever-presence I have brone my loss
But what is lost, forgotten.

* * * * *

A TESTAMENT

In memory of Bernard Blackstone

Unlooked for, the messenger,
But punctual to our need, reminds
Of who we are, why here,

And of the forgotten
Left so long ago, that those draw near
Who travel far in time.

A scholar, a friend, through seldom seen,
Like-minded, human as I,
Wrote, before the end,

Of how, unwilling and incredulous,
From death's reality to this
Real or unreal time and place

Back to a ward where cancer-patients die
His soul was dragged unwilling from its bliss.

Fine books he had written, but this
Last testimony of a man who cared no longer
For whatever a life's hard-earned honourable achievement was

Tells how soul longs only to resume
Its true eternal form, that boundless sphere
Without circumference
Whose infinite centre each for ever is.

(Based on a near-death experience of Bernard Blackstone,
reported in the *The Lancet*, Sept 3rd, 1983)

* * * * *

SHABD

Sound
 Of creation, and I
 In the great concord cry
 My one note, that trembles
 Into the continuous harmony
 Of those immortal voices
 Uttering worlds that travel on
 In waves streaming for ever. I flow
 In the undying music lost, and found.
 * * * * *

It is enough, what the eye sees,
 The here and now, the whole
 World without end, this day's epiphany
 Of leaves and shadows of leaves, the unending sky
 Has come to this
 Time and place that brings me all that is, and I
 Receive the forever unknowable
 Presence that tells itself to all, always.
 * * * * *

Reflection on a Seventy-Seventh Birthday.
For Harold Morland

I tell myself that I am old,
 That time grows short,
 But presence, now as always,

Brimful of world,
 Heart, sense and mind,
 My small cup overflows.

O ceaseless wind,
 I have heard you on the wild hills—
 Enclosing walls

Cannot hinder the unconfined
 Continuous
 With all that is.
 * * * * *

An Old Story

I

I was in a garden
 Where the trees flower,
 Where birds sing
 And waters run

But my mind wandered
 For a moment only
 Of life-long time
 I was astray,

A life-time gone —

But where are they,
The dazzling waters,
The creatures at play?

Still I see
White clouds, bright sun,
I touch young leaves,
Breathe the wild rose,

But they are far
As love from loss,
As come from gone.

II

This was not what I meant,
My life amiss

From day to day
How did I lose my way
From moment to moment?

The hours run on
Through the unkind act,
The lifelong loss,
But what is done
Long outlasts
Deed and doer,

There is no end,
From life to life
We repair what we can.

I have done what I am,
Am what I have done,
Yet meant far other.

III

Reader, I would tell
If I knew
That all shall be well,

All darkness gone,
All lives made whole,
Hearts healed that were broken,

Would tell of joy reborn,
Of wrongs made right,
Of harms forgiven,

But do not know
How what is done
Can ever not be,

Though love would wish it so.

IV

Who so well as the lost
 Can know, from absence,
 Who better, so far removed,
 Measure by want love's fullness?
 Of that kindness
 In which a myriad creatures live in peace,
 I, who know evil and good
 Ask no mercy, yet
 Claim as by right
 Best right to praise.

The untold! My life all
 I have not been or known
 Of the rich perpetual
 Flow that has carried me on
 So far – far
 From what bright star
 The distance I have come,
 Or gone, the distances still
 To travel, whence we are,
 Inaccessible to ourselves, our being.
 * * * * *

The Self-Condemed

What is this fear
 That falls between
 Sight and seen,
 Heart and heart's desire?

All is here, is near,
 But I am far
 and cannot reach or touch
 With hand or thought.

I open into the night
 The boundless dark
 That has no face,
 Or I return,

Switch on the light
 Of here and now,
 Of time and place.

Where is what love
 Has lost or cannot find
 Or call to mind?
 What so near my end
 Do I still seek?

Self-accusation and remorse
 Cannot unlock
 The gate of paradise
 For one self-condemned
 Beyond reprieve.
 * * * * *

Hand, pen
 That must write truth,
 Bitter world
 That interposes darkness
 Between remembered heaven
 And shadowed earth,
 The voice of joy
 Signs on, but far away,
 In sorrow's regions
 I would bring comfort
 With news of paradise, but memory
 Of joy brings tears.
 * * * * *

Breath of world's first delight
 I breathed and was,
 Now pollution-laden
 Air carries wide and far
 Voices of sorrow, tears
 Fall in the bitter rain,
 Earth's wombs are closed
 With dust and ashes, yet
 There remains fire,
 The pure, the purifier.
 * * * * *

First Communion, Sermoneta, May 11th, 1986
For Emmuanele Marchetti

Village Madonna, tender Queen of Heaven,
 With her bambino, his royal crown
 Woven, like hers, with gold of tinsel and dream,
 Shines on these new children entering her house of life –
 Little girls with earrings, bows of ribbon
 Plaited in shining Italian hair, the small boys sporting ties
 Knotted by loving mothers of their own.
 The Cistercian abbey-church is murmuring
 With children's whispers, babies-in-arms, grandmothers
 Delighting in these new people they have seen come.
 The old priest raises the Holy Grail to catch sun's rays,
 You country voices sing, lilies and summer flowers
 Today conceal the tortured body on the crucifix.
 They eat the bread of angels, for whom
 Life's deepest roots have drawn
 From love's true vine new wine.
 The Madonna from her painted state smiles.

2

And what of those others,
 The one-parent mothers,
 Their dreams a flicker
 On a screen, a machine
 Their icon, sad sex
 Torments their youth
 Who were never children.
 What mothering
 Can the unmothered give?

And no child's laughter
 Lightens the heart
 Of anonymous fatherhood.
 Where is home's door
 For the unloved?
 Their unvalued human
 Beauty is shorn,
 Eyes averted, dyed crests,
 Belts, buckles, brave face
 On hopelessness.
 * * * * *

Nameless Rose

Sometime, some where
 Always I hoped to find again
 The rose whose trusses of pearl-
 Shell-petalled flowers
 Climbed to my first window-sill.
 My mother did not know its name.

Some where, some time
 That flourishing tree, whose buds, sun-warm
 Opened godly-stamened on the wall
 Centres of sweet small roses
 Whose petals fell too soon
 I hoped to find,

But in no catalogue, no visited garden
 My mother's nameless rose, until
 Today in Italy, where summer
 In multitude is blooming,
 By a ruined wall I came
 Upon a bower, and did not dare

To look too close, fearing to find
 That rose too a stranger, yet
 When I came near, each shell-pearl petal
 Slipped into memory's place:
 'Look, we are here', they told me, 'then
 Is now again'. Almost

I believed them, for they were the same
 As in those childhood summers past,
 Those withered petals made anew;
 But I was not, for years between,
 Tears and estrangement, my mother's sorrow
 No flowers could comfort, nor mine now.

Ninfa May 13th, 1986

* * * * *

The Closed Door

I am a closed door:
 What is outside?
 The empty night
 The eternal spaces.

Who is within?

My stranger self
Whom I am not,
Who is not I.

How escape?
I have lost the key,
In or out
There is no way.

Will no-one come
To set me free?
Only love
Can unlock the heart.

I am unloved,
I am alone!
It is the love you give
Will guide you home.
* * * * *

The Inescapable

No longer one
On whom the icons smile,
To whom the gods unveil
In dreams their faces,

All is valueless, all,
As I am, unblessed
Only love can see
The holy face.

To India, Italy,
My world goes with me,
Returning to my house
The furies await me.

On those who have loved me
I have brought sorrow,
Those I once longed for
Have hurt and harmed.

Is this hell then?
When did I cross the threshold
Whose inner world
Is this holocaust?

If any work of mine
Has for you embodied
Meaning, beauty or joy,
Spare me.
* * * * *

Radio Set

Harsh and human
voices from the heart
Of unknown silent
Multitude of listening men and women

Broadcast continually on our polluted air
 From far, far
 Unknown singers who transpose,
 Attune our dull sense
 Music of the inward ear,
 Telling of love. They sing always
 Of love, those faraway young voices that are ours,
 Harmonious, profound,
 Their resonance within the city's noise we hear.

2

I have heard them, human voices,
 Singing the unending song –

Are these, then,
 Such as I, weighed down
 By pain, remorse?

The wind passes
 Over us, who are as grass,
 Who are heart-strings
 To joy, to sorrow attuned.

Silent, I have denied
 Life's self-delight
 Withheld from none.

Who can remove
 Mankind's remorse and woman's tears,
 Who hide ourselves

From the light of the stars, the sun,
 The bright clouds, the wings,
 The leaves, the trees, the rain,
 The myriad eyes,

Who from the ever-living
 Withhold in grief our love?
 * * * * *

H. G. A.

Too long away,
 You have drawn near, of late,
 Or is it I,
 Late, who return,
 Nearing my end of time,
 To your timeless place?
 I have lived lifelong
 My works and days with friends and strangers,
 Now those ties
 I and they have woven
 No longer bind me, alone,
 Duties, done or undone, forgotten.
 How easily a lifetime falls away
 And I stand free,
 Now, again, as then.
 Invisible companion ever young,

Lead me away
 Where you will beyond memories,
 Beyond past days and vanished houses,
 Remembered and forgotten faces.
 Here is not my place, nor I this.
 * * * * *

A Dream

Those birds of dream,
 Circling high as eagles the skies of sleep,
 Descending to rest in trees –
 I saw with wonder birds of paradise,
 Rainbow-hued, luminous
 Their plumage, and others gray as doves.
 Again into that inner sky they rose, but then
 Returned once more to await. Are these
 Birds of soul's country images
 Of earth, remembered? Peacocks
 Adorning miniatures of Brindavan, or Persian pages
 Painted with two squirrel-hairs by craftsmen
 Skilled in marvels,
 Are they of inner or of outer skies,
 Nature's splendour, or memory's ?
 Or are earth's peacocks' jewelled ocelli
 Mirrors of paradise? Their plumes
 That make the light shimmer are only dust
 Of the earth, their lustre in the beholder's eye.
 Where, of what land are they?
 Or when did dust and spirit
 So separate that creatures of clay
 Ceased to mean heaven,
 The birds of heaven fly from our waking world away?
 * * * * *

What human babe
 Born in this world
 without a brimful cup
 Of tears to weep –
 But those tears shed
 Dry-eyed
 The heart weeps blood.
 * * * * *

Who Are We?

Not that I remember, but that I am
 Memory, am all that has befallen
 Unbroken being and knowing
 Whose flow has brought me here, laden with the forgotten
 Times and places, once here and now
 Of those who were, from day to day,
 From life to life, as I,
 Presences of that omnipresence without end or beginning
 Living through our being
 That brings and takes away the unnumbered living
 Moments of joy and wisdom, the once familiar
 Rooms and temples and fountains, the long-ago gardens
 Of a thousand summers, music once heard,

Travelling through me and on, like a wave
 Of sound, a gleam
 Irrecapturable. And who are we
 Who gather each one leaf, one life of the myriadfold tree
 Of the lost domain, and mourn
 The flowing away of all we never were or knew?
 Promises, messages, reach us, instruct us,
 The untold, the untellable
 Undying heart's desire, resonance
 Of elsewhere, once, someday, for ever.
 * * * * *

Jessie

A cousin sent it me,
 Found in the back of a drawer,
 A broken brooch engraved with my mother's name,
 Returned from long ago, when I
 Knew by heart those silver clover-leaves and flowers
 Small as forget-me-nots.
 Then they were part of the known, whole world
 My mother gave me; her name a message whose simple meaning
 Is herself, once dear and familiar, now dear and far.
 * * * * *

I have been told
 My early poems were luminous
 With a clear vision of the beautiful world,
 While now a darkness shadows
 That rainbow land.

Old, I dwell with those
 Though lost, remembered,
 Dear, whom I wounded,
 Holy, though scorned,
 Loved, though rejected,
 At heart, though neglected,
 The deathless, the dead.
 * * * * *

August 20th, 1986

Full circle-wedding-day
 And day of earth to earth -
 Daughter, bride, mother,
 This last time together,
 Man and wife before the altar -
 Love made eternal
 * * * * *

All Souls

I, who in these shortening days
 Am still in the company of the living
 Who bear through time
 All who were, are, or shall ever be,
 Until the kingdom comes nor they nor I shall see,
 Who, from time immemorial sorrowing
 Have heard the far-away music of immortal joy.

As this year darkens towards its close
 I, until my last leaves fall,
 Keep faith with that unending song
 For those who were as now I am,
 Remembering that imagined state and place
 I never knew, nor they, that whence and whither
 All come and all return.

In days to whose morning I shall not wake,
 To others I shall not know, that song will tell
 That all is as the dead who in us will not rest
 Would have it be, whose hearts beat on
 In mine, through the October dark
 Keeping the flame alight
 Of all they never were, nor I.

Living I have traversed another day,
 Kept faith still with what is not,
 Has never been, that none has known
 Who ever was, nor we
 Whose memories are inexhaustible as time
 Whom time can never satisfy,
 That yet through time live on in me.
 * * * * *

A Candle for All Saints, All Souls

In this book, gift of an unknown friend
 Hoping I might find words to kindle
 Some illumination of mind or heart,
 There remain many spacious pages where I still
 May trace life's record, as the ant in dust,
 The beetle under elm-bark, the snail
 Its lustrous footsepts, or track of hare on the bare snow.
 All leave their signature, as skeleton veins
 Record spring's sap-flow in leaves once green.
 What the pattern, what the meaning, these toilers know
 No more than I what or to whom I tell -
 No more than the small house-fly that alights
 Now on this page, whose script
 Only the writer of the book of life can read.

On my shelves closed books of many lives,
 Knowledge of the long dead, who lived these thoughts.
 I have explored their regions of wisdom and wonder,
 As others will relive their ever-present past
 Whose records, written or unwritten, remembered or forgotten
 Come to us in words spoken by living lips
 Of the wise and the unwise, long-ago voices repeating
 The never-ending stories of the loved and known
 As being moves through every here and now, delighting
 In all we have been and seen and done, endured,
 Imagined and dreamed.

Fragments, traces remain, perfect like fossil shells,
 Pages unfaded, painted walls, or sculptured stone,
 Writings on bark or palm-leaves, scripts
 Decipherable still by some, though few

Who from old manuscripts can rekindle the light
 That once illumined texts of treasured wisdom
 Transcribed by monks of Whitby or Ajanta.
 The gods themselves told the creation-stories
 To those first ancestors whose scriptures were the stars
 Who knew the speech of insect and bird, of rock and cloud,
 The innumerable living, each a universe
 Boundless in its own presence,
 Undying in the imagination of the world.
 I leave my trace, with theirs, in timelessness
 * * * * *

October Wind

Wind, lifting litter, paper, empty containers, grit,
 Even here blows the once unpolluted element of air –
 Between post-office and supermarket still the caress
 Of earth's invisible breath cool on my face
 As gusts in spirals and eddies whirl
 Spent leaves from London's plane-trees to let fall
 Perfect forms so lightly poised in some vandalized lot,
 And as another dark October dawn
 Renews world's unending beginning
 I have heard again the eleven geese in formation pass
 Over exhausted London on their untrammelled courses.
 * * * * *

Have I not heard
 Or only thought or hoped to hear
 Those harmonies of heaven
 That make the music of the world,

Waves of wind and tide,
 Heartbeat and pulse
 Of life, all songs,
 All forms of being?

If they are there
 With what dim vision
 Looked daily on
 Earth's holy face,

Yet if imagined only
 Still the imaginable
 Meaning and beauty
 Of human thought,
 Of heart's delight.
 * * * * *

That immortal voice
 Is never silent, sings
 As the sun rises,
 As threes ascend,
 Eloquent in sound of water and wind.
 We see its utterance
 Move across our days, our skies
 In birds and stars, we taste,
 We touch and breathe it, every sense attuned
 to harmonies of paradise,

Clouds and mountains, rivers and seas,
 Telling all that is.
 * * * * *

Be comforted, sorrower,
 Dark shadow cast
 By the one light,
 Remember, none
 Who has not mourned has known
 How deep the heart,
 How high its star.
 * * * * *

I

This was not what I meant,
 My life amiss

From day to day
 How did I lose my way
 From moment to moment,

The hours run on
 Through the unkind act,
 The lifelong loss

But what is done
 Long outlasts
 Deed and doer,

There is no end
 From life to life
 We repair what we can.

I have done what I am,
 Am what I have done,
 Yet meant for other.

II

Reader, I would tell
 If I knew
 That all shall be well,

All darkness gone,
 All lives made whole,
 Hearts healed that were broken,

Would tell of joy reborn,
 Of wrongs made right,
 Of harms forgotten,

But do not know
 How what is done
 Can ever not be

Though love would wish it so.

III

Who so well as the lost
 Can know, from absence,
 Who better, so far removed,
 Measure by want love's fullness?
 Of that kindness
 In which a myriad creatures live in peace,
 I, who know evil and good,
 Ask no mercy, yet
 Claim as by right
 Best right to praise.
 * * * * *

Darkening Light

Yet another day
 Has risen on our declining world
 From a far pure source.

Sun kindles
 The sun-like in us
 Who are that light

We wake to, seers
 Of all seen. Are the great sun's rays
 Dimmed by our sight,

By the evil eye,
 by the ignorant mind,
 By the blind heart,

By human tears and blood?
 Is the speeding away light
 To the end of days
 Shadowed by our dark state?
 * * * * *

London Rain

These diamond spheres
 Tainted from poisoned air that blows about the houses,
 Each sour raindrop hanging from wire or railings
 Yet catches its ray to open the rainbow light
 of heavenly promise before it falls
 On sterile ground to moisten the patient moss
 That mends with living green
 Of paradise, springing from blown dust in cracks and crevices
 For lonely downcast eyes to find a long-ago familiar place.
 * * * * *

Christmas Poem, 1986

Ah, human child, for whom we wait,
 The nights of earth are darker now,
 Yet still you come, and still the stars
 Keep their cold distance, as the wise
 Men attend you still, who know
 Only that none knows,
 Though sometimes watch ers on the hills

Hear the far music of the spheres.
 But you into our world always
 Bring your mere self, unqualified.
 * * * * *

Before my eyes this page, my writing hand,
 Books, lamp alight, fire low:
 Shall I remember or forget
 This time and place, my world
 That none but I can know,
 This secret, infinite here and now?
 * * * * *

JOY

Where is joy, when?
 I, being old, know
 Joy here and now, always,
 In every place, is in us
 Who must die, must mourn,
 Must soon be gone.

Joy, fragile, brief,
 Soon, once, then, no-where-
 But how beautiful, how clear
 The sun, the light of life.

No need to tell of sorrow,
 Of absence, loss - tears flow
 From all eyes, offerings
 To joy the heart remembers,
 Whose lack all know.

No more nor less
 Joy, whose presence
 Is always
 In its own place
 Not ours.

Joy -
 This morning against clear sky
 Twigs of leafless sycamore
 Gently stir
 In the chill air

How far from joy -
 Yet glad, because I
 Myself who am the shadow
 Before my eye
 Must at last die.
 * * * * *

What Did I Expect?

What, then, did I
 Look for, on earth,
 From sun and sky,
 From bird and tree?

What hope to know, to see,
What treasure find,
What music, mystic rose,
What face,

Who every day have seen
Sky, sun, flower, leaf,
Rainbow and rain,
Faces, places,

Yet failed to recognize
The beyond-price
Heavenly glory
Lifelong before my eyes

Father, mother,
Children, friends, strangers
Have been good to me

For whom soon for ever
The light will fade
Of this epiphany.

* * * * *

APPENDIX IV

THE KINGDOM
ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

These poems are one follower's meditations on those texts in the Gospel according to St. John which speak of the Kingdom of Heaven; they claim to be no more.

During my earlier years I gathered knowledge from many spiritual traditions; in my later years I have lost sight of most that I gathered. What remains from the teaching of the Church is the four Gospels; of the Gospels, the mystery of the Kingdom; the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within; the Kingdom of God which is also the human kingdom, taught by the Lord Jesus to an uncomprehending many and a few who partly understood.

I do not claim, like William Blake, to be 'an inhabitant of that happy country' but to see it far away; and that, though I may never enter it, is enough.

This is the fourth section of a longer sequence on the Kingdom ready to the four Gospels, which may at some future time be published. Meanwhile these poems seem to have a unity in themselves and I do not wish to add or omit or change the sequence as it stands. Were I to do so they would be still inadequate to their theme; they are an offering, not an achievement.

Kathleen Raine.

Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John iii.5

Drawn to those caverns
Where the nymphs are
With their moist thighs,
Descending souls

Quench in death
Life's desire,
Drink deep
From Hades's river.

Shrouded phantoms
Who seek their grave-plots,
Times and places
Of Hades' dream-flux.

As fathering spirit
Begets on earth
Children of heaven
In sorrow's regions.

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. John iii.13

Heaven's one in earth's many
Suffers each life
From cradle to grave,

The being of all:
Not like us, but is us
Incarnate God
And crucified Christes.

And John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. John iii.27

A reed shaken -
John the Prophet
Uttered for God
From the beginning
The desert wind.

For I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him that sent me. John vi.28

He who descends the Tree
Of God, to be
Born, knows only
'The will of him that sent me'.
Who, then, are we
For whom he must die?

And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I come down from heaven? John vi.42

Habituate with mystery
We think we know them,
Some Joseph and Mary
Into whose house

A child from heaven

Your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. John vi.58

Golden
Corn of the harvest
Of all earth's graves
Springs from the furrow,

Unseen
Seed of the Father
Sown from heaven
In eternal spasm.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. John vi.50

Each day our daily bread
This dust and ashes earth
True bread from heaven
Blind mouths
We in ignorance eat.

I am not come of myself but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him, and he hath sent me. John vii.28-29

Who am I?
This writing hand I know
From long familiarity,

Bur living vein and bone
Hidden from me,
This body I call mine.

What would do I see,
And whose my sight?
Whence sent to be?

As river I flow
Down from a height
Beyond my reach of being,

But he
Remembered he was from God
Who was as we.

Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come. John vii.34

For a few years
A face seen,
Known, as we say,
And then withdrawn.

Did any know him
Who is gone
Out of our sight?
We use the word

Yet saw only

An image of mystery,
Eyes of love
That looked at us.

... I proceeded forth and came from God; Neither came I of myself, but he sent me. John viii.42

Long journey into being –
Diminished as we
Into his here and now, past
Lost, the cross to come
Beyond time's onrushing present did he
Remember the way he had come, foresee
A way home for the Son of Man
Beyond the Tree?

I and my Father are one. John x.20

Incomprehensible words –
Yet simple
as inbreathed air breathed back
Into blue heavens, for
Is God – what else?
But only the Son wears
A face.

I am the resurrection and the life. John II.25

He who is
Called stinking Lazarus from the grave;
Whether to live
Be not to die, none knows,
To die to live.

The resurrection and the life always
A birth, a death for those
Who hear His voice, and rise
From nothingness to love.

Father, glorify thy name. John xii.28

'I have glorified, and will again'
said the wordless voice
To the Word his son,
Said the voice of wind and tide
And humming stars,
Life's songs and cries.
Said the silence in the heart,
'I am'.

And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. John xii.50

The Everlasting speaks
In all that is:
What man hears
The Son utters.
What the woman
Imparts in silence,
What the child
Life's eyes open to us.

When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of the world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end. John xiii.1

Parting, departing always –
Yet here and now
Bathed travelling feet
Of those who follow
Mother's, child's friend's lover's faces
That from beyond times and places
He who is turns to us.

Jesus knowing ... that he was come from God, and went to God. John xiii.3

The human terror –
That there is none greater
Than we, who must,
Lost among whirling nebulae,
Cycles of dust,
Name the nihil father
Of love's dearest.

The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. John viii.16

Greater than we
Who sends us, ignorant
Of who we are, or what
Our part
 It is he
Who tells the heart
Its story.

Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. John xiii.36

Within blind pupa form
Wings, eyes for flight, for sight
In atmospheres unknown;
An old emblem, Psyche, the butterfly,
Found on many a tomb.
He, risen; we
Wingless and eyeless mourn.

If it were not so, I would have told you. John xiv.2

Needless to tell us
Whose dream is paradise
Of that happy place
For the soul is
Its vision's domain,
But 'If it were not so'
The spirit of truth
In the human heart
would 'nihil' have spoken.

In my father's house are many mansions. John xiv.2

Poetry soul's house -
Those golden builders raise
That city whose domes and spires
Are spacious thoughts, are vision's
Copious flow and overflow
Of times and places, moments and hours and days
Of multitudes, whose knowledge is what each loves
and in mind's living mirror gaze
Each into our own eternal place.

I go to prepare a place for you. John xiv.2

To each at heart
He tells, reveals,
Draws aside
Shadow that closes
Eyes from sight, Knowing from being,
Love from presence,
Life from delight

I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. John xiv.3

No absence but a presence
Elsewhere, lost to us,
In places and days
Where none can follow.

If he were not
How could he be absent?
If we had not known him
How could we sorrow?

Great are love's distances
But not of time and space:
In the unbounded heart
He has prepared a place.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. John xiv.6

But who the speaker,
Mask or maskeer,
Breath of God
Or wind's noise,

Whose the voice
That wakens in us
Sense of being,
Knowledge of meaning,
Tremor of bliss?

None cometh unto the Father but through me. John xiv.6

The son
Always arriving:
Before his presence
In the world's house

How far the way?

Home
Seems a place for ever
In the light of day,
Yet into familiar night
His returning.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my father also. John xiv.7

How can he who is
Be bounded?
Always and everywhere
The very face we love
Whose human eyes
Are the light of the world.

Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? John xiv.10

No part or particle not that all
Neither great nor small, whose centre
Is always where we are,
contains us, is in us
Begetter and begotten,
No elsewhere but the One
Who is us, our unknown
Being, who alone is
Deus Absconditus.

And whatever ye ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. John xiv.13

But who in that name dare
Invoke the Father's fires?
Not far from us -
Frailest membrane of life divides, or mirroring surface,
At a thought's distance
The Seven Eyes sent forth into all the earth.
O, withhold us from our desires!
Let no will but His
Release those inconceivable powers.

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. John xiv.16

Other than he who died?
When no longer ever, anywhere, can we meet,
Near or far or at the world's end
The face we love, what comfort?
Memory a ghost, hope futureless, the present
All that we have and are
Becomes a boundless prayer,
And he is there.

Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. John xiv.17

Who listens to silence?
Who sees
The messenger?

Wherever we may be
Conscience speaks to us
Louder than world's noise,

The angel in every place,
Although we turn away
Rises before our eyes.

We cannot flee
From what we are:
Witnesses.

For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. John xiv.17

Simple his words,
Incomprehensible to those
For whom his presence is

A reflection in the glass
Of time and place,
Where some have seen his image pass:

He enters where love builds
Soul's unseen house.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more. John xiv.19

That human face
He turns to each who loves,
Guise or disguise he wears
Whose presence in the world
Is here and now, then gone
Utterly from each who knows
Only in recollection who it was
Who visited us, bearing a familiar name
We did not recognize
As one among the innumerable holy names of God.

But ye see me: because I live ye shall live also. John xiv.19

Beautiful in father, mother, child,
Lover or bride, or marred
Obscured by the degradation of this world,
Ignorant and lost, the holy blood
Bleeding from every wound
The living suffer, hurt,
Silenced, the song of the heart
Torned to raving. All earth's indignities and sorrows
disfigure life's one-in-many faces.
Yet love, and even in these
You will see God.

I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. John xiv.20

Whose the voice
That can affirm 'I am'
And claim for father

The dark source?

Alike meaningless
Belief, unbelief
Of ours, who have forgotten
The way of life

From origin
To what we are,
Ourselves unknowing
Whence and whither.

Now have they both seen and hated me and my father. John xv.24

Not sinners but world-rulers
Having seen, must hate
Man in God's image made.

But for his presence
Theirs would be the kingdom
The power and the glory.

So great his dignity
The earth cannot contain him,
Can but destroy him
Again and again

The divine human rises
In our murderous hearts
To take his seat of judgment.

They hated me without a cause. John xv.25

What cause for hate
But that we cannot
Endure to be undone
Like shadows by the sun,
Drop by the ocean,
Cave by the opening light,
The selves we are unmade?

... even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. John xv.26

Proceeding, abiding, returning –
He whom love has known
No longer wears
His human face,
But from the ends of space
That wheel of stars
Is all his presence.

But because I have said these things sorrow has filled your heart. John xvi.6

He spoke of eternal life
To those who understood
Only that he must die,

That human face
Hers, now, where humankind
Meet one another,
Be seen no more.

Sorrow the one love
That only we on earth
Can offer.

...It is expedient that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you. John xvi.7

Presence, absence,
By both we know
The measure of love;

Had the eternal
Remained below
How sweet this place,

But soul cannot live
(A poet has said)
Without sorrow,

The image shattered,
The rushing wind,
The sound of space.

A little while and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to my Father. John xvi.16

Ourselves miraculous
Among the wonders
Of birds, beasts, trees, islands and seas,
Sun, moon and galaxies
Yet doubt his promise inconceivable
As to sightless stone the stars.
Yet as in stone, star touches darkness
So our blind hearts at his words
Tremble, as to the unheard music of the spheres.

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. John xvi.28

Not remote, but everywhere
Before our eyes the mystery;
Not in doubt, this world
We touch, and hear, and see.

But who we are,
Whence came and whither go,
None knows but he
Whose words are clear
True and incomprehensible as the light.

Now we are sure that thou knowest all things. John xvi.30

He spoke of the unknowable when he said
'I came out from God',

But 'Now at last you speak plainly'
They replied.

'Do you now believe?'
He answered; but what mystery
Did he then communicate, they receive?

What but himself?
They in that moment understood:
Without him was not anything made that was made.

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. John xvi.32

Each man alone
And he alone
Who in each
That solitude
Must live again,

For each must go
Where none can follow,
Every life
A different way
To that one end
That Jesus knew.

Yet 'not alone'
He still could say
who on the Cross
Uttered the cry
'Why, my God, my God,
'Hast thou forsaken me?'

... be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. John xvi.33

About to die,
The world dwindled,
Time gone,

Only himself remains
whom his pursuers cannot hold,
His torturers destroy.

The cross where they
Think to bind him, bars their way

Into the mind of God
He who was in the beginning goes.

Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee.
John xvii.1

Once only
In this world
Was that prayer made,
Did that hour come.

The Son of God

Who in the beginning
Was the Word
God had spoken,

From the world,
Son of man
About to die
Cried out to heaven

'I have finished
'The work thou gavedst',
Made manifest
What man is,
The human face
Of divine glory.

... the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I
am not of the world. John xvii.14

I

Who will not receive
Must loathe the gift
Each longs for most,
Yet cannot have
Because the heart is closed
Fearing the hurt
All must endure who love:
Easier to hate.

II

Did not he
In the beginning
Cause us to be,
Our many in his all, the multitudes
Of eternity?

Whose then the dream,
This seeming world,
By whom its stroy told
To those who sleep
Each alone?

shadows, leaves, lives,
Selves who cling
Each to our own fate,
Who dread to wake,
Who hate the light?

They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world. John xvii.16

We do not know their state
Nor where their place, who pass

Beyond the scope of sense,
who see with opened eyes
The dark world we inhabit

See beautified
Barren earth and seas,

Women and man, age, youth,
Who know death otherwise
Than we, and birth, And love and hate,

Who are in God
with him who is
In every heart.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I
am. John xvii.24

The poet is of those
Who see but cannot be
In that holy place.

Vision or mirage trembles
In a dry wilderness
Of an elsewhere island.

Of garden and tree I have told,
Mountain and clear stream,
Remember, who may not enter

That ever-present kingdom
Where some I know and have known
Have been and are always,

Whose brightness from far away
Shines on my desert journey:
Yet I bear witness.

... that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; John xvii.24

What is light
To the mist-dwellers,
The caverned men?

What is glory
To clay that walks
From dust to dust?

Only the sun in the eye
Sees the sun,
And we the human

through the son
Not earth-born
Who from heaven came down.

... for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. John xvii.24

O love-begotten
Life in the beginning
Before moon or sun,

Before day and night
the light of man
Unborn, undying

Boundless being

In whom, by whom
All things are made,

Not in the world
But world in him
Who from death's threshold prayed

That at the end of days
As before heaven and earth
Be glorified
That holy deathless one.

My Kingdom is not of this world. John xix.26

'Not of this world':
As sound invisible
Travels the air
The words resound
To the world's end,
Yet Pilate can never hear
What Jesus said
Nor his power compel
The elusive dead.

ON . LIFE'S BEATITUDES
St. Matthew, v.3-16

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Wanting nothing, theirs what is
Of boundless here and now. Sense the eye
That what is given, receives, presence,
Revelation of flowers, blades of grass,
Sky.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Mourning: dark mystery of the heart
I have learned your secret.
Guide in dark night, veiled,
Have followed you into a pure land.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Returned from how far a country, I found you, childhood's friend,
Your sons farming now your father's fields,
Grandchildren, family albums, wedding-groups;
Warmth in your house, and place
For the prodigal who also through long years
Had lived on in that native country you inhabit only in dreams.

Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Did not respond to snigger or guffaw,
Complicity of the human animal;
Shakespeare he loved, who knew the vile
But praised nobility in men and women.
Unimpressed by Darwin, he lived by an older tale
Of one in the image of God, first made, last born,
And for that king's sake, courteous to all:

My father such a man.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

I have asked none, nor shown.
Yet have been given
Days and months and years of time, the mercy
Of eternity.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

God incorruptible, Plotinus said;
Freed from body's mire and clay
Soul shines in native purity:
'To cleanse the face of my spirit'
Blake's Awakener came,
'To wash off the not human'; and I
Would bathe in the waters of life
To wash myself away.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Noisy propaganda against this and that, rallies,
Marches, manifestos, demonstrations – are these
The children of God? Rather, perhaps,
The quiet ones,
My mother walking in her garden listening to her flowers
Telling of paradise, forgetting a daughter's unkind words.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is
the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and
persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my
sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets
which were before you.

Of righteousness I cannot speak,
Yet writing not from opinion but from knowledge
Not taught in schools, have weathered Academic rage
Happy in good company, Thomas Taylor, William Blake
Who were before me.

Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith
shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out,
and to be trodden underfoot of men.

The clerks, as we all know, have betrayed –
The universities, the media, the press;
The churches too trivialise.
Mere spiritual ignorance?
Or do they know full well where danger lies
For those who break a pact with this world's prince?
Poets (a modern word, Blake said for prophets)
Care mostly to be seen in print, or broadcast
Effortless verse for effortless consumption.
When poets have their price
(And such a cheap one!) who shall salt the savourless?

Alchemists in solitude laboured at the Great Work
To transmute the heavy substance of the world
Through sulphur's fiery, salt's transmuting power
To gold: invisible order of the wise!
Our democratic age dissolves all back

In the base element to equalize.
Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

Not on any map, the cities of Sarras, Monsalvat,
Where knights of the Temple meet
who keep the roads to the holy places; yet
We know the twelve secret ones who serve
Their invisible Master are always on earth, somewhere,
In New York City may be the Messiah, unrecognized,
Martin Buber wrote; a French savant
In Iran; a wounded poet I long have known;
A Sikh Master in the Punjab; a Ute Indian;
A Carmelite monk I knew in Kensington;
Some holy 'stalker' in Russia, or, who knows,
The man who made the film? My own father?
I cannot reach my count of twelve, but have sometimes felt
The brushing of a crimson [arch] angel's wing.

Let your light so shine before men, that they shall see your good work, and
glorify your Father which is in heaven

When there is no other
Who shall bear witness
Unless I myself, with the prayer

That a light that is not mine
Through my worthlessness
May shine.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust
doth corrupt. Matt. vi.20
(Kielder revisited, June 14th 1981)

Black on the hills for miles, dense
Forestry plantations of sitca and spruce,
Clearings, rides, caravan-sites;
But under birdless branches
Impenetrable presence of archaic lives
Whose leading shoots advancing into time
Year by year have invaded spaces of remembered hills.

The new reservoir's expanse
Is changeless; water lies level always; fills
Weightless the reflected clouds
As passing thoughts; gone
The house that was my mother's home,
Gay flower-beds where begonias bloomed,
Nemophila, mint and pansies in the shade,
Fuzzy the cat sunning herself on the lichen wall:
That sheltering roof under the bright surface
That covers all.
A faded snapshot
I lately threw away, for who would know
Ghosts of seventy years ago?
But in love's memory-place
The trout-flies in my grandfather's tweed hat,
The shining fender where my grandmother's loaves rise
No moth can spoil nor rust corrupt.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matt. vi.21

I have no heart's desire
Nor heart to seek
That treasure:
It is my heart I lack.

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! Matt. vi.23

None blind but by the measure
Of a lacked sight
What better knowledge of the sun
Does earthworm, flower, tree require?
What can we seek unless the known,
A state of being once ours,
Whose loss remembers paradise:
We scan our darkness by its light.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Matt. vi.23

World of causes, Imagination,
Order intelligible
Whose thoughts we are, in all
Our many one
King and kingdom,
Shadows by sun made visible
Who enacts, known or unknown,
Our to ourselves unknowable being.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Matt. vi.34

Present of the Presence, past, future,
the living and the dead together
In communion for ever now; we
With all who once were, all who will be
When this day is where the dead years are.
I listen to past voices, I reply;
Love unheeded then speaks to me now.
Did they, then, know
How words spoken to the young, long ago
Are heard by the old a lifetime after?
I after long alienation of the heart
Answer their silent need of me –
In that kingdom beyond time
Not too late or soon for healing love.
May my untold also, and undone,
Reach some day its term; my grandchildren, gray-haired,
Remember happy days, forgive
As I now in the abiding presence of my past
Forgive and honour those who in me live on.
He who took no thought for the morrow had none, nor yesterday.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Matt. vii.6

The mysteries not hidden;
Their symbols everywhere displayed
Upon earth's pearly sphere that spins
Its rainbow surface in the skies,

Mirroring the eternal mind
In leaf and twig, in cloud and stone.
Angelic intelligences scan
With all the innumerable eyes of God
Nature's illuminated pages,
The seen in which the unseen is shown.
Not hidden, yet none can divulge
The holy mysteries of heaven:
Meaning is of the heart, heart's world unseen.
Tatters to dogs, and filth to swine.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Matt. vii.7

So simple; why then not ask, seek,
Knock at that secret door? We do not need, perhaps,
Invisible gifts? Yet children
Give one another, and us too, such beautiful imaginary presents
And with such love.
But few find worth the asking the gifts of the spirit,
Wisdom, knowledge, faith, hope, gentleness, goodness;
And who in the liberated nineteen-eighties would choose
long-suffering love.
That trusts, bears, believes and hopes, endures all?
Inner riches are for those with low wages:
Better to press our civil rights
With those who pay them. Well, we have been told,
Of course, what those wages; but then, there is no sin
In the Permissive Society, and, a propos death,
Science in these days of transplant surgery and wonder-drugs
Is well on the way to overcoming that medical problem:
For what else do we pay our National Health Insurance?
It's only a matter of time: we need not knock
Yet at the door of the Kingdom of Heaven.

... strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life ...
Matt. vii.14

Has no dimension, is not in time,
The way from world to world,
No, not on the very spot where others found
That gate, wishing-well, scared mountain;
The bush that burned
For Moses only another thorny desert shrub.
Blake in the sun beheld the heavenly host
That brings to the broad ways of the earth
Only the common day; and yet
Suddenly we are there,
Where we have always been, transfigured.
Homecoming: how then are we lost again,
Who neither can forget, nor ever
Throughout all time un-know that holy land?

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Matt. vii.16

In books written about the wild places
Where he sought refuge, a lover of boys
Has shared with multitudes his vision of Paradise.

That sick poet who could never support himself,

Took lighter-fuel to dull the pain of being human,
Sensed in London's night the suffering heart of love.

My friend the ostracised lady
Who gave to those who asked her generous body
In an unclouded vision was shown the divine glory;

While that man of vain repetitions, authority
On the split hairs of the Desert Fathers
Broke hearts in the name of sanctity
To be found only on Athos or some remoter mountain.

Of self-righteousness
The fruits are unkindness, tears,
The Holy Inquisition, Hitler's holocaust, the Maze prison.

God forgive us, forgive me
Judgments and condemnations passed in your name
Whose face everywhere to all is turned always.

... one having authority, not as the scribes.

As in tree, flower, bird, we
Sense the green earth, so he,
Author not of books but worlds,
Realms invisible, to us hearsay
Knows with Imagination's eye.

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence. Matt ix.12

Why? Let them suffer,
Suffer what we suffer
Always: despair!
We know hope vain,
And faith illusion,
Love selfish emotion,
Joy, self-deception.
No, we cry, no, as we lash out
At The kind cace, bring tears
To eyes that pity us, rout
The inhabitants from the undefended houses
Of peace.

The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Matt x.7

At hand: so near
Not thickness of green leaf
Lies between,
Nor hairsbreadth vein
Of petal or fly's wing,
And yet as far
As end from beginning,
Unseen from seen,
As now from then,
The long-gone,
The never again.

Take no thought of what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that

same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your father speaketh in you. (Matt x.20)

How can I
Speak the untold, voice
Your mystery?
The lost have only silence
Or a cry.

There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. (Matt x.20)

Told in darkness; all dark in me
That I inherit from the never-silent
Who by hidden roots that raise
The living from the dead, return.
I who am the present of their past
And past of lives to be, yet hear at heart
A voice, or many voices cry
From beyond guilt and grief, unbounded joy.
Treading the devious ways of time
I seek to uncover, layer on layer
Pure source, under long shadows cast
Upon the future from the past,
Fountain of hope
For what has never been, will never be,
And yet by anguish of absence ever known.
Telling how great that loss, do I
Speak for the absconditus?

Think not that I come to send peace on earth; I have come not to send peace but a sword. (Matthew x.34)

Merely by being such as it is, that world
Troubles this:
Who has not heard,
Ever, its music, seen in a bright cloud
Reflected image of elsewhere? Too far
That distance between what we are
And what we are.

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive the prophet's reward. Matt x.41

Of one thing I am not ashamed,
who, seeking no conflict, being no prophet,
But speaking for one, found myself unawares engaged
In the Great Battle from which there is no discharge,
Attacked (especially from behind - she's a poetess,
Boehme's, Swedenborg's, Plotinus', Plato's themes
Personal fancies, not to be taken seriously)
By academics who deface the poet's lines
With [sic] in square brackets, preserve his mis-spellings
scrupulously,
Read 'the words on the page' oblivious of their meanings.
For imagined Jerusalem they do not care
Whose daydreams are of a University chair:
Blake's golden string can only lead us
Into a labyrinth whose four beasts are dangerous.

I found their paper darts fell wide of the mark

struck by those shot from a bow of burning gold,
Have not surrendered in my time and place
My sector of those intellectual wars
He fought in once; chapter and verse
Sound armour in attack as in defence.
I have been honoured in the name of Blake
With a prophet's reward: to be shot at for his sake.

He who is last in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he. Matt. xi.11

Greatest of the prophets, ever-present Elias
Which was for to come; but who descry
From earth the far-off country
Cannot breathe its air, walk in its living light:
No way from world to world but birth, but death.

We who have endured the desert journey,
Souls who thirst for generation, gather
To the baptist by the river; he
Knew one who came to the forgetful stream
Deathless, though for that time he stepped in Jordan's water.

If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Matt. xii.28

Blind
Plasm of the earth writhes
This way and that, in pain
From light too bright,
Yet from what impels
No respite.

Dumb
The mortal worm
Has no word to voice
The ignorant urge
That goads its hungry search
from clod to clod.

What devil drives
The blind, what fiends
Lash the sense of those
Who cannot tell what moves
In every part the world
To see, to sing?

When the blind see and the dumb speak, then
The kingdom is to his kingdom come.

For whosoever speaketh against the holy ghost, it shall not be forgiven.
Matt. xii.32

Son
Of the one mother named from the bitter sea
Whose eyes unfathomable look down
Upon her babe so tenderly,
New-born
Yet older by all time than she,

Who are we
On whose feet spirit walks the world,

High in the bare branches of the here and now
Tree at my window,
Find food in winter; so far they have come
To reach this brief precarious place, from the beginning,
Whom tomorrow's frost may kill.

Seed of invisible life, sown,
Grown in earth's graveyard of all leaf and wing,
Has never failed, nor will
While shelter of boughs can hide that vulnerable germ.
Fragile messengers of the undying:
Always a new angel alighting
In the tree's commerce between earth and heaven.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven. Matt. xiii.33

True woman's art invisible germ of life
In the dry meal she hides, to feed
Parents, husband, children, strangers, the old, the young.
Beside the hearth she tends
Her loaves rise of their own accord, it seems,
And children grow
In the cradle, whom she nurtures
With her own body, her mothering hands,
Until, risen men,
And women, like warm new bread,
Are ready to be broken, given, to feed
New generations of the seed of heaven;
Of whom, without woman's love, none thrives.

The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. Matt. xiii.39

Hearing them named
What stirs in us
Like sleepers stirred by dream,
Child in the womb,
Wingless in crysalis?

Shall we see them alight
In our times and places
To cut with bright sickle
The stem that holds us
To earth's stony ground?

Bright ones invisible
Whose name has meaning
Not for the mind
But to the wordless heart
Familiar as life.

We long for them
As for the true beloved
Lost or never found;
Long awaited
They come to claim us.

Love is their nature
Who harvest us:
From mortal blood

Ours the dark wine
Of Paradise.

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be at the end of the world. Matt. 13.40

It is in us they burn,
Those undying flames -
Over our night cities
Glare the dull red skies
Of the eternal Dis.

Implacable noon signs
Signal to the night
Trivial inanities,
But their true import
We know is otherwise.

City to city flares
Their beacons to the stars -
Mankind has loosed the power
Of the stolen fire
Whose seed is in the heart.

Destruction is within us
Who secretly delight
In violence, rape and murder,
Who while we prate of peace
Hurt and harm and hate.

'God cannot be so cruel'
We say, 'as to condemn us
To Hell!' who have ourselves
Built it and live in it
'So shall it be' He said.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Matt. xiii.43

Ah, welcome fire
That will burn away
All that I am
But would not be,

If there be nothing
But ash of me
When the fire is out,
Thy will be done,

And if there remain
Some pure star,
Indestructible glory
Of what I was

Before I became
What I have been,
Thy name I praise
In the purging flame.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all

that he hath, and buyeth that field. Maatt. Xiii.44

What treasure do fields hide?
The past, streets of old cities
Whose citizens are dust?

The future? Profitable crops?
But who sells all he has
To purchase Adam's curse?

At the dead king's board
None drinks again, nor joins those revellers
Whose flesh is grass.

All fields are graves;
From flowers of all summers
All summers flower.

I had a field once, whose treasure
Was my here and now
Lime-tree in blossom, bees,
The lark's nest, morning's brightness.
There were angels on my hills,
Children in my house.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Matt. xiii.45-46

Pearl,
Drop freed from the flux, whole
Enspiring light, bright
Mirror of earth and heaven, above, below,
Eye all over, and tear
Of earth's blind pain, toil
Of the bitter tides of ocean's for ever
Ebb and flow.

And again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. Matt. xiii.47-8

Drawn through our seas
The fine imperceptible seine
Gathers our multitude,

To us invisible
Shadow or bright gleam
As if in dream

Who have seen our ways,
But we, the known,
Not their purposes

Who will keep some,
Others cast away.
Yet not in ignorance we

Who have received, though dimmed,
Refracted, bent by the incessant waves

Light from the one sun.

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just: And shall cast them into the furnace of fire. Matt. 49-50

No, it was himself who told
Of flaming fires,
Of wailing, the bottomless pit, the furnaces.

We would wish it otherwise
Who are ourselves
Those who offend, who do iniquity.

His plain words all can comprehend
Who, trembling, say
'Lord, is it I?' and know
Already the reply.

Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things new and old. Matt. xiii.52

There is a learning, then,
Of the kingdom, blessed by him
Who needed none.
But we in time pass on through time
Knowledge brought from heaven
From friend to friend,
Inscribed in sacred books, whose seals
Cannot be opened but by those
To whom the sky is given, though legible,
Penned in pigment compounded of precious mineral
By scribe of Clonmacnoise or Lindisfarne,
In golden fluent script of Ispahan,
Or magic brush of Chinese sage
Shaken with laughter because he has
Just in that moment understood
The way of earth and heaven.
It is as if the fluent ink has scarcely dried;
For all is contemporaneous, is now,
That love has discerned or wisdom known.

... there be some standing here that shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. Mat. xvi.28

And still among us,
Unnoticed, the pure in heart
Who in the human face
See the presence.

They do not know
How otherwise
What to them is plain: the kingdom,
Where love is, has come.

Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Matt. xxvii.64

That inner kingdom, veiled
By our oblivion, as an eyelid

Covers the eye, so is heaven shut

Not by these grey vapours
That cloud the dark sun
By whose filtered light
I write, but by mind's dimness
I cannot penetrate,
And only he disperse
Who is the light of light.

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. xviii.3

Konwing nothing, their being
Knowledge itself, whose eyes open
Unsurprised at what is,
Cannot speak, but are spoken.

Baby in pushcar
Regards the kind and unkind faces
In the supermarket, recognizes,
Blames none for being.

Glossy trash, cellophane,
Bottles, cans, packages,
Poor man-made utilities,
Sees otherwise,

Living light everywhere,
Shining colours, presences,
Along the pavement wind stirs
Toffee-papers, imps, little dancers

All alive, telling them, telling them
The rreal we no longer see,
Who are the seen,
Must meet their unclouded eyes.

Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. Matt. xviii.6

Unrecognized, I did not know
Then, who they were, thought a baby
Regrettable interference with what I chose
To think my proper occupation; though what that was
I cannot now recall; cried,
Needed to be fed, cleaned; woke me at night,
Not, to me, human yet.
I was preoccupied, unhappy, wild, astray.
Now, my daughter and my son,
I see on you marks of old pain
You have perhaps forgotten, but not I.

... in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. Matt. xviii.10

Begotten not made –
They know only, the unborn, the new-born,
The begetter in whom, by whom
No separation of father, mother, child;
World the great countenance

Of presence that encompasses
The sleep of paradise.
Waking, Adam's dream of time and space
Whose light is common day, whose sun and moon,
Trees, stars, do not love us; meaningless
The sounds of wind and water, bird-voices,
Not answering to joy's unbounded hope,
To love's all-embrace, to wisdom's scope,
Ourselves inscrutable nothingness.

In the great mechanism, no-one,
No little children to behold
The father's face.

All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Matt. xxviii.17

Not all, like William Blake, daily converse
As man to man with the Divine Humanity,
And yet all wonder who he is
Who lives and reigns, whose kingdom
We are: Logos, Imagination, Son
Of the Invisible whose name no one knows.
Speculation can never find the way
That to love stands open.

... if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall
ask, it shall be done for them by my Father which is in heaven. Matt.
xviii.19

Such powers we set in motion
Who live by the miraculous always, thought seem
Chance or choice, so smoothly run
The hours, we do not see the messengers
Who bring about all we intend
At heart, in love or hate, for good or ill.
We do not know ourselves the weavers
Of those invisible webs we spin
Who dare not recognize the power of thought,
Deem ourselves powerless, even while we kill.

The thing we long for seems the good,
Longing, it seems, having in us such force
As rivers that seek the sea, as the ceaseless wind.
Floods, we sweep away, hurricanes, we tear down:
Ah, God, turn our desire
Into the strong and certain currents of prayer.

... the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take
account of his servants. Matt. xviii.23

King of the great countenance,
You have seen my ways,
Forgiven, given me days

Under the blue heavens, white
Clouds, the sun's light,
Moon, stars, quiet of night,

forgiveness of trees,
The unreproachful grass, the small weeds

Growing for me in crannies, cracks of pavements,

Even in this city; the blackbirds
Outside my window have made their nest
Secure in paradise.

Yet I have not been kind, have blamed
Neighbours, spoken ill of an old friend
As if glad of a wrong he did

I might have covered and smoothed away,
Blameworthy, I have blamed
Before the presence who does not punish me.

... I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of
heaven. Matt xix.23

Burdened
With a house, furniture, books
Pictures I value, habits

Of morning cup of tea, whiskey at six
To lift me through the hours
Till time for bed,

I would find it hard
Not to be able to put hand on text, to part
With my father's chair, my mother's card-table,
Vases that have held flowers from former gardens,
Reminders of dear friends, now dead,

Strip body and soul of all,
Returning whence I came; for that state and place
Everywhere, nowhere, I am ill prepared.

But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Matt.
xix.30

Always who love
Lose, are last,
Are lost, to give
To another first place,

Who as by right
accepts from the generous,
Grows great
In another's praise.

What do these
Know of heartbreak,
Of the giver's ache
For those who take?

Take that which thine is and go thy way: I will give unto this last even
as unto thee. Matt xx.14

Alike to each given,
Labourers
who tend the vine of heaven,
Our wages,

Our penny-worth of time,
Day-long or an hour
We toil,
Bear the heat and the burden.

Empty the years
Until he summon:
Our hire, to each none more, none less
Than all.

Ye shall drink indeed from my cup, and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.
Matt. xx.23

I the cup from which that holy one
Must drink life's wine
For which all thirst who come
To the womb, from the womb,

Through whose waters who pass
Forget our father's house
Yet neverlose
Lifelong that loss.

Who the rememberer, who
The knower within
Who suffers that we are,
Suffers what we do?

That holy one endures
The flood, the fire,
The tempest and the prison
Of ignorance and time,

But what is elsewhere given
To the returning souls
None but the Father knows.

And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matt. xxi.22

Who prays, passes
The threshold that divides
That world from this,
Whence we have come, returns,
Whose sole desire, what is.

Who prays, sees heaven,
Earth's pattern, which to lose
Is to be lost, of those
Not able to receive
What none believes,
Nor can conceive.

... this is the heir: come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. Matt. xxi.38

At first he sent messengers,
And they were beaten, stoned,
(Blessed whom men revile, prophets of God
Who, persecuted, know their message heard,

Unwelcome always to men living as we please
Upon an earth not ours.)

It is not said
Those employees did not work hard
To make the vineyard pay and sell the wine
At a good profit, make a success
Of their collective farm, or syndicate;
And are not humanists bound to resent
Those who deem man God's instrument?

Then came the heir, human
As they themselves, easy to dispose of one
Who, calling himself the Son
Of a heavenly Father, challenged at root the cause
Of man's supremacy: 'Kill him', they agreed,
And ever since have boasted, 'God is dead.'

The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king, which made a marriage for his son ... Matt. xxii.2

It seems unlikely, on the face of it,
That all the invited guests declined
An invitation to a royal wedding;
But then, the king
Was only God: a parable, not the real thing.

The feast prepared, the table spread –
Not far to travel to his house
Whose doors in every heart stand wide;
But as we know, important men
Have no time for the timeless.

'Call the beggars from the roads,
The drop-outs and the unemployed
'Who through their own or others's fault
'Have nothing in the world
'To keep them from the joys of heaven.'

And so to that king's party came
All sorts, a mixed crowd, bad and good,
But when the feast was in full swing
That high king, mingling with his guests
Found one who had refused
To tidy up for the occasion.

'Bind that spoil-sport had and food
'And throw him out', the word was, 'back
'Where you found him, in the dark.'
Not only one,
But others too there must have been
Of many called, for few are chosen
Companions of the king of kings.

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven. Matt xxii.30

When at the end of days
Soul from body's grave
Rises, and looks down
Where body lies,

Strange and far
This life will seem,
In space confined,
Exiled in time,
Heart from heart divided.

In the resurrection
We who are his thoughts
As angels are

Can only love,
He being love who utters us
Who are his presence
To one another.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your father, which is in heaven. Matt xxiii.9

And yet I could not have loved more
Any face that God might wear
Than your kind presence,
My human father, patient always,
Whom I made to suffer
And now only remember.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations ... and then shall the end come. Matt xxiv.14

The story of the one king and his one son
Discerned
Afar, or by some other name
Than his, who, crucified
Was dead, buried, and rose again.
His holy shroud,
His seamless dress, all men
Wear, bear from body's birth to death,
Soul's death to birth,
Through him, in him
Who is the holy deathless one.

And then shall appear the sign of the son of man, in heaven. Matt xxiv.30

Father to son,
First-begotten, last born,
Slow the changes

From the face of the waters
Light from darkness,
Earth from skies,

Clouds from seas
In metamorphoses
Each unforeknown.

What can rock or stone
Know of green cells'
Alembic of life?

What the blind leaf
Of sight, of song?

Animal we are born
In the egg, in the womb
Time's embryon,
We remember, await
The human kingdom.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins ... Matt. xxv.1

Just such little lamps of clay as those
Archaeologists bring back from houses of dust
Where, tremulous or still,
A pulsing star of flame
Once stirred the shadows in love's room,
These virgins trimmed, with fragrant oil
And wick of a peeled rusk, or wisp of flax.

Those in the parable are praised
Whose lamps burned on
For the unknown beloved who would come
Some hour, some day, some year, the heart believes
That loves; but others
Deemed too long the empty night of time
Amorous Psyche must traverse
Who sought to see by light of such an earthen lamp as theirs
With bodily eyes Love's face.
This world would call them wise, foolish the soul
That nightlong, lifelong waits.

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling in a far country, who called
his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. Matt. xxv.14

I have ventured my share of talents till all are gone:
Why are we told only of those
Who profited, and of the unadventurous man
Who lost all, by losing nothing?
Of other losers no mention; must we suppose
There is much profit, too, in loss?

... Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the
Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him; and a voice came
from heaven ... Luke iii.21-2

That power
Can by birds of the air
Send messages, meanings
Deep as life; as dove,
Swan, angels on all wings move
Through world's wilderness
Of times and places
To find everywhere
The son of the Father.

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the
kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. Luke iv.5

In a moment of time
This world's prince
Showed the son of man
Seven thousand years.

'I will make him

'Abandon you and fall
'In love with me', said Ahriman
To Ormuzd

'Seven thousand thousand
'Lives, kingdoms, cities, all
'The ruins of time are mine'
Said Satan to Jesus.

'In time the sons of men
'Astray between past and future
'From time will return',
Said Ormuzd to Ahriman.

World's seven millennia
Less than the living moment
Between two heartbeats,
Said Blake to the Lost Traveller.

I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I
sent. Luke iv.43

Why do we, unkind and violent
Destroyers that we are, and ignorant
Still know that what we did
And do, is seldom what we meant:
The heart at heart means otherwise.

Seeing what is, we are incredulous
At our own acts, though we ourselves
Know well the time, the occasion and the place
Of each irrevocable word and deed:
And yet at heart the heart meant otherwise.

If this world's ways
Befitted us, then what are tears
That we should weep, unless
Being what we are, and full of bitterness
At heart each human heart means otherwise.

Whence sent but from those bitter depths
Of our own souls, who have betrayed
That kingdom we have known by loss,
Where yet He lives and reigns, because
Each heart at heart means otherwise than this?

Blessed are the poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Luke vi.20.

Flesh and blood
Cannot inherit
The kingdom, yet

The earth is theirs
Whom he blesses,
Gives no less

Than all to all.
The poor have nothing
but life, no place

But the heart,
Where heaven is
Earth's here and now
Beatitude.

... among those that are born of woman there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.
Luke vii.28

Borne on the wind -
Whose the oracular voices
That speak through lips of dust?

In the hollow reed
Invisible breath of the wilderness
Sounds and is gone.

Who speaks for God
Locust and wild honey
His food, a skin his garment.

Poet and prophet tell
Of a pure land
On whose earth no footfall.

From desert to river
Souls flock, moist from the womb,
And one in robes of blood

Lord of that kingdom
Into the forgetful waters
Stepped, remembering.

John the prophet
Born of woman
Knew the holy deathless one.

... the glad tidings of the Kingdom ... Luke viii.1

Glad tidings:
Not so received,
And now as then

Angels from the horizon,
From the crest of the hills,
Summon us always,

Sun moon and stars
And blade of grass,
Water and wind voices.

Heart know truth
Is what love sees,
That joy is wisdom,

But the selves we are
Cannot enter the kingdom.

Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God: but to

others in parables ... Luke viii.10

Not to be learned
From words written or spoken,
Known by reason
Or proof or sense,

In what form he pleases
Shows himself
In many guises;

His human face
To those who love
The mystery of God,
So I have heard.

And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. Luke ix.2

Not of this world his kingdom -
A film as thin
As air, intangible as thought,
Impenetrable as absence, void
As death between.

Time is our sickness
Who drift from dream to dream:
Are we ourselves
Or other selves, or selfless
Undying spirit unborn,
Ageless and free from time?

Spirit its own place:
In this world how near
Our nothing to his all, far
Our all from his
Everywhere always presence.

... spake to them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. Luke ix.11

O miracle of life,
In your healing stream
From those I love
Wash away the stain
Of ignorance and wrong
Suffered and done,

From what we are so far
That the real seems dream,
Time where all born must die
A prison with no door,
Dust is but dust
And all love lost.

How could heaven have known
Bodily pain and fear,
Heart's grief, bitterness
Of baffled mind,
How free the exiled soul
Had he not come down?

There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. Luke ix.27

'To me
'This world is one continued vision'
Wrote William Blake, who conversed with God
Daily as man to man,

And at all times in time
There have been and will be
Some who, though not with perishing mortal eye
Have seen the kingdom.

'I'll show you all alive the world'
A nature-spirit said
To Blake, who before our day
Knew 'matter' an obsolete model, a broken toy.

Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.
Luke ix.60

I

Do not turn aside, he said,
From the vision of the kingdom
To lament world's holocaust,
Body's stench of sex and blood,
Meaningless dust to meaningless
Nihil of the boundless grave.

Invading discord topples walls
Of cities a divine music raised,
Ignorant and trivial
Civilization's suicide,
Ruins of time the insubstantial
Shadows of undying life.

II

Teach the kingdom?
Mere self-deception
Of wishful thinking!

But what desire
Unless a way of knowing,
Knowing of being?

The substance of things hoped for,
What we already are
And may become.

No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Luke ix.62

We who in time
Move always on
From past to future,
Known to unknown,

Cannot return
To what we were,
Nor ever discern
What lies before,

Nor in the furrow
Turn the plow,
But a timeless vision
Can never un-know.

Be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. Luke
x.11

Whence do they come,
The awakens
From beyond reach of sense,
Messengers who bear
Over the world
News of the unseen, unheard?

Music stirs, passes
Like migrant wings
From far to far:
Within time's shell
With senses sealed
The unborn await the hour.

Stirred in dream
Memory and desire
Know who they are who tell
The remembering heart
That the lost is found again.

.. your names are written in the book of heaven. Luke x.20

Summoned by name –
But who I am
Or what the meaning
Of that one word
Written in my life's blood
In the book of time
Its author knows, not I.

From the creation to the end of days
The story runs
Whose words are lives,
A language few can read
Or understand. And yet
Not meaningless or trivial what is written,
Nor any valueless
To whom he has said, 'Be'.

Thy kingdom come. Luke xi.2

Not yet; and yet
In this distant place
I for a moment once
Saw earth's true face,
a flower of living light

Growing in paradise
Yet on the table where I write,
Not separate
From the beholder who was I, and know
That aspect true, and this
A shadow fallen between
Seer and seen.

Our Father which art in heaven. Luke xi.2

Heaven-begotten -
And as the father so his children,
Unborn, undying.

All times and places,
Past, future and to come
That boundless realm

Whence none can steal a star,
Nor take away
Sun and moon, near and far,

Nor finest petal, smallest shell
Nor glittering grain
Of sand nor drop of dew.

Boundless now
As in childhood so in age
the ever-presence

To each no less than all,
As far as sense
Can reach, mind comprehend,
And close as love's embrace.

But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God
is come upon you. Luke xi.20

He who with the finger of God
Points at the devil who wears
The appearance, so we had hoped,
Of a not-our-fault depression,
Paranoia, schizophrenia, dementia or what-not, called
Azazel, Beelzebub or known by some other
Long barbarous euphemism,
Or Venus-toute-entiere (in any case
Not us) offers no other cure
Than forgiveness.

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added
unto you. Luke xii.31

My father, servant to a master
Whose kingdom is not of this world
Lacked nothing, being content
With all his master sent;
Not bread alone, but every word
His listening spirit heard;
Needed no means to an end
Present always, being God.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke xii.32

Safety in number?
The masses are led
To believe so, yet
It's when a few are gathered
With the poemander
That the kingdom is present.

What is the kingdom of God like? And wherewith shall I resemble it?
Luke xiii.18

Infinite like seed, invisible
One life of world's great tree and all
Its numberless acorns signed with the seed

Of branches and leaves and forests
To be, outspreading times and places
Unending of multitudes.

Like leaven, works within
Our measures of milled corn, who at harvest time
Share at earth's table the holy bread and holy wine.

... ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. Luke xiii.28

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, devious sinners,
Strange prophets too, and our own William Blake
(Perhaps the worst of men)
Yet lived and sinned before the Presence,
Knowing no other place.
That landless seeker for the holy land
Prepared to slaughter his own son,
At god's sole bidding sharpened and stayed the knife.
To Jacob in his lonely night awake
In fear to meet the brother he had wronged
Descending and ascending angels in a vision came.
All these went naked
To that encounter all avoid
(Religion is for those who do not know God)
Evade, who shun that solitude
Where we with the ever-living come life to life.

And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north and from the south and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. Luke xiii.29

'Four gates', my mother said,
Her mind wandering for a moment out of time.

I, so near her, failed
To find the door love can.

Yet that beatitude
In our grier the lost too proclaim.

Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Luke xiv.15

I have eaten the bread

Of life in the kingdom,
In my father's house,
At my mother's table,
Birthdays and Christmases
And quiet days.

Guest of the courteous,
Host to strangers,
Sometimes in peace
Alone with myself,
With friends of the heart
Or mind's companions.

Hand in hand
A circle forming
Of love always
Adding to love's
Times and places,
Memories, faces.

... since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man
presseth into it. Luke xvi.16

Everyone – the crowd,
The masses, all
Who live with the one life
Of the sole Self, who is
God's kingdom; yet each single
Indivisible only Adam, the world
His farden, the first Eve
Flesh of his flesh, whose children
Astray in every street, seek always
Each the one paradise, whose gate
Is locked in the heart.

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Luke xvii.20

The augers will tell you from their calenders.
The stars, the Great Pyramid,
And every yarrow-stalk and tea-leaf holds
The whole secret we ignore, yet nevertheless
Know in our bones akin to stone and stalk and star,
The forever beginning abiding ending world:
His kingdom of life a state of being that fills
The heart that has no past or future' days or years.

The kingdom of God is within you. Luke xvii.21

Within? Too far that place –
Nearer the moon, Sirius, the Milky Way.
We flee into endless space
Rather than at heart
Meet the all-knowing angel at the gate.

Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no
wise enter therein. Luke xviii.17

Even I
As a little child, happy

Received love, the world's beauty

As the due of life,
Not needing to deserve,
Not knowing myself

Enfolded already in the seed
In the seed, the tree
The crime, the guilt,
The sentence and the death:
Was that child I used to be
Innocent?

How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God. Luke xviii.24

Treasurer of written pages,
Records of some lived insight
Of wisdom, anguish, or delight –
My erudition withered leaves
That grew on other trees.

For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Luke xviii.25

Those elegant camels
Burdened with merchandise can pass
Through needless eyes
If they dematerialize.

I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Luke 22.15

Desired to be with his friends
On earth, whose companions
In heaven were angels,
Who have no tears,

Yet know nothing
Of a love poised
Between a lost past
And the unknown to come.

I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. Luke xxii.18

A god-man Dionysus torn to pieces,
Ritually boiled and roasted for a feast
Held holy, to commemorate
The Titan's deed –

The horror of the Mysteries
Too close in our days
To project upon some cult
Of corn and wine.

The divine-human
On the cross always
In us, by us, body and blood
Till kingdom come.

And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto me.
Luke xxii.29

The human kingdom: from father
To son passes
The mystery, everywhere all,
Each part the whole whole centre
Is boundless.

That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones
judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Luke xxii.30

To that table all come
Who know for what it is
The very place
We are and have been always.

Of the twelve tribes,
None lost, each priest and king
In his own house,
The zodiac, the thirteen spheres,

The twelve gates
That open out of time
The rose-window of heaven.

'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Luke xxiii.42

'Remember me', they say
Who soon must cease to be,
Become faint shades who haunt
One or another's memory, but he

That for his bad deeds suffered
Due reward
Asked of a dying man
To be remembered in eternity.

'In paradise', Jesus said
Upon the threshold of death's mystery.

And straightway coming up out of the water he saw heaven opened, and the
Spirit like a dove, descending upon him. Mark I.10

'The dry soul is wisest', 'never to be born'
The Greeks say, 'is best'; from waters of the womb
Cast upon shoreless space
'Time stand still now', we cry,
Whom that incessant flux bears on, away.
But of bitter wisdom
'Until he is dead call no man happy' the reply.

One came up out of the waters
And saw heaven within
Opened, and over the drowned world the dove
Messenger from heart's home
Himself that realm of love.

The Kingdom of God is at Hand. Mark I.15

i

At hand – nearer than soon,
Everywhere
The here and now signature
Of leaf and flower,

Ooutside my window the jasmin
Taps, sunlight and shadow
I see, but am far:
He
That present for ever
Kingdom and king.

ii

At hand – but soon is far
As then is gone,
Age from remembered home,
Heart from heart's desire,
While fleeting time
Brings never now here.

Unto you is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. Mark iv.2

What that knowledge? Not natural sight
Or touch or taste or hearing,
Although these things delight,
And mirror heaven's face

Nor speculative thought,
For all the ancient world was wise,
Whose myths conduct
Intellect to the brink of the dark source.

Who knows that state of being
Those close to him have found
That none can tell, none learn
By reason or belief?

Only the heart
His mystery can receive,
His mystery impart

So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground. Mark
iv.26

In human form
God the seed
Sows in time
Day and night
To grow unseen.

Rooted in earth's
Grave we lie,
Her fertile field
Where the living rise
From the dead
Continually.

Night and day
As children grow
Towards the light
None knows how,
Become the evil
And the wise.

Day and night
Spirits weep,
Man and woman
Stir in sleep,
Dreaming of Eden
Souls return.

Bread of angels,
Ours the blood
Of heaven's wine,
Who are the corn,
Who are the wine.

... there be some here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God. Mark ix.1

In that kingdom
Three on a high mountain
Saw him,

The man of light
With Moses and Elias
Hold converse,

What there was spoken
Might not hear
Or understand,

Meaning beyond reach
Of human speech,
Network of words

Too coarse to retain
What in another realm
Is known:

An overshadowing cloud,
A voice.

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

Of all the seeds
That be in the earth,
Seminal reasons
Of all that is

Not Plato's Timaeus
Knew the source
Dimensionless
Of the birth of life,

But he who taught

In parables:
smallest seed
Of greatest tree.

From air invisible,
Formless water,
Inert mineral
Who could foretell

That green kingdom
Whose myriad leaves
Upturn to the sun
They cannot see?

What dream informs
The living wood,
Foreknows the light
Of a world to be?

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. Mark ix.47

Maimed in this world
In another are whole
Some who refuse
To barter soul
For money or fame
Of the kind the devil
Has to sell
In the kingdom of hell.

Some would choose
Rather to lose
Hand or foot
Than take the pay
Of this world's prince,
Rather pluck out
The evil eye
That sees too well
The gleam of gold,
Can recognize
The friends of power,
Admire the towers
Of the city of Dis.

Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God! Mark x.21

The needle's eye,
That secret gate
From world to world
Body cannot pass
Yet soul can thread
Its clue into the dimensionless
Kingdom, who enter leave behind
What heart has never loved,
Pondered and made timeless
Memory of eternal mind.

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Mark x.14

How can we look into their eyes
Who in their innocence love both
Father and mother, whose divorce
Rends that one flesh a marriage made,
A living child, apart.

Their reasons of the heart
We will not hear, as we enact
Our loveless stories,
Impatient to collect
Of a soul's death the wages.

Mark xii.1-9

That ancient tower
Mellow in evening sun
Set in its vineyard
Seen from a passing train

As we speed on
slowly towards and sway
Seems the home
We hoped to find some day,

Everyman's heritage,
Whose husbandmen
Plot violence and murder
And kill the son
Again and again.

Sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow me.

Less for theirs than for his own sake
Jesus bade that well-endowed young man
Give to the ever-with-us poor
Who cannot cope, his rich estate,
And live by miracle, the spirit's law.
'Take up your cross' he said
'And follow me': what else to one
Who, possessing, best could know
That the world's all is nothing to the soul
Born for another? The poor he healed and fed
But to the rich could offer his one lack,
Poverty: and saw him hesitate
But not reject that challenge to the great.

Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. Mark xii.17

What will Caesar receive
When we render to God
All that is his? 'The earth
'Is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.'

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The Bibliography in this thesis is classified according to its two main topics; Kathleen Raine and Mysticism. Each topic is divided into primary and secondary sources. Under the heading 'GENERAL' comes a list of other sources which are related in one way or another to the thesis as a whole. All sources mentioned have been consulted during the preparation of this thesis.

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