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**'THE DESIRE AND PURSUIT OF THE WHOLE': PATTERN  
AND QUEST IN THE NOVELS OF ROSE MACAULAY.**

A Thesis presented for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

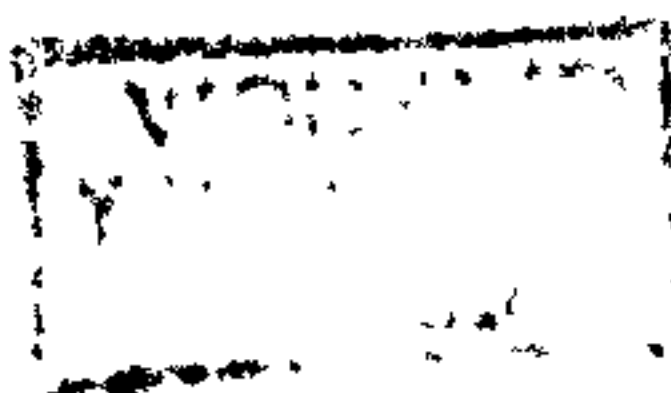
by

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Dedication

For Robert

SUMMARY

Desire and pursuit of the whole is the theme which animates all Rose Macaulay's fiction. Her literature-rich childhood nourished both an interest in mysticism and an ambition to write poems. It is in her verse that we first see emerging her careful symbolism of quest, her obsession with pilgrims who seek the elusive goal of insight perfectly achieved. The fascination is evident in her six earliest, image-studded novels in each of which she traces a protagonist's development from innocence to maturity. The multiple symbolisms of mysticism, Platonism, Hermeticism and Christianity are juggled to produce a complex iconographical subtext to the stories of growth towards perception.

While Rose Macaulay's novels of the First World War period change sharply in tone, veering towards a new mood of pragmatism, the theme of the pursuit of the whole remains clear. Now, however, characters are shown realising that the "whole" is an unrealisable dream which they must, in the interests of good sense, decline to chase. They must limit their quests to the practically achievable.

Satire lightens her most well-known fiction of the inter-war years, allowing her to complicate her work with the new elements of ambiguity and irony. Still convinced that the individual's impulse to search for wholeness is essential, she now combines her conviction with a satirical perception that the quest is pointless. Her field

widens in these intricate, paradoxical novels and it becomes evident that her interest in the personal "pursuits of the whole" of her characters is paralleled by her anxious interest in the quest of the post-war world itself for civilisation. In her best novels, the clashes of comedy and tragedy, civilisation and savagery which her new ambiguous outlook has released, produces liveliness and wit. In her fictions of 1934-40, however, Rose Macaulay's personal weariness and disenchantment intrude, and the formula fails to ignite.

The "whole" is again vigorously pursued in her last two novels, published after a ten-year silence during the 1940's. From her distraught picture in The World My Wilderness of a once coherent world in ruins, she moves in The Towers of Trebizond to a new sense of fulfilment. Her reconciliation with the Anglican Church allows her to proclaim triumphantly in this, the richest and most paradoxical of her books, that the "pattern and the hard core" of her own quest has been grasped.

An understanding of this theme of pursuit which unites the entire corpus of Rose Macaulay's fiction, illuminates her work, enabling the critic to see that the labels usually applied to it - "satirical," "witty," "feminist" or "Anglican" - are restricted and misleading. Beneath the patina of fun and feminism, Rose Macaulay is in fact fascinated by the largest of issues - man's search for meaning in life. It is a fascination she indulges in all her novels.

## Introduction

Rose Macaulay's reviewers in the 1920's and 30's were in no doubt about where to "place" her. "I place Miss Rose Macaulay amongst the three most interesting and distinctive women novelists in England today"; "Rose Macaulay is one of the wittiest writers going"; "Miss Macaulay must be tired of hearing the word brilliant applied by critics"; "With Miss Macaulay at her best one is captured, irresistibly, by sheer delight in good workmanship."<sup>1</sup> She was an incontrovertibly bright star in the Georgian literary firmament, author, in addition to her abundant output of novels (twenty-three between 1906 and 1956), of two books of poetry, three collections of essays, three volumes of literary criticism, three travel books, three short stories, two anthologies, a radio-play, an unfinished stage-play and a history book. Well over a hundred journal articles and book reviews also flowed into print in such diverse organs as The Literary Digest, The New Statesman and Nation, The Saturday Review, The Daily Herald, The Daily News and The Daily Mail. Her "Marginal Comments" column appeared regularly in The Spectator between 1935 and 1936, while from 1934 onwards she extended her net even further, becoming a frequent broadcaster with the BBC. Rose Macaulay was in demand, asked, as Virginia Woolf enviously records in her diary in February 1926, "to speak at dinners, to give opinions to newspapers, and so on."<sup>2</sup> She was by that year undeniably one of "our 'leading lady novelists'" - an elect body of which the recent author of Mrs Dalloway (1925) surprisingly then felt herself

"not quite one."<sup>3</sup> Adjectives like "sparkling," "coruscating," "brilliant," "witty," bejewel her contemporary reviews.

Given this secure prominence in her heyday, Rose Macaulay's almost total disappearance from the current literary critical scene is arresting. The most recent survey of Georgian literature (Valentine Cunningham's British Writers of the Thirties, 1988) allows her no more than a passing mention.<sup>4</sup> Only two books have ever been written about her work - Alice R. Bensen's Rose Macaulay (1969), which offers a dogged plod through the plots of her novels, and Jeanette N. Passty's Eros and Androgyny (1988), a study of the theme of sexuality.<sup>5</sup> No other full-length critical studies have ever been produced on this prolific author, so highly acclaimed in her own lifetime. Her eclipse is difficult to account for. It may well be that the very reputation for "wit," "brilliance" and "sparkle," to which she owed her laurels in the 1930's, has been her undoing. Rose Macaulay's too close association with satire in the popular estimation may have led to her dismissal as a merely comic writer. She herself clearly foresaw the trap into which she was falling. "Those who called her a flippant writer failed to understand the deep earnestness which underlay her sometimes facetious style," she writes in her "auto-obituary," "Full Fathom Five" for The Listener in 1936.<sup>6</sup> To apply the label "satirical" to Rose Macaulay's fiction is indeed to be guilty of a dangerously narrow misreading of her work. Satire, with its requirement of specific targets in time and place, is only one of the strings attached to her impressively large and flexible bow.

The present study will investigate the "deep earnestness" of Rose Macaulay's underlying themes. Descended from long lines of clerical ancestors, she has inherited her forbears' interest in the largest of issues: how should one live one's life? - can meaning or value be ascribed to it? - what are the basic goodnesses to be aimed for? It is evident from her notes for her last novel fragment (Venice Besieged) that she was familiar with the work of Frederick Rolfe, "Baron Corvo."<sup>7</sup> The "desire and pursuit of the whole," title (posthumously published in 1934), of his 1909 novel his is the theme which deepens and complicates the entire corpus of her fiction.<sup>8</sup> Her evocations of characters engaged in search after search for "wholeness" in their lives, her preoccupation with the human need for "pattern," give a timelessness, a universality of application to her novels which defies their usual too-simple categorisation as "satirical," "feminist" or "Anglican." This study will be the first to show that the theme of the search for the whole, so prominent in Rose Macaulay's last novel, The Towers of Trebizond (1956), runs in fact through all twenty-three of her books, and provides the essential framework for their interpretation. It will be distinctive in emphasizing the importance of her poetry, the medium which throws into relief her key quest metaphors, and in offering a close textual examination, in both her verse and her prose, of her use of imagery. The symbolism of the search for wholeness will, for the first time, be shown to inform the entire spectrum of Rose Macaulay's fictional output.

It will be the first study, too, to draw upon the extensive collection of Rose Macaulay's papers, preserved at Trinity College,

Cambridge. The eighteen boxes of material have yielded juvenilia, diaries, notebooks, unpublished poems, manuscript and typescript drafts of articles and talks, an unpublished play and vast quantities of unpublished correspondence which will allow a fuller and clearer picture of the background to Rose Macaulay's fiction to be drawn. Evidence of her childhood reading can, for instance, now be seen, as well as drafts of her earliest poems. All such items permit new and important insight into the mind of the developing writer. Gilbert Murray's letters to Rose Macaulay, held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and typescripts of her many BBC broadcasts, are among other primary sources, not drawn upon by previous literary appraisers, which offer further new information about her work.

\* \* \* \* \*

Critical articles on Rose Macaulay begin to appear in the 1920's, after her sudden accession to popularity with Potterism at the beginning of that decade. Reginald Brimley Johnson, in Some Contemporary Novelists - Women (1920), devotes his chapter on Rose Macaulay to surveying all ten of her novels from Abbots Verney to Potterism and to attempting to establish her in a tradition of female writing; Jane Austen, Dorothy Richardson, Sheila Kaye-Smith, May Sinclair and E.M. Delafield are all offered for contrast or comparison.<sup>9</sup> Doris Dalglish in "Some Contemporary Women Novelists" (1925) is struck by the change of tone she perceives to have occurred in Rose Macaulay's novels after Potterism, while Stuart Sherman in

"Rose Macaulay and Women" (1926) expresses anxiety about the unfeminine hardness of her cynicism, her cool intelligence and what he sees as her obtrusive authorial superiority in Told By an Idiot (1923).<sup>10</sup> John Englisham's article on "Rose Macaulay" in The Bookman (1927) is a plea for the publishers' blurb epithets "satirical," "caustic," "cynical," "sardonic" to be ignored and for her books to be read "straight."<sup>11</sup> Patrick Braybrooke proceeds in Some Goddesses of the Pen the same year, to a too straight reading of Crewe Train in which he primly castigates the author for a surfeit of realism in detailing her pregnant heroine Denham's tendency to be sick in the mornings.<sup>12</sup> Maurice Hewlett, in a peculiar diatribe entitled "The Death of Society" (1928) accuses her of having evoked in Dangerous Ages a moribund post-war suburban world and peopled it with "perverts or neurotics."<sup>13</sup> Margarete Kluge's published dissertation, "Die Stellung Rose Macaulays zur Frau, nach ihren Romanen" (1928) bears witness to European interest in Rose Macaulay's work and is the first feminist study of her novels.<sup>14</sup>

1930 saw the publication in Novels and Novelists (edited by John Middleton Murry) of Katherine Mansfield's reviews of What Not (1918) and Potterism (1920), two acutely observed pieces which appreciate "Miss Macaulay's nice sense of humour, matched with her fine sensitive style."<sup>15</sup> Frank Swinnerton's treatment of her in The Georgian Literary Scene (1935) describes her as "fully adult in a world of children," while Margaret Lawrence in The School of Femininity (1936) classes her as one of the female "go-getters" in a



world of newly opening opportunities for women.<sup>16</sup> Told By an Idiot is, she says, the key to her philosophy:

Her technique is the consummation of the go-getters' technique in writing. Without waste of either energy or emotion she opens her story and presents the histories of her people....Enough detail is given to indicate the characterization without causing the least hesitation in the narrative outline. Like all the go-getters she covers an amazing space in a short time.<sup>17</sup>

Geoffrey Uther Ellis in Twilight on Parnassus (1939), describes her, less excitingly, as "essentially English," "a good Protestant," full of the "common sense" distinctive of the eighteenth century literature she most enjoyed, limited to the upper middle class milieu she moved in herself, and yet retaining "a certain brisk zest for the human spectacle in whatever form it presents itself."<sup>18</sup>

The 1940's and 50's offer little in the way of Rose Macaulay criticism. Two comparative studies, H. Fickert's 'Emma,' a Novel of the Year 1815, and 'Dangerous Ages,' a Novel of the Year 1921 (Buenos Aires, 1944) and W.R. Irwin's "Permanence and Change in The Edwardians and Told By an Idiot" (1956) indicate a continuing anxiety about where Rose Macaulay should be placed in the history of English literature.<sup>19</sup> William Frierson presents her work as an example of The English Novel in Transition (1942), and is the first critic to suggest that her poetry "often reveals in a flash" what her novels take "volumes to tell."<sup>20</sup> The publication in 1950 of The World My Wilderness provides a Times Literary Supplement reviewer with the

opportunity to re-assess her fiction to date. In "Miss Macaulay's Novels," he worries about her negativism, her tendency to indulge,

an interest in life in general rather than particular application, which eventually flattens and minimizes the differences between her characters, so that their pleasures and reverses seem almost unimportant. She invites her readers to share this bird's eye view. Is life, after all, no more than "a rather absurd comic film"?<sup>21</sup>

One important academic study does emerge in 1959, however, in Philip Rizzo's thesis at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>22</sup> Rose Macaulay : A Critical Survey is an intelligent chronological account of the novels, highlighting with an emphasis on the middle period satires, her main themes and offering an excellent bibliography. He makes brief mention of her published poems in connection with The World My Wilderness and The Towers of Trebizond, and considers in an Appendix her non-fiction, minor prose works. Written before them, this study was, of course, unable to draw on the volumes of biographical information which were to become available in the early 1960's and 70's - Constance Babington Smith's editions of Rose Macaulay's letters, Letters to a Friend (1961), Last Letters to a Friend (1962), Letters to a Sister (1964), and her biography Rose Macaulay (1972).<sup>23</sup>

The reissue in the 1960's of a number of Rose Macaulay's novels results in a flurry of new interest in her work. Various established literary figures produce introductions to these new editions - C.V. Wedgwood to They Were Defeated (1960), Alan Pryce-Jones to Orphan Island (1961), Raymond Mortimer to Told By an Idiot (1965), William

Plomer to The World My Wilderness (1968) and Elizabeth Bowen to Staying With Relations (1969).<sup>24</sup> Robert Earl Kuehn's Ph.D. thesis (University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1962) covers the same ground as Rizzo's and adds little to it.<sup>25</sup> He, too, is content to discuss the novels individually, without suggesting essential thematic links. Alice R. Bensen's articles, "The Skeptical Balance: A Study of Rose Macaulay's Going Abroad" (1963), and "Rose Macaulay: the Ironic Aesthete" (1966), an examination of the role of Louie Robinson in Views and Vagabonds, are precursors of her previously mentioned 1969 survey, entitled Rose Macaulay.<sup>26</sup> Anglicanism and the treatment of it in The Towers of Trebizond is the subject of a lengthy article by Douglas Stewart in The Ark of God (1961).<sup>27</sup> He sees the Church of England challenged by various issues raised by the novel - the problem of romantic love, the debate over the role of women and the question of the proper aims of marriage. William J. Lockwood's chapter on Rose Macaulay in Minor British Novelists (1967) is a sound, story-telling survey offering no surprises.<sup>28</sup>

Two further academic studies appear in the 1970's, overshadowing H.C. Webster's twenty-page scamper through the novels in After The Trauma (1970) - Rose Macaulay criticism is now choc-a-bloc with such brief, repetitive run-throughs.<sup>29</sup> Mary Gwen Davies' M.Phil. dissertation, Rose Macaulay: A Study of Six of her Novels (University of Southampton, 1973) offers a useful chapter for the historian on the factual sources of They Were Defeated (1932), but little that is new at the level of ideas about the novels.<sup>30</sup> A slightly "off-beat" bibliography provides additional material from popular journalism -

articles and reviews from, for example, Good Housekeeping, Country Life, and The Tatler. A more mature study is Maria Jane Marrocco's Ph.D. thesis, The Novels of Rose Macaulay: A Literary Pilgrimage (University of Toronto, 1978), which sets Rose Macaulay usefully in the context of her times and relates the now available biographical information convincingly to her fiction.<sup>31</sup> This is an interesting, sympathetic examination of the novels which recognises the seriousness of the writer's "search for a spiritual haven," but which is still uneasy about tracing this seriousness through the bright "middle period" works and does not grasp the subterranean symbolism there which links them with both early and last novels.<sup>32</sup> In her lecture "Rose Macaulay in her Writings" (read 1 March 1973), Constance Babington Smith has clearly reserved some fascinating nuggets of biographical material for presentation here rather than in her book, Rose Macaulay.<sup>33</sup> She opens on the interesting assertion that her cousin "once said she wished she could be remembered as a poet rather than as a novelist," but tantalisingly gives us no clue as to when, or in what circumstances, or where we might check the remark for ourselves.<sup>34</sup> She also presents two stanzas of Rose Macaulay's first published poem "The Sea," from the Oxford High School Magazine and an extract from her 1949 broadcast I Speak for Myself, describing her inner and outer childhood lives - both items which would have enlivened the biography, and would have been more usefully placed there.<sup>35</sup> The family connection between Babington Smith and her subject places unhelpful restraints on her treatment of some biographical material. We are often conscious of too much cousinly tact in both her biography and her editing of the letters.

The 1980's have seen some feminist interest in Rose Macaulay. Her poem, "Many Sisters to Many Brothers" is quoted in Catherine Reilly's anthology, Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War (Virago, 1982) and A.N. Wilson provides a perceptive preface to the reissue of Told By an Idiot (Virago, 1983).<sup>36</sup> Nicola Beauman usefully comments on several of the middle period novels (Dangerous Ages, Told By an Idiot, Crewe Train) in her discussion of fiction for women between the wars, A Very Great Profession: the Woman's Novel 1914-39 (Virago, 1983).<sup>37</sup> Dale Spender supplies a summary biographical paragraph on Rose Macaulay in Time and Tide Wait for No Man (1984), recognising her exploration through her fictional heroines of "the problems experienced by women who sought independence," and regretting that her "significance" is currently not more appreciated.<sup>38</sup> Margaret Crosland opens Beyond the Lighthouse (Constable, 1981) with a quotation from Told By an Idiot, and skims for ten pages through the middle and last novels, highlighting the traits of strength, independence and career-mindedness Rose Macaulay so frequently evokes for her women.<sup>39</sup> She concludes that while her novels "might seem casual on the surface...they are still some of the most stimulating fiction written by anyone, and not only women, this century."<sup>40</sup> Annis Pratt uses Dangerous Ages to make similar points about female resilience under male pressure in Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction (Harvester, 1982).<sup>41</sup> Sandra Gilbert makes a passing reference in her 1983 article, "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War," an abbreviated version of a chapter in her book; No Man's Land: the Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century (Yale

University Press, 1989).<sup>42</sup> The most thorough feminist study of Rose Macaulay's fiction is, however, offered by Jeanette N. Passty. Her Ph.D. thesis (University of Southern California, 1982) examines the significance of "Feminine Men," "Masculine Women," and "Twins" as recurrent types in the novels and suggests evidence from her writings of Rose Macaulay's own "Androgynous Leanings."<sup>43</sup> The redrafting of the thesis into the 1988 book, Eros and Androgyny: the Legacy of Rose Macaulay, offers the same interesting and valid interpretations of twin and androgyne symbols, but is unbalanced by her insistence on deriving sensational conclusions from flimsy evidence.<sup>44</sup> Her claim, for example, that her book will be the first to reveal that the influence of Father Johnson, Rose Macaulay's distant cousin and confessor, was "profoundly literary," is not only unsubstantiable but misleading.<sup>45</sup> She has uncovered in the archives of the Humanities Research Centre at the University of Texas at Austin Father Johnson's handwritten translation, sent to Rose Macaulay in 1951, of "De Abbate Daniele et Quadam Sanctimoniali," but to argue from this "find" to the conclusion that inspiration for the androgynous ideas of The Towers of Trebizond (1956) was drawn directly from her reading of this piece is unsound. The theme has preoccupied Rose Macaulay so constantly since her earliest writing as this study will show, that it is simplistic to ascribe influences on the conception of her last novel to any particular source. Even Passty worries in a footnote about a later letter of her author in which it is clear that she has forgotten she has ever received the translation.<sup>46</sup> Such faults of emphasis apart, however, the study is useful for the attention it draws to the strong feminist thrust of much of Rose Macaulay's work

and for its re-assertion of the continuing currency of these ideas. Marie-Jose Codaccioni discusses The Towers of Trebizond in connection with Muriel Spark's The Mandelbaum Gate in a conference paper of 1982.<sup>47</sup> Gloria G. Fromm has published two papers on Rose Macaulay in 1986, the first, "The Worldly and Unworldly Fortunes of Rose Macaulay," another recapitulatory trip up the well-beaten track of "life and works," the second, "Re-inscribing The Years: Virginia Woolf, Rose Macaulay, and the Critics," a much more stimulating study which draws significantly on the evidence of Virginia Woolf's diaries to suggest that Woolf, in awe of the successful Macaulay, used the latter's high-speed family saga, Told By an Idiot (1923) as the inspiration for her own The Years (1937).<sup>48</sup> Most recently, J.V. Guerinet meanders appreciatively through plot summaries of half a dozen of Rose Macaulay's most well-known novels in his 1987 article "The Pleasures of Rose Macaulay," and also dwells briefly but unusually on her longest non-fiction work, Pleasure of Ruins (1953).<sup>49</sup> He breaks no new ground in this round-up of "tasters" for her books, but does communicate an enthusiasm for her writing which does her waning reputation useful service.

Short critical articles on Rose Macaulay's writings, plot-displaying reviews of her output and comparative studies of small groups of her novels have always, as can be seen, abounded. With the exception of Jeanette Passty, however, no one has traced a single unifying theme through all twenty-three of her novels, enabling her work to be examined as the coherent body of ideas it is. Passty's treatment of the theme of sexuality is interesting, but limited - to

view Rose Macaulay's novels from only a feminist perspective is to distort them. There is need now for this present study in which the underlying "pursuit of the whole" motif, glimpsed and sporadically recognised in Marrocco's 1978 thesis, will be definitively identified, its persistent manifestations in all twenty-three novels examined.

\* \* \* \* \*

Emily Rose Macaulay was born in 1881, the second child of Grace Mary Conybeare and George Macaulay. Her background was strongly literary and academic. Her father was for nine years an assistant master at Rugby School, progressing in 1901 to the post of Professor of English Language and Literature at the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth, and in 1905 to a Lectureship in English at Cambridge. She was "descended on both sides from long lines of eloquent and well-informed clergymen, few of whom had denied themselves the indulgence of breaking into print."<sup>50</sup> Noel Annan, in his chapter in Plumb's Studies in Social History: a tribute to G.M. Trevelyan (1955), uses Rose Macaulay as his starting point for tracing the vast network of English upper-middle-class inter-marriages which has created what he calls the "intellectual aristocracy."<sup>51</sup> She is related, through various chains of cousinly connections, to Conybeares, Babingtons, Trevelyan, Booths, Arnolds, Huxleys, Wards, Smiths and Roses. Historian and essayist Thomas Babington Macaulay was her grandfather's <sup>cousin.</sup> Aulay Macaulay, her great-grandfather (1758-1819), was tutor to Queen Caroline. His wife, Anne Herrick, was of



the same family as the poet Robert Herrick. Her great-great-grandfather, John Macaulay, was the minister at Inveraray whom Dr. Johnson met when he toured the Hebrides. Her great-great uncle, Zachary Macaulay, campaigned with Wilberforce for the abolition of the slave trade. R.C. and G.M. Trevelyan were his great-grandsons, hence distant cousins of Rose Macaulay's. The Trevelyan family was, in turn, related by marriage to the Wards (Mrs Humphrey Ward), the Huxleys and the Arnolds. "Placing" Rose Macaulay is as much a matter of establishing her against her wider family background as of relating her to trends in twentieth-century literature.

Enjoying the advantages of her comfortably income'd class, she had an idyllically happy childhood. There are many references in her writing to the pleasures of her early years, spent (1887-1894) at the Italian fishing village of Varazze, where the family had removed for the sake of Mrs Macaulay's health. She records her memories of long, carefree summer days playing with brothers and sisters, bathing, canoeing, rambling through stone-paved streets, fishing, or reading.<sup>52</sup> Her return to England at the age of thirteen to attend Oxford High School for Girls was a sobering and inhibiting experience -- "pretty dim it seemed" after our libertine and bare-legged scrambling about our Italian shore and hills, complete with canoe and pony."<sup>53</sup> Her sister Jean, too, remembers being jarred by the loss of the childhood Italian idyll. "My chief impression is how completely unfit we were for civilized society," she recalls in a letter to Constance Babington Smith. "We behaved like small children in many ways, playing in the streets, taking our tortoises to church etc."<sup>54</sup>

Life in Italy was for both girls a Golden Age which ended abruptly with the transition to England. Rose Macaulay's first published poem, "The Sea," is a seventeen year-old's nostalgic lament for past perfection.<sup>55</sup> The child who mourns the forfeited, idyllic, seaside world becomes the novelist and poet who time and again introduces images of water and sea to indicate lost ideals.

Rose's confirmation at the age of fourteen, at the Church of SS. Philip and James, Oxford, appears to have occasioned some personal anguish. Fresh from her reading of John Stuart Mill, she agonised about not being able to believe all she was required to profess, but proceeded with the ceremony, too embarrassed to mention her doubts to her vicar.

After a painfully shy adolescence, she entered Somerville College, Oxford, in 1900 to read Modern History. Here she blossomed into a confident and talkative young woman, but left in 1903 with an Aegrotat, having failed to complete her Honours papers on account of illness. Returning to stay with her parents in Aberystwyth after university, she decided to lighten the monotony of the rural Welsh existence by writing a novel - Abbots Verney was published by John Murray in 1906.

Her introduction to the London literary scene was gradual, the result initially of her friendship with Rupert Brooke. The two families had been acquainted since they had been neighbours at Rugby, but the relationship between Rose and Rupert (six years her junior)

deepened when he acquired lodgings in Grantchester in 1909 to read for a Fellowship at King's College, Cambridge. The Macaulays had by this time moved to the nearby village of Great Shelford on George Macaulay's appointment to his Cambridge post. Rose, accepting Rupert's invitations to the theatre or to dinner in London, was introduced to his poet friends - Edward Thomas, Wilfred Gibson, Ralph Hodgson and others.<sup>56</sup> She and Rupert had for some years shared an interest in the "Problem and Prizes Page" of the Saturday Westminster, to which both had frequently submitted prize poems. Through the editor of this page, Naomi Royde-Smith, whom she met some time between 1910 and 1912, Rose Macaulay's initiation into literary circles was further extended. As Miss Royde-Smith's protégée, she was drawn into the fringes of the Bloomsbury group:

Naomi Royde-Smith was the centre of a lively and able circle of friends....With her I met, in this pre-war golden age, a number of people who seemed to me, an innocent from the Cam, to be more sparkingly alive than any in my home world. Some were journalists, and worked on the literary side of the Westminster; these seemed to know everything that was behind the news; some, like J.R. Brooke, were civil servants, and seemed to know even more that was behind the news, and the contemporary, literary, political and social scene became, to my inexperienced eyes, very amusing and alive.<sup>57</sup>

The circle of friends and acquaintances she established for herself at this time included Walter de la Mare, J.C. Squire, William Beveridge, Hugh Walpole, J. Middleton Murry, Frank Sidgwick, Roger Senhouse, Edward Marsh, Dorothy and Reeve Brooke, Mary Agnes Hamilton, E.V. and R.A. Knox. The acquisition of a small flat near

Chancery Lane in 1913 allowed her to establish an independent foothold in the capital and to gain the "room of her own" she required for her writing career.

With the outbreak of the First World War, Rose Macaulay found herself, after abortive attempts to serve as a VAD and a land girl, in the Italian Section of the Ministry of Information's Department for Propaganda in Enemy Countries. Here she met Gerald O'Donovan, the married man and ex-priest who was to be her "beloved companion" for over twenty years.<sup>58</sup> A conspiracy of silence surrounds this relationship. It is clear that, with the perhaps surprising exception of her mother, Rose Macaulay's family and friends disapproved of the adulterous affair and, though they knew of it, never spoke of it.<sup>59</sup> The pair themselves were extremely discreet in their arrangement of secret meetings and holidays over the years. The only possible glimpses we have into the relationship are to be gleaned from various fictional sources, notably The Towers of Trebizond (1956) and the short story Miss Anstruther's Letters (1942) - a dangerous game of guesswork for the biographer. Constance Babington Smith is coy, supplying the sparsest of information in her chapter "Falling in Love."<sup>60</sup> A closed box of correspondence ("letters from Dame Rose Macaulay to Father J.H.C. Johnson") in Trinity College Library presumably contains sensitive information on the subject - until its contents can be revealed in June 2012, the Macaulay/O'Donovan relationship must remain the subject only of interested speculation. We do know, however, that some time in 1921 or 1922, Rose Macaulay decided she could no longer make her

confession or take communion, thus beginning her thirty-year estrangement from the Anglican Church.<sup>61</sup>

Between 1918 and 1922, she had rooms in Naomi Royde-Smith's Kensington house at 44, Princes Gardens, where she continued to enjoy a vivid social life. Such literary luminaries as Arnold Bennett, W.B. Yeats, Edith Sitwell, Aldous Huxley and Storm Jameson appeared at "Naomi's Thursday's", occasions at which the bright protégée Rose came dangerously near to outshining her envious mentor.<sup>62</sup> After a quarrel with Naomi in 1922, she moved to a flat in Hampstead and acquired a new social circle. Friendships with E.M. Forster, J.D. Beresford, Elizabeth Bowen and Anthony Powell flourished, as did those with Humbert Wolfe, Victor Gollancz, Lancelot Sieveking, Viola Garvin and Robert and Sylvia Lynd. At "Sylvia's Fridays," authors such as "James Joyce and Max Beerbohm occasionally turned up, and Rose could count on the company of the Gollanczs, David Lows, J.B. Priestleys, and Philip Guedallas."<sup>63</sup> Virginia and Leonard Woolf and the Irish novelist Conal O'Riordan were also dinner-party friends.

Given the absence of detail about the love affair which dominated it, Rose Macaulay's "middle period" of the 1920's and 1930's, during which she wrote her most well-known novels, cannot be well documented. We know of her trip to America in 1929-30, of her driving escapades and flying lessons, of her uncertain dalliance with Pacifism and the Peace Pledge Union, but of little else. Events towards the end of her life are, however, more fully revealed. The Second World War is the background to various personal cataclysms.

In June 1939, she and Gerald O'Donovan were injured (he seriously) in a car accident in the Lake District, in which she was driving. Although he recovered, he was to die of cancer only three years later. Her flat was destroyed in the Blitz of 10 May, 1941, with the loss of all her belongings, while her elder sister Margaret died in March of the same year. Perhaps as a result of such compounded tragedies, Rose Macaulay produced no fiction during the decade 1940-1950, concentrating instead on her history book for Collins, Life Among the English (1942), and her celebrations of the history and geography of Portugal, They Went to Portugal (1946) and Fabled Shore (1949). Her fiction re-emerged only in 1950 with The World My Wilderness, the accumulation of her experiences of the Second World War.

Her return to the Anglican faith at the beginning of 1951 is the most striking feature of the last eight years of her life. A chance letter in August 1950 from her one-time confessor Father J.H.C. Johnson triggered the renewal of her Christian commitment and the resurgence of her passionate interest in Church affairs. The Towers of Trebizond (1956) is the fictional outpouring of the personal "church or adultery" dilemma in which she had been so painfully emmeshed for years, and the testament of her newly re-discovered Anglicanism. At her death in October 1958, aged 77, she left notes for an unfinished twenty-fourth novel, tentatively entitled Venice Besieged, in which she shows herself still preoccupied, as she has been in the well-known twenty-third, with the possibility of evil overwhelming a foolish world.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rose Macaulay's fiction spans fifty years. Born a Victorian, she lived through the reigns of six monarchs, dining towards the end of her life with the new Queen Elizabeth II.<sup>64</sup> She began writing in the "short spring day" of Edwardianism and was hitting newspaper headlines ("Young Lady Novelist Wins £1,000 First Prize") with her novel The Lee Shore when Georgian Poetry was first being published in 1912.<sup>65</sup> Her writing is affected by two World Wars. She saw the birth of the Welfare State, the arrival of votes for women, the publication of Einstein's theory of relativity, the emergence of mechanised flight and the upsurge in popularity of the motor-car. She lived through the General Strike, the 1930's depression, the abdication of Edward VIII with its attendant constitutional crisis, the Spanish Civil War and the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima.<sup>66</sup> Seeing Rose Macaulay's life whole involves seeing an entire age whole, watching her observing the cascade process of change and trying in her writing to assimilate and make sense of it.

Her first novels display what Richard Ellmann calls the "Two Faces of Edward," a tendency to draw on the "ample wardrobe" of the tried and tested styles of the elder literary statesmen (Bennett, Wells, James, Conrad, Forster, Galsworthy, Ford, Meredith) while tentatively experimenting with the new.<sup>67</sup> The century's first decade was, as she herself wrote "A queer time! Perhaps a transition time."<sup>68</sup> The sedate poetics of Swinburne, John Davidson, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Kipling, Hardy and Housman were being usurped

by the Poetry Bookshop readings of W.B. Yeats, Lascelles Abercrombie, Edward Thomas and John Drinkwater. Rose Macaulay saw not only the worthy theatrical spectacles of Granville Barker and John Masefield, but also the disturbing plays of the fashionable Ibsen and the shocking new ballets of Diaghilev, Massine and Nijinski - she records her excited response to Le Sacre du Printemps, L'Après Midi d'un Faune, Thamar, Le Spectre de la Rose, Le Lac des Cygnes and Les Sylphides.<sup>69</sup> In the Edwardian musical arena, Richard Strauss's controversial operas Salome (1905) and Elektra (1909) undermined the quiet popularity of Elgar. In art the ascendancy of the Academicians (Leighton, Poynter, Alma-Tadema, Orchardson) was shaken by the First Post-Impressionist Exhibition in 1910, with its startling shower of Cézannes, Gauguins, Van Goghs, Seurats and Matisses. The New English Art Club promulgated sharp new ideas. Rose Macaulay, child of her age, was caught in the cross-current of old and new. Ezra Pound arrived in England in 1908 as she was writing The Secret River; his Des Imagistes and Wyndham Lewis's Blast emerged in 1914, the same year as her own chastely conservative book of poems, The Two Blind Countries; Joyce's Portrait of an Artist, Dorothy Richardson's Pointed Roofs, T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and Virginia Woolf's The Voyage Out had all newly appeared in 1915 as she wrote and published her eighth novel Non-Combatants and Others (1916).<sup>70</sup> Her earliest work shows her seesawing between polite reactionism and experimental newness, trying out styles and voices, attempting to find her own.



In her four novels of 1914-1920 Rose Macaulay strikes a new urgent note of practicality. The catalyst of the World War has inspired her to concentrate on working out, through her characters, methods of engaging with the problem of chaos, of imposing order on disorder, stasis on flux. People in The Making of a Bigot (1914), Non-Combatants and Others (1916), What Not (1918) and Potterism (1920) seek modes of behaviour and philosophies of life which will enable them to confront a world in disarray. In her emphasis on the need for action, for definitiveness in the face of muddle, Rose Macaulay seems to be on the point of finally discovering her distinctive literary "self."

The voice which does emerge in the confident novels of her "middle period" 1921-1932, is one which insists, however, on satire rather than pragmatism as its dominant note. She channels a new sense of uncertainty into a tone which can now suggest simultaneously seriousness and comedy, the tragic and the ridiculous. Ambivalence and paradox are her latest hallmarks. There is here, as there has been in all the earlier novels still a sense of quest, an impression of movement towards a solution, but the solution itself is never realised. She displays now an intelligent lack of commitment to any one answer, a sense which brings her into line with other writers of the 1920's and 30's that the situations she sketches are at once serious and to be laughed at. She shares with Aldous Huxley an elegant cynicism, with Evelyn Waugh an awareness (like that apparent in A Handful of Dust, 1934) of the horrifying closeness of civilisation to barbarity. The awareness has, of course, earlier been Conrad's in Heart of Darkness (1902).<sup>71</sup> Possible light is shed on the

influences forming Rose Macaulay's own satirical style at this time by her selection of Elizabeth Russell (Countess von Arnim, cousin of Katherine Mansfield), Max Beerbohm and Saki as "among the wittiest and most verbally dexterous novelists" in the "pre-war golden age."<sup>72</sup> She certainly shares Saki's gift for icy understatement, and Elizabeth Russell's adeptness at the wry rendering of anecdote.<sup>73</sup>

These novels of 1921-1932 are the work of an assured writer, one who is time-served in her craft, and has graduated beyond the youthful ardour of her early writing. They are the work of a woman who earns her living by her pen, who is simultaneously busy with popular journalism, essays, anthologies and serious literary criticism. She is now a novelist who wishes to keep the emotions at the centre of her life buried from view, who uses the barriers of humour and satire to deflect interest from her own personality, yet who is paradoxically pouring many of her most personal concerns, well disguised, into her fiction. The middle novels show her, as much as the austere Edwardian ones, investigating possible solutions to the complications of modern life. She considers the position of women, the role of politics in working for global harmony, how civilisation is to be maintained, the basic barbarity at the heart of man, religion, adultery, the complexity of the human character. Her novels are, still, her responses to a confused and busy world, experimenting with solutions though finally offering none. Simon Nowell-Smith records Rose Macaulay's request for two of her early novels to be removed from the London Library's shelves and her apparent shame at being associated, at the height of

her career, with "these very juvenile works."<sup>74</sup> The transparency of the quests for truth contained in, say, Abbots Verney or The Secret River, must have been embarrassing for a writer now self-protectively shrouding her seriousness in satire.

In her three novels of 1934-1940, we sense Rose Macaulay's gradual slide into hopelessness. Personal sadness accelerates her disaffection with a world entering the shadow of yet another war. The solutions she offers her questing characters become increasingly tentative and unconvicted.

In The Towers of Trebizond, her climactic last novel, this bleak period of her life is behind her and an answer - the Christian faith - suggested, though shown to be desperately hard to attain. A sophisticated, many-layered novel which glances again at all the many issues dealt with throughout the twenty-two earlier fictions, it makes the point that difficulty is inevitable. Its very complexity dramatizes the discovery that a simplistic solution is not to be hoped for." Rose Macaulay's late return to Anglicanism has brought her - paradoxically - relief in the very acceptance of difficulty.

\* \* \* \* \*

Writing is, from first to last, Rose Macaulay's life. "Dilly Tante" records an interview with her in which she recalls writing a novel with her sister, sitting under the table at the age of three. "I did the talking while she worked the pencil."<sup>75</sup> To examine her

fiction is to see a woman growing up, developing her ideas, coming to terms with the perplexities the world throws in her path. We see emerging not only the modern woman, with her views about love, marriage, career, childbirth, the vote, but the modern person. "She was forever in transit, physically, intellectually, spiritually,"<sup>76</sup> Rosamond Lehmann wrote of her friend after death. Her novels all have the quest impulse, the impetus towards finding out. Reading them, we sense her always moving towards a goal she is forever eagerly, curiously, re-defining or revising. She packs her stories as she did her life with ideas about how best to find fulfilment. The woman who zestfully crammed her working day with activity - who took a daily swim in the Serpentine at the age of seventy-seven, who drove and bicycled with more enthusiasm than care, who globe-trotted happily all her life and took her car alone through Portugal when in her sixties, who greeted her many party invitations with delight and whose time was crowded with friendships - made the most of her writing also. She writes in all possible genres - poetry, fiction, drama, history, travel prose, literary criticism - and piles a multiplicity of ideas into a fifty-year writing career. "What we...get from fiction," she once wrote, "is a light on the minds of its composers; we learn the way in which they possibly looked at life."<sup>77</sup> What we get from Rose Macaulay is her enthusiasm, her deeply religious sense of the value of quest. As a woman closely engaged with life, who enjoyed the good things it has to offer and put up with the bad as well as she could, who did manage "on the whole, to put in a pretty good time," she was, as her many friends agree, worth knowing.<sup>78</sup> So is her fiction.

Chapter 1     The Quest Begins : First Writing and Apprenticeship in Verse

Childhood Reading

Rose Macaulay's mind "was nourished always largely on literature."<sup>1</sup> Her imaginative inner life was fostered from the start by parents who made her earliest years rich with story-telling and make-believe. "Read much aloud to the children," Grace Macaulay records in her diary of November 19, 1887 at the beginning of their idyllic years at Varazze, "(all 5 listening in rapt attention). 'Rosamond and the Purple Jar,' 'Leila or the Island,' and 'The Wave and Battlefield' - also 'Holiday House'."<sup>2</sup> Later in the month (November 30) she writes that she is "reading Henry V to M. & R. [Margaret and Rose] in the evenings," and proceeds the following day to describe her schedule: "I show pictures or read simple stories first, then as the younger ones drop off to bed we go on to Shakespeare which is M.'s and R.'s great joy."<sup>3</sup> In September and October of 1889 she is reading aloud to Margaret (ill with scarlet fever) Mrs Molesworth's The Cuckoo Clock and Charlotte Yonge's The Heir of Redclyffe and Chaplet of Pearls.<sup>4</sup> Her entry for March 2, 1890 records that she "read the boys parts of 'Settlers at Home,' and Otto Specktere, all of which Will as well as Aulay much enjoyed," while that for May 12 of the same year recalls that she "read part of Mill on Floss to children in aft. to their delight."<sup>5</sup> Rose also remembers her father's story-telling:

Every evening, from the time we were old enough to listen, my father read aloud to me....He read us nearly all Dickens and Scott, Robinson Crusoe, Lorna Doone, Shakespeare, a lot of poetry, Jane Austen, Meredith (these two not before our teens), Tom Jones (but later we discovered that he had left out the more vulgar bits), The Three Musketeers; we knew at the time that he left out the more vulgar bits of this, because it was the only book we were forbidden to read to ourselves, and some of the pages were stuck together with sticking paper; my mother thought the coarseness of the bed-room scenes might displease us...the only two books that my father read us that I remember being bored by were Don Quixote and The Origin of Species, which was rather heavy going for us; I used to sit in the dark corner behind his chair and read a book of my own. I don't think he can have persevered with this great work to the end.<sup>6</sup>

She recalls, too, her scholar father "telling us stories from Herodotus, Froissart, or the Inferno" on their hill-walks in Italy - his Chronicles of Froissart appeared in 1895, his Herodotus Book III and History of Herodotus in 1890.<sup>7</sup>

That reading was fun for the Macaulay children is evidenced by their rather peculiar delight in the "exam papers" on their books set by their cousins Henry and Daisy Smith. Grace Macaulay has an account of the occasion in her diary on June 10, 1889:

Henry and Daisy Smith sent exam paper on Pied Piper to children's joy. M. R. & J. [Margaret, Rose and Jean] sat at tables in the spare room (because of heat) and hailed each fresh question with cries of delight. George wrote for Aulay what he could do of the answers and I for Will. "What did J. Caesar do when he swam across river?" (Will) "Went home."<sup>8</sup>

An earlier, apparently more subdued examination has been held on The Little Duke, the questions in this case posed by Grace's brother, Edward Conybeare. Her diary entries for November 29 to December 1, 1888 relate that,

Edward's exam-questions on Mrs Yonge's 'Little Duke' came today. Children are answering them well - the 3 eldest.

Little Duke exam still continues - very interesting to us and children.

L.D. exam - finished. M. [Margaret] wept at not knowing "All were equal there."<sup>9</sup>

Private childhood reading, for Rose Macaulay, opened doors and offered escape into other worlds:

The most extreme rapture of reading was private and could not be shared...; one slipped into a dream or secret cave world; one hid under tables, in the tops of orange trees, in the ivy clumps on high walls, to be beyond reach. Each book read was a new world explored, a new territory opened, a new set of beings gloriously introduced into one's territory.<sup>10</sup>

The avid child reader entered the "other realm" of fictitious "brave adventure." She devoured Masterman Ready, Ivanhoe, The Talisman, Coral Island, L'Isola de tesoro, A Tale of Two Cities, The Murders in the Rue Morgue, The Prince and the Page.<sup>11</sup> She adventured with Jason and the Argonauts, with King Arthur and his knights, with Sir Guy Morville, Hugo Wharncliffe, Rudolf Rassandyll and Sherlock Holmes.<sup>12</sup> She relished such island shipwreck stories as The Swiss Family Robinson.<sup>13</sup>

Books listed on a Will form she drew-up at the age of fourteen reveal her tastes, including John Gilpin, Devon Boys and In the Golden Days.<sup>14</sup> Andrew Lang's Fairy Books and his Odyssey were also a staple.<sup>15</sup> Her own first attempts at story-writing mirrored her predilections as a reader:

I remember many of my early novels, which were apt to begin 'Man the lifeboats,' shouted the captain 'because we have struck a rock and are sinking fast.' Then, of course, the few survivors find a lovely desert island, which was a mixture of Coral Island, Masterman Ready (what a book!) and the Swiss Family Robinson. But, alas, all have sunk beneath the waves of this troublesome world.<sup>16</sup>

"I suppose I lived rather in a world of imagination and dreams," she reflects in a letter to Father Johnson in 1951, writing of herself as a young girl - a supposition she has indulged at greater length in her 1949 broadcast, I Speak for Myself:

Myths, adventures, romantic tales of all kinds were my mental food from infancy...stories of Greek heroes and gods, of battles, voyages, desert islands, adventures in fairyland and in forests, by sea and by land, filled my mind, transformed me into an explorer, a sailor or soldier, a page in the tents of a prince, a knight fighting in a tournament, Perseus with winged heels... I would turn myself into a bird like the Grand Visier in my book of Indian fairy stories...and fly hither and thither from land to land. I crept on hands and knees through wild forests stalking Red Indians, or caught by them, I bravely endured torture at the stake. I ran with Mowgli's wolfpack, leaped across great ravines, plunged into rivers pursued by wild dogs, rode my pony into battle against enemy spears....This grand romantic life ran on, while the ordinary little girl that I was went on her ordinary way, playing, doing lessons, climbing trees, bathing, canoeing, quarrelling, later applying herself in a rather half-hearted way to her studies. But it was more than a life; it was a world;



a magic world; a key turned, a door swung back, and in one went.<sup>17</sup>

Poetry as well as prose enriched Rose Macaulay's early years. "Poetry flowed into life with surges of exquisite excitement," she remembers.<sup>18</sup> Both parents were enthusiastic readers of verse. Grace Macaulay's diaries are full of references to being read to by the young George during their courtship and the early years of their marriage. ("...G. read us Swinburne's Ode, and brought me Walt Whitman of which he read extracts" - May 24, 1877; "...George...reading to me and mother - Chaucer chiefly" - May 2-5, 1886; the extracts are typical of many).<sup>19</sup> A love poem from George to Grace is the entry for October 10, 1877, while evidence of Grace's own poetic interests is contained in her entry for September 9, 1880: "Translating poem of Victor Hugo's for 'Journal of Education.'"<sup>20</sup> Her record of George's readings to a working men's club at Bath Lane Schools in Rugby during November and December 1883 also contains interesting evidence of her husband's poetic tastes.<sup>21</sup> His selections are heavily dominated by Tennyson - "Enoch Arden," "Rizpah," "The Grandmother," "The Revenge" - Browning - "How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix" - and Macaulay - "Horatius." Much of George Macaulay's scholarly work was also in the field of poetry. His edition of The Idylls of the King appeared between 1892 and 1895.<sup>22</sup> He was, too, a respected student of medieval poetry, responsible in 1895 for discovering the text of one of Gower's poems lost in the Bodleian Library - George "today discovered in Varsity Library Gowers [sic] lost work Speculum Homines! [sic]" his brother-

in-law Edward Conybeare records excitedly in his diary for April 5, 1895.<sup>23</sup> His edition of The English Works of John Gower was published in 1903.<sup>24</sup>

Daughter of the editor father, Rose Macaulay was given a copy of the complete works of Tennyson when she was eight, and remembers knowing it "practically by heart."<sup>25</sup> She also recalls proclaiming the lament of Matthew Arnold's Forsaken Mermaid from her canoe in the bay at Varazze.<sup>26</sup> Shelley, too, she found "an intoxicant."<sup>27</sup> A complete works of Shelley joined her Tennyson a year later, whereupon,

The Lotus Eaters and the Revenge formed a glorious medley in my mind with the Shelley lyrics and Prometheus Unbound (alarming picture in my book of Prometheus chained to his rock, with approaching eagle)...I suppose it was round about my tenth birthday that I used to wade along the sea's edge chanting, in an orgy of self-pity,  
'O world! O life! O time! on whose last steps  
I climb....'<sup>28</sup>

Absorption in her Shelley she recollects as sparking irritation in a younger brother, "rather outside the bibliomane fold" - the child, presumably intent on coaxing his sister to come and play, snatched the book from her and threw it over a wall into the water.<sup>29</sup> She again remembers her childhood fascination with Shelley in a letter to Gilbert Murray in January 1945:

I, like you, read Shelley's Prometheus very young - [I] think, from the place I remember reading it in (the top of a high wall round an orto we had) that I was ten. I was entirely carried away by it; as I was, indeed, by

all Shelley. I had been given a Shelley for a birthday present. Of course, I didn't understand all Prometheus; but enough to be fascinated.<sup>30</sup>

In the course of the same correspondence, she also recalls having been "brought up on Browning."<sup>31</sup>

It is clear that the young Macaulays were encouraged not only to read, but to write their own verse - some fragments of unpublished juvenilia are preserved with Rose Macaulay's papers at Trinity College, Cambridge.<sup>32</sup> About fifteen poems, in various childish hands, are accompanied by a collator's note to the effect that they were "probably written by the Macaulay children in a competition for a "Valentine poem" - it is not certain which is by Rose."<sup>33</sup> Constance Babington Smith has, however, made a tentative identification, pencilling "? ERM on one item, adorned with a picture of water-colour primroses:

One day a lovely vision kept,  
Possession of me while I slept.  
I saw a lady sweet and fair,  
With shining form and laughter rare,  
Descending from a wondrous height.  
Like a star in the dark night,  
And mute I was from very awe,  
For her face had not a flaw.  
Not a word did she utter,  
Her dress did not flutter,  
But she gave one look of love,  
And then - she changed into a dove!  
Oh, couldst thou but love me my sweet,  
I should require nor bread nor meat.  
Alas, Alas!<sup>34</sup>

It is tempting to suggest a connection between the painted roses accompanying these lines and Rose Macaulay's later interest in the symbolism of her own name.

### Mysticism and Early Poetry

Not surprisingly, Rose Macaulay's literature-rich childhood background leaves its imprint on her own writing when she comes to produce it. Nourished on Tennyson, Shelley, Browning and Swinburne, this woman who was to make her name as a prolific novelist in fact published poetry before she published prose. Into her verse she poured the love of romance, the pleasure in imaginative "other realms" she derived from her reading. In both "The Sea" and "Lament for Varazze" (written in Oxford, "in her early teens when she was feeling very homesick for the life of quite unconventional freedom" of her Mediterranean childhood years) she longs for seashore landscapes she has lost.<sup>35</sup> Childhood has been for Rose Macaulay a "golden age" in which states of perfection have been - if only momentarily - reached. In memory her life at Varazze has been paradisaical. She has perched in trees or on walls reading, basked at sea in a canoe, romped on the beach with her brothers and sisters. Her pain at being wrenched from this realm to begin adolescent life in the dull, cold, English confines of Oxford High School for Girls is relived frequently in her accounts of fictional children similarly banished from their rightful golden regions. Expressing her desire for this forfeited other world of childhood, these earliest poems are her first articulations of the theme of quest which is to run through

all her later work, both poetry and prose. She is, from the beginning, in pursuit of something perfect lost.

Her childhood pleasure in slipping into imaginative other worlds is closely connected, for Rose Macaulay, with her interest in mysticism. A difficult term to use precisely, it is worth attempting to define what she herself meant by it. Consistently in her poetry and in her prose she equates it with the attainment of a state of perfection. "Mystic thoughts," a "mystic sense," "mystical belief" are attributed to characters in her novels who achieve supernatural insights, who penetrate realms beyond the actual and glimpse a reassuring coherence beyond apparent chaos.<sup>36</sup> Characters on the "mystic way" are en route to attaining such insight.<sup>37</sup> She does not use the term sloppily to convey simply vague spiritual excitement, but has clearly read widely about mysticism and uses her knowledge to evoke the various stages of the mystical experience with precision. She will discriminate, for instance, between the levels of "awakening," "purgation," "illumination," "dark night" and "unitive life" - terms explained in detail by Evelyn Underhill in her definitive studies of 1911 and 1913 respectively, Mysticism and The Mystic Way.<sup>38</sup> It is difficult to establish exactly what Rose Macaulay read on the subject, although it is safe to assume some familiarity with Underhill's work from her use of a quotation from one of her books as the epigraph to Potterism (1920) and from her record of reading The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today (1922) in 1951.<sup>39</sup> She also met her in person.<sup>40</sup> In a scored out section of the typescript draft of her 1956 article, "Religious Writing" for the

Times Literary Supplement she queries, "Where are the Francis Thompsons, the Laurence Housmans, the G.K. Chestertons, the Wilfred Childes, the Evelyn Underhills, the Alice Meynells, and all the others who soared into religious verse round the turn of the century?" - her appeal further confirming our impression of her familiarity with Underhill's work.<sup>41</sup> Rose Macaulay's knowledge of the "technicalities" of mysticism may have been gleaned from any of the many treatises on the subject which exploded into prominence in the decade 1900-1910: R.H. Benson's Mysticism (1907), W.R. Inge's Christian Mysticism (1899), Studies of English Mystics (1906), Light, Life and Love : Selections from the German Mystics (1905), Personal Idealism and Mysticism (1905), Coventry Patmore's The Rod, the Root, and the Flower (1907), Baron von Hügel's The Mystical Element of Religion (1908).<sup>42</sup> Her wide reading in the works of all these authors is certainly recorded in her letters of the 1950's.<sup>43</sup> There is, too, the evidence, in her correspondence with Father Johnson of 1950-1958, of her life-long interest in such medieval mystics as Richard Rolle, Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich.<sup>44</sup>

Rose Macaulay herself, it is to be suspected, would have liked to have known the sensation of mystical insight, and often teeters on the brink of claiming mystical experiences for herself as a child. We note her description in her 1949 broadcast, I Speak for Myself of slipping, as a girl into an indescribable other realm:

Sometimes the key would be poetry, sometimes music, sometimes a sweet smell, sometimes the sight of sudden beauty, a blue cove between rocks, a sunset, ponies cantering by, a lonely hillside...hot in the

brooding noonday, frogs croaking in ponds beneath a summer moon. The world was suddenly magicked; it slid into an eerie dream. Its ecstasy possessed me utterly; after I had recovered my senses a little, I wrote poetry, the only vent for such dreams.<sup>45</sup>

There is her insistence on her sense of the existence of many worlds. "I think I naturally believe in some kind of mysterious world, interpenetrating this world, in and out of it and all round its margins," she writes to Father Johnson in 1951, sending him a copy of her first book of poems which "seem to be about just that."<sup>46</sup> Later she expands on the kinds of worlds she has discerned:

Sometimes I meant the dead and the living, sometimes ordinary life and the kind of dream life beyond it, sometimes the Christian assault on the world... sometimes the impact of some remote unbelievable past, sometimes of strangenesses one doesn't understand but feels.<sup>47</sup>

Still in 1949 she is alert to the possibility that "the dream world may sometimes overflow into the world of action and work." She forges a link between such experiences and the writing of her poems. When young, she tells Father Johnson, she found the release of poetry "when things were almost too beautiful to bear."<sup>49</sup> She remembers "as a child and girl, being poetry-drunk," finding the experience all-consuming:

...there are moments when it surges up, one falls into it, poetry takes hold, one swims in it as in a sea.<sup>50</sup>

In her novels, her poetry-writing characters, Michael in The Secret River and Imogen in Told By an Idiot, are also described as being inspired by such climactic moments of awareness.<sup>51</sup>

Yet it would be impossible, on the evidence of her writings, to ascribe to Rose Macaulay knowledge of the intense visionary experience of the true mystic: she is no Julian of Norwich. We must read warily her recollections of youthful mysticism recorded in 1949 and 1951 from a mature sexagenarian perspective. There is something slightly self-regarding in her picture of her childhood self, wafted into mystical realms on a surge of poetry - as there has been, indeed, too, in her portrait of the young Rose romantically poised in fruit trees or on garden walls reading verse, or running along the seashore proclaiming Shelley. Her evocations of the mystical state are, it seems safe to conclude, the work of a woman who knows much about mysticism, but has not experienced it herself. Her mysticism is more literary than actual.

Rose Macaulay would, however, have enjoyed Mary C. Sturgeon's description of her early poetry as "the testament of mysticism" of its time.<sup>52</sup> She is engaged from her very first poetic experiments with the ideas of movement towards an absolute, of desire to reach a goal, of the existence of a trans-sensory realm where confusion is perceived as order and perfection is attained. She places pilgrims on pale paths and has them strive towards hill-top castles; hands tap on closed doors; misty veils descend to prevent clear insight into the beyond. Although her best early poems appear, on the whole, in



her 1914 collection, The Two Blind Countries, several even earlier pieces survive amongst her papers at Trinity College, Cambridge. It is interesting to see emerging in them the "mystic" themes and images which are to be more successfully treated later. A handwritten composition entitled "Via Appia," for example, is annotated "1905?" and draws heavily on Rose Macaulay's visit to Naples and Rome in the spring of that year.<sup>53</sup> It is stylistically redolent of Kipling or Browning:

Passed we beyond the gates of the City of Cities  
- Brows to the South, at the cold still dawn of the day;  
Brows to the South, & the haze on the hills of Albano,  
- As Horace took, so took we the Appian Way.  
Behind us, Rome was fair in the grey still morning,  
Round us, blue like the sea, the Campagna lay;  
Before us, circling in line, the hills were snow-crested,  
But straight through the heart of the land ran the Appian Way.<sup>54</sup>

Stolidly visual and rhythmically pedestrian, it does, eventually, mount to a climax: the travellers breast a hill and encounter the splendid sight of the Castle Gandolfo. "Vespertina Cognito," "Crastini Temporis Cognito," and "Matutina Cognito" appear in the Westminster Gazette of October 5, 1907. Here again a pilgrim struggles through a plethora of Keatsian and Shelleyan images - limitless walls, chiming bells, luminous air, twilight bournes and mists - to a mystical consummation:

When on the city ways and the cragged height  
That took the dawn, the cool dim hands of night  
Are laid, holding from sight  
The bitter rocks, the many-hued delight,  
The paths of wandering,  
The desolate ways of men, where no bells swing,  
What news then of the morrow's journeying?

Over the shrouded roads the mists hang blind;  
Dimly, to twilight bournes, the faint ways wind,  
    Yet is the pilgrim's dreaming  
    Of a new day's white gleaming  
And seas of dawn beating on sleep's grey shore,  
And ships that shiver and wake and launch once more,  
And paths that climb beyond a still pale door.  
...Oh, young songs surge and break beyond the door!<sup>55</sup>

Her "no bells swing" conjures Keats' "no birds sing", the rhythm of her "morrow's journeying" his associated line, "Alone and palely loitering."<sup>56</sup> Her "many-hued delight" and "white gleaming" suggest Shelley's "many-coloured glass" and "white radiance of eternity."<sup>57</sup> (Interestingly, "Matutina Cognito" resurfaces as the first stanza of the poem "Completion" in The Two Blind Countries, while "Crastini Temporis Cognito" is reworked as the fifth).<sup>58</sup> Two prize-winning sestinas, "Sestina of the Seashore," (Westminster Gazette, 1907) and "The End of a Holiday" (Westminster Gazette, 1912, reprinted as "Turning Back" in The Two Blind Countries) continue her preoccupation with themes of quest and achievement.<sup>59</sup> The seeker in the first pursues "jewelled treasure" and a "radiant castle," while the travellers in the second tread "paths of mystery" and drain cups of insight "from out the Elysian still."

The title of Rose Macaulay's 1914 collection, The Two Blind Countries, makes her mystical theme explicit. In it she encapsulates her fascination with the idea of other worlds and the soul's impulse to penetrate these. Subjects slip into alien realms:

When the paths of dream were mist-muffled,  
    And the hours were dim and small  
(Through still nights on wet orchard grass

Like rain the apples fall),  
Then naked-footed, secretly,  
The thief dropped over the wall.<sup>60</sup>

Like a lost child my strayed soul drifted  
Back from the lit, intelligible ways  
Into the old, dim environing maze  
Where remote passions and shadows shifted.<sup>61</sup>

"Hammering hands" beat on a "shut door" between worlds in "Summons," while in an image reminiscent of Emily Brontë (Lockwood reaching out through the window to close on the "little, ice-cold hand" of the ghostly Cathy), an "inexplicable world thrusts "a soft hand" through casements in "Keyless."<sup>62</sup> (Rose Macaulay wrote the introduction for the Travellers' Library edition of Wuthering Heights in 1926, and spoke in a radio broadcast of 1946 of the novel's "strange, uncanny tremendous power of emotion, its brooding sense of doom").<sup>63</sup> There are vivid moments of mystical insight apparently achieved, as in "Trinity Sunday," where the reader is suddenly, startlingly, transferred from the everyday to the transcendental: from an ambling description of the prosaic scene - red-gowned Cambridge doctors strolling to church in the spring sunshine - the poem breaks mid-stanza into a terrifying vision of the primordial. Through a torn veil, "like maniacs mocking/The wild things from without peered through." Layer after layer of comforting civilisation is peeled back,

...veil beyond veil illimitably lifted:  
And I saw the world's naked face,  
Before, reeling and baffled and blind, I drifted  
Back within the bounds of space.<sup>64</sup>

Piling hazel-branches onto a bonfire, another subject suddenly sees into the life of things.

Through eddying wreaths I saw your eyes  
Narrowed, as if you were  
In mirth, or pain, or sharp surprise,  
Or fear too keen to bear.

The hazel leaves had a stir and thrill  
As if they watched men die;  
And the centuries tumbled at a shrill,  
Sharp, long-forgotten cry.<sup>65</sup>

Fire as a trigger for a moment of illumination is an image which is reworked at (less effective) length in her 1907 novel, The Furnace. Revelation in "The Thief" is release into a glorious garden, "full of pears and joy" and drenched in the scent of lavender. The moment of insight is synonymous with a sudden heightening of sensual awareness - the "thief" crunches pungent apples "with sharp white teeth" and hears, in a line reminiscent of Keats' nightingale pouring forth its song in ecstasy, "a robin breaking its heart on song."<sup>66</sup>

What is remarkable, however, in the poetry of this woman so obviously deeply in love with the idea of mysticism, is the frequency with which the actual moment of mystical insight is side-stepped and declined. More common than her evocation of high spots of trans-sensory vision are her stanzas full of cadenced sadness at insight not, or only fleetingly, achieved, her descriptions of travellers caught forever in the solid real world. Mary C. Sturgeon has remarked on the tight hold exerted by actuality on her poet:

It is a surprising fact in one of so speculative a turn, and is the clearest sign by which we recognise her work as of our time and no other. Her thought may be projected far, but her feet are generally upon solid ground.<sup>67</sup>

Rose Macaulay is more drawn to the plight of those souls who do not scale the mind-paralysing heights of ultimate vision and union with the absolute, transcendent force, but who rest on what Evelyn Underhill describes as the plateau of the illuminative way, the half-way house between the preparatory stages of mystical awakening and purification and the final goal of the unitive life. The illuminative plateau on which so many of her poetic subjects congregate is, according to Underhill, "the largest and most densely populated province of the mystic kingdom":

Only the very greatest souls, the Galahads of the quest...tread the whole of that "King's Highway" which leads man back to his source. 'For the many that come to Bethlehem, there be few that will go on to Calvary.' The rest stay here, in this Earthly Paradise, these flowery fields; where the liberated self wanders at will, describing to us as well as it can now this corner, now that, of the Country of the Soul.<sup>68</sup>

Pilgrims in "Fear" halt their journey at a wood's edge, afraid to proceed towards the brighter world on the other side.

Nor back they turn, nor on they go;  
They deem it the world's end.  
(Of a myriad pilgrims, how few know  
The way the shadows sway and flow  
In the heart of the woods when the winds blow  
And the birch-trees bend!)

A myriad pilgrims, when these be dust,  
Shall stay their journeying here,  
And watch the moon rise red as rust  
Over the earth they may not trust  
(Because of fear).<sup>69</sup>

Tramps shuffling along a dust-whitened highway in "The Losers" are pleased to have abandoned the painful struggle for success:

And glad they are to have left climbing  
The difficult way -  
Glad no more to sweat and strive,  
No more obey;  
Yea, all but glad the goal was not  
For such as they.

(Lost souls, they say, from Michael's gate  
Turn back in such wise.  
Forgetful of the ecstasy  
Of the strange, steep skies,  
Down popped paths to the silent lands  
They slope, with blind eyes).<sup>70</sup>

"Hands," too, with the Yeatsian melody of its opening lines, is an exhortation to exempt oneself from vain strivings towards a goal.

Seek no more fondly where the blind mists ride.  
They wreath pale dreams, fantastical and vain,  
But wreath no face for thee, O empty-eyed.<sup>71</sup>

Comfort is to be had, it suggests, from the milder pleasures of the illuminative plateau. Delight in the clearly perceived beauty of earthly things is offered - "bluebells, laying light fingers into thine," "the may's pale sweet hands," music, "the strong pine," the eddying wind. The soul is freed from the need to seek ultimate beauty on another plane and can rest content,

On earth's breast, hearing no more vain tales told,  
Being mocked no more by beauty's powerless power,  
But held unstriving to the peace of old....<sup>72</sup>

A similar refusal to struggle is encountered in "Foregrounds," where the poet describes her pleasure in the sensed beauty of the actual world - "The pleasant ditch is a milky way,/So alight with stars it is...":

The jolly donkeys that love me well  
Nuzzle with thistly lips;  
The harebell is song made visible,<sup>73</sup>  
The dandelion's lamp a miracle....

Yet she is troubled by the intrusive intimations of another world which is the home of transcendent beauty. Her cry is for veils to be drawn across this unsettling "face of the dream country":

I will weave of the clear clean shapes of things,  
A curtain to shelter me....

Happy in the calm, white stretches of the illuminative way, she feels safe in the world of positive light and colour, surrounded by solid, natural things. She is an artist filling her paintings with representations of the beauty around her, happily removed from the radiance of the "absolute," aware that she is living in the mere foreground of the unitive life, but content not to strive any further. The persona of this poem would rather be an artist describing the experience of insight than have the experience herself.

Rose Macaulay is intriguingly ambivalent in her treatment of mysticism. She both describes the sensation of insight and shows characters side-stepping it. It is as though she wanted to claim the experience as her own but is too honest in the end to do so.

Literary Influences: Walter de la Mare, Rupert Brooke, W.B. Yeats

At the root of this problem with her mysticism is Rose Macaulay's sheer derivativeness. It would be difficult to define in her poetry any distinctive voice of her own. She has brought to her writing from her childhood reading Shelley, Browning, Tennyson, Swinburne, Wordsworth and Keats. As she begins to publish in the early 1900's, we see her wanting, too, to set herself in line with the newer Edwardian poets. Harold Monro describes The Two Blind Countries as "a pot-pourri of the styles of Walter de la Mare, Rupert Brooke, Frances Cornford, and certain others."<sup>74</sup> Rose Macaulay's experience is second-hand. In this, of course, she is typically Edwardian: Richard Ellmann describes the first decade or so of the century as a period in which writers drew on different styles like clothes, even daring now and again "to leave unbuttoned the lowest button on their literary waistcoats."<sup>75</sup> That Rose Macaulay is an enthusiastic trier-on of styles has been evident from the playfulness with poetic formats she has evinced when writing for the "Problems" page of the Westminster Gazette. She can turn her hand to any style or voice which takes her fancy. She ably masters the rigours of the sestina, and slickly concocts a would-be comic prose-poem ("On Being Fastidious," 1911, see Appendix A). "A



Letter to the New Professor of Latin in the University of Cambridge," 1911, (see Appendix B) is a clever piece mimicking the style of A.E. Housman, to whom it is addressed.

It is, however, what she derives from other quasi-mystics such as Walter de la Mare, Rupert Brooke and W.B. Yeats that is most interesting.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rose Macaulay was introduced to Walter de la Mare by her mentor Naomi Royde-Smith some time in the early 1910's. A lasting friendship was struck up between senior and junior poets, the latter clearly aware of important points of similarity between De la Mare's work and her own:

He was very beautiful, and had a fantastic wit and funniness, and his poetry was exquisite and full of ghosts and shadows and dreams, as well as sometimes of a charming nonsense that seemed to belong to some strange moonish world, and was different in kind from all other nonsense. In his serious as well as his nonsense poetry he wholly blurred the frontiers of reality and dream, which is what poetry ought to do, for we do not want to know which is which, but to travel about freely in both countries, not hampered either by facts or dreams.<sup>76</sup>

His preoccupation with the two "countries" of dream and reality is very like her own. His poem "Sleep," for example, with its delineation of the two realms, brushes against the themes of many of those in The Two Blind Countries :

Men all, and birds, and creeping beasts,  
When the dark of night is deep,  
From the moving wonder of their lives  
Commit themselves to sleep.

Without a thought, or fear, they shut  
The narrow gates of sense;  
Heedless and quiet, in slumber turn  
Their strength to impotence.

...Two worlds they have - a globe forgot,  
Wheeling from dark to light;  
And all enchanted realm of dream  
That burgeons out of night.

His ghostly figure knocking at the door in "The Ghost" is like Rose Macaulay's similar wraith in "The Alien." De la Mare is troubled by a knocking:

'Who knocks?' 'I, who was beautiful,  
Beyond all dreams to restore,  
I, from the roots of the dark thorn am hither,  
And knock on the door.'

...Silence. Still faint on the porch  
Brake the flames of the stars.  
In gloom groped a hope-wearied hand  
Over keys, bolts and bars.

A face peered. All the grey night  
In chaos of vacancy shone;  
Nought but vast sorrow was there  
The sweet cheat gone.

Rose Macaulay's figure is troubled by a "clamorous whispering" of voices against a "shaken door," and, like "The Ghost" stealing a "hope-wearied hand/Over keys, bolts, and bars," tentatively slips his hand into the other world:

Only through a crack in the door's blind face  
He would reach a thieving hand,

To draw some clue to his own strange place  
From the other land.

But his closed hand came back empty,  
As a dream drops from him who wakes;  
And naught might he know but how a muffled sea  
In whispers breaks.<sup>79</sup>

De la Mare's celebrated "Listeners," too, are close cousins to Rose Macaulay's "solemn, small voices tick[ing] elf-like from hidden places."<sup>80</sup> Both poets share a quasi-mysticism which consists of a fascination with the closed doors dividing one world from another, with the fluid, twilight, no-man's land between realms, with hints of elusive existences beyond. As late as 1939, a letter of Rose Macaulay to De la Mare still links the vocabulary of his poems to her own:

I have been reading a lot from you lately, both verse and prose. There is not very m[uc]h poetry that consoles just now, but yours sends slants of light through doors ajar, always.<sup>81</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

The influence of Rupert Brooke on Rose Macaulay's early poetry is also intriguingly traceable. His work, too, displays a quasi-mysticism which the impressionable Rose has absorbed. Constance Babington Smith suggests the possibility of a romantic attachment between the two, indicating that her cousin may well have been "a little in love" with the "radiantly attractive" Rupert.<sup>82</sup> Evidence of their friendship certainly exists, but its degree and intensity

can only be guessed at. Connections between the Brooke and Macaulay families were of long standing, William Brooke and George Macaulay having taught together at Rugby. (The former had arrived to teach classics in 1880, the latter to take up his post as assistant master after his marriage at the end of 1878). Grace Macaulay's diaries record appointments to call on Mrs Brooke in August 1887 (just before the family's departure for Varazze) and June 1888 (on a visit to England).<sup>83</sup> As Rupert, born on August 3, 1887, was five weeks old when the Macaulays left Rugby for Italy, any suggestion that Rose and he were childhood playmates must be discounted, yet the friendship between the two families was clearly resumed on the Macaulays' return to England in 1894. Rose's younger sister Jean states in a letter to Constance Babington Smith (November 1966), "Yes we were great friends with Dick Brook, [sic, Rupert's elder brother] but rather despised Rupert."<sup>84</sup> A note in Constance Babington Smith's hand dated November 10, 1968 elucidates, "Jeanie says it must have been after they came back from Italy that they despised R. - 'because he cheated at games'." Dick Brooke was a visitor at Ty-issa, the Macaulay home in Aberystwyth (1901-1906), and Grace Macaulay seems to have hoped that he and her eldest daughter Margaret would become engaged.<sup>85</sup> No such event occurred. Rose's friendship with Rupert, however, began on a more promising footing, she setting store by the renewal of the family connection when the Macaulays arrived in Great Shelford (a few miles from Grantchester) in 1906. He, after leaving King's College Cambridge, in 1909, was happy to invite her on occasions to London for "lunch or dinner and plays" and to meet his friends - invitations which were to leave Rose with vivid memories.

I was envious of Rupert, who walked about the streets without a map, often with a plaid rug over his shoulders, as if he was Tennyson, which seemed to me a very good idea and gave him prestige, and people turned to look at him as he strolled through Soho with his golden hair and his rug, and I was proud to be with him.<sup>86</sup>

Rupert Brooke's letters to his mother between 1907 and 1910 from Cambridge contain various references to Rose. One (of October 29, 1907) records her imminent arrival with her mother, sister Margaret and a friend at his King's College rooms for tea.<sup>87</sup> Another (of November, 1908), refers to the publication of a collection of his prize-winning poems in the Westminster Problems Book for 1904-1907, an honour he shared with Rose.<sup>88</sup> Again, in a letter of August 17, 1910, he mentions having met her in the street in Cambridge along with her uncle, his tutor W.H. Macaulay.<sup>89</sup> (In May of the same year, he had also been referred to Rose's father in his professional capacity as Lecturer in English for advice on "what subject to take up" for his fellowship dissertation).<sup>90</sup>

Rose's memories of Rupert are much less prosaic. She remembers bathing with him at Grantchester and roaming the meadows there in his company.<sup>91</sup> A vivid cameo of their relationship as she perceived it is offered in her letter to Walter de la Mare, congratulating him on his piece about Brooke, 1915:

I have just been reading your thing about Rupert. It is so entirely himself - so m[uc]h more so than one could have imagined anything written about him could be - th[at] it is m[uc]h better than a picture for his friends to have to keep. It seems all alive with his humour and his aliveness, and the most inside self

th[at] I sh[ou]ld think not very many people even who knew him well understood. He would have liked it so m[uc]h himself, especially as coming from you; you of course, know how much he liked you; it was one of the things he said, I remember, in one of his last letters to me - "I do love meeting de la Mare." I remember one day in May, 3 or 4 years ago, when he and I were paddling in the Grantchester meadows, th[at] we were talking about you - it was rather like versicle and response, and y[o]u would h[a]ve been amused if y[o]u had been there no doubt - b[ut] I wish he could read what y[o]u've written about him this week.

You, of course, know all this already; my only excuse for writing is th[at] I am so fond of Rupert - we've known each other since we were children - and th[at] I do like your article so m[uc]h. His mother will be proud of it too - th[ou]gh at present she can't feel anything b[ut] th[at] she wants him back.<sup>92</sup>

Frustratingly, no trace of the correspondence here referred to survives - letters from Constance Babington Smith to Geoffrey Keynes while researching for her cousin's biography, (held in the collection of papers at Trinity College Library), confirm this fact. Yet Rose Macaulay seems anxious to establish its one time existence. "Rupert's p.c.'s were wonderful," she writes to Roger Senhouse in 1946, " - I used to have a large number of them, but, alas, they were blown up."<sup>93</sup> A 1939 letter to Edward Marsh also refers to "the letters and cards I used to get from [Rupert] from 15 Raymond Buildings."<sup>94</sup> It is possible that Rose Macaulay is again guilty as she has been in her imagining of her childhood, poetry-proclaiming, semi-mystical self, of attempting to shape her past in retrospect, of investing her relationship with Brooke with more significance than it in fact had, and of implanting in her correspondents' minds the idea of a romantic friendship which will impress without requiring immediate substantiation. A conversation with her friend David Ley

seems to have had precisely this effect. Writing to Constance Babington Smith on the publication of her biography in 1972, he comments on her suggestion that Rose was infatuated with Rupert:

...the part about Rupert Brooke is very interesting. In a discussion we once had about modern poetry, I happened to mention Rupert Brooke, and she said, "I knew him well." It sounded as if he had been important in her life and I find what you say confirms it.<sup>95</sup>

The prevalence of Rupert Brooke look-alikes in Rose Macaulay's early novels does indicate a preoccupation with him. The young, fair-haired poet Michael of The Secret River, sleeping out on a river bank amid climbing roses is unmistakably Brooke against a Grantchester background. Basil Doye of Non-Combatants and Others, who rejects Alix's love for her cousin Evie's when he returns, nerves shattered, from the war, echoes the real-life young man whose fascination with Ka Cox and Noel Olivier must have, by 1915, left Rose Macaulay ousted and envious. A boat party in Views and Vagabonds goes up river to Grantchester for "a large tea, with muffins, at the Orchard."<sup>96</sup> Benjamin Bunter and Cecil (in the same novel), who tour the countryside preaching the gospel of work and selling carpentry in an effort to educate the working man's aesthetic taste, are like Brooke and Dudley Ward touring the New Forest by horse-drawn caravan in 1910, campaigning for Fabianism. The clues are suggestive, making the Rose-Rupert liaison an intriguing probability, but the full facts are elusive.

Whatever the nature of the friendship between the two, it is clear that Rupert Brooke's poetry has exerted more than a passing influence on Rose Macaulay's own. His early verses are elaborate with the imagery of roses, white paths, windy rivers and moonlight which is so apparent in The Two Blind Countries. Brooke's "The Path of Dreams" (c. 1904):

Go, heart, and pluck beside the Path of Dreams,  
Where moans the wind along the shadowy streams,  
Sad garlands wreathed of the red mournful Roses,  
And lilies o' moon beams

has echoes of the opening lines of Macaulay's poem "The Thief":

When the paths of dream were mist-muffled,  
And the hours were dim and small...

as well as of the plaintive pictures of reeds and stream which introduce "The Flame":

The dawn is secret and gray, for the willows weave it  
Of a dim dream and pale water light.  
Very still the dream flows, having for motion  
The swaying the reeds make through the night.<sup>97</sup>

(Significantly, too, this poem closes the image of "A radiant, reed-swayed rose" as an analogue for undying love.) Rupert Brooke's quasi-mysticism is very like Rose Macaulay's own. He is intrigued like her by the soul's urge to penetrate realms beyond the actual. In "Second Best" (1908), he writes of the heart as an "exile of



immortality," straining through the dark to a "clear-visions" view of "what may lie beyond it":

...behind the night,  
Waits for the great unborn, somewhere afar,  
Some white tremendous daybreak. And the light,  
Returning, shall give back the golden hours,  
Ocean a windless level, Earth a lawn  
Spacious and full of sunlit dancing-places,  
And laughter, and music, and, among the flowers,  
The gay child-hearts of men, and the child-faces,  
O heart, in the great dawn!<sup>98</sup>

We are reminded of such ecstatic moments of vision as that aspired to by Rose Macaulay's pilgrim in "Completion," who strives towards "heaven's clear mystery" and the point where,

The porter of the Temple of the West  
Flings gold gates wide and shows  
The Altar of the Rose,<sup>99</sup>  
Blooming for him....

Both poets are interested in the progress of pilgrims towards some ineffable goal. Rose Macaulay has her "young pilgrim, seeking grave still spaces" in "Completion" and her "myriad pilgrims" on the "white road of their pilgrimage" in "Fear."<sup>100</sup> Brooke's "The Song of the Pilgrims" (March 1908) follows similar themes:

What light of unremembered skies  
Hast thou relumed within our eyes,  
Thou whom we seek, whom we shall find?...  
A certain odour on the wind,  
Thy hidden face beyond the west,  
These things have called us; on a quest  
Older than any road we trod,  
More endless than desire....

The poem ends with the vision of "Thine altar wonderfully white, / Among the Forests of the Night."<sup>101</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

The influence of the early Yeats on the young Rose Macaulay was clearly also profound. His The Wind Among the Reeds was published in 1899, In the Seven Woods in 1904, The Green Helmet and Other Poems in 1910.<sup>102</sup> We know that some volume of his work was amongst Rose Macaulay's twenty-fifth birthday presents in August 1906: "We gave her Stevensons Vailima Letters [sic], Yeates [sic], Henley, C. Bronte's Life, a raquet [sic] and a motor-veil," her sister Margaret records in her diary that day.<sup>103</sup> She remembers, too, going to hear him read at the Poetry Bookshop and being impressed by his "incantatory manner, fascinating, peculiar, and eventually soporific."<sup>104</sup> There are points in Rose Macaulay's poems where we detect distinct Yeatsian resonances. Her picture, for example, in "Completion" of "small waves lapping upon a dim gray shore" is redolent of Yeats' "The Lake Isle of Innisfree."<sup>107</sup> Again, her interchange of voices in "Questions," (Westminster Gazette, October 18, 1913) -

'You were like cool water on the still grey days,  
Limpid and quiet, and empty of the sun.  
But in you now some new day has begun:  
I fear its strange, discomfortable blaze.  
Have you found God, or has the sharp amaze  
Of a world's piteous beauty stabbed you through?'

'I have found nothing beneath the sun but you.  
Cover your eyes.' 'You wince to meet their gaze.  
What have you seen?' 'The dawn striking the hill'

is like that of Yeats' "Ephemera" (1889), with its description of ebbing emotion and interplaying voices:

'Your eyes that once were never weary of mine  
Are bowed in sorrow under pendulous lids,  
Because our love is waning,'  
    And then she:  
'Although our love is waning, let us stand  
By the lone border of the lake once more,  
Together in that hour of gentleness  
When the poor tired child, Passion, falls asleep.'<sup>106</sup>

Yeats' influence on Rose Macaulay does, however, go deeper than simple quotation of specific points of similarity can display. She has absorbed from him the need for a core vocabulary of symbols. Just as he has made pivotal to his scheme of ideas the images of rose, river, tree and bird, she creates for herself in her poems a spectrum of metaphors which is to carry the weight of her developing thought through both her verse and her fiction. Arches, bells, birds, gardens, lameness, left-handedness, the moon, numbers, roads, roses, rains, ships, walls, water and woods - all have their precise metaphorical significances. Rose Macaulay learns from Yeats her striking meticulousness with symbol. No colour or number is employed -

either in her poetry or in her prose by accident. Her poem "Cards," for instance, is typical of her careful crafting of images:

Four candle flames shook in a stir of air;  
Four moths drifted to death from out the night;  
Four players sat in a soft circle of light  
In a dim lily-illuminated garden, where  
Small sweet winds wandered. White in the rosy  
flare

Your thin quick hands flung slippery cards about;  
And you smiled, innocent of the furtive rout  
Of shadowing things sidling behind your chair.

But, like swords clashing, my love on their hate  
Struck sharp, and drove, and pushed...Grimly round you  
Fought we that fight, they pressing passionate  
Into the lit circle which called and drew  
Shadows and moths of night....I held the gate.  
You said, 'Our game', more truly than you knew.<sup>107</sup>

In this fastidiously turned sonnet, the neat, civilised, card-playing world of the octave is offset by the confused, syncopated rhythms of the sestet, in which the speaker fights to keep out the inchoate "forces of misrule." The opposition of the poem's two parts is supported by the imagery: a "lily-illuminated garden" is highlighted in the first, the clashing of swords in the second. We are reminded of the convention in old paintings that a lily on one side of a picture and a sword on the other depict innocence and guilt. (The painting, for example, of the "Madonna and Child in the Enclosed Garden," from the Studio of the Master of Flemalle, in the Kress Collection, New York, shows St. Catherine sitting on one side with a sword on her lap, the Madonna in the Centre with white flowers growing in front of

her.) A series of oppositions winds through the whole piece - night and light, innocence and furtiveness, soft light and sharp swords, love and hate, flames and shadows. The poet's insistence on the number "four" - "four candle flames," "four moths," "four players" - enforces her idea of neatness, order, plan. The world in which the sophisticated patterning of the card-game ("Your thin quick hands flung slippery cards about") can be sustained, is the reassuringly organised one in which there are four elements, four corners of the earth, four winds, and four seasons. The "shadowy things" sidling in the darkness are the more horrifying for being unquantified and unnumbered. The central image of the game of cards is singularly appropriate, picturing as it does within the colours of the suits this primordial battle between light and dark. The two red suits have been traditionally associated with the warm seasons and the day, the two black ones with the cold and the night. Interpreting the poem is like teasing the meaning out of a medieval illumination where each meticulously penned symbol is significant. (The comparison is not an idle one - Rose Macaulay was later to spend several years of her life poring over such illuminations to gather material for a "modern bestiary"; the research notes were completely obliterated in the Blitz).

Immense care is detectable, too, in the choice of images in "The Door":

We piled the crackling brushwood sticks,  
With the dead brown stalks of fern,

Into a heap, and lighted six  
Matches to make it burn.<sup>108</sup>

The specification of six matches is intriguing, the number 'six' intended to highlight the occurrence of the summer solstice - the subject of the poem - in the sixth month. The moment of insight on which the piece focuses is analogous to the peaking of the sun's strength in this longest day of the year. Interpretation of tiny details transforms the poem; hazel leaves heaped on the fire symbolize hidden wisdom; "blue smoke" drifting from the bonfire images fertility, the ripening of the soul towards insight; a triad of Hermetic colours punctuates the sixth stanza:

The red fire leapt and lit your face;  
I winced - you were so white,  
To have come once more to the ancient place  
Of red pain and black night.<sup>109</sup>

Black, white and red feature in Hermeticism as the colours of the three traditional stages of the mystic way - purgation, illumination and union. This merging of the three in one verse indicates a high-point of insight achieved.

It is not clear precisely where Rose Macaulay derives her symbolism from, though she obviously read widely and hungrily,

absorbing information about number and colour systems from a variety of sources. Given her enthusiasm for Yeats, it is tempting to suggest that she may have dipped into the sources of his symbols - Eliphas Levi's Histoire de la magie, MacGregor Mathers' translation of Zohar's Kabbala Denudata, Madame Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled, A.P. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>110</sup> She certainly shares with him his interest in trying to juggle many systems of ideas into the compatible "whole" of total understanding. As Yeats toyed with Cabbalism, Platonism, spiritualism, Hermeticism and oriental philosophies, Rose Macaulay is intrigued, too, we perceive in the symbolism of her early poems, by many systems. Her interest in mysticism merges with her use of Hermetic colour metaphors and pagan symbols of fertility or tree-worship, gleanable from the Golden Bough; Platonic strivings after perfection intertwine with Christian quests for goodness and truth. She, too, a child of her secular Edwardian times, is looking for the vast whole pattern where all systems interlock to form the perfect picture.<sup>111</sup>

### Conclusion

"Most of us", wrote Rose Macaulay in 1938, "whatever we may do about it later, write poetry in our twenties: such an activity is, at the least or at the most (as the case may be) a vent for our subliminal selves; into it we discharge our ghost-consciousness."<sup>112</sup>

Examination of Rose Macaulay's ghost-consciousness is essential to the interpretation of her novels. The poems she wrote in her twenties are the work of a young woman who, as a child, was brought up experiencing the delightful ease of access there can be to imaginative other worlds. They reveal her a person who has felt ever since that some perfection has been lost and must be striven for again, and show her in young adulthood channelling this sense into an interest in mysticism and in other systems of ideas offering some "wholeness" or "coherence" to be obtained. Rose Macaulay's poetry writing clearly develops naturally from the poetry reading in which her childhood was steeped, and is an accomplishment she in fact retains and takes pleasure in all her life. "Starting on poetry is like turning on a tap, with me," she told Victor Gollancz in 1931, "-the trouble is to turn it off again."<sup>113</sup> At all stages in her career, her poetry provides an illuminating index to the fiction she is producing at the same time. We see her in these first poems trying on the styles of poets she admires - those of her old Romantic heroes as well as of her newer favourites, Walter de la Mare, Rupert Brooke and W.B. Yeats.

Above all, the poems offer a layer of careful symbolic detail which the critic must carry with him to his interpretation of the novels. In her fiction, too, clarification comes with the resolution of meticulous schemes of images. Quests again, as in the poems, are for the absolutes of Truth, Beauty, Love and for glimpses of the "whole." Rose Macaulay's poetry and prose cannot be seen as standing



in splendid isolation from each other. Illuminatingly often, the techniques which have created the careful picturings of the verse are applied to the fiction also. Her verse is her apprenticeship.

Chapter 2 The Ordered Frame : Novels 1906-1912

Abbots Verney

The closeness of Rose Macaulay's prose to her poetry is most apparent in her highly symbolic first six novels. Abbots Verney (1906) was written while the Macaulay family were at Aberystwyth - a period of unhappiness and anticlimax in Rose's life, as she recovered from the disappointment of having been awarded only an Aegrotat, fretted at being the last daughter left at home and worried about her future.<sup>1</sup> Not unnaturally, ideas of success and failure are at the forefront of her mind at this time: quest for achievement emerges as an obvious theme as she tries her hand at her first novel.

An account of young Verney Ruth's development towards manhood, this novel offers two separate strands of story-line as indexes to his progress. In the first he is shown contending with the difficulties of his relationship with his grandfather. Old Francis Ruth, his judgement impaired by the distress of having had to disinherit his wayward son Meyrick, finds it impossible to believe that Verney (Meyrick's son) can so far have deviated from his father's unprincipled "type" as to be capable of preserving the family's honour. The topical theme of heredity is clearly in evidence.<sup>2</sup> Unable to accept his grandson's innocence, he subjects him to suspicion after suspicion and finally disinherits him also. Verney, at first stubborn to the point of conceit in refusing to give apologies where they are not due, gradually reaches the point of

emotional maturity where he can accept his disinheritance with sad equanimity and see that more compromises in his own behaviour might have been a kindness to the old man. The second thread of the plot offers a love story in which Verney pursues, but fails to win, the cool young beauty Rosamund Ilbert. Here again, though compelled to accept the loss of an ideal, he emerges from the experience a resigned but (it is suggested) spiritually stronger man.

The two strands of quest are neatly paralleled at the level of imagery. Verney Ruth seeks to inherit the Abbey of Abbots Verney. Returning from Italy, he contemplates its imposing, castle-like outline on the high hill:

Verney looked up to where the proud melancholy of the Abbey shadowed the sky. Through the surging golden trees that shut it in its stern lines stood invincibly noble, dark with the pathos and the desolation of the centuries. The little turreted towers of the gate guarded the stone bridge across the moat....<sup>3</sup>

His climb towards it is difficult - through a wood, up a steep wood-path, through a "little wicket gate" and out onto a bare hillside where the view of the "castle" is clearer.<sup>4</sup> He pauses to contemplate the high scene above him, the Abbey with its two gardens stretching beyond it, the one with its "great yellow trees" clustering round the house, the other a fruit garden, enclosed by an ivy-covered wall over which boughs of unripened apples can be seen.<sup>5</sup> Climbing on, he notices that there is no light from the chapel.

The great rose-window that lit the long refectory was a dark blur; it gleamed back no red light to meet the sombre falling of the day.<sup>6</sup>

An interview with his grandfather determines that Abbots Verney is not to be his. Later, descending the hill, he looks back briefly to reflect that, "He would go there no more in the years to be, but as a guest."<sup>7</sup> He is left in the final chapter gazing downwards, rather than upwards, this time over the rooftops of Rome, contenting himself with having only second-best.

The symbols are the traditional ones of quest. Golden trees around the "castle" signify fulfilment and enlightenment; gate and moat mark thresholds between realms, announcing the pilgrim's passage from one level of understanding to the next; the wood is the place of testing and initiation through which (as in the poem "Fear") he must pass before achieving insight. The two gardens, one full of golden foliage, the other unpleasant with its ivied walls and unripe fruit, suggest the influence of Maeterlinck on Rose Macaulay's writing at this time. His prose collection Le double jardin sustains the metaphor that there are two gardens in life, one beautiful, sunny and joyous, the other haunted by things evil and menacing.<sup>8</sup> In progressing towards maturity, he contends, the individual must traverse both these gardens; he must perceive for himself the fact that life in its fullness should embrace all opposites, acquiring a wholeness of vision which accepts that good and evil, happiness and sadness, necessarily co-exist. Rose, using verses from his "Feuillage du coeur" as an epigraph for Part IV of The Secret River,

and from other poems of his, in The Furnace, was clearly interested in Maeterlinck as she produced her earliest novels.<sup>9</sup> Her reference to him in her 1910 poem, "Thoughts from Great Minds on Crying for the Moon" (see Appendix C) substantiates this.<sup>10</sup> Here she borrows his picture of the two gardens to indicate, beside the towered abbey, the desired goal of consummate perception achieved.

Her description of the unlighted rose-window is delicately suggestive, as a counterpoint to the abbey's soaring towers, of Verney's finally failed aspirations. The "rose" image, as shorthand for spiritual summits scaled is, of course, part of the early twentieth-century poet's stock-in-trade. Rose Macaulay, steeped in her admiration for Yeats, does not hesitate to transfer his rose-symbolism to her own vocabulary of images. She even uses a verse from "The Secret Rose" to introduce Part V of The Secret River.<sup>11</sup> The child brought up on tales of Dante would also, naturally, be familiar from an early age with the idea of the rose as a symbol of wholeness and heavenly completion. In Rose Macaulay's case, however, the coincidence of the symbol with her own name must have added an edge to her interest in its layers of meaning. Though known as "Rosie" as a child, Emily Rose Macaulay was under some pressure to respond to her more "adult" first name as a schoolgirl.<sup>12</sup> At Somerville, in reaction, she appears to have been at pains to revert to the stylish "Rose". A note with Margerie Venables Taylor's letters in ERM18 recalls that, "At school she was called Emily...but she tried to suppress it at Somerville and we teased her by calling her "Rozemly."<sup>13</sup> "Emily" in later life was retained for convenient

anonymity on occasions when she was called to account for her (many - minor) driving offences.<sup>14</sup> Fascinated by her own name and its synonymy with an image of perfection, Rose Macaulay must surely have felt her whole identity bound up with the themes it represents.

The second strand of quest within Abbots Verney - Verney's pursuit of Rosamund Ilbert - is also traced in a subtext of symbolic terms. The carefully named Rosamund, herself the "Rose of the World," is pictured in the "little cloister-garden of the Lateran":

She was waiting there by the stone well, where springing water sounds perpetually, in the middle of the little palm-grown garden, when Verney sauntered in, and stood for a minute watching the Western sun strike little twisted columns to a glad glory of gold....<sup>15</sup>

The stone well in the courtyard images the cosmic centre; with Rosamund at the heart of it, standing caressing the scars on the well lip - symbolically poised to reveal the mystery of life from its depths - the scene represents all that is perfect. The cameo also intimates, however, the failure to which Verney's quest is doomed. He stands beside Rosamund, attempting to read "the inscription that ran, shining brokenly gold in the sunshine, round above the little arches, admonishing those who read to fashion their lives and souls upon these cloisters, so should they be well ordered, fair, and bright."<sup>16</sup> The secret from the well at the cosmic centre is only fragmentarily revealed; the perfect pattern is not displayed.

Verney's journey in delirium (preceding fever) towards this courtyard fountain of insight is described in the meticulously symbolic terms of a mystical quest. This section, as even the author was to admit, has "shockingly expanded" and makes laborious reading.<sup>17</sup> Examined closely enough, however, it reveals the interesting extent of her detailed information about the mystical experience. She is aware that the soul must begin by experiencing what Evelyn Underhill describes as an "awakening," an "emergence of intuitions from below the surface," a sense of "gradual and increasing lucidity."<sup>18</sup> This is followed by a stage of "purgation" in which the soul reacts against the heightening of the senses it has just achieved and sinks back into sensations of self-mortification and pain. Emerging from this, it proceeds to the stage of "illumination" (a condition frequently associated with silver, white or lunar images). "Illumination," as Underhill explains, "is the contemplative state" par excellence. It forms, with the two preceding states, the "first mystic life. Many mystics never go beyond it....It entails a vision of the Absolute: a sense of the Divine Presence; but not true union with it. It is a state of happiness."<sup>19</sup> Reaction from this happiness must again be experienced, and the soul, if it is to proceed, must plunge into its "dark night," a "great swing-back into darkness" which entails "impotence, blankness [and] solitude."<sup>20</sup> Only after undergoing such anguish may it enjoy the supreme happiness and insight of the "unitive life."<sup>21</sup>

Verney Ruth is the first of Rose Macaulay's pilgrims to travel along this mystic way. In the pause before he embarks, he sees the long route of his journey set out before him. Rome, the labyrinth with the fountain at its centre, hangs, "a mirage city with a dreaming dome" in the distance at the end of the "straight white path" of the Appian Way.<sup>22</sup> Awakened to the necessity of the quest, he realises this is the road he must take. He has not advanced far, however, before he is compelled to turn aside from the straight route into the gloom of an ilex wood. He is experiencing, the symbolism indicates, purgation. The testing confusion of the wood must be suffered before greater enlightenment can be reached. The ilex woods (hollies and holm-oaks) have been specified with the same care that "fern," "hazel" and "beech" were specified in the poem "The Door" - hollies and oaks, "trees of the cross," signify sanctity and impending insight.<sup>23</sup> Leaving the ilex wood, he passes to the stage of illumination. The scene is suffused with silver and white.

Now he saw - he had been shut from the realization before by the dim enclosing gloom of the ilex wood - that the world was a wonderful glory of white moonlight. It lay in great, still spaces; the Campagna was a misty, swelling sea of silver grey. One could discern the whole of it in that lucid breadth of light....<sup>24</sup>

Momentarily, Verney is overwhelmed by the clarity and coherence of his vision. Illumination is, however, rapidly followed by the painful dark night of the soul. The moonlight "dies" from the world, leaving him to confront a grey wasteland from which all sight of his goal has been effaced.<sup>25</sup>



Rome was gone wholly; the plains had drowned her. Verney scanned the grey width in vain. The plains had taken the line of the sea, too. Nothing remained but the great dim waste, set here with a broken tomb, there with a square tower, with now and then the blur of an olive farm or vineyard, and always the long striding of the aqueducts out of the dark west.<sup>26</sup>

He has reached the nadir of his existence from which he can only slowly struggle back. In the desolation of the barren plains, he thinks suddenly of running water, is reminded of the fountain, and strikes out on the final desperate lap of his quest. At last he reaches the courtyard and stumbles up the twisting path, hung with "dark, sweet roses" -

There, in the centre of the labyrinth, was his journey's end, for at the bottom of a grey well, strangely wrought and deeply scarred, water rose and musically choked, and sang perpetually.<sup>27</sup>

Yet, as the rose window in the abbey in the first symbolic sequence has been unlighted, so Rosamund is absent from her place at the well in this second one. Verney may be aware for the rest of his life of the water running tantalisingly at the well's foot, but no one will draw its secret up for him. He has achieved, in terms of the mystic quest, a momentary glimpse of the absolute, before sinking back onto the populous illuminative plateau where he must experience only the lesser, sporadic insights of ordinary minds.

We are conscious of a peculiar down-grading of images in the course of the novel as Rose Macaulay's philosophy of disappointment

becomes apparent. Rome is not only the glittering, distant city, the desired object of Verney's quest whose domes hide the vital fountain, but also "the guardian of a mighty prison," the site of his squalid flat in the Via de Teatrodi Marcello.<sup>28</sup> Verney is struck at different times by both the personality and impersonality of the city. He muses, before his illness, on its intense individuality:

Rome was always there, waiting to seize one in a grip strangely, almost terribly personal. There was surely never a place - though every place has its individuality - so pervasively, potently individual as this city. She exhaled her personality from the stones of her streets; one could not escape from it.<sup>29</sup>

Later, having failed to win both his inheritance and the woman he loves, he is reconciled to the looser universality of the city's appeal:

Rome was for everyone; not, perhaps, with a great intimacy of belonging, but with a wide receptiveness, and a most manifold, compelling charm. He would take that of her, and be content....<sup>30</sup>

Rosamund shares this ambivalence of Rome's. She is at first the intensely desirable "Rose of the World," whom Verney wishes to possess as his own. Gradually, however, he realises that she is incapable of personal passion - she can dispense only a mild, concerned charity on a worldwide scale. Maggie Denham assesses her friend:

'Rosamund, it always seems to me, has such crowds of friends, who talk to her about all kinds of intimate

things that I sometimes feel as if she couldn't have much special, particular store left for one person.'<sup>31</sup>

Rosamund, like Rome, is for everyone.

Verney's quest is left delicately balanced between success and failure. He has lost his inheritance, but won (briefly) his grandfather's liking; he has failed to win Rosamund's love, but found her friendship; as he stands looking out over Rome, the sun sets, but the city street-lights appear and the stars come out. He has lost the material trappings of worldly happiness, but attained the mature insight that life must be a matter of merely "making do." Rosamund gives him, not the secret of the universe she has seemed to promise, but the sadder, makeshift truth:

'Most of life is a sort of pis aller - making the best of a poor business. We've just got to take things as they are, and make what we can of them.'<sup>32</sup>

Abbots Verney is, distinctly, the novel of the new graduate debating how best to wrest success from the world into which she has so recently been released. The pattern of the mystic quest effectively conveys her sense of the confusing ebbing and flowing of achievement - life's up's and down's - and of the need for some goal to be striven for. The impressions of a perhaps unusually long adolescence are marshalled into the format of a novel. Deluging her story with images, she seeks to demonstrate a mature grasp of ideas and a familiarity with contemporary literary trends. She examines

the theme of heredity, considers the possibility of her characters being "types," adds the complicated dimension of mysticism to her love-story, and manages polite conversational interchanges - Jamesian in their stiltedness - between the sexes. The account of the development of Verney Ruth to adult insights is as much the story of Rose Macaulay's own "growing up" as his.

### The Furnace

The Furnace (1907) is even more ambitiously studded with images. Set in Naples against the background of the slowly erupting Vesuvius, it, too, focuses on the growth towards insight of its protagonists, this time a brother and sister pair, Tommy and Betty Crevequer. Unhappily at sea in the polite social world to which the Venables family (Warren, his mother and cousin Prudence Varley) introduce them, Betty's love spurned by Warren, Tommy's by Prudence, they come to realise that their sibling love for each other is the highest ideal to which they can attain. The novel's peculiar asexuality is its point: as the highest goal of sexual compatibility with a loved opposite cannot be achieved, this sexless, loving parity of brother and sister must be accepted as a more readily realisable and more or less satisfying happiness.

Various strands of imagery confuse The Furnace. The patterned gradations of the mystic quest so laboriously detailed in Abbots Verney are again apparent here. Encountered in the opening chapter as penniless bohemians, aimless children happy in the playground of

backstreet Naples, Betty and Tommy are awakened by the arrival of the sophisticated Prudence and Warren to unpleasant truths about themselves. They begin to see that they are socially unacceptable, that they need clean collars and new hats, that their offers of friendship can be spurned. A period of purgation follows as they retire to their shabby flat, saddened by this realisation. Betty does, however, emerge onto a recognisable illuminative plateau, as she spends a quiet Sunday afternoon on the beach of Baiae's Bay. A moment of sudden clarity is crowded with images of insight - a sand castle (the Abbots Verney towers writ small), sailing boats bobbing on the sea, church bells sounding in the background, the city of Naples itself just out of sight beyond the bay. Her burst of illumination is a mild, pleasant foretaste of later, harder-won insight:

It was at this moment that the 'impression' became of a great vividness. Life might be a furnace, but here were things untouched by its flame, cast up - so Betty saw them, with prospective eyes - out of the sea of fire on to the high shores. Here, by the edge of the sea, were she and Tommy and a sand-castle dotted with pumice-stone like a plum-pudding....A swift moment of vivid intuition came to her, illuminating her vision of life, as she looked at Tommy, lying on his back, with his straw hat tilted over his eye. She was lit by a flash of great certainty, of strange discernment.<sup>33</sup>

It is an impression of clarity which interestingly anticipates Virginia Woolf's technique of conveying moments of vision triggered by very ordinary objects - James Ramsay cutting out a picture of a refrigerator from an illustrated catalogue and endowing it with "heavenly bliss" as his mother promises him a visit to the

lighthouse, an entire London street transfixed by the sight of an aeroplane advertising toffee in its smoke trails.<sup>34</sup> For the Crevequers, the journey home lies, symbolically, along "the white coast road, with the gold of the west behind them, and the pale blue winter sea beside them, and the bright city of many hues growing larger in front of them as they circled the bay."<sup>35</sup> The picture is of the greater, unitive insight to which the mystic aspires if he proceeds further along the mystic way. The eruption of Vesuvius provides an appropriate analogue for the dark night of the soul into which, reacting from illumination, Betty descends. Searching for the missing Tommy throughout the (literal) dark night of devastation, she realises the truth about herself - that her companionship with her brother is the highest good to which she can attain.

Platonic imagery is, however, woven around this picture of mystical progression, confusingly adding another dimension to the story of the soul's progress. Betty and Tommy Crevequer are the two halves of the original "whole" human being Aristophanes postulates in The Symposium:

...each human being was a whole, with its back and flanks rounded to form a circle; it had four hands and an equal number of legs, and two identically similar faces upon a circular neck, with one head common to both the faces, which were turned in opposite directions:<sup>36</sup>

Now compelled to lead separate, earthly existences, only traces of their original symmetry remain:

Betty had a dimple, when she laughed, in her left cheek; Tommy's indentation, rather fainter, was in his right.<sup>37</sup>

Both have memories (in line with the Platonic theory of remembered beauty) of a golden age in which they were together; there are idyllic pictures of childhood at Varazze, halcyon days in which they played tirelessly in the blue bay in a canoe for two, or in a "sweet-smelling garden of close-crowded flowers."<sup>38</sup> The scenes are those of Rose Macaulay's own Italian childhood.<sup>39</sup> This "companionship of two" the Crevequers enjoy is "a thing always known...stranger than death, surer that the thing called love, failing nowhere. It had been from the dawn of days."<sup>40</sup> Ousted from their paradise, they are the "broken tallies" of the whole souls severed by Zeus and compelled to a life-long search for each other.<sup>41</sup> The mutual love of brother and sister is the perfect whole which they "desire and pursue."<sup>42</sup>

Plato's cave image is also invoked to convey the movement of the Crevequers' souls towards insight:

Picture men in an underground cave-dwelling with a long entrance reaching up towards the light along the whole width of the cave; in this they lie from their childhood, their legs and necks in chains, so that they stay where they are and look only in front of them, as the chain prevents them turning their heads around. Some way off, and high up, a fire is burning behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners is a road on higher ground. Imagine a wall built along this road, like the screens which showmen have in front of the audience, over which they show the puppets. Then picture also men carrying along this wall all kinds of articles which overtop it, statues of men and other creatures in stone and wood and other materials.<sup>43</sup>

The prisoners in the cave see only shadows of the real objects as they are cast by the fire: movement upward to the real world will eventually reveal to them the truth about what they have seen represented. Rose Macaulay applies a local Neapolitan gloss to the cave image, likening the Crevequers' upward struggle towards perception to movement up through the Naples streets:

There are steep streets called gradoni, which climb up from the old town to the new town above; their slope is assisted by shallow steps at intervals. So shallow are the steps that you hardly notice each as you take it. Not until you arrive at the top and look down on the ascending way do you perceive how its climbing was assisted. Of like nature is the ascending alley of human penetration. At the top is the daylight; in the analogy, perceptiveness quite achieved.<sup>44</sup>

A strand of Hermetic imagery further complicates The Furnace. The symbol of the title, sustained by the picture, perpetually in the novel's background, of Vesuvius on the point of eruption, suggests and interpretation in terms of alchemy. "The art of the alchemist," Underhill summarizes, "whether spiritual or physical, consists in completing the work of perfection, bringing forth and making dominant, as it were, the "latent goldness" which "lies obscure" in metal or man.<sup>45</sup> Tommy and Betty distil from their experiences the "gold" of the realization that their loving "companionship of two" is the highest good that life can offer them.<sup>46</sup> The furnace also contains echoes of Richard Rolle's "fire of love": the Crevequers have struggled laboriously towards the point at which they glimpse a love even more perfect than their own:



Then it is the he [man] feels that warmth most sweet, burning like a fire. He is filled with wonderful sweetness, and glories in jubilant song. Here indeed is a charity perfected, and no one can know what it is unless he lays hold of it; and he who does never loses it, but lives in sweetness and dies in safety.<sup>47</sup>

Mystical, Platonic and Hermetic images overlay one another, concurring in the identity of the quest's object as love.

The novel ends on the same note of ambivalence, however, as Abbots Verney. It closes with an image of union - brother and sister, the two halves of the severed soul, or broken heart (crève-cœur), together again in the paradisial coastal town where they spent their childhood. Yet it is stressed that this is an earthly paradise only. Despite the elaborate iconography of union and fulfilment - the pair sitting under a trellis of spring roses, Naples (the desired city) spread out before them in the distance "like a great rose of many colours," imperfection still intrudes.<sup>48</sup> Tommy, wounded in the earthquake, cannot use his right hand: he continues, too, to stammer. A single metaphor carries the implication of perfection slightly marred: the toy pine-bark boats brother and sister are racing capsized:

The race in upside down was a leisurely process. The owners got bored at last, and decided to abandon the crafts, which remained bobbing together upside down, twin derelicts far from the shore.<sup>49</sup>

As Peter Margerison is to be in The Lee Shore, they are cast off course, making do with the second best of their aspirations. Their

companionable sibling love is pleasant, but it is not that perfect, highest of emotions which Rolle defines. The Crevequers are left with the realisation that the ultimate is attainable only with death.

Rose Macaulay has been playing in The Furnace, as she has been doing in the poems, with multiple systems of images, jostling them together within the framework of one novel in a Yeatsian attempt to offer a vast interlinked whole. What she has achieved, however, is not the impressive template for perfection of her intentions, but rather a perplexing jumble of symbols where nothing is clear. We are confused by the tension between the Platonic images, with their suggestions of steady upward movement towards a pinnacle of insight, and those of the mystic way with their tracing of movements up and down, forwards and backwards on this more complex route to the absolute. Images of fire and distillation, with their blend of Christianity and Hermeticism, glut an already overloaded canvas. Ambitiously conceived, The Furnace emerges as an ineffectively crafted novel in which a slight story-line is choked with symbolism.

### The Secret River

The same glutting of images mars The Secret River (1909). Platonic and mystical "soul's progress" patterns are again intertwined, making interpretation a painstaking exercise in code-breaking. Very little by way of story or event is allowed to sustain the imagery. Michael, a young poet, first enjoys the companionship of his friend Jim then falls in love with Cecilia. Deceived by her,

he deadens his sense of desolation in drink and drugs. Emerging at length from this slough of despond, he begins to hope again and marries her - a serious mistake, which leaves him trapped in a prosaic relationship, unable to write poetry, and employed as a clerk in Mincing Lane. Release comes only with suicide.

Platonic images are notably to the fore in the opening chapters. "All picturesque Platonism, brilliantly clever," Rose Macaulay's Uncle Edward writes in his diary, recording his impressions of the book.<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to note the response of a contemporary reader, to whom the Platonic symbolism is obvious and clear; much of the book's obscurity is ascribable to the modern mind's lack of sympathy with its classical frame of reference. Michael seems set at the outset to progress through the various stages of Plato's "true order of going":

This is the right way of approaching or being initiated into the mysteries of love, to begin with examples of beauty in this world, and using them as steps to ascend continually with that absolute beauty as one's aim, from the instance of physical beauty to moral beauty, and from moral beauty to the beauty of knowledge, until from knowledge of various kinds one arrives at the supreme knowledge where the sole object is that absolute beauty and knows at last what absolute beauty is.<sup>51</sup>

He begins in Part 1 by appreciating "examples of beauty in this world," becoming acutely aware of natural sights, smells and sounds. With the arrival at the end of Part 1 of his friend Jim at the field gate, "a towel over his shoulder and the morning shining against his tanned face," he graduates to the second step of the "progressive

stairway," passing from awareness of natural beauty to that of the moral beauty of human friendship.<sup>52</sup> The gate marks his transition from one stage to the next. With his descent in Part 3, however, into the "Tent of Darkness," the nightmare realm he reaches after being crossed in love by Cecilia, his soul breaks from its proper pattern of progress: the Platonic imagery is specific:

He had not followed Plato's 'true order of going' - the progressive stairway by which the seeker mounts upwards until he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty - 'and at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science, which is the science of beauty everywhere.'<sup>53</sup>

Mistaking Cecilia's base, physical beauty for the goal of his quest, abandoning his struggle for the higher "ultimate" beauty postulated by the Platonic schema, he blasphemes against reality. The Platonic images, so carefully established, fizzle out.<sup>54</sup>

Rose Macaulay's interest in Beauty as the goal of this Platonic quest is significant. Jean Macaulay remarks on her sister's sense of beauty as the ultimate to be achieved: "I think our fundamental difference is that Rose thought that Beauty was the essential quality of God, whereas I like most Christians, think it is love," she writes in a letter to Constance Babington Smith.<sup>55</sup> The pursuit of beauty has run as an undercurrent through Abbots Verney and The Furnace and surfaces again in The Lee Shore (1912).<sup>56</sup>

Distractingly, however, a mystical soul's progress pattern overlays this Platonic one with its expectations of a pilgrimage

after beauty. Events are simultaneously translatable, through these first few stages, in terms of both systems of images. Rose Macaulay has, briefly, achieved a meshing of the two patterns. Michael's awakening to natural beauty in the Platonic schema in Part I is at the same time a mystical awakening to the need for the quest - the chapter is full of pictures of wakening and focussing. Awakening extends through the realisation first of the beauty of the handsome, fair-haired Jim, then of Cecilia's - a blossoming of insight which is announced by the image of "the Rose at the World's End," at the heart of which he now feels he lies:

Looking out from the rose he saw how all the flowery ways, all the sweet and musical ways, all the fragrant lanes of delight that had made his life, had climbed and converged but to this rose that was the end of all ways.<sup>57</sup>

Part 3 describes the inevitable reaction from the ecstasy of awakening, the period of "purgation" which is the second stage of experience on the mystic way. The knowledge of love and beauty brings with it the complementary knowledge of the opposite states, hatred and ugliness. Michael burns his sheets of poetry and sends them as flaming boats down the river. Fire and water suggest the purging of imperfection. Parts 4 and 5 describe the slow struggle back to the light, the difficulty of the climb exacerbated by the mood of profound ennui which has now engulfed him. At the end of Part 5, he is allowed to glimpse the "Gate of the Rose" from which the chapter takes its name:

It was the mystic and illumined approach to the very gates of the temple, the temple of the inviolate rose, which was beauty's self.<sup>58</sup>

He sees his goal in the distance and realises the path he must make towards it. In "The Pale Path" of Part 6, he arrives at the half way stage of illumination. The whole chapter is suffused with whiteness - hawthorn flowers, moonlight, white banks, white and silver night - as he attains the peaceful plateau:

He was free; he had come into a place of passionless peace, of utter remoteness. He had achieved detachment, winning to it through travail and the horror of great darkness, finding it last in the semblance of a pale and mystic way that glistened between the silvery shores.<sup>59</sup>

His vision is clearly the lesser one of illumination rather than the ultimate one of union with the absolute. Michael finds that his eyes do not clearly focus:

His affinity - if he had any - with the sphere to which these pale hints of light must appertain - the pure, rare, luminous sphere of the unclogged spirit - was a very partial thing, a struggling, emergent, perhaps growing, but still very ungrown thing.<sup>60</sup>

Rose Macaulay is meticulous in her distinction between the illuminative and unitive stages and in stressing the fact that Michael is at present in the first of these only:

Michael's sense-limits were, in short, not transcended but extended; he was aware of things not outside them but newly entering within them.<sup>61</sup>

Part 7 shows him confirmed in the moyen de parvenir offered by the experience of illumination. Strength, and hope have returned; he resumes writing poetry; the freshness of April dominates the chapter. "The new year was born," the return of spring representing a mid-year birth between two birthdays in first and last chapters.<sup>62</sup> Seven parts have brought him to the end of "the first mystic life."<sup>63</sup> He is now halfway between temporal and spiritual realms, capable of regarding the natural beauty of the first with heightened perception, and of glimpsing in fitful visions the higher beauty of the second.

An image from Hermeticism intrudes in the eighth part, however, as Michael digresses from the mystic way to renew his infatuation with Cecilia. Allowing her earthly beauty once more to divert him from the pure goals of his quest, he again betrays the realities he has been seeking. As the extraction of gold from base metals is the goal of the alchemist, the proper climax of the mystic quest may be seen as the "gold" of union with the absolute. Michael, foolishly, makes do with the "Old Gold" of his unsatisfactory relationship with Cecilia.<sup>64</sup>

The novel now takes an anti-climactic downward sweep. He descends in Part 9 into "The Prison-house" of his dark night of the soul.<sup>65</sup> Blankness, melancholy and solitude assail him. The quasi-poetic style of the first eight parts is abandoned and the story

proceeds in smooth-running narrative prose. Nagged by a social climbing, unsympathetic wife, Michael wanders forlorn through city streets, treading the dreary daily path to his clerk's desk. (We are reminded of Agnes haranguing Rickie Elliot about his writing in The Longest Journey (1907)).<sup>66</sup> His poetic imagination stifled, he repairs in desperation to the river.

His suicide in the tenth part (ironically enough) opens the gateway to the unitive life. To the accompaniment of triumphant images of golden sunrise and "golden lily-cups" bobbing on the water's surface, he surrenders himself to the river on whose banks he woke in Part 1.<sup>67</sup> His death is announced in an image of birth as he remembers "that it [is] the New Year; for it [is] his birthday."<sup>68</sup> He has now achieved the clear vision he could glimpse as a possibility from the plateau of illumination:

He looked with unimpeded eyes into the luminous sphere of the unclogged spirit, and knew that, like the kingdom of the earth peoples, it was his heritage, won at last into the realm of sense.<sup>69</sup>

Spheres of sense and spirit have merged. Where he has known previously only the transcendence of the Divine, he now experiences its immanence. His vision of cosmic unity, of the perfect pattern of an ordered universe, supplies - in death - the victorious climax of the soul's progress.



It is impossible to disagree with Rose's own verdict on The Secret River that "its [sic] rather stodgy and there isn't much in it."<sup>70</sup> She has indulged in a heavy, near-poetic, Paterian prose which denies the book any liveliness. Yet it is germane to an understanding of her later novels to be able to identify her procedure here. She has proposed this overlaying of patterns - Platonic, mystical, Hermetic - in a bid to demonstrate their interrelationship in a wider whole. Images from Belloc, Maeterlinck, Yeats, Browne, Fiona Macleod, Emerson and De la Mare, are deliberately crowded together in an effort to show their compatibility even in diversity.<sup>71</sup> An impression of coherence rather than confusion has been aimed for. That the actual effect is an exhausting muddle of ideas is a sign (interesting in itself) of her twenty-eight year-old literary - and philosophical - immaturity.

### The Valley Captives

The Valley Captives (1911) is the first of her novels to make explicit her theme of coherence. Inspired by personal sadness (her brother Aulay had met a violent death on the North West Frontier in February 1909), it is a more bitter, angry book than any of the earlier ones. Violence and pain erupt here with a vividness which has not been apparent before. Aulay's death has been a catalyst which has urged her out of the esoteric realms of metaphor in which she has been immersed in The Furnace and The Secret River into closer contact with real life. Symbols still stud her writing, but they will not again dominate it. Submerged, less obtrusive, they begin to

work more subtly to delineate, clarify and substantiate her ideas. No longer obsessed by the need to summon the definitive jigsaw puzzle of image-systems, she now concentrates rather on describing characters urgently engaged in the pursuit of coherence for their own lives. People seek meaning, a modus vivendi which will enable them to carry on in the face of hopelessness, a vision of things which will encompass knowledge of both good and evil. They want "wholeness" in a world warped by evil from its intended perfect pattern. The mystical quests of poems and early novels begin to be translated into searches for attitudes to life itself.

The story centres on Tudor Vallon who, raised with his sister Joanna (John) by a weak father and an overpowering stepmother, experiences at the hands of his stepbrother and sister (the Bodger children) a degree of brutality which permanently distorts his life.<sup>72</sup> A limping, stammering, left-handed, damaged human being, he eventually runs away from home. Only in death does he at last reach maturity: returning bravely from his self-imposed exile to confront an outraged step-brother, he is killed stopping the runaway horse pulling his sister and step-sister's trap. The last few minutes of his life allow him to transcend the weakness and fear which have so distorted his nature.

Platonic images elaborate Tudor's quest for perfection. He and Joanna are, like Tommy and Betty Crevequer, Aristophanes' souls fallen to earth, dimly, remembering the glories of the heaven they have left. They recall the "pleasant place of holidays" of their

childhood, the red-brick house in its flower-garden, a place "made for delight."<sup>73</sup> With the Crevequers, they come trailing Wordsworthian clouds of glory. In a letter long afterwards to Father Johnson, Rose Macaulay describes her fondness for Wordsworth's descriptions of childhood and links him with Traherne, from whom she quotes in her next novel, The Lee Shore:

Yes, what intensity those infant joys in beautiful things had! A kind of rapture, never quite to be recaptured (as Wordsworth says) 'The earth and every common sight, to me did seem, Apparelled in a celestial light, the glory and the freshness of a dream.' What Traherne called 'The new-burnisht joys.' Do you know that delightful poet, by the way? Delightful prose meditations, too. The rapture of childhood is nowhere better expressed than in his poetry. Teas in the garden and new green wheel-barrows are part of it, but by no means all. The birthday I shall never forget was a rapturous day in Italy, when we were first given a canoe, and navigated it in the calm summer sea from morning till evening, indescribable beauty and joy and romance, that returns to me still in dreams.<sup>74</sup>

Clearly there is a strong Wordsworthian flavour to her evocations of childhood - or pre-childhood-perfection. Now, however, the Crevequers are plagued by the cruelty of the Bodgers, their lives marred by pain, hatred and fear. Tudor is mutilated, both physically and spiritually by the experience:

Possibly some string in him, light and fine and delicate, which might have been tuned to fine music, had been somehow jangled and slackened, even as the light quickness of his motion had been jarred and checked till it halted a little.<sup>75</sup>

His lameness puts him in line with a string of Rose Macaulay's limping, stammering left-handed characters - Tommy Crevequer, Peter Margerison, Alex Sandomir, Basil Doye, Arthur Gideon, all symbolically maimed to illustrate her theme of imperfection. In their relentless taunting of the young Vallons, the Bodgers commit "the one unforgiveable crime - they darkened the delightful world and put joy out of reach, the joy that was each man's heritage in the jolly universe."<sup>76</sup> There are interesting echoes here of Maeterlinck's judgement of his unsympathetic Jesuit teachers at the Collège de Sainte-Barbe: Georgette Leblanc records:

Il n'y a selon lui qu'un crime que l'on ne peut pas pardonner, c'est celui qui empoisonne les joies et détruit le sourire d'un enfant.<sup>77</sup>

Maeterlinck's sentiments and vocabulary coincide with Rose Macaulay's own.

The Platonic cave image is again employed to describe the Vallon plight. Tudor is locked in the cellar during routine bullying by the Bodgers:

They found Teddy, when they got the key from the Bodgers, lying doubled up on the cellar floor, beneath the high grating.

'He tried to climb to it,' said John, who knew.

'For the light, you know. There were things...and he was afraid. He climbed and fell down. He was afraid.'<sup>78</sup>

The scene is a translation of the original metaphor - the soul clambering towards the cave-mouth. The figures of the Bodgers always intervene between the climber and the light.

The imagery of mystical quest tangles with that of Platonism. During a brief respite from fear, Tudor takes a riverside walk and, against a background of pink and gold sunset, bathes in a rose-coloured rock pool. In this moment of illumination, his sense of hidden pattern is restored:

So he lay and looked at the sky, and the large sky looked at him, and the sky and the world were very good, and life held only what this roseate mirror of it showed, and hope bloomed and glowed like a flower from marge to marge.<sup>79</sup>

His feeling of peace, of desire "sleeping" rather than "craving fulfilment," is typical of that experienced at the mystical stage of illumination.<sup>80</sup> The revelation is, however, only a prelude to his anguish in the next chapter. Paralysed by fear, he fails to go to Laurie's aid when he is attacked on the moor, and descends to the nadir of self-knowledge, a dark night of the soul in which fear once more traps him.

Other images of quest in The Valley Captives are from the realm of fairy-tale. We are reminded that this was a genre very much in vogue with late nineteenth-century authors - George MacDonald, Andrew Lang, William Sharpe, W.B. Yeats - whose work Rose was reading and converting into epigraphs at the time.<sup>81</sup> We recall, too, that she

was "brought up" on Andrew Lang's Fairy Books, and that George MacDonald is mentioned in the texts of two of her later novels.<sup>82</sup>

Tudor returns to the sanctuary cottage of his godmother:

He knew the green-doored cottage in a clearing, with its raftered walls and ceilings and thatched roof and blue smoke curling up through hollies and oaks. He remembered it a murmurous place, full of the humming of bees and the sighing of ancient trees. Through its small sweet garden a flagged path ran from the wicket-gate to the green door.<sup>83</sup>

The scene is, as usual, meticulously symbolic. Image after image indicates impending insight. The cottage door is the mystic colour, green (we look forward to the mermaid figure, Ellen Green in And No Man's Wit with her preternatural powers). Hollies and oaks are sacred trees, bees the traditional symbols of immortality and rebirth. Forest and wicket-gate are thresholds to other worlds. Classic fairy-tale imagery marks Tudor's entrance to the cottage: he opens the green door and is in the godmother's raftered house:

Then he did not know which of the three doors to open. She might be in the little parlour, or the little dining-room, or the little kitchen, or up the oak stairs. He tried the parlour, and found only white knitting folded for Sunday, smelling of lavender. He tried the kitchen next, and a hot smell of cakes greeted him, and she was there, among white dressers and blue china and shining pots, talking to Susan, whom he knew.<sup>84</sup>

The scene has echoes of George MacDonald's fairy-tale, The Princess and the Goblin, and the end of Irene's journey up the mysterious staircase:

When she came to the top, she found herself in a little square place, with three doors, two opposite each other, and one opposite the top of the stair. She stood for a moment, without an idea in her little head of what to do next.<sup>85</sup>

For both Tudor and Irene, the object of the quest is a wise, white-haired old lady.

Important to the scheme of images in The Valley Captives is Rose Macaulay's insistence here on the breaking down of barriers between realms. A concept which has figured prominently in the poems (the figure slipping over the orchard wall in "The Thief," hands being thrust through casements in "The Alien" and "Keyless," doors being opened to "hammering hands" in "Summons"), it has appeared already to some extent as an idea in Abbots Verney and in The Furnace.<sup>86</sup> In The Valley Captives, the barriers to be broken through are, at one level, those between the two gardens of Maeterlinck's metaphor representing good and evil. It is an image clearly stated in an incident in Tudor's childhood. The joyous place of holidays has had both a garden, luscious with gooseberries and currants, bees humming amongst its sunflowers, and a yard full of pigsty, stables and wash-house. Tudor is jostled by the Bodgers from the pleasant flower-garden to the place of torture in the back-yard:

Sharply imprinted on the memory of Tudor Vallon was the picture he saw with intensity as he was hurried by the Bodgers through the front garden to the back-yard - the bright colours of the flower-borders, the glimpses between the trees along the holly-hedge of field and sky and blue Shropshire hills beyond, the

level mellow sunshine, and the long shadow of the holly-tree.<sup>87</sup>

Housman's "blue remembered hills" flicker in the imagery.<sup>88</sup> Tudor and Joanna must both reach the point of maturity at which they see that garden and yard, good and evil, happiness and sadness must necessarily coexist; life is a series of perpetual oscillations between the two states. The only coherent view of the world is one which accepts this dualism.

Another implicitly Maeterlinckian metaphor supports the theme. It is the death of Tudor's dog, Ruff, as the result of Bodger malice, which finally inspires him to his most desperate fight against his oppressors. We are reminded of Maeterlinck's essay, "Sur la mort d'un petit chien," in which he is intrigued by the dog's ability to live "une existence heureuse sur la limite de deux mondes aussi différents que le monde des bêtes et le monde des hommes."<sup>89</sup> He sees the dog engaged in a struggle to break down the boundaries between the human and animal spheres; instinctively, the creature strives "pour se rapprocher d'une région plus claire," putting all his effort into achieving "un peu plus de lumière."<sup>90</sup> Tudor, too, is living in the twilight zone between two worlds - the actual world, marred by hatred and fear, and the ideal one which he senses must exist. He also, is struggling towards the light. The dog's death reminds him of the value of the fight. He need not remain in the "sphère étanche," the steel-bound circle of the evil world in which he experiences pain; the dog has been proof that boundaries can be



broken and higher planes achieved.<sup>91</sup> Rose Macaulay's obvious familiarity with the double-garden metaphor suggests she may well have read this essay and applied its images to her novel.

She is interested in characters' abilities to break through barriers and achieve a coherent perspective. Their willingness to engage in the fight is what is important. The Valley Captives differs from its predecessors in its analysis of the value of the quest - this is now no mere description of its stages. Various characters initially decline to struggle. Oliver Vallon, Tudor's father, declares his calculated lack of commitment - "Detachment is what we want, the sane philosophical view which accepts what it can't refuse."<sup>92</sup> Laurie Rennel, land-agent and friend of the Vallon family, initially shares Oliver's "tranquil philosophy of acceptance."<sup>93</sup> He is even-tempered, nonchalant, quietly amused by the absurdity of the scene he surveys. It takes the double catastrophes of his public disgrace (he mishandles his employer's funds) and of his castration by religious zealots to force him from this attitude - the latter an extravagantly symbolic and grotesque plot device which ruins the novel's credibility. Rose Macaulay's intention is, however, traceable if not convincing. Laurie is forced to enter a dark night of the soul where he confronts the truth about himself:

So he saw how the rottenness which was not luck's had all through his life grown and insidiously spread, corrupting to baseness a character never in the heroic mould, but always gritless, self-indulging, cast for failure.<sup>94</sup>

His experience is the prelude to insight: the "clash of battle and pain" has opened the way to new lucidity:

A moral and emotional crash and ruin had begun the work in him; a physical crash and ruin had carried it further....The very utterness of the crash and the ruin, the desperation of the case, might be its hope. On ruins one can begin to build. Anyhow, looking out from ruins one clearly sees; there are no obstructing walls. Rennel saw many things.<sup>95</sup>

He has passed from the ordered garden-party scene in which he was first introduced - the civilized chat of guests, the sound of tennis-balls in the background - to the open, rainswept wastes of the moorland in which his assailants attack. He has seen the necessity of struggle, realising that existence is meaningless without it. Life cannot be passed exclusively in the enclosed garden-party world. Laurie's vision at last encompasses the double garden.

Also initially detached from struggle is the vacuous Dorothy Wynne, a tennis-playing friend of the Vallons. She has, in her untroubled life, experienced no conflict of opposites, has never seen the need to choose. Her acceptance comes,

not through the philosophy which stands motionless in the face of the unachievable, but through the inapprehensiveness to which the unachievable is the unknown and undesired.<sup>96</sup>

Understanding neither good nor evil, lacking the "essential qualification of ardour," she finds herself "shut between walls that

nothing she had experienced had yet broken through."<sup>97</sup> The trauma of the night on the moor awakens her, too, however, from aimlessness. She becomes aware of the need for commitment, of a desire to break out of her world of inaction. Had she really loved Laurie, she realises, she would have gone to his assistance despite her fear. Her marriage to travelling evangelist Lloyd Evans fulfils her need. With him, tramping the roads and preaching in fields, she will satisfy her desire for action and adventure. She, too, has graduated beyond the garden-party world to enter the wider sphere where life will be enriched by struggle.

Vincent Carter (cousin of Oliver Vallon) has the attitude which Rose Macaulay herself seems to endorse:

'Excitement,' said Carter - 'I am for excitement, I like things to happen with a crash....I want to smash the walls with cannon-balls, and make ragged gaps to look through.'<sup>98</sup>

In a letter to Margerie Venables Taylor in 1909, following the tragedy of Aulay's death, she complains:

One of the minor troubles of a thing like [this]... is that it seems to take all the object out of life, and makes it difficult to feel it worth while to do anything of any sort. I have come to the conclusion that my besetting sin is Accidie - do you know Paget's sermon on it? Consequently I sit at home and feel like a toad under a stone. I'm afraid I don't even write books...I am so stodgy these days. I haven't an idea in my head or a word to bestow on anyone - total vacuousness and inertia....<sup>99</sup>

The "wall" symbolism so predominant in The Valley Captives originates in the sermon here referred to. Paget gives an account of Marchantius' "Tuba Sacerdotalis" which pursues the metaphor of the seven deadly sins as the seven walls of Jericho. According to Marchantius, seven battering rams must be brought forward to smash the particularly resistant wall of accidie.<sup>100</sup> It is clear that Rose Macaulay herself has felt in need of some vigorous action to restore her sense of the meaningfulness of life. She did, in fact, attempt at this time to dedicate herself to public service, applying for a post as missionary to the Universities' Mission to Central Africa - an application which was rejected.<sup>101</sup> Her central thesis here is that the very act of battling through walls, of forcing one's way from one garden to another, is what confers coherence on life. Tudor Vallon, stepping out to catch the runaway horse and trap and saving the lives of his sister and step-sister while losing his own, does at last triumphantly embrace the two realms. He proves that his nature spans fear and courage; he passes from life to death. Vincent Carter recognises the coherent vision of things which Tudor's death has bestowed:

'It flames over all his past life, over all our lives; and I personally believe, as you know, over the life he lives now, illumining it. If there is such a life, under whatever conceivable conditions he is living it, I think that the flame he lit that day must be lighting it now, giving it vividness and coherence. Vividness, coherence, significance - that is what all life gains by deaths such as his....It's simply Christianity I'm expounding to you now, you know.'<sup>102</sup>

Tudor, like Aulay, the novel insists, cannot have died in vain. Characters after his death find their sense of coherence and pattern restored, their warped natures smoothed and straightened. Oliver Vallon is "a cynic no more"; the Bodgers become "softer", Cis recognising she owes her life to Tudor.<sup>103</sup> John elucidates the full extent of the restored pattern. She sees, as Tudor finally did, that boundaries can be crossed, the walls apparently dividing different spheres broken down:

John grasped it in that moment - the life persisting behind all forms of it - and saw at last how there must be no death. What was death but the condition of the new life, the dark archway to birth? As the winter-bound earth never died, but woke to the touch of spring, so her children seemed to die but did not - could not....<sup>104</sup>

She has grasped the essential continuity which exists behind apparent disparity. Brother and sister have in their own ways understood the hidden dialectic; there can be no good without evil, no life without death, no progress without the continuous conflict of opposites. In the glimpsed coherent pattern of many worlds which forms the perfect design, the worlds of good and evil are necessarily interpenetrating.

Mysticism, Platonism, Christianity, folklore are again in this novel drawn together to form a conglomerate of images all working together to support the theme of "wholeness" pursued. A strange, brutal novel weakened by major infelicities of style, it does, however, show Rose Macaulay tackling the problems which have always

preoccupied her with a new earnestness and sense of their seriousness.

### The Lee Shore

Imagery in The Lee Shore (1912) is strongly Platonic and Christian, with the same distinct undertones of mysticism as have been detectable in The Valley Captives. Peter Margerison seeks beauty, progressing in the course of the novel from veneration of beautiful objects and people to a glimpse of beauty in its absolute, spiritual state. He is described standing as a boy,

...breathless before a Bow rose bowl of soft and mellow paste, ornamented with old Japan May flowers in red and gold and green, and dated "New Canton, 1750."<sup>105</sup>

The delicately submerged rose image announces the numinous moment of realisation. As a young man, he is depicted surrounded by the pleasing art-work he has collected to furnish his Cambridge room - a Gobelin tapestry, an embroidered cherry tree in blossom, "coming to slow birth on a green serge background."<sup>106</sup> His "immense love, innate rather than grafted, of the pleasures of the eye," is already highly developed.<sup>107</sup> The post of artistic adviser to the rich Stephen Leslie, to which he proceeds after having had to break off his university studies, supplies an appropriate outlet for his skills: he becomes the "complete shopper," buying the beautiful objects for which his soul craves instinctively, but for which his employer has only a floundering, immature appreciation.<sup>108</sup> "Peter

picked things up with judgement, and Leslie paid for them with phlegm."<sup>109</sup> A Berovieri goblet, "a glorious thing of deep blue glass and translucent enamel and silver," is the most prized purchase, a memorable objectification of the physical beauty Peter loves.<sup>110</sup>

Overconscientiously, Rose Macaulay specifies her pilgrim's position in this Platonic scheme. He is a phenomenalist, excited only by the visual and tangible. True to the "rock" his name denotes, he places his faith in solidity:

What was spirit, apart from form? Could it be? If so, would it be valuable and admirable? It was the shapes and colours of things, after all, that mattered. As to the pre-existence of things and their here-after, Peter seldom speculated; he knew that it was through the workshop (or the play-room, he would rather have said) of the phenomenal, where the idea took limiting lines and definite shape and the tangible charm of the sense-apprehended, that life for him became life.<sup>111</sup>

Gradually, however, Peter's pilgrimage becomes more complicated. He must graduate beyond a simple love of physical beauty. Loss after loss constitutes for him a dark night of the soul. His brother Hilary, desperate for income, recommends fake art treasures to the public through the art journal Peter edits. Ironically, the chief victim of his deceit is Lord Evelyn, the journal's owner. Peter stumbles upon evidence of the fraud and attempts, unsuccessfully, to end it. Although innocent, he is tainted by his brother's disgrace and is compelled by Lord Evelyn to abandon his career of artistic adviser. He must sacrifice reputation, career and warm Italian life-

style to a brother who needs his help. Now all he has left are a living as a warehouse clerk, a room in a dingy English boarding house and a brief, unsuccessful marriage.

In retrospect it is apparent that Peter has been falsely secure in his veneration of the beautiful object only. Urquhart, the hero he has worshipped at school, attempts to mend Peter's shoulder, dislocated at football, but fails to do so - his failure brands him as imperfect. Later when Urquhart, on a motoring holiday in Italy, knocks down and kills a tramp, Peter realises that his god is mortal after all.

How absolutely incongruous, Peter was dully thinking.  
Urquhart and tragedy; Urquhart and death.<sup>112</sup>

Similar in its impact is the revelation that Lucy, his other love-object, intends to marry Urquhart, not him; she who is "his other self" engineers a misalliance which will leave both herself and Peter thwarted.<sup>113</sup> The severed halves of Aristophanes' original perfect soul are permanently mismatched. Ironically, Lucy's announcement of her engagement is accompanied by images of fulfilment - she and Peter sit eating honey sandwiches in a room "full of roses."<sup>114</sup> The union of these two would have constituted a perfect whole. The inappropriateness of the rose image in the context of Lucy's betrothal to Urquhart is underlined, for she "usually had small, pale, faint flowers."<sup>115</sup> An incongruous rose image is likewise applied to Peter's misalliance with Rhoda - his bride's name is a



corruption of the original, pure form "Rose." It is not his destiny to win or retain the rounded perfection of the beautiful objects he desires: the Berovieri goblet has to be sold to satisfy his brother's creditors: from the beginning he has been aware of the fragility of his hold on what he loves - "Things do break so; break and get lost and are no more seen."<sup>116</sup>

Finally, he graduates beyond this dependence on the physically beautiful, realising that it will not satisfy. In a desperate bid, he fills his grey boarding-house rooms with daffodils, bright rugs and paintings, "things concrete, lovely things to handle and hold."<sup>117</sup> Moved by the same impulse, he asks Lucy to end her marriage to Urquhart and join him. Events rush towards this triumphant, easy conclusion when Rodney, Urquhart's cousin, intervenes, reminding him of the ascetic, morally beautiful course. Union with Lucy will only hurt Urquhart, his other hero. In retrospect it is apparent that the symbolism attendant on Peter's journey to Astleys to seek Lucy has indicated that he is on a false trail: approaching the house, he has climbed "over the stile in the hedge," leaving the proper road, and taken a path leading through a wood; his confrontation with Lucy takes place in the wood itself, not in a clearing reached on the other side.<sup>118</sup> Rodney's remonstrances bring him back onto the straight white road of his true pilgrimage. The experience is accompanied by overtly Christian imagery: Peter's old desire for easy beauty is crucified on Easter Day and he rises to his new life of Franciscan poverty. He had undergone a symbolic death - "In the dim light his face looked pale and pinched like a

dead man's."<sup>119</sup> He tells Rodney, "You've done your work" - his statement mirroring the simplicity of "it is finished."<sup>120</sup> He has attained the higher beauty of sacrificing all he instinctively wants most.

Images of fulfilment mark his embarkation on his life of Francisian poverty on the warm, Italian lee shore. Roses riot on garden walls; the air is heavy with blossom. Accompanied by dog (San Francisco), donkey (Suor Clara) and baby son (Thomas), he makes a leisurely living selling embroidery.

An influence on Rose Macaulay's choice of theme and symbolism at this time, which has not been remarked upon, is that of P.N. Waggett, the Cowley Father who was then preaching in Cambridge.<sup>121</sup> A quotation from one of his works forms the epigraph to the book. Rose writes to Father Johnson in 1950:

Dear Fr. Waggett: he was a great friend of ours at Cambridge, before 1914. Wasn't he sent there to counteract the influence of Hugh Benson at the R.C. Cathedral, who was making converts? Everyone loved him (Fr. Waggett, I mean). He was the most brilliant and enchanting person. We used sometimes to sit under him at St. Giles's; he could, by the turn of a phrase, set the whole congregation laughing (which he once said he deplored, but I think he can't have). I remember his bicycling out in a snow-storm to stay the night with us, to take a Lent service at a church two or three miles outside Cambridge, and how we enjoyed having him. He used to call me "the hockey girl," because of sometimes meeting me coming in with my hockey stick after some match....<sup>122</sup>

Her uncle, Edward Conybeare, records having "Margaret and Rose to supper for Waggett sermon" in February 1910 and, on hearing him preach himself a few weeks later, remarks that he "found him quite Franciscan, birds, silliness, and all."<sup>123</sup> There is a striking similarity between some of the ideas Waggett expresses in his Hulsean Lectures for 1920-1921 (published as Knowledge and Virtue, 1924) and those of Rose Macaulay in The Lee Shore. They share the same preoccupation with the need for quest and the same identification of beauty as its goal. Waggett writes:

The quest for a hidden knowledge - for a fortress of illumination whence the world may be viewed as if from a guarded point of vantage, an observation post, and its meaning and hope discerned - is common to man as man though not consciously pursued by all men. The search for beauty and the service of beauty are ancillary to this great quest and design. When it is raised to the highest power we know, it effects an exaltation, a translation of the sense and mind, and puts man for a while outside the oppression of ugliness and the tyranny of imperfection and disorder. It is a door to the ideal but it opens not by paths of symbol suggesting the reality, but by the way of influence, or transport laying us open to the true.<sup>124</sup>

Rose Macaulay's discussion of knowledge or intelligence as ideals to be aimed for begins to take prominence in The Making of a Bigot, What Not and Potterism. She and Waggett are alike in their sense of the synonymy of beauty and clarity. Waggett declares:

Whether this is the case or not, beauty is a clearness. For the ear, it comes in notes not noises; for the eye in clear forms, pure colours, delicate gradations of light. It is a way or at least a window through the veil that hides from our senses, though not from our souls, an entrancing reality....<sup>125</sup>

Rose Macaulay confers on Rodney, Urquhart's cousin, the ability to perceive the transcendent beauty beyond the veils as she describes him experiencing a moment of mystical illumination while lying awake at night in a moonlit Italian olive garden:

Rodney attained to his real by looking through the manifold veils of the phenomenal as through so much glass....Getting through and behind the most visible and obvious of the worlds one was in the sphere of true values; they lay all about, shining in unveiled strangeness, eternally and unalterably lit. So Rodney, who had his own value-system, saw them.<sup>126</sup>

Peter, she indicates, perceives only the "clear forms, pure colours, delicate gradations of light" of the phenomenal realm: he looks

...with the artist's [eye] on life expressed in the clean and lovely shapes of things, their colours and tangible sweetness.<sup>127</sup>

The attainment of beauty she equates, as Waggett does, with the attainment of a clear and coherent viewpoint. Her characters seek his "fortress of illumination" from which life can be contemplated "whole."<sup>128</sup>

A handful of other images may be remarked upon in the subtext of The Lee Shore. A Christian picture from Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love is suggested in the opening chapter. (Rose Macaulay mentions her familiarity with Julian's writings in letters to Fr. Johnson in 1951 and 1953 and includes a passing reference to her in her book, Some Religious Elements in English

Literature, 1931).<sup>129</sup> An image is formed in two stages: Urquhart, the "great man" from the top of the school bids his hero-worshipper Peter of the lower fourth "cut down" to the football field and fetch him his cap: a paragraph later, Peter, again on the football field, has fallen and injured himself:

...Peter tumbled on to the point of his right shoulder and lay on his face, his arm crooked curiously at his side, remarking that he didn't think he was hurt, only his arm felt funny and he didn't think he would move it just yet.<sup>130</sup>

The picture thus created is strongly redolent of the image of master and servant recounted by Julian of Norwich:

And then I saw the lord look at his servant with rare love and tenderness, and quietly send him to a certain place to fulfil his purpose. Not only does that servant go, but he starts off at once, running with all speed, in his love to do what his master wanted. And without warning he falls headlong into a deep ditch, and injures himself very badly. And though he groans and moans and cries and struggles he is quite unable to get up or help himself in any way.<sup>131</sup>

Between them, Denis and Peter enact the allegory of the fall described in Julian's vision. Peter symbolically falls from a perfect state and is forced to continue his existence in his brittle, flawed, earthly condition. His dislocated shoulder is followed by a broken ankle and the discovery of a weak heart. He is, as he ruefully reflects, "made in Germany."<sup>132</sup> The picture is, of course, in Rose Macaulay's version, ironic, as Urquhart himself is eventually revealed as a false god.

The novel's other dominant image is its triptych of the three half-brothers. Peter's mother, Sylvia Hope, was stepmother, through one marriage, to Denis Urquhart and, through her second, to Hilary Margerison. The three, linked by the common mother-figure, are carefully graded. Urquhart, the privileged young aristocrat, brought up by his uncle, Lord Evelyn, is a "radiant figure on the heroic scale."<sup>133</sup> Later, driving his car at speed along Italian roads, he is the "sun god" in his chariot.<sup>104</sup> Hilary, at the other end of the scale, is the penniless artist whom fortune scorns: to him are attributed all the cliché trappings of artistic penury - the seedy lodging-house, the harassed wife and undernourished children. Far from maintaining the bright, pure principles of the monied Urquhart, Hilary stoops to deception and blackmail in an attempt to find money for his family's basic needs. Between the two stands Peter, admiring Urquhart, pitying Hilary and loving both. Significantly, the only game at which Peter confidently expresses his skill is diabolò, a game in which a two-headed top is thrown up and caught with a string stretched between two sticks. The image suggests his loyalty similarly stretched between two poles. As a whole, the triptych is redolent of Plato's tripartite social pyramid of Guardians, Auxiliaries and Craftsmen:

...in order to convince the citizens of the wisdom and justice of this order of things, we must tell them a story, to the effect that they were all originally fashioned in the bowels of the earth, their common mother; and that it pleased the gods to mix gold in the composition of some of them, silver in that of others, iron and copper in that of others. The first are to be Guardians, the second Auxiliaries and the third husbandmen and craftsmen; and this rule must be

most carefully observed and perpetuated, otherwise  
the state will most certainly perish.<sup>135</sup>

Urquhart (to the adoring young Peter, who has not yet admitted his hero is flawed) is one of the exalted breed who accede to Guardian status; there is gold in his composition - as he rises, magnificently unconcerned, above the tragedy of the motoring accident in which he has been involved, Peter sees him silhouetted against a golden sunrise:

'I don't see,' said Denis, 'that we need...that we can...do anything about it.'

Above the clear mountains the sun swung up triumphant,  
and the wide river-valley was bathed in radiant gold.<sup>136</sup>

In obvious contrast, Hilary, persevering without skill in the painting and selling of his pictures, drifts hopelessly along in the lowest, craftsman class.

The description of Denis standing bathed in the golden light of sunrise is suggestive of the well-known lines of Frances Cornford on Rupert Brooke:

A young Apollo, goldenhaired  
Stands dreaming on the verge of strife  
Magnificently unprepared  
For the long littleness of life.<sup>137</sup>

Other signs of the Brooke connection could be suggested: Rose Macaulay's triptych of the three brothers is reminiscent of the three

Brooke brothers, Dick, Rupert and Alfred. Peter's physical fragility contains echoes of Rupert's. Paul Delany records Mrs Brooke's anxiety about the delicate health of her middle son, and her decision on these grounds to send him to Hillbrow Preparatory School very close to their Rugby home. The brightness of the playing field incident on which the book opens remind us, too, that Rose spent the first six years of her life in the environment of Rugby school where her father, (as well as Rupert's) taught, and that the schoolboys were regular visitors to the Macaulay household.<sup>139</sup>

Another possible inspiration for the character of Peter himself has not till now been remarked upon. We know that Rose Macaulay was a reader of W.E. Henley. Various events in this poet's life strikingly parallel those in the fictitious Peter's. Henley, like him, was crippled, having lost a foot as a result of tuberculosis; he had, too, a damaged hand. While recovering from treatment to his foot administered in Edinburgh by Joseph Lister, he was introduced by Leslie Stephen (editor of the Cornhill Magazine, to which Henley had submitted some poems) to R.L. Stevenson. The coincidence of Henley's mentor's name with Peter's (Stephen Leslie) is remarkable. Later Henley, like Peter, was to pursue a career in art journalism, editing The Magazine of Art from 1881-1886, and acting subsequently as an adviser to the Art Journal. Peter's Gem has an identifiable real-life equivalent.<sup>140</sup>

Peter's final position, like those of Rose Macaulay's other early characters - Verney Ruth, the Crevequers, Michael Travis and



the Vallons - blends joy and pathos. He has attained "the gaiety of the saints."<sup>141</sup> The mood is one of restfulness, peace, freedom from care, happiness, yet the triumphal sense of a goal achieved is lacking. Peter has followed Rodney's lead, fighting his way beyond the veils of the phenomenal to a realisation of the high essential beauty which lies behind; he has reached a level of "goodness" to which he could not have risen in a life cluttered with mere physical possessions. Yet sadness remains. He is forced to live permanently outside the sphere inhabited by the golden ones - Urquhart, Lucy, Lord Evelyn - whom he worships. Life on the lee shore in the port in which he has landed, though he has never set his course for it, is pleasant but no more than a pis aller. As a pilgrim on the mystic way he senses, like Verney Ruth, Michael Travis and the Crevequers, that lasting union with the absolute will be attainable only with death. On the lee shore, he hovers merely on the brink of insight. Flickering glimpses of perfection are all that offer themselves. "Can anyone ever leave their world and go into another?" Lucy asks, echoing the questionings of characters in The Valley Captives.<sup>142</sup> Peter, tutored by Rodney, realises he must attempt to pass from the phenomenal to the ideal world, but discovers that for the ordinary mortal, the transition can at best be only momentary. He must make do with the simple goodness of the partial, earthly life - must rest, as it were, on the illuminative plateau - until the perfect whole is permanently revealed. The Lee Shore contains the clearest statement of Rose Macaulay's early philosophy. Her most finely managed allegory of the soul in pursuit of perfection, it bears testimony to her belief that it is a goal which must be, except in death, elusive.

Views and Vagabonds

In Views and Vagabonds (1912) a turning-point is reached in Rose Macaulay's writing. Although published slightly prior to The Lee Shore, this sixth novel was written simultaneously with it, composed "impulsively" during the summer of 1911, the other book having been temporarily set aside less than half finished.<sup>143</sup> On the scale of maturity, it surpasses The Lee Shore. It is at once the last of the anguished, intense "soul's progress" allegories and the first of a new sequence of works in which she surveys the human scene coolly and deliberately with a wide-angle lens.

A Cambridge graduate of aristocratic stock, Benjamin Bunter seeks to live according to principle alone, to make his life a neat, coherent translation of idea into action. He establishes himself as a country blacksmith and later embarks on a caravan tour, evangelising the countryside with his gospel of free-thought, socialism and work. Converting theory further into action, he marries mill-hand Louie Robinson with the intention of raising a hard-working artisan family. Inevitable problems ensue. In his naive belief that "the principles one lives by are above everything else; infinitely above personal tastes and preferences and so on," he damages a human soul; he invests Louie with the status of a mere idea.<sup>144</sup> The novel ends with his realisation that human personality cannot be subordinated to principle, that the love and happiness of his wife and child are more important than any theory.

Locked together chronologically in the circumstances of their composition, The Lee Shore and Views and Vagabonds represent an intriguing clash of Rose Macaulay's views. Where Peter Margerison is allowed to glimpse another sphere where a perfect pattern hovers just beyond the limits of human perception, Benjamin Bunter is finally denied any illusion of coherence: he is left with the realisation that the world is a "puzzle map, its pieces too many and too difficult for him to put together."<sup>145</sup> It is as though the author of The Lee Shore has seen her fifth novel trudging like its predecessors towards an academically mystical conclusion and has swerved aside dissatisfied to pursue in the sixth a more convincing alternative.

Imagery in Views and Vagabonds is again less prominent than it has been in the first three Macaulay novels, much more an integral part of the story than the almost separately interpretable "patina" of pictures offered in Abbots Verney, The Furnace and The Secret River. The relative absence of symbolism is significant in this novel in which the futility of systematizing is stressed, in which human individuality is revealed as unpatternable, and all the more valuable for that. This very sparsity of images heralds the beginning of the author's concern with character - a sign of her literary maturity.

What symbolism there is, we notice, is prominently associated with the very ideal which is to be highlighted as unobtainable: Socialist principles will, Benjamin Bunter believes, when converted into action, confer "wholeness" on a heterogeneous world. An image-

studded opening' sequence shows him as the "Celestial Smith" at his forge on the London road, creating and organising the world and imparting knowledge of its mysteries. He is in complete control of a universe he lucidly comprehends. The road outside the forge leads direct to an unequivocal goal:

And on either side of the road, beyond the white may hedges, the green fields swelled, golden with buttercups, and sweet with clover.<sup>146</sup>

Images of fulfilment - may blossom, green fields, golden flowers - indicate his sense of having arrived at the answer.

Benjamin Bunter's socialism - the coherent ideal aimed for - is like that of Rupert Brooke, who, arriving as an undergraduate in Cambridge in 1907, adopted first the "distributist" ideas of Belloc and Chesterton, then the "scientific socialism" of the Fabian Society. Belloc's distributism Brooke defined as a desire to "go back to the merry days before the Reformation when every Englishman had a cottage, a field and all the beer he could drink."<sup>147</sup> Benjamin Bunter's longing for a whitewashed workman's cottage is in line with this ideal. Brooke joined the Cambridge branch of the Young Fabians set up by Ben Keeling - the coincidence of his name with Rose Macaulay's "Benjamin Bunter" is significant - first as an associate, then as a fully committed member assenting to "The Basis," a credo calling for "the abolition of private property, rent and interest, and for the equal citizenship of men and women."<sup>148</sup> The evangelising, furniture-making Benjamin Bunter who denies his

Cambridge intellectual background to move among the rural working class is, like Brooke, a "constructive socialist." He is intent on furthering the Wellsian ideal of doing "whatever lies in his power towards the enrichment of the Socialist idea" and giving "whatever gifts he has as artist, as writer, as maker of any sort to increasing and refining the conception of civilised life."<sup>149</sup>

Benjamin's caravan tour of the countryside preaching his gospel of work and selling samples of his carpentry is like that of Rupert Brooke and Dudley Ward who, in the Summer of 1910 had travelled by horse-drawn caravan through Hampshire and Dorset making speeches on village greens about the reform of the Poor Law.<sup>150</sup> (At Wareham it rained, their cat was run over by a car and they retired in true upper class fashion to a hotel for lobster teas and comfortable beds.)<sup>151</sup> Constance Babington Smith notes Gladys Fanshawe's recollection that Rupert Brooke at about this time asked Rose to accompany him on a caravan expedition, and that her father vetoed the plan.<sup>152</sup> Certainly the episode "The Conscientious Bohemian" in which male and female cousins Benjamin and Cecil (Cecilia) embark on a caravan holiday together, the latter repairing to a nearby inn at night, may contain hints of pique at this prohibition.

Views and Vagabonds is a serio-comic commentary on the futility of human aspirations to lasting coherence of any kind. The naivety of Benjamin's idealistic view is thrown into relief by other characters. His wife, plain, commonsensical Louie, confounds his aspirations by her dogged belief in the sheer, pure value of human

love. She has the "wisdom of the ages."<sup>153</sup> Beside her, the sophisticated Bunter family (Benjamin, his brother and his mother who have come to persuade him to abandon his artisan life) resemble "intelligent babies eating slices of bread and raspberry jam."<sup>154</sup> Love alone makes her world coherent. Watching Louie rush to attend to her husband's burned hand, Cecil is overwhelmed by the intensity of the girl's emotion, and is

...suddenly caught right out of the world of ideas into some other world, more direct, more simple, more coherent, more intense.<sup>155</sup>

The birth of Louie's baby, too, brings "renewed coherence into the puzzle map."<sup>156</sup>

Opposition to Benjamin's life of principle is also specifically Christian. Father Estcourt, a Roman Catholic priest, confirms to Louie as she mourns the early death of her baby, the child's status as "an individual soul to be saved, rather than a "notion" of his father's."<sup>157</sup> Bob Traherne, Benjamin's cousin and Anglican curate, likewise remonstrates with the idealist. For him the keystone for all life is personality:

'That's what you're leaving out of account. I'll tell you what you're doing - you're trying to destroy personality. You're trying to enforce on people - on people, the genuine, live, sacred article - a system, a set of principles, a soulless code of life and art.'<sup>158</sup>

The Church, he argues, while itself a great systematizer, maintains personality as its basis; it exists in the personalities of its members and has as its aim the worship of "a greater personality" which must suffuse their human ones.<sup>159</sup>

Jerry, Benjamin's younger brother, expresses the opposition of the artist. His poet's sensibilities are outraged by Benjamin's subordination of the individual to the "type":

...did they really come each heading a great army like unto themselves only more so, so that one must accept or reject the person on the merits of his background of myrmidons?<sup>160</sup>

Do ideas, he wonders, matter because of the people who have them, or people because of their ideas? In an image precisely duplicated in the Shelleyan language of Rodney's musings in The Lee Shore, he debates whether it is people who stand in the white radiance of eternity, or whether it is, vice versa, ideas which transcend humanity.<sup>161</sup> In the end he is left firmly entrenched in the phenomenalist position, convinced that "things" are more important than the ideas behind them. He is content with the "lovely, concrete world; a world of foregrounds."<sup>162</sup>

It is, of course, Tommy and Betty Crevequer, re-appearing in this sixth novel, who make the most obvious comments on the fatuity of Benjamin's beliefs. The two life-styles are deliberately juxtaposed in the opening chapter. Itinerant pedlars, disorganized

and carefree, Tommy and Betty arrive at the forge to have a donkey shod. Significantly, they are anxious to turn aside from the straight road Benjamin has been contemplating, to find a resting place. "We just want a nice place ... a place we can play about in for a little...."<sup>163</sup> Despite their coaxing, he will not join them at the fair nearby. To them life is a playground, a casual, haphazard, happy business where the prime motive must be to have fun. Benjamin, aspiring to exist within the framework of principle, is appalled by their aimlessness. The Crevequers play a central role in the novel's symbolism. Merrilies End, the beautiful old house they inherit (briefly) from a relation, is the place of sanctuary to which Benjamin is brought before the initiatory experience of the fire. The house name, intended, of course, to connote joyfulness, may also have been chosen to echo the well-known "Howards End" of the novel published only two years earlier.<sup>164</sup> In Forster's book, as here, the house is the focal point of a conflict between different systems and values, and a symbol of enduring ordinariness. Standing castle-like on a cliff above a seaside fishing-village, Merrilies End is enclosed in a "green garden," the steep path leading up to it ending "at a little green door in a grey garden wall."<sup>165</sup> The images suggest a fairy-tale place of repose such as Tudor Vallon discovers on his visit to his godmother's forest cottage. The garden, "happy with animals," indicates the Franciscan happiness to which the Crevequers have attained, having nothing yet "possessing all things," extending indiscriminate welcome to the multifarious human souls they encounter.<sup>167</sup> People are valued by Tommy and Betty for themselves rather than for any idea or principle they represent.



The fire at Merrilies End (an image at once Hermetic and Christian) marks Benjamin's maturation. Distaste for their lifestyle forgotten, he enters the burning building in the belief that brother and sister are still there and must be rescued. Although his act is unnecessary - the Crevequers have gone for a night-time sail - he attains through it a realisation of the barrenness of a life based on principle only. Love alone is what matters, he sees suddenly as he stands engulfed by flames. What the Crevequers represent, and the type of lives they lead are of no account: they are significant only as fellow human-beings whom he loves. Imagining they have perished, he is distraught:

He knew that the flames had taken and burnt up what he loved best in all the world, in any worlds that there might be. How he hated every principle, every lack of principle, that those whom he so loved had stood for, and how much stronger a thing is love than hate! What are principles? Dust scattered by the puffing of a wind to the four quarters of the heavens; straw, burnt by the touch of flame, and their place knows them no more.<sup>167</sup>

He emerges from this "fire of love" with his priorities reversed.<sup>168</sup> The return of the Crevequers, as though from the dead, with the accompanying gold and blue imagery of the April dawn, indicates new life. Benjamin's awakening takes two, painful stages. He must learn first that his assiduous straining after the coherence of principle is pointless, that happiness is all that is worth aiming for. He must learn secondly to place the happiness of other people before his own:

Happiness counts. But whose? That is the immense, the far-reaching root question, the answer to which decides the issues of the world. Whose? Yours or mine?<sup>169</sup>

In the end he is resigned to the futility of the pursuit of coherence. He settles with Louie and baby Stanley Wilfred in "Daisyville," the ugly modern working-class house at which his artistic temperament has previously balked. He abandons his dream of the model artisan home with its "joys of art and sanitation and hand-made furniture, and fresh whitewash...."<sup>170</sup> This is real life, where his stylish Japanese prints jostle for position on the sitting-room walls with Louie's coronation portraits. He is left at the end in Candidian equanimity, digging his garden, tranquilly accepting his lack of coherence.

'I am incoherent,' [he tells Cecil.] 'And when you are my age, you will be incoherent too. The strain after a studied coherence is the bane of the very young. The universe is not coherent, according to my knowledge of it; it is a series of unrelated episodes. A most surprising place, I admit - but surprise is always interesting. You are a monist; you want to reduce it all to a single basis. You think there is a Truth. I happen to be a pluralist. There we differ, you see.'<sup>171</sup>

Although surpassing them in maturity, Views and Vagabonds is still detectably within the tradition of the first five "soul's progress" novels. Benjamin, like Verney Ruth, Michael Travis, Tudor Vallon, and Peter Margerison, is a pilgrim with his sight set on a far city - his approach by horse-drawn caravan to Cambridge is heavily weighted with symbolism:

His eyes were on a distant spire - a pale, transparent grey point in the north-east....To the thus indicated city the dusty road ran straight; the van was passing a blurred milestone that said "Cambridge 10."<sup>172</sup>

As he watches, the spire is bathed briefly in the gold light of sunrise. The next minute, however, dark clouds have appeared and rain begun:

That was only for a moment; in the next the grey came down, and it was but a poor sunrise after all - a moment's gold smile over a singing earth, then a plunge into blue clouds, and the early silver rain slanting over the willows and pelting the young man's face and darkly spotting the soft dust.<sup>173</sup>

The scene dramatizes the false dawns of his idealism - the birth and sudden death of the son who was to be the perfect artisan, his brief dream of the perfect working household in its neatly whitewashed cottage.

The stages of his development are still those of the traveller on the mystic way, although the mystical allusions are now fairly firmly submerged. Benjamin, attacked and badly hurt by the working-class men to whom he is trying to preach, painfully enters the stage of purgation. Carried by the kind-hearted Crevequers to Merrilies End to recover, he is on the restful illuminative plateau where he sees clearly and feels he has found the "answer." He is by now aware of his real parentage - his sailor father, Prittie, has returned from the sea to claim him - and is enthusiastically planning the model working-class home he will form with his wife and father. In

accordance with the typical mystic pattern, he does not realise that there are still further heights to be scaled and higher perceptions to be attained. Only with the catalyst of the fire - which plunges him into a dark night of the soul - does he achieve insight proper.

The novel's ending is carefully equivocal. Jerry and Cecil cycle home, side by side, along the road to Cambridge. The opposing views of phenomenalist and idealist are balanced as they talk. Jerry loves the pleasant, solid, physical world, where "one handles and touches and tastes each thing as it comes along," enjoying it for itself rather than for any idea it represents. He is content with the landscape of "buttercup fields, that spread, golden in the sun's evening light, on either side of the dusty road," and the hedges in their "glory of pure white."<sup>174</sup> It is the same rural roadside scene as Benjamin looked out on from his forge in the novel's opening scene, but whereas for him the gold and white fields and hedgerows were burdened with the symbolic significance of his quest for the idea, for Jerry they are satisfying in themselves; their natural beauty is enough. Cecil, on the other hand, is still busy in her pursuit of ideas - she looks forward to seeing "the Irish plays" and hearing "Alec Potts on G.B.S. in the Guildhall."<sup>175</sup> Together the two cousins make their way along the road towards the spires of Cambridge. There is room for both philosophies, the image seems to suggest; phenomenalist and idealist must co-exist, the only wise modus vivendi being that which effects some kind of practicable compromise between the two.

Views and Vagabonds gives the first glimpse of the "mature" Rose Macaulay, the acid and aloof satirist she is best known as. Her standard stock of quest images continues to announce mystical Platonic, Hermetic and Christian undercurrents which now contribute to, rather than entirely carry, the body of the story. There is a light-heartedness about her handling of this novel, however, which prevents it sinking, like The Furnace, The Secret River and The Valley Captives, under the weight of its earnestness. She makes it clear she has not aimed for realism - the sudden emergence of Benjamin's real father is an unashamedly creaky plot-device. Cecil's gushing idealism, too, deliberately invites laughter.

It is a novel which marks a crux in her thinking. In the explicitness with which it announces its protagonist's quest for coherence, it sheds retrospective light on the previous novels - all her characters, it is confirmed, have been engaged in this quest. In the wit which now begins tentatively to surface, there are glimmerings of her later satire. In the poised indecision of the ending, there is a new maturity. Both of the novels of 1912 have depicted pilgrims cast up on lee shores, "making do" with lives they have neither planned nor desired. Yet while Peter Margerison is allowed to maintain his belief in a transcendent "wholeness" which will restore meaning and pattern to his marred life, Benjamin Bunter is not. He is left confronting his inability to make sense of an incoherent world. In this sixth novel, the author will offer the reader no neatly packaged pattern for progress. She invites him only

to join the cousins in their journey along the dusty road in the hope they might find a spired city in the end.

### Conclusion

Rose Macaulay's first six novels, published between 1906 and 1912, are very much of their time. With their emphasis on the pursuit of coherence, on monistic idealism and the achievement of the absolute, they emerge from a calm, pre-war world in which a sense of system still prevails, a "curious age...when the ordered frame of things was still unbroken, and violence a child's dream, and poetry and art were taken with immense seriousness."<sup>176</sup> It was an age in which the system - building ideas of the nineteenth-century philosophers continued to enjoy prominence - Darwin with his conviction that behaviour could be subjected to the same laws as those that applied in the physical world; Comte, with his belief in the existence of a positivist universe, an ordered, organic whole ruled by definable laws, Taine with his anti-romantic love of the logical and the abstract, Herbert Spencer with his vast attempt to provide a classification for all empirical knowledge in his ten-volume Synthetic Philosophy of 1896.<sup>177</sup> In anthropology, J.G. Frazer was producing between 1890 and 1915 in The Golden Bough, his huge comparative study of the magical and religious beliefs of mankind, while in the world of letters, another great synthetic work, The Dictionary of National Biography, first appeared in 1900, under the editorship of Leslie Stephen.<sup>178</sup> In poetry, W.B. Yeats played with systems of mystical, Hermetic and Cabbalistic symbols and tried

to create a synthesis of Irish folk-lore and legends (Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry, 1888, The Celtic Twilight, 1893, The Secret Rose, 1897).<sup>179</sup>

In line with the impulse towards synthesis which is the keynote of her age, Rose Macaulay places all her early characters in the "ordered frames" of mystical, Platonic or Hermetic quests and defines their goals as mystical insight, beauty, love, truth or a sense of life meaningfully revealed as a coherent whole. Succumbing to the synthetic urge, she attempts to jostle into some kind of compatibility the multiple systems of images she has gleaned from her reading.

Cutting across the stable received wisdom of the synthesists at the beginning of the century, however, were the new ideas of flux and change. Freud, with his publication of The Interpretation of Dreams (1899), had triggered the psychoanalytic revolution, releasing new interest in the heterogeneous, disconnected elements at work in the mind, and in the dream logic he claimed could make sense of the human subconscious.<sup>180</sup> Gradually, in the early years of the decade, Monistic idealism began to subside before the popular new Pragmatic philosophy of William James, John Dewey, C.S. Peirce and F.C.S. Schiller. James' conception of consciousness as a "continuum," of experience as a "continuous stream or flux," accorded with the new psychoanalytical developments.<sup>181</sup> Truth for the pragmatist was a more subtle, fluid, utilitarian concept than the sharply crystallized Hegelian absolute.

Rose Macaulay, caught as she begins to write fiction, in the cross-current of old and new, is at once tentatively experimental and cautiously conservative. She writes Abbots Verney in the style of the traditional Victorian family saga (her familiarity with the Verney papers suggests the probable source of her inspiration), and aligns herself instinctively with the Bildungsromanen, or novels of development, which dominated the literature of the early Edwardian era.<sup>182</sup> Granville Barker's The Voysey Inheritance, (1905), Conrad's Lord Jim (1900) and Heart of Darkness (1902), Henry James' the Ambassadors (1903), H.G. Wells' Kipps (1905) and Love and Mr Lewisham (1900), Samuel Butler's The Way of All Flesh (1903), are all, like Abbots Verney, stories of characters' growth to maturity.<sup>183</sup> Yet Rose Macaulay at the same time almost daringly overlays her tale with features from the newer fiction which was attracting her attention at the time. Abbots Verney is Jamesian in its evocation of the multifaceted nature of truth and of the perpetual fluctuations of personalities and perceptions. What is Verney really like? Could his grandfather's view of him be fair? It is a story full of characters watching one another, all seeing their own versions of the truth. Noting the Jamesian features of her second novel while preparing his 1959 study of Rose Macaulay's work (the intricate gradations of tone, the pregnant pauses in conversations, the sense of meaning being teased from silence), Philip Rizzo received a letter from her saying:

It rather interests me someone should have suggested a Jamesian influence in the Furnace [sic], as I remember



that I was reading him with fascination at the time I wrote it.<sup>184</sup>

As in Abbots Verney, the trappings of the Victorian novel in The Furnace - the knot of upper-class characters gathered in the continental resort - are also disturbed. The influence of E.M. Forster likewise unsettles the conventional contours of several of these early novels, as Rose Macaulay carefully works into them his characteristic undercurrent of concern that human lives are irrevocably interlinked. Tommy and Betty Crevequer, for example, "touch" the hearts of Warren Venables and Prudence Varley, and vice versa. Rosamund Ilbert debates with herself how far it is proper to intervene for good in other people's affairs. The emphasis in The Valley Captives on the breaking down of barriers is a refinement on Forster's "only connect." Rose Macaulay's friendship with E.M. Forster began in the 1920's. Her critical appraisal of his work, The Writings of E.M. Forster, which appeared in 1938, indicates not only her detailed knowledge of what he wrote, but also her particular fondness for it. Here in her first novels we see her sharing his predilection for setting his stories in Italy (Where Angels Fear to Tread, 1905, A Room With a View, 1908), as well as his liking, evinced especially in such early short stories as "The Celestial Omnibus," "The Story of Panic" and "Other Kingdom," for introducing his characters to unsettling supernatural elements from "other" worlds.<sup>185</sup> Her preoccupation with mysticism and insight into the beyond parallels his interest in the "mystic borderlands" he saw

flickering on the edges of the "solid, sinisterly fascinating, mahogany-and-port Victorian world."<sup>186</sup>

Rose Macaulay's first six novels are, above all, novels of transition and compromise. Neither confidently traditional nor courageously modern, they are the work of an author poised halfway between adolescent enthusiasm for the new and adult conservatism, who is still defining her distinctive voice. The philosophy of disappointment which the novels express is at one with this tone. She is eager to show her characters struggling for perfection - love, beauty, goodness - but will not allow their efforts to be met with success. Just as her early poems have been about the mystical experience without being the products of it, she effects a similar compromise in her fiction. The value of the pilgrimage after perfection is emphasised, but its pointlessness admitted. Hope and hopelessness are deadlocked. The ambitious project of fitting mystical, Platonic, Hermetic, Christian, fairy-tale and folk-lore images together is, she knows from the start, doomed to failure, yet has to be tried; she will attempt to demonstrate the undemonstrable.

These peculiar, tentative, equivocal novels are remarkable for their asexuality. Time and again Rose Macaulay shyly sidesteps the issue of sex. Characters are shown in pursuit of a love-object - Verney of Rosamund, Michael of Cecilia, the Crevequers of Warren and Prudence, Peter of Lucy - yet there is no convincing urgency about their intentions, or indeed often any obvious reason why the love-affairs are unsuccessful. Why Rosamund Ilbert should not want to

marry Verney is not very satisfactorily explained - we are left with the impression that she cannot be bothered. Rose Macaulay's reluctance to supply, at her publisher's request, an "afterward" in which the two do move towards reconciliation, suggests her own lack of confidence with the subject-matter.<sup>187</sup> She is happier with the androgynous twin-relationship of Tommy and Betty and Tudor and Joanna or with the calm, theory-based match of Benjamin Bunter and Louie. She will supply all the trappings of sexual tensions - the confrontations of interested character with interested character - yet she will consistently defuse the situations thus created. Her treatment of sex is yet another compromise. Love is a delight to be aimed for, but not experienced.

Humour has not yet bubbled into the early productions of this novelist whose name, in her heyday some ten years later, is to be synonymous with satirical sparkle. We are confronted instead with the earnest, fulsome, highly allegorical work of a writer who is obsessed by symbol and idea. "Heaven never, I think, destined me for a story teller," Rose Macaulay writes in Personal Pleasures (1935):

...stories are the form of literary activity which give me the least pleasure. I am one of the world's least efficient novelists. I cannot invent good stories, or care what becomes of the people of whom I write. I have heard novelists complain that their characters run away with their books and do what they like with them. This must be somewhat disconcerting....No; my people are retiring, elusive, and apt not to come even when I require them. I do not blame them.<sup>188</sup>

The image-drenched seriousness of these early novels, in which story is often only a fragile feature, in which plots are vapid and characterization thin, should form an important clue to our understanding of the later work in which satirical surfaces are not always recognised as masking serious ideas.

Chapter 3 Pursuit and Pragmatism: Novels 1914-1920

Rose Macaulay's writing changes its tone in the four novels she published between 1914 and 1920. With the First World War, "a chapter was closed with a bang, and the world ran amok like a herd of wild elephants" - her fiction reflects her profound shock at this "loudest and most uncivilized" of noises off to interrupt the serene Edwardian garden-party.<sup>1</sup> The world in which she could spend tranquil summer nights sleeping by the riverside at her parents' Cambridge home was gone. Now began the more rigorous war-time years during which she served first as a land-girl, then as a VAD, then as a reluctant civil-servant at the War Office and at the Ministry of Information.<sup>2</sup> It was in this last post, to which she was transferred at the beginning of 1918, that she met Gerald O'Donovan, the married man and former priest who was to become her "beloved companion" for over twenty years.<sup>3</sup> Personal and national cataclysms coincided.

Her novels of this period are now openly satirical. It is as though the catastrophe of the War has released her at last from the bonds of the conventional "Edwardian" novel and has allowed her the detachment, the freedom to fantasize and to give reign to both anger and wit, which are the concomitants of the satirical mode. These novels are, too, newly pragmatic in the philosophies they propound. Characters' quests for wholeness and coherence in their lives are as ardent as they were in the earnest first novels, but people are now shown clearly limiting themselves to the attainment of strictly useful ideals. Only the narrower truths necessary for everyday life

are perceived: the emphasis now is on the strictly practical. Stylistically, Rose Macaulay's writing is terser, sharper, much less heavy with symbolism than before. Her central vocabulary of symbolism is still present, but it is more skilfully managed, more artfully integrated into her texts. Her new maturity is gradually freeing her from her reliance on symbol to confirm her "cleverness"; as her satire becomes more confident, her need for such open display diminishes.

### Poetry

As with her earliest novels, Rose's poetry of the period provides a useful index to the preoccupations of her prose. Her second collection of poems, Three Days, was published in 1919 and reveals her distress at the devastating effects of war. Three sections, "Yesterday," "Today" and "Any Day" supply the three days of the title and evoke respectively the holocaust of the war just past, the desolation of the present world now left and scenarios for survival into the possible future. "Picnic, July 1917" in the first of these sections, describes her companions lying eating, "sweet hurt-berries/In the bracken of Hurt Wood," savouring the tranquillity of the rural scene, "drowsy, and quiet, and sweet," until the sound of the guns from France intrudes, shattering the peace.<sup>4</sup> The "still ring" in which life has been bound is sundered.<sup>5</sup> "The Shadow" evokes the horror of night bombing and the destruction that is left:

Bright fingers point all round the sky, they  
point and grope and cannot find.

(God's hand, you'd think, and he gone blind)...

The queer white faces twist and cry.  
Last time they came they messed our square,  
and left it a hot rubbish-heap,  
With people sunk in it so deep,  
you could not even hear them swear.<sup>6</sup>

It is as though "the stars were crashing right into the town, and tumbling streets and houses down, and smashing people like wine-jars...."<sup>7</sup> Her vision of ruin is apocalyptic in "Sanity," in which she watches with horrified fascination as "the world's ruins crumbled, and its walls fell down."<sup>8</sup> Again, her sense of the deep mental disturbance worked by war on the human mind is poignantly disclosed in "The Gate." The metaphor here is of the traveller veering in sudden insanity through the gate away from the narrow road of normal thought:

With a hand pressed over each eye  
Some men have pushed through blind...  
But then should I surely run mad and die  
If I was touched, as I stumbled by,  
By a hand reached out behind....

\* \* \* \*

They found him running in the hill country,  
Full many a long hour's journey from that place.  
No tale he told, but gibbered crazily,  
And ran and ran, as he would win a race.

And the moon had dried his tears upon his  
face.<sup>9</sup>

The war-time world is shattered, broken, disturbed.

The present day which has been left after the upheaval of "Yesterday" is dreamless and bleak. It is, as she puts it in "The Adventurers," "a desperate age," one in which man has "lost heaven's stair":

It is a tilled country, without dreams,  
And everything that seems  
Is really so.  
No wavering hints of doubt glint and go,...  
(They do tell  
Of queer elves who used here to dwell,  
And who fled before the guns of hell.)<sup>10</sup>

This is a world in which there is little scope for mystical insight, in which Edwardian "ghost consciousness" has been suppressed, in which all is flat and barrenly actual.<sup>11</sup> Rose Macaulay's ghost story "The Empty Berth," was published in The Cornhill Magazine in 1913, significantly before the crash of the war.<sup>12</sup> A neat, well-told piece, it looks to the style of the early E.M. Forster, dealing with his favoured theme of mysterious extra persons. A young classics master, Shipley, embarks on a Hellenic cruise, and discovers that the unknown gentleman, H. Cottar, who had been supposed to share his state-room with him has died three days earlier. Despite his death, however, H. Cottar proves supernaturally present throughout the cruise, enhancing the perceptions of Shipley and his (Cottar's) former sweetheart Miss Brown. The sensed influence of Cottar leaves Shipley, strangely, with a "clear, clean vision of life."<sup>13</sup> We are reminded of E.M. Forster's 1904 essay (reprinted in Abinger Harvest), which Rose Macaulay knew and wrote about in her critical study of him, describing a visit with a party of travellers to the Greek port



of Cnidus. The group is intrigued and unsettled on being joined by an unidentified additional figure, a stranger whose presence haunts and upsets.<sup>14</sup> What Rose Macaulay's poetry of 1919 now reveals is her saddened sense that the world in which such mild and pleasant ghost stories as her own and Forster's could be written, in which readers could be expected to acquiesce in the existence of such gently supernatural borderlands as they postulate, has gone forever. The "queer elves" have fled.<sup>15</sup>

In the hard, flat, unmythical world that is left, various survival tactics are offered. "Picnic, July 1917" suggests the building of walls to block out the horrors:

We are shut about by guarding walls:  
(We have built them lest we run  
Mad from dreaming of naked fear  
And of black things done.)

We are ringed all round by guarding walls,  
So high, they shut the view.  
Not all the guns that shatter the world  
Can quite break through.<sup>16</sup>

In "Sanity" the speaker is resolved to shrink into herself, surrounding herself with the comforting littlenesses of normal life:

Let me only know  
How the beech woods grow  
All round Jordans, where the Friends come and go.  
Let me hold in my mind  
Things small, sweet and kind,  
Apples, and the Chalfonts, and keep sane so.<sup>17</sup>

"The Passport" offers the most positive survival scheme. The vital sense of coherence can be recaptured by counterbalancing tragedy with laughter:

Through a world so littered, so sad and so gay,  
What shall you take for your lunatic travelling?  
And what shall help you to any unravelling  
Of the threads that bind and choke your way?

Faith wilts in the quiet of the cold dawn hour;  
Courage endures not in the face of to-morrow!  
Peace may not live amid such joy and sorrow;  
Dreams shrivel up like a flower.

...  
Then what's for your pack, and what gift shall  
it be?  
You shall fare on your wondering way with  
laughter;  
This shall be your pass through the maze and  
after,  
Strayed child of eternity.

...  
So you'll laugh, so you'll live, so you'll die  
when you must,  
For what is the world but for living and dying?  
And what fills the earth except laughing and  
crying?  
Laughter, then, until dust goes to dust.<sup>18</sup>

The saving vision must be of life as a revue, a tragi-comic farce, not to be taken too seriously, but to be laughed at where possible for its bizarreness and variety. A First World War soldier comes in from the street and sees his own life mirrored in the bright whirl of the revue:

And that was Life, a wild thing spinning for a  
brief hour, bedecked with lights,  
Swung between two black hungry nights, which  
have no end and no beginning.  
And that was Time, a queer lit section of some  
monstrous wheel all drowned and dim,  
Whose eternal, churning turning rim flings up

man in its circumvection,  
To do his turn and dance his dance and slip  
back into the quiet sea  
Of silence and eternity....<sup>19</sup>

Life is seen reassuringly whole and insignificant in comic perspective.

### Satire

This element of comedy, advocated as a key to survival in the poems is, indeed, a new and distinguishing feature of Rose Macaulay's four novels of 1914-1920. Her satire, which has glimmered briefly in Views and Vagabonds, now shines out defiantly, lifting her writing to a new level of maturity.

The Making of a Bigot (1914) is a satire like her earlier poem "On Being Fastidious" (see Appendix A), on a young man who finds it impossible to "draw the line" and live his life in accordance with a coherent, clearly defined set of beliefs. Eddy Oliver has an easy "attitude of omni-acceptance."<sup>20</sup> As a comically mild and owlish Cambridge undergraduate, he belongs happily to a ludicrous conglomeration of disparate groups - to both Fabian Society and Primrose League, Church Society and Heretic Society, Factory Increase League and Coal Smoke Abatement Society, League for the Encouragement and Better Appreciation of Post Impressionism and League for the Maintenance of the Principles of Classical Art. Peculiarly lacking in emotional bias, he declines to discriminate between opposing views

and innocently sees good in all. His attitude almost loses him his fiancée Molly, the "dear little girl" from the Hall who declines to associate with his less than respectable bohemian friends.<sup>21</sup> Eventually convinced of the dead-lock impossibility of his position, he spends his wedding morning drawing up a cogent set of principles and loyalties, on the grounds that "Molly must have a bigot to marry."<sup>22</sup>

Non-Combatants and Others (1916) is by no means a satire, but contains satirical elements. It is the story of Alix Sandomir, a lame, imaginative art-student who is abandoned by Basil Doye when he returns wounded from the War. He finds comfort instead with Alix's wholesome, cheerful cousin Evie, and Alix is left to shape some kind of coherent philosophy of life for herself from the fragments which remain. Rose Macaulay's comic eye is apparent in the "Violette" episodes, the scenes from suburban life in which Alix is caught up when she goes to stay with her cousins the Framptons. Mrs Frampton sits knitting a sock while being read "stories impossible to doubt" from the Evening Thrill - "knit two and make one, purl two, slip one, pass the slipped one over, drop four and knit six."<sup>23</sup> Mrs Vinney opines primly on war-time theatre: "Of course, you know, Vin and I wouldn't go to anything really festive just now, like the Girl on the Garden Wall, but I'm not ashamed to say we did go to the Man Who Stayed Behind."<sup>24</sup> Home hints are read aloud from a morning paper: "Don't throw away a favourite hat because you think its day is over. Wash it in a solution of water and gum and lay it flat on the kitchen dresser. Stuff the crown with soft paper and stand four flat-irons

on the brim. But clean the irons well first with brick-dust and ammonia. The hat will then be a very nice new shape...."<sup>25</sup> Rose Macaulay catches the absurd small-mindedness of human-beings against the nightmare background of the First World War. The psychological littleness of the non-combatants in the cotton-woolled atmosphere of "Violette" (the house name) is at once ludicrous by comparison with the heroism of the men at war, and yet in itself the tough selfish character trait of the survivor.

What Not (1918), is more purely satire, entering some fourteen years before the publication of Brave New World, a science fiction realm in which efforts are being made to regulate the intelligence of the population.<sup>26</sup> In this imaginary post-war world, the new Ministry of Brains handles the task of classifying people according to intelligence levels. A busy bureaucracy issues certificates grading individuals on a scale from A1 to C3. The Mental Progress Act stipulates the intelligence categories between which marriage is allowed and operates a system of bonuses for the offspring of state-approved alliances. In the "prophetic comedy" of the title, the Minister of Brains himself falls foul of the system he has perpetrated, making an inappropriate marriage with Kitty Grammont. The whole complicated, beautifully logical structure collapses in the face of their love; human emotions, unruly and chaotic, will not be confined by the dry dictates of a system generated by mere intellect.

Potterism (1920) is the most successful of the early satires, a piece of gentle mockery of popular journalism and the press barons,

and of the idealism of youth which believes that "unsentimental precision in thought" is permanently attainable in a muddled world.<sup>27</sup> The choice of the name "Potter" for the family of newspaper moguls here attacked is explained by the fact that the Macaulay family was itself distantly related, as Noel Annan explains, to that of Richard ("Radical Dick") Potter, who in 1821 was one of the founders of the Manchester Guardian.<sup>28</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay's youngest son, Charles, married Potter's daughter. Family interest has inspired Rose Macaulay's title. The Anti-Potter League is a group of enthusiastic young intellectuals - Jane and Johnny Potter, Arthur Gideon, Laurence Juke and Katherine Varick - who are united in their fight against "the great mass of thought - or of incoherent, muddled emotion that passed for thought - which [they] had agreed, for brevity's sake, to call "Potterism."<sup>29</sup> Their weapons are "hard, jolly facts, with clear sharp edges that you can't slur and talk away."<sup>30</sup> Placing their faith, like the Ministry of Brains, in the efficacy of the intellect, they must in the end admit the futility of the fight. Gideon, the most committed visionary of the group, is killed as a result of mob violence, his death reported (a double irony) on a news placard of the popular press he has despised. The detective-story format complements the "Potter" theme; Charles Hobart meets his death under mysterious circumstances and the novel's central chapters consist of the four main characters' accounts of their actions leading up to this event. As each person presents a different analysis of the situation, and forms his own hypothesis as to "whodunit" from the limited sets of facts available to him, the

impossibility of attaining utter precision of thought is demonstrated.

That Rose Macaulay should turn to satire in this way at a time when her own life in particular and the world in general were in turmoil is an interesting phenomenon. Various reasons could be suggested as to why she found the medium attractive. Satire is, of course, a stock defensive response to perplexity. Humour can offer escape, a means of defusing the overwhelming seriousness of life. Published in 1918, What Not for example, provides imaginative release from the war by allowing the reader a rueful-humorous look at what life might be like after it. There is also evidence to suggest that Rose Macaulay is, to some extent at least, using her writing to distance herself from some of her own most pressing personal problems. The plight of Kitty Grammont and Nicholas Chester echoes her own with Gerald O'Donovan - Constance Babington Smith has even drawn on the fictional episode to elucidate her account of the period in her cousin's life when she, too, was falling in love with a civil servant and experiencing prohibitions in the way of marriage.<sup>31</sup> The real-life unhappiness of her tangled love-affair with a married man is distilled into the comic ironies of the novel. Rose Macaulay's own professions - of novelist and journalist - are also frequent targets of satire in these novels. Eddy Oliver, who at one stage considers becoming a novelist, Leila Yorke, who writes low-grade romantic fiction, and Jane and Johnny Potter, who are journalist and novelist respectively, are all victims of the satirical pen. It is as though she has considered it safe to embark on a life of

authorship only if she can exercise her awareness of the profession's difficulties and defects in satire. Rose Macaulay is in her novels, but distanced, her essential inner life kept private, by humour.

There is more, however, to the "lift" of her fiction into satire than this. Satire accommodates her newly bifocal vision of life. Only as a satirist can she view the world as absurd, while simultaneously maintaining that it demands serious engagement. The satirical mode encapsulates the paradox of her stance, allowing her to express her belief that man's quest for coherence is at once valuable - indeed, essential - and ridiculous. It is the perfect mode for the writer whose art is in her ambiguity. The paradox of Rose Macaulay's double vision is, of course, paralleled at the level of her writing itself: within the coherent art-forms of her novels, she describes the chaos she perceives in the newly disintegrating world around her. Fiction provides a formal vehicle for her expression of incoherence.

Satire also offers her a greater freedom of format, opening up for her a generic range beyond the realism and symbolism of her Edwardian novels of ideas. Under the canopy of satire, she now tries her hand at fantasy (What Not) and the detective story (Potterism). Later she will try family saga, utopian novel, mystery story, stage play and historical fiction. She relishes, we sense, the nature of the fictional medium, seeing what it will do for her under the headings of different styles. Her writing is self-referential in a way it has not been before.



Rose Macaulay's satire qualifies her for modernity, releasing her novels from the Edwardian mould. It gives her writing sophistication, focuses attention on the precarious balance she achieves between hope and despair, makes her fiction experimental and aware.

There is an interesting modernity indeed, about what makes us laugh in these novels of 1914-1920. Her humour here is intriguingly in line with Bergson's theory of laughter. Le rire had been published in England in 1911 and would be topical when Rose Macaulay was emerging into her satirical mode.<sup>32</sup> It is clear she was, at least by 1916, familiar with the book - Guy Gresham is seen reading it in Crewe Train that year, while in a review of BBC radio programmes in 1947 she remarked on the difficulty confronting Bergson in attempting to analyse humour.<sup>33</sup> Whether or not she agreed with his analysis, her novels at this time do surprisingly often derive their humour from what he describes as "something mechanical encrusted on the living," a sense of the automatic and machine-like having been imposed on the natural and ordinary.<sup>34</sup> The fun in The Making of a Bigot is sparked by Eddy Oliver committing himself to adhere to the unnatural rigours of a precise philosophical schema, cancelling out in himself the element of normal human muddle. In What Not we are amused by the attempts of an imaginary post-war society to live within the dictates of the Ministry of Brains' eugenically sound but humanly impossible intelligence classification scheme. In Potterism, the anti-Potters are funny for their well-

meaning but ludicrously futile efforts to eliminate muddle from human thinking. All are victims of Bergson's "automatism."<sup>35</sup>

We are reminded that this was the period during which Wyndham Lewis, too, was producing pictures of reality "mechanised," sharply angular renderings of people and things in line with the Vorticist urge to crush sentimentality and celebrate instead energy and the machine. Rose Macaulay remembers being impressed by the "detonating and flashy" Blast of 1914, "which ran futurism and vorticists and Marinetti. Marinetti was the vogue just then; his vehemence when he lectured was alarming."<sup>36</sup> Lewis's portraits of people as "tyros" (his picture of himself, in this mode, for instance, was produced 1920-1921), show figures harshly outlined, caricatured, square-jawed. Rose Macaulay, we notice, whose characters at this time also come at points close to caricature - Eddy Oliver, Ivy Delmer, Mrs Frampton, Mrs Potter, all have the necessary sketchiness - has a remarkable tendency to ascribe square features to people. Katherine Varick in Potterism has "a pale, square-jawed, slightly cynical face," while Jane Potter has a "square white forehead."<sup>37</sup> Alix's cousin John in Non-Combatants and Others, returned from the war, has a scar running "from his square jaw to his square forehead."<sup>38</sup> It is as though Rose Macaulay has wished to render those characters she sees as crushed by some inhuman, mechanical force - in Katherine's and Jane's cases by the Anti-Potter urge for unsentimental precision in thought, in John's case by the First World War - sharp featured and distorted like a Wyndham Lewis portrait. It is a Leitmotif she uses both earlier and later in her career. Joanna Vallon in The Valley

Captives, her natural élan vital extinguished by the cruelty of her Bodgers, has also been "square-jawed" and worn "square-toed shoes."<sup>39</sup> Denham Dobie in Crewe Train (1926) who is forced to leave her idyllic Andorran homeland for a hemmed-in life in London with her aunt, is also "square-faced," with the "square jaw, the thrust-out under lip of an arguing child."<sup>40</sup>

### Pragmatism

At the level of ideas, these novels of 1914-1920 are alike in their advocacy of a philosophy of pragmatism which has not been apparent in Rose Macaulay's earliest fiction. Where her characters' quests before have been for Hegelian absolutes of truth, beauty, love, they are now for limited and useful truths which will avail them in practical terms in their daily lives. It is a position towards which Benjamin Bunter in Views and Vagabonds has been moving in his rejection of monism and his return to cultivate his working-class garden. Rose Macaulay has in her first six novels been content, as we have seen, to concede the impossibility of achieving the absolute, leaving her characters frustrated but mildly happy on the illuminative plateau of their quests. Now in these novels of the First World War years, she dispels this mood of resignation and makes her subjects actively choose the compromise truths according to which they will lead their lives. There is action, vigour, determination here, in contrast to the attitude of Franciscan surrender to the inevitable which dominated the earlier works.

All four novels are successful in suggesting the fluctuating "continuum" of experience from which characters select their portions of individual truth. This is the new "whole" which she sees in the upturned, war-riven world - a vacillating, perpetually changing flow of reality which only finds coherence when pragmatically limited to each individual's task in hand. There is no point, these novels indicate, in attempting to systematize or encompass the whole; each person must extract only what is useful for himself. The ideas are those, popular at the time, of Peirce, William James and Bergson. Although evidence of Rose Macaulay's familiarity with these philosophers is slight, the movement of ideas within the novels does seem compatible with at least some knowledge of their thought.

Concepts of "fluidity" and "change" such as those invoked by William James' description of the "stream of consciousness" clearly do intrigue her:

Consciousness...does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.<sup>41</sup>

Her own novels now are full of movement and variety - characters rush from place to place by train in What Not, people in The Making of a Bigot are constantly being grouped and regrouped in different locales (at tea at Pleasance Court, at dinner at St. Gregory's, on a Sunday

walk, in a weekend party at a country house) and allowed to talk, exchanging their multifarious views. The internal detective story of Potterism is a tailor-made channel for the expression of divergent ideas by the characters. We have an impression of infinite variety, of people crowded into tube-trains, with their multiplicity of reading matter in What Not, or the jumble of disparate buildings making up the town of Welchester:

Coherence and unity: these qualities seemed in the main sadly lacking in Welchester, as in other places. It was - country life is, life in Cathedral or any other cities is - a chaos of warring elements, disturbing to the onlooker. There are no communities now, village or other. In Welchester, and in the country round about it, there was the continuous strain of opposing interests. You saw it on the main road into Welchester, where villas and villa people ousted cottages and small farmers; ousted them and made a different demand on life, set up a different, opposing standard. Then, in the heart of the town, was the Cathedral, standing on a hill and for a set of interests quite different again, and round about it were the canons' houses of old brick, and the Deanery, and they were imposing on life standards of a certain dignity and beauty and tradition and order, not in the least accepted either by the slum-yards behind Church Street, or by Beulah, the smug tabernacle just outside the Close. And the Cathedral society, the canons and their families, the lawyers, doctors, and unemployed gentry, kept themselves apart with satisfied gentility from the townspeople, the keepers of shops, the dentists, the auctioneers. Sentiment and opinion in Welchester was, in short, disintegrated, rent, at odds within itself.<sup>42</sup>

The Making of a Bigot, indeed, announces its theme of variety in the piling up of "triad" images in its opening paragraph:

It was Trinity Sunday, full of buttercups and cuckoos and the sun. In Cambridge it was a Scarlet Day. In colleges, people struggling through a desert of Tripos papers or Mays rested their souls for a brief space in

a green oasis, and took their lunch up the river. In Sunday Schools, teachers were telling of the shamrock, that ill-considered and peculiarly inappropriate image conceived by a hard-pressed saint.<sup>43</sup>

Triplets shape the prose - "buttercups and cuckoos and the sun"; "in Cambridge...in colleges...in Sunday Schools." In a single paragraph, worded as meticulously as any of her poems, Rose Macaulay encapsulates her sense of the multifariousness of existence. In What Not, the "revue" metaphor used in the poem of that name is again employed to suggest the variety of life.<sup>44</sup> Kitty says:

'There are jokes, and shops, and music and plays, and pictures, and nice clothes, and Russian politics, and the world's failures caged together on one island, and things to eat and to drink, and our careers, and primroses in woods and the censor....Good gracious, it's all like an idiotic, glorified revue!'<sup>45</sup>

Rose Macaulay's sense of the "continuum" in which all are caught up is well-expressed in her poetry. "New Year 1918" contains her picture of the world like a turning wheel, perpetually becoming:

Whatever the year brings, he brings nothing new,  
For time, caught on the ancient wheel of change,  
Spins round, and round, and round; and nothing is  
strange,  
Or shall amaze.  
Mankind, in whom the heritage of all days  
Stirs suddenly, as dreams half remembered do.  
Whatever the year brings, he brings nothing new.<sup>46</sup>

We are reminded of the central thesis of Bergson's philosophy, "that the universe is itself becoming."<sup>47</sup> A water image in "Revenants" expands her concept of change:

As a lost and lovely island in a dim sea rides,  
So the world turns and spins among pale waste  
waters,  
And tumbles and spills its gay sons and  
daughters  
To sink or to swim in the outgoing tides."<sup>48</sup>

It is from this fluid and multifarious continuum that characters must select and construct their own limited but practical philosophies of existence.

Eddy Oliver with his "keen sense of unity", his childlike "knack of seeing a number of things at once," eventually reaches the point of emotional maturity at which he realises that this totality is meaningless.<sup>49</sup> It is, he perceives,

...a rough and ready, stupid muddle of a world, an incoherent, astonishing chaos of contradictions - but, after all, the world one has to live in and work in and fight in, using the weapons ready to hand. If one does not use them, if one rejects them as too blunt, too rough and ready, too inaccurate, for one's fine sense of truth, one is left weaponless, a non-combatant, a useless drifter from company to company, cast out of all in turn....Better than that, surely, is any absurdity of party and creed, dogma and system. After all, when all is said in their despite, it is these that do the work.<sup>50</sup>

He defines the principles on which he will henceforth act,

Then and only then, when, for him, many-faced Truth had resolved itself into one, when he should see but little here below but see that little clear, when he could say from the heart, 'I believe Tariff Reformers, Unionists, Liberals, Individualists, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Dissenters, Vegetarians, and all others with whom I disagree, to be absolutely in the wrong; I believe that I and those who think like me possess not merely truth but the truth' - then, and only then would he be able to set to work and get something done....<sup>51</sup>

The tone is ironic - stated as baldly as this, the idea seems ridiculous, and we are reminded that at several points throughout the novel, the characterisation of Eddy has been close to caricature - yet a serious philosophical point does seem to be being made. Eddy emerges from his experience "a homogenous and consistent whole," having defined a reality and a truth which are useful to him.<sup>52</sup> The story enacts the pragmatism of Peirce which holds that,

...to develop a thought's meaning we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce  
....To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object...we need only consider what effects of a conceivably practical kind the object may involve - what sensation we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects then, is for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all.<sup>53</sup>

Eddy's emergence into the realm of committed practicality is essentially pragmatic.

Other characters throughout the novel demonstrate the thesis that commitment to specific "truths" is vital for the sane survival



of the individual. Eileen Le Moine, musician separated from her playwright husband, and now living with socialist visionary Hugh Datcher, believes that her love for him is all-important and is prepared to sacrifice her reputation and position in society in defence of it. Datcher, in his last illness, returns from the warm Italian climate where he has gone in the hope of recuperating, to restore his boys' club to the political affiliations Eddy has unconsciously been undermining. Eddy's friend Arnold Denison, too, loses his life for a belief, trampled to death by a mob which objects to his views on the dock strike. Molly is prepared to sacrifice her love for Eddy for her conviction that she may not be seen in the company of Eileen Le Moine. Eddy's father, the Dean of Welchester, insists on his sick bed on finishing an article for the Church Quarterly stating his opinion on the Synoptic Problem - his health itself depends on his being able to pursue his argument for his firmly held beliefs. All have discovered before Eddy that the sensible way to exist is "to take a definite line and stick to it and reject all others; to be single-minded and ardent, and exclusive; to be, in brief, a partisan, if necessary a bigot."<sup>54</sup>

Tongue-in-cheek, Rose Macaulay indicates that the only escape from such partisanship lies in the craft of novel writing itself - a theme which she is to develop in Potterism:

In these dark hours of self-disgust, Eddy half thought of becoming a novelist, that last resource of the spiritually destitute. For novels are not life, that immeasurably important thing that has to be so sternly approached; in novels one may take as many points of view as one likes, all at the same time; instead of

working for life, one may sit and survey it from all angles simultaneously. It is only when one starts walking on a road that one finds it excludes the other roads. Yes; probably he would end a novelist.<sup>55</sup>

The novelist, detached and "non-combatant" (Eddy himself uses the word), sees life whole.<sup>56</sup>

The pragmatic pursuit of coherence is described again in Non-Combatants and Others. Where Eddy has sought merely to make sense of a fluctuating and endlessly varying world, Alix Sandomir has the tougher problem of attempting to distil meaning from a world broken to bits by the war. She is, in her mother's words "mentally and physically incoherent and adrift," looking on "the face of the incoherent world."<sup>57</sup> Into the calm ordered arena of cottage gardens, tennis-lawns and croquet hoops (the novel's opening scenes are studded with the careful "double-garden" symbols which have been prominent in the early books), there intrude the horrors of war - her cousin John shell-shocked and talking tormentedly in his sleep, her artist friend Basil Doye losing his precious right hand, her younger brother Paul killing himself to escape the terrors of the trenches. She suffers what her other brother Nicholas describes as a nervous breakdown:

'The war's playing the devil with your nerves - that's what it means. You do things and feel things and say things, I dare say, that you wouldn't have once, but that you can scarcely help now. You're only one of many, you know - one of thousands. The military hospitals are full of them; men who come through plucky and grinning but with their nerves shattered to bits.'<sup>58</sup>

Her condition is a symptom of the more general malaise of civilisation as a whole. "We're fast losing even such mental coherence and concentration as we had," Nicholas reflects.<sup>59</sup>

Into this fragmented, disintegrated world, there erupts the dynamic Daphne Sandomir, Alix's mother, who prescribes all sorts of invigorating recipes for cohesion:

'You should do eurhythmics. You'd find it changed the whole of life - gave it balance, coherence, rhythm. I find it wonderful. You must certainly begin classes at once.'<sup>60</sup>

More seriously, she advocates the same pragmatic selection of limited truths that Eddy Oliver chose to survive on, taking her daughter to task for her sad, cynical, detached - non-combatant - attitude to the war:

'Such a paltry attitude, my dear! Unpractical, selfish, and sentimental; though I know you think you hate sentimentality. It's quite time you learnt that there's no fighting with whole truths in this life, and all we can do is to seize fragments of truth where we can find them, and use them as best we can. Poor weapons, perhaps, but all we've got.'<sup>61</sup>

Her own weapon is the Society for Promoting Permanent Peace (reminiscent of the real life Peace Pledge Union) of which she is a founder member and in which she places her hopes for the return to order of war-wrecked civilisation.<sup>62</sup> People must, she believes, "learn together the science of reconstruction."<sup>63</sup>

Alix, tentatively, takes her advice, joining both the SPPP and the Church of England, and committing herself to belief in the good they are attempting, however ineffectively, to do. Her alliance with the Church is interesting, making explicit for the first time Rose Macaulay's identification of organised religion with the coherence her characters seek. It is a theme which has been subterraneanly present throughout most of the early novels (Betty Crevequer carrying her moment of illumination with her into the cool church, Michael Travis seeking escape from his "prison-house" in the ugly little Baptist chapel, Peter and Rhoda in The Lee Shore finding their city church "a luminous brightness shining in a fog-choked world," Bob Traherne in Views and Vagabonds advocating the Church as "a living force" based on the personalities of its members, Welchester Cathedral in The Making of a Bigot strangely transcending "all factions, all barriers, proving them illusions in the still light of the Real."<sup>64</sup> Now, however, the potential of the Church as a force for cohesion is clearly stated:

Alix believed that it stood for the same things that Daphne stood for. It too would say, build up a living peace. It too would say, let each man, woman, and child cast out first from their own souls the forces that make against peace - stupidity (that first), then commercialism, rivalries, hatreds, grabbing, pride, ill-bred vaunting. It too was international, supernational. It too was out for a dream, a wild dream, of unity.<sup>65</sup>

Alix, accepting membership of the Church of England, seizes her fragment of truth as Eddy Oliver has selected his one segment from the "many-faced Truth" which has previously perplexed him.<sup>66</sup>

In What Not it is love which for the first time in Rose Macaulay's novels determines the pragmatic choice. The probable autobiographical element - Rose's relationship with Gerald O'Donovan was beginning about this time - has been remarked on by Constance Babington Smith.<sup>67</sup> Certainly there is a new conviction here in her description of Kitty Grammont's and Nicholas Chester's attraction to each other. We sense an urgency about the efforts to overcome the legal impediments to their marriage (Chester has a mentally defective brother and sister and is therefore prohibited by the State from marrying) which must reflect the frustrations of the real-life situation in which Rose Macaulay now found herself.

Kitty and Nicholas discover the impossibility of systematization: the whole complex structure of human gradation by intelligence which they have supported in their professional capacities (Nicholas as Minister for Brains, Kitty as a secretary in the same department) crumbles when they realise that their love for each other contravenes its basic tenets. Partly a satire on Eugenics (Galton's Probability: the Foundation of Eugenics had been published in 1907, Punnett's Mendelism in 1905), it is partly also a satire on ideological aspirations of any kind.<sup>68</sup> The ideal system of classifiable intellects is unworkable; to treat the intellect in isolation is to impose an artificial stasis on the natural processes of human life. Kitty and Chester learn with Eddy and Alix, that a practical route to simple survival must be sought. They abandon the ideal system and select the narrower, but workable, truth of their love for each other to live by. Pragmatism is anti-intellectual:

So turned the world around. Individual desire given way to, as usual, ruining principle and ideals by its soft pressure.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps paradoxically, it is their love for each other and their marriage, even against the rules, which are seen as coherent rather than the vast ordered classification scheme of human intelligence they have spent their earlier lives concocting. Kitty, lying with Chester on the sun-bathed Italian hill-top during their honeymoon, experiences a mystical moment of insight when she seems to see things whole:

Kitty, as she sometimes did, seemed to slip suddenly outside the circle of the present, of her own life and the life around her; far off she saw it, a queer little excited corner of the universe, where people played together and were happy, where the funny world spun round and round and laughed and cried and ran and slept and loved and hated, and everything mattered intensely, and yet, as seen from outside the circle, did not matter at all....She felt like a soul unborn, or a soul long dead, watching the world's antics with a dispassionate, compassionate interest....<sup>70</sup>

Not marrying would be for Chester an incoherent act:

'I don't approve of this omitting of the legal bond; it argues a lack of the sense of social ethics; it opens the door to a state of things which is essentially uncivilised, lacking in self-control and intelligence. I don't like it.'<sup>71</sup>

The novel ends as it began on an image of flux - the Bakerloo tube train slipping endlessly round its circuit, filled with its jumbled mass of humanity. Kitty and Chester, sitting inside on their

way to work and laughing ruefully to each other, know that they have salvaged the best principles to live by - their love and their ability to laugh.

Potterism is Rose Macaulay's most sophisticated discussion of pragmatism. With their emphasis on fact, members of the Anti-Potter League are quintessentially pragmatic. The pragmatist, as defined by William James,

...turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad a priori reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power.<sup>72</sup>

What they, in their awesome clear-sightedness, are fighting against is muddled thought, sentimentality, the cheapening or blunting of the intellect, the lowering of mental standards. The bases of Potterism are,

...ignorance, vulgarity, mental laziness, sentimentality, and greed. The ignorance which does not know facts; the vulgarity which cannot appreciate values; the laziness which will not try to learn either of these things; the sentimentality which, knowing neither, is stirred by the valueless and the untrue; the greed which grabs and exploits. But fear is worst; the fear of public opinion, the fear of scandal, the fear of independent thought, of loss of position, of discomfort, of consequences, of truth.<sup>73</sup>

"Potterism" is the "Bunkum" to which characters are opposed in Rose Macaulay's unfinished (and unpublished) play of that name, written

around April 1924. Molly Pritchard, the pert little heroine of the play, explains what she means by "Bunkumites":

Yes, that's what Bobby and I call the people who talk through their hats - talk a lot of tosh, you know, instead of saying what they mean in a few simple, well-chosen words. We most of us talk bunkum in my family. Daddy's a statesman, of course and used to be a journalist, so he can't help it. And Edna's a novelist so she can't help it. And my eldest brother writes poetry and articles and reviews and things, so he can't help it. And I've another brother who's a doctor, so he has to gas to make people think he knows something - you know how doctors do. And my married sister is a psycho analyst, and you know how they talk. Oh, we talk an awful lot of bunkum in my family.<sup>74</sup>

Out of the muddled continuum of ordinary incoherent thought, the Anti-Potterites are determined to select only the actual, the precise and the empirically true. What distinguishes Potterism, however, from its three immediate predecessors, is its indication that even the pragmatic quest for coherence is ultimately doomed to failure.

The detective story format of the novel effectively demonstrates the ultimate impossibility of eliciting single, useful truths from the complex flux of reality. "The Terrible Tragedy on the Stairs" is related from the points of view of four characters (Part II, "Told by Gideon," Part III, "Told by Leila Yorke," Part IV, "Told by Juke").<sup>75</sup> All express their individual, limited versions of the truth, but only the author herself in the opening and closing sections, "Told by R.M.," sees the overall pattern of the whole truth. Potterism, while making its universally applicable statement about the invalidity of



pragmatic truth, at the same time discusses the role of the artist, developing the idea which emerged in The Making of a Bigot of the novelist's ability to survey life "from all angles simultaneously."<sup>76</sup>

Each character's account of the truth in Potterism is, in accordance with the Pragmatic theory, coloured by his own will and personality.<sup>77</sup> Gideon in his narrative records the events leading to Jane Potter's marriage to journalist Oliver Hobart, and his realisation, too late, that he is in love with her himself. Interrupted by Hobart as he stands holding Jane's hands on the stairs, he turns to the husband in anger and the narrative ends. Gideon has presented the bare facts of the situation. Mrs Potter, Jane's mother, resumes the tale under her pseudonym. "Leila Yorke" proceeds in the unctuous tones of popular feminine fiction to record subsequent events, and to draw her own conclusions from the evidence she sees - Jane's sister Clare deeply shocked by Hobart's death, Gideon in mysterious confabulation with Jane in the dining room, Gideon and Jane oddly distant with each other. Supported in her suspicions by her visit to her medium friend Amy Ayres, she decides that Gideon is guilty of Hobart's murder. Scientist Katherine Varick brings to her analysis of the problem the rational sharpness of mind of her profession. She sees that Gideon is in love with Jane, considers but rejects the possibility that he killed Hobart, and at last forms the theory that Jane herself is guilty and is being courageously shielded by the devoted Gideon. She remains blind to the suspicious behaviour of Clare Potter and to the fact that her own unadmitted love for Gideon is influencing her hypothesis

and fuelling her hatred of Jane. Curate Laurence Juke sees yet another aspect of the affair - Clare confesses to him that she, jealous of Hobart's love for her sister (he had at first been attracted to her), pushed him angrily out of the way on the stairs and accidentally caused his death.

As the story moves back into the realms of authorial narrative in the final section, "Told by R.M.," all the clues fall into place. Jane has suspected Gideon and attempted out of love for him to shield him; Gideon has had the same suspicion of Jane and acted similarly; Clare has been afraid to confess and blind to the possibility that other people might be suspected. Mrs Potter's scarcely veiled anti-Semitism has impelled her to suspicions of Gideon and closed her mind to the failings of her daughter Clare.

Potterism is a novel about relativity. "Light Caught Bending," Gideon notices a news placard remark at one point as he strolls disconsolately back to his rooms, and reflects how "Einstein's theory as to space and light would be discussed, with varying degrees of intelligence, most of them low, in many a cottage, many a club, many a train."<sup>78</sup> Rose Macaulay's detective story dramatizes Einstein's contention that all values and measurements are dependent on the point of view of the observer. For her in her definition of truth as for him in his measurement of time, everything is dependent on the perspective of the individual.<sup>79</sup>

Her choice of the detective story medium for this novel about the analysis of truth is interestingly self-indulgent. Her predilection for the genre has, surprisingly, rarely been remarked on, "Rose Macaulay...delighted in the detective stories," Elizabeth Bowen remembers, a fact Rose herself confirms in a letter to Mr and Mrs Donald Macaulay in April 1924, discussing recent reading:

There's been a stream of detective fiction, all of which finds its way to Hedgerley End [Rose's home in Beaconsfield], as mother loves it and I ask for it to review. It's the only kind of bad novel I can read, really. Bodies in Blue Rooms, Mysterious affairs at the Cedars, Master - Criminals etc. - these form the staple of our literature.<sup>80</sup>

The same sentiments are expressed in a letter to Gilbert Murray in April 1948:

I agree about thrillers and detectives - I too sleep best on them. The new Michael Innes is n.v.g. - but he is always readable. Do you know his real name, and if he is the same as one Crispin, who writes books rather like his? He is an Oxford don, I believe.... I have read lately (mystery, not murder) The Franchise Affair, by Gordon Daviot, with Murder in Mind, The Magnet (Simenon), and am trying to get Puzzle for Pilgrims (P. Quentin) The Last of Philip Banter (Bardin) and the Voice of the Corpse (Max Murray).<sup>81</sup>

Again in a BBC broadcast of 1949 we find her luxuriating in her reading of detective stories, confessing them to be "one of my favourite kinds of fiction," and revealing the wide range of authors she has enjoyed - Michael Innes, Edmund Crispin, Julian Symons, Margery Allingham and Ngaio Marsh.<sup>82</sup> The precise mind at work in the

creation and application of sophisticated symbolism and in the manipulation of ideas is clearly also attracted to the reassuringly logical world of detective fiction.

It is interesting to have Rose Macaulay's own interpretation of Potterism in a letter to a Miss Florence Trotter who has apparently written to her for explanations of various points after a discussion of Potterism at a College Club in November 1952:

I suppose Gideon felt a failure because his gospel of moderation and clear thought cut so little ice, and because he died at the hands of the two intolerant parties who were fighting one another. In fact, anyone preaching clear and detached thinking in this emotional and muddled world is bound to fail, surely.

As for Juke, I think he felt he had temptations towards worldly ambitions and popularity - he could have been a fashionable popular preacher and thought he had better get out of danger's way by being obscure. Don't you agree?

Anyhow, I am delighted that you found something in "Potterism" worth thinking about. As you say, it is a universal and timeless theme. Wish I had been there to join in your discussion!<sup>83</sup>

We are left, after the failure of the pragmatic quest for coherence, with only the laughter which has been suggested in "The Passport" as a way of confronting a muddled, disintegrating world.<sup>84</sup>

'After all,' said Jane [to Gideon], more moderately, 'it's all a joke. Everything is. The world is.'

'A rotten bad joke.'

'You think things matter. You take anti-Potterism seriously, as some people take Potterism.'

'Things are serious. Things do matter,' said the Russian Jew.

Jane looked at him kindly. She was a year younger than he was but felt five years older to-night.<sup>85</sup>

There may also, perhaps, be the Church. Lawrence Juke offers it as a flawed, but still durable bastion of strength:

A Potterite Church - yes; because we are most of us Potterites. An anti-Potterite church - yes, again; because at its heart is something sharp and clean and fine and direct, like a sword, which will not let us be contented Potterites, but which is for ever goading us out of ourselves, pricking us out of our trivial satisfactions and our egotistic discontents.<sup>86</sup>

### Symbolism

The tone of the novels of 1914-1920 has changed and the nature of the quests is different: the structured rise towards the realisation of the absolute has given way to pragmatic effort to chisel away useful fragments of truth from an unencompassable whole; yet Rose Macaulay's vocabulary of images remains remarkably static. These later novels are much less obviously symbolic, but a tracery of pictures does run consistently throughout, supporting the ideas of quest and achievement which are so central to the subject matter.

In The Making of a Bigot and What Not, the images of city and castle which have studded the early novels, denoting goals to be reached, retain their significance. The landscapes of both novels are surreptitiously symbolic. The appropriately named "good city" of Welchester, Eddy Oliver's home town in the former, epitomizes

multiplicity. The city of Cambridge shares the symbolism, evoked in the opening sequence as the scene of multiple activities - animated by the busy to-ing and fro-ing of people about their many businesses, and by the flutter of leaflets as the committed Miss Jamison canvasses support for her National Service League.

"Castle-like" images of cathedral and tower complement those of the city. Welchester cathedral stands on its hill, lights glowing redly from its stained-glass windows. The picture is a direct descendant of that used in Abbots Verney as Verney climbs towards the house on the hill, noticing that the rose-window in the chapel is unlit.<sup>87</sup> Rose Macaulay retains her reliance on the symbol of the rose and the significance of the Hermetic red. A mutation of the cathedral image recurs in the description of the editorial office of Eddy's newspaper, Unity - "on the top floor of the Denisons' publishing house."<sup>88</sup> As the Cathedral rises above the contending factions of the Welchester panorama, the Unity office, overlooking Fleet Street and Chancery, rises castle-like out of the city scene, crowning the Denison empire. Here Eddy in his idealism aspires to perfection, struggling to fit all ideas and opinions together into a massive jigsaw-puzzle of perfectly interlocking pieces, producing a bizarre newspaper which has no "line," but juxtaposes contradictory views with no intention of resolving the inconsistencies.

The dual images of city and "castle" encapsulate the conflict between ideal and reality. The perfect towers of Cathedral and Unity office rise out of the seething masses of town and city. Eddy,

perched in his tower overlooking the city seeks at first the transcendent view which will comprehend multiplicity, but fails; the panorama of conflict cannot be embraced in its entirety. Only one perfect city is recognised: Venice, states Rose Macaulay is, "unlike London, "a coherent whole, not rings, within rings."<sup>89</sup> Here alone there is no tension between city and castle tower. In an awkward dinner-table gathering, respectable Dean and Bohemian artist both discover with relief that Venice is an appropriate topic of conversation - this city is not exclusive, but will contain the ideas and interests of all types. The disjunction between ideal and reality is encountered in the practicalities of everyday living, but the perfect city where there is no jar between the two can still be talked about, dreamed of and hoped for.

A substratum of city imagery is also present in What Not. Where the city in The Making of a Bigot has denoted the multiplicity which the human mind, for the purposes of daily living, finds it impossible to encompass, it now denotes the ideal of the "perfect" society regulated by the intellect. The Minister of Brains himself is appropriately named Nicholas Chester, the city indicated by his Latin - derived surname becoming synonymous with the "ideal" social system he perpetrates. Kitty Grammont is likewise associated with the ideal; with the softening of its initial letter, her first name sounds like "city." Together the two visit Beaconsfield, "that city set on a hill."<sup>90</sup> (Rose herself had lived there since August 1916).<sup>91</sup> At Chesterfield they decide they must marry. The imagery, connecting with hill-tops both their love for each other and the

"perfect" state of classifiable intellects which militates against this love, captures the novel's central irony. In the end they admit that the demands of human love must nullify their vision of the ideally patterned society. Contenting themselves with the "simple human things" enumerated by Nicholas's bishop father - "love, birth, family life" - they slide downhill from the intellectual ideal:

To this they had come, then; to the first of the three simple human things mentioned by the bishop. What now, since they had started down the long slope of this green and easy hill, should arrest their progress, until they arrived, brakeless and unheld, into the valley where the other two waited, cynical, for all their simplicity, and grim?<sup>92</sup>

The image brings them from hill-top to valley, relinquishing their hope of perfection and, like Eddy Oliver, selecting the more closely defined and utilitarian truth of the pragmatist.

The hill-top city image features, too, in Non-Combatants and Others. Alix listens to a Sunday evening sermon in which the preacher invokes the Mass as "the strong city" to which communicants are called:

The next moment he was talking of another road of approach to the city on the hill, besides going to church, besides building Jerusalem in England. A road steep and sharp and black; we take it unawares, forced along it (many boys are taking it at this moment, devoted and unafraid. Unafraid, thought Alix); and suddenly we are at the city gates; they open and close behind us, and we are in the strong city, the drifting chaos of our lives behind us, to be redeemed by firm walking on whatever new roads may be shown us.<sup>93</sup>



He has ascribed a complex dual symbolism to the image. Mass, and the church in which it is celebrated, offer a calm sanctuary from the war-torn world, the hope of meaning behind what appears to be nonsensical strife, an assurance of order behind chaos. Yet here the city, too, is death - soldiers make their ways towards it along the dark, painful road of battle. The preacher indicates that the Christian can hope to comprehend the whole pattern only with death and his transition to an after-life. Again, the picture of the hill-top fortification represents the ideal, the state where apparent chaos is revealed as actual unity.

Similarly low-key in these novels are the water images which complement those of city and castle. Here Rose Macaulay's maturing sense of the fluidity of things (perceptible first in the central metaphor of The Secret River) is realised. They convey her awareness of a wider, more gently contoured pattern persisting beyond the edges of the carefully structured ones her characters try, but fail, to construct. A boat party moves in leisurely fashion up the Thames in The Making of a Bigot. Molly comments on the attractiveness of a riverside house named Les Osiers; moments later a heron rises to view. Heron and willow trees combine to create a picture in which a long tradition of symbolism has been drawn upon. The heron is, with the phoenix, the symbol of regeneration and the renewal of life, and is frequently associated with willow trees in Chinese and Japanese art.<sup>94</sup> For all its apparent realism, the scene is highly charged with significance. Rose Macaulay has shown her characters caught up in the immense, primaeval, cyclic pattern of birth, death and

renewal. Sailing up river, they are at one with the continuous process of change. The human intellect may be incapable of grasping the unified pattern behind the apparent fragmentariness of existence, yet the wider, inexorable scheme of things remains, lapping at the edges of man's consciousness, recognisable only to his instinct.

Marshland shares the significance of the other water images. Eileen Le Moine, after the death of her lover Datcherd, wanders hopelessly through the desolate marsh areas outside the city.

She would spend long mornings or evenings in the fields and lanes by the Lea, walking or sitting, silent and alone....She would travel by the tram up Shoreditch and Mare Street to the north east, and walk along the narrow path by the Lea-side wharf cottages, little and old and jumbled, and so over the river on to Leyton Marsh, where sheep crop the grass.<sup>95</sup>

She is the island her name denotes, alone and uncomforted without the man who has embodied all she has wished to live for. In her love for him as a married man, she is outside the conventions; walking in the empty marshland beyond the busy city, she demonstrates her exile. She has, Rose Macaulay suggests, transcended the pettiness of the city with its busy in-fighting and narrow-minded exchange of trivial ideas. She is in tune, as conventional Molly is not, with a wider, natural pattern which recognises the continuous cycle of birth and death and human love as the essential life-force impelling the cycle's continuation.

Water images feature with similar significance in What Not. After their illegal marriage, Kitty and Chester holiday at the Italian resort of Cogoleto.

There was one hill they often climbed, a steep little pine-grown mountain crested by a little old chapel with a well by its side. The chapel was dedicated to the Madonna della Mare, and was hung about inside with votive offerings of little ships, presented to the Madonna by grateful sailors whom she had delivered from the perils of the sea. Outside the chapel a shrine stood, painted pink, and from it the Mother and Child smiled kindly down on the withered flowers that nearly always lay on the ledge before them.<sup>96</sup>

The hillside well here is reminiscent of the one beside which Verney Ruth and Rosamund Ilbert meet in the Lateran courtyard in Abbots Verney. As Rosamund has seemed poised to reveal the mystery of life from the well at the Cosmic Centre, Kitty and Chester resting by this well are, too, on the brink of realising a deep truth. In this seaside scene, presided over by the Madonna della Mare, they gain an awareness of a pattern which transcends the mere intellectual one they have attempted to impose on a muddled society. Again water symbolizes the continuation of life, the force of love fuelling the cycle of renewal. Madonna and Child are tokens of the persistent miracle of birth. Evergreen trees represent renewal. Kitty and Chester, champions in their professional lives of things structured and classifiable, stand now surrounded by reminders of forces fluid and unquantifiable.

Rose Macaulay continues also to use the "twin" imagery which has been important in supporting the ideas of the early novels. In What Not the symbolism has a sad and sinister emphasis. Nicholas Chester's mentally defective twin sister complements the picture of his own brilliance. Grimly he at last accepts the fact that the polar opposites they embody are necessary for the continuation of life - there cannot be one without the other. Imperfection plays its part in the wider, perfect pattern which he cannot grasp: there can be no progress without the tension between the two. In an incident which has echoes of scenes in The Tempest, Rose Macaulay confirms her symbolism. Kitty and Chester sit on an Italian hill-top beside the shrine and well, "as if enchanted, in a circle of fairy gold":

One evening while they sat here a half-witted contadino slouched out of the chapel and begged from them. Chester refused sharply, and turned his face away. The imbecile hung about, mouthed a confused prayer, bowing and crossing, before the shrine, got no help from that quarter either and at last shambled disconsolately down the hill-side, crooning an unintelligible song to himself.<sup>97</sup>

The half-witted peasant intrudes like Caliban on the enchanted island. There can be no possibility of maintaining perfection unmarred - the peasant must interrupt the golden sunset, Nicholas must accept his defective twin sister, Caliban must complement Ariel's presence on the island. In Potterism, twins Jane and Johnny Potter play another symbolic role. Members of the Anti-Potter League, committed like their colleagues to the fight against muddled thought, they seem at first the perfect symbiosis - the ideal partnership of two, supporting the intellectual ideal. Only

gradually does it become apparent that the ideal is flawed. Both are slowly won to the side of the Potters from whom they are descended (Mrs Potter the Leila Yorke of popular fiction, Mr Potter the press baron). Jane marries Oliver Hobart, editor of a Potterite daily newspaper, Johnny publishes popular novels. They are the touchstone of the innate Potterism of the others in the Group - Gideon, against all his principles, loving Jane despite her flawed ideals and her marriage to another man, Katherine loving Gideon, Juke longing for a fashionable parish where his pastoral duties will be light and his success easy - all secretly anxious to grasp what they can for themselves. The twins are a picture of Aristophanes' perfect soul marred, a token of the fact that the ideal, anti-Potter pattern is not humanly realisable.

### Conclusion

Rose Macaulay's writing is changing with the times. Her characters still search for coherence, but they are the unmythical quests of people perplexed by the sudden violent fragmentation of things by the war, who realise that a limited perception of pattern is all that can be realistically hoped for. She continues to experiment with styles, trying her hand at fantasy and the detective story, aware now as she has not been before, of the potential of satire to transform her stories into confident critical commentaries on events of her day. Her novels remain essentially those of ideas, but characterisation is becoming livelier, plots and situations more complex and interesting. Characters now fall convincingly in love

and confront with realistic heart-searching the impediments placed between them and marriage. Still, too, however, the author whose mind works happily with the concentrations and ellipses of poetry, spins the closely symbolic subtexts to her stories which have been such a distinctive feature of her early novels. This reliance on imagery to complement her themes is a trait which is to follow Rose Macaulay through all her later work.

Chapter 4 Pursuit and Paradox : Novels 1921-1932

Rose Macaulay wrote her best novels in the decade between 1921 and 1932. At the age of forty she seems to have realised at last where her most telling strengths as a novelist lay and to have tapped this vein triumphantly and insistently in most of her eight fictions of the period. What she excels at, as has been becoming gradually apparent in the pragmatic novels of 1914-1920, is the endlessly tantalising tightrope act she performs between the extremes of comedy and despair. Passionately convinced that the individual's impulse to search for wholeness is valuable - indeed, essential - she yet combines this conviction with a satirical perception that the quest is fruitless. It is a peculiarly fertile crux in her thinking. From it emerges a stream of teasing, ironic, interestingly double-valued, perpetually volatile, poignant, supremely ambiguous books, which see-saw constantly between deceptiveness and candour. At times she displays the deep insights into personality of Dangerous Ages (1921) and Told By an Idiot (1923), producing rounded, realistic characters with whose plights on the "quest" route the reader can readily identify. At others she veers towards the fantastic, satirical mode most clearly in evidence in Mystery at Geneva (1922) and Orphan Island (1924). Most often what she engineers is a sophisticated blend of the two. In Crewe Train (1926), Keeping Up Appearances (1928) and Staying With Relations (1930), a unique balance is achieved, one which allows Rose Macaulay to interweave not only seriousness and comedy, but also the personal and the universal. Her stories about individuals are simultaneously about the plight of

civilisation. In each case, a person's quest for fulfilment is paralleled by an evocation of mankind's search for the perfectly civilised state - both strands represent a wholeness avidly pursued.

Pirouetting on the points of intersection between opposites, constantly balancing and playing, shifting her reader's perception to first one then another angle, now clarifying, now obscuring, Rose Macaulay breaks free in effect from the ideological bonds of the conventional novel. Her stories may come neatly packaged with innocuously acceptable beginnings, middles and ends, yet within these skeleton outlines they are subterraneanly but superbly deliquescent, shockingly fluid and alive with contradictions. Charging the traditional formats with the ambiguity of her ideas, she pushes them to their limits and achieves her own distinctive modernity.

### Poetry

Significantly, Rose Macaulay produced almost no poetry during this period in which her fiction was at its effervescent best. Poetry-writing is an activity associated with youth ("...I don't write so much poetry as when younger: one doesn't, I think," she tells Father Johnson).<sup>1</sup> What little there is is imaginatively sparse. Five poems appeared in Lascelles Abercrombie's New English Poems (1931), an unexciting selection of which the best is "The Last Race," an Eliotesque apocalyptic vision of cosmic calamity:

Sirius, Arcturus, Betelgeux, and Atair,  
Herculis, Mira, Sun,



Mark how wrecked the Earth and Moon do  
blindly run  
Down the steep slopes of vasty night, to where,  
Planets make end, their crazy courses done....<sup>2</sup>

"Has the Sea Form?" forms the epigraph to Staying With Relations (1930), encapsulating the themes of fluidity and the changeability of character on which the story expands. (The poem was also published in the Literary Digest of November 15, 1930).<sup>3</sup> Clearly the stream of Rose Macaulay's poetic imagination has gone underground in the 1920's and early 1930's. It is the period during which her popular journalism is at its most prolific, her essays, critical works and anthologies appearing with impressive rapidity - A Casual Commentary (1925), Catchwords and Claptrap (1926), Some Religious Elements in English Literature (1931). Later in the 1930's she published Milton (1934), The Minor Pleasures of Life (1934), Personal Pleasures (1935) and The Writings of E.M. Forster (1938). It is as though the overriding impulse towards prose, both fiction and non-fiction has, for the time being, smothered poetry.

#### Biographical and Literary Background

Rose Macaulay began this middle period of her literary career in the prosaic world of work, the hostile arena into which she had been catapulted by the war. She had moved at the end of 1918 from the Propaganda Department at Crewe House to the Ministry of Information's main office in Norfolk Street, experiencing the humdrum Civil Service routine which is ridiculed in What Not. Shortly afterwards, she

became a fiction editor for Constable. With the publication of Potterism in 1920, however, it became gradually possible for her to live on the proceeds of her writing. The years 1921-1932 saw her emergence as a "professional" author. The death of her uncle, Reginald Macaulay, in 1937 further consolidated her financial position, leaving her with substantial income from investments.

Gerald O'Donovan's influence on Rose Macaulay's life was, of course, at this time at its most profound. They spent frequent holidays together in utmost secrecy in Italy, France, the Lake District. In terms of her literary career, Gerald's position as publisher's reader for Collins with special responsibility for Rose Macaulay's work must clearly have determined much of her success - all her fiction from 1920 onwards was published by Collins.

Rose's many literary friendships on the edge of Bloomsbury flourished. Her admiration for Walter de la Mare continued and she was introduced at some time in the 1920's to E.M. Forster. She was also friendly with J.D. Beresford, inviting him to accompany her to a celebratory dinner at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine for Women in October 1920 - he was to be one of a hundred "representative men" present.<sup>4</sup> She records her admiration for The Hampdenshire Wonder in "Coming to London."<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Bowen became a protégée of hers on her arrival in London in the 1920's. She remembers being invited to tea with Rose Macaulay at the University Women's Club, and showing her her stories.<sup>6</sup> Rose, she says, "lit up a confidence" she had never had, and was instrumental in recommending her first short

pieces (Encounters (1923)) for publication by Sidgwick and Jackson.<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth acquired the habit of attendance at Rose's and Naomi Royde-Smith's "Thursday's," at which she records meeting such luminaries as Edith Sitwell, Walter de la Mare and Aldous Huxley.<sup>8</sup> Rose also introduced Elizabeth to her agent, Curtis Brown, and recommended her book The Hotel to Michael Sadleir at Constable.<sup>9</sup>

Rose's relationship with Virginia Woolf is interesting to trace. References begin to occur in Woolf's diaries of 1920, with her indictment of Potterism as "a don's book, hard-headed, masculine, atmosphere of lecture room not interesting to me."<sup>10</sup> In 1921 there is an account of a dinner party at which Rose had "chipped in with her witticism."<sup>11</sup> By 1926, Woolf's tone has become much more tart, recording in March a dinner of Rose's at which there were "10 second rate writers in second rate dress clothes, Lynds, Goulds, O'Donovan: no, I won't in any spasm of hypocritical humanity include Woolves."<sup>12</sup> Rose is described as "spruce, lean, like a mummified cat": "something like a lean sheep dog in appearance - harum scarum - humble...oh and badly dressed": "too chattery chittery at first go off; lean as a rake, wispy, and frittered. Some flimsy smartness and a taint of the flimsy glittery literary about her"; "a mere chit; a wafer."<sup>13</sup> Gloria G. Fromm, in an intriguing piece (1986), raises the possibility that a degree of tension existed between the two women on account of Woolf's jealousy of Rose, this prolific and successful rival in her field.<sup>14</sup> Woolf is explicit on this point, in fact, in her record of her dinner conversation with Rose on May 24, 1928. Having just been awarded the Prix Femina for To The Lighthouse, she

had raised the subject with Rose who had gained the same accolade in 1922 for Dangerous Ages:

Rose Macaulay says 'Yes I won the prize' - rather peevishly. I think at once she is jealous & test whatever else she says with a view to finding out whether she is or not.... This shows through a dozen little phrases, as we're talking of America, articles etc: she is jealous of me: anxious to compare us: but I may imagine it: and it shows my own jealousy no doubt, as suspicions always do. <sup>15</sup>

A succession of remarks do seem to indicate Woolf's anxiety about her status by comparison with that of "old stringy Rose Macaulay."<sup>16</sup> Rose is asked "to speak at dinners, to give opinions to newspapers, and so on," where she is not: Rose, however, is constrained for the sake of a living to write numerous articles for the popular press, while Woolf has not, she is pleased to admit, sunk to such depths.<sup>17</sup> Rose has had a university education, while Woolf has not. Woolf sees Rose as permanently outside her Bloomsbury set - "somehow won't come to grips with us" - and records Rose's own remarks on the subject:

Let me see, there's some failure of sympathy between Chiswick & Bloomsbury, I think, she said. So we defined Bloomsbury. Her part is to stick up for common sense she said. I elaborated her being Cambridge. She is writing an article for an American paper on London after the war. It is [this] sort of thing that one distrusts in her. Why should she take the field so unnecessarily? But I fancy our 'leading lady novelists' all do as they are asked about this and I am not quite one of them. I saw my own position a good deal lowered and diminished: and this is part of the value of seeing new people - still more of going to people's houses. One is, if anything, minimised: here in the eternal Bloomsbury, one is apt, without realising it, to expand.<sup>19</sup>

A fascinating glimpse of a power struggle between the two women is offered - Woolf, whose literary fame, had she only known it, was far to outstrip Rose Macaulay's, niggling jealously away at her guest's reputation, Rose poised and charitable, secure in the possession of her own laurels. Particularly interesting is the obvious respect Woolf has for the older woman's novels - her achievements, to her, are clearly worthy of envy. Rose Macaulay's attitude, on the other hand, to the emerging "modernist" literature for which Virginia Woolf was a trail-blazer is ambivalent. "'Orlando' is the most lovely and amusing book - I've just been reviewing it and saying so - I don't know when I've liked a book so much," she writes to its author in October 1928, modifying her attitude in her letter to Father Johnson twenty-four years later - "'Orlando' is nonsense, of course, but rather lovely and fascinating nonsense, don't you think?"<sup>20</sup> She is a self-styled "great admirer" of Woolf's work and recognises her as a literary epoch-maker.<sup>21</sup> ("Her going seems symbolic of the end of an age," she writes in her Horizon tribute of January 1941).<sup>22</sup> She is clearly alert to the qualities of fluidity and deliquescence which make Woolf's conversation, like her writing, so distinctive:

With her, conversation was a flashing, many-faceted stream, now running swiftly, now slowing into still pools that shimmered with a hundred changing lights, shades and reflections, wherein sudden coloured flashes continually darted and stirred, now flowing between deep banks, now chuckling over sharp pebbles.<sup>23</sup>

Yet they are qualities from which Rose Macaulay, on the face of it, holds aloof in her own writing. A traditionalist in her formats, if not in her ideas, she looks on at this emergent modern scene with its undulatory impulses, but fastidiously declines to be caught up in it.

Against the backdrop of contemporary modernist attempts to convey the "wholeness" of experience - Joyce's single Dublin day in Ulysses (1922), May Sinclair's evocation of The Life and Death of Harriet Frean (1922), Eliot's kaleidoscope of associations in The Waste Land (1922), Virginia Woolf's description of Clarissa's whole day in Mrs Dalloway (1925) - Rose Macaulay stands detached and ironic.<sup>24</sup> She recognises the new experimentalism, sees Joyce and Dorothy Richardson as the instigators of "the 'stream of consciousness' novel which became presently so much the vogue," and Eliot as having "pushed the bounds of verse speech a little further, made new patterns," offering from the conscious and subconscious mind "a new wealth of associated and disassociated images."<sup>25</sup> Yet she does not copy. Ulysses she dismisses as "rather a cumbrous great slab of Dublin life," Richardson as "a little tiring."<sup>26</sup> Her own stories remain linear, the traditional unities of time, place and action always maintained. Only within the conventional outlines, in her ideas themselves, does she allow herself a licence - often not apparent to the critics of her day - to indulge her liking for the ambiguities and ironies which give her novels both their comedy and their poignancy.

With the humorists of the 1920's and 1930's she has more in common. Evelyn Waugh's Decline and Fall (1928) and Black Mischief

(1932) are among the "indispensables" in her library, her 1948 critique of his work making clear the pleasure she finds in his comic world, "the world he invented and decorated with extravagant jeu d'esprit."<sup>27</sup> She shows at times in her own novels - in, for example, Crewe Train - a sense very similar to Waugh's of the sheer hysterical 'busyness' of the modern world, of impending anarchy and potential chaos. The "giddy whirl of Vile Bodies" fascinates her as it "snatches up in its dance at least a dozen separate groups of people, each with their own story, as in a ballet where groups perform in different corners of the stage, sometimes crossing one another's orbits, entangling one another's courses, flung together and lurching apart like heavenly bodies on the run."<sup>28</sup> Is this, we wonder, the technique she aims for in Going Abroad four years later, in which she, too, creates a collage of fantastical life-stories? Aldous Huxley she admires as a teller of good stories, a conventional craftsman whose pieces "begin with an opening and end with a climax."<sup>29</sup> There are points in her fiction - in, for instance, her creation of such lookers-on at life as Rome Garden in Told By an Idiot and Catherine Grey in Staying With Relations - when she offers a Huxleian cynicism and detachment as a recommended attitude to perplexity. The same Zeitgeist which has produced Huxley's morbid emphasis on failure - Dennis, defeated in love, dejectedly leaving the houseparty in Crome Yellow (1921), Gumbril abandoning his pneumatic "small clothes" venture in Antic Hay (1923) - determines the sadness of some of Rose Macaulay's novels of the 1930's - They Were Defeated (1932), I Would Be Private (1937), And No Man's Wit (1940).<sup>30</sup> She shares with both these writers a sense that the post-

war world is dissolute, directionless, lacking centres of value or realisable goals for quest; like them, too, she offers comic irony as a means of survival in this atmosphere of psychological and moral disarray.

Her interest in other authors of the period is revealing. Elizabeth Bowen's work she clearly finds impressive (The Hotel appeared in 1927, The House in Paris in 1935, The Death of the Heart in 1938).<sup>31</sup> Reviewing A World of Love in 1955, she describes it as "rather fascinating."<sup>32</sup> Her favourite Elizabeth Bowen is, she tells her godchild Emily Smith, To the North (1932).<sup>33</sup> Like her protégée, Rose Macaulay writes best of the upper and middle-class milieux she knows. Katherine Mansfield, whose Bliss, and Other Stories appeared in 1920, and The Garden Party and Other Stories in 1922, she admires as a sensitive evoker of the "gang life" of children.<sup>34</sup> Descriptions of the happiness and miseries of childhood have been prominent in Rose Macaulay's earliest novels (The Furnace, The Valley Captives) and are so again in Told By an Idiot and The World My Wilderness (1950); an ability to render this area of life well appears to form for her a touchstone for the evaluation of good writing. Rose Macaulay's friendship with Rosamond Lehmann also suggests a familiarity with her novels - Dusty Answer was published in 1927, A Note in the Music in 1930, Invitation to the Waltz in 1932, The Weather in the Streets in 1936.<sup>35</sup> Although, however, correspondence between the two women for the period 1954-1958 is held at Trinity College, Cambridge, there is no record of Rose Macaulay's opinion of the books. About her friend Ivy Compton-Burnett's work she is



ambivalent, describing her novels in a letter to Father Johnson as "odd, and often awkwardly written," yet seeing in them, too, in her 1935 review of A House and Its Head an "elegant precision and formality of her wit" which she admires.<sup>36</sup> She appreciates amidst the oddness "the dark abyss over which her wit and precision skim with the elegance of accomplished skaters."<sup>37</sup> She describes Graham Greene, whose novels also begin to appear with Stamboul Train in 1932, as a "pulpit thwacker."<sup>38</sup> She notes his "great natural sense of guilt," but finds his Roman Catholicism distastefully intrusive.<sup>39</sup> His particular religious quests, though interesting, are not for her. Another major literary figure of the 1920's and 1930's about whom she says little is D.H. Lawrence; she remarks on him once only, giving her opinion that he "isn't cynical; he has great and earnest enthusiasm for what he believes of life."<sup>40</sup> He has, she says, "spiritual vision."<sup>41</sup> Her assessment is, on the whole, remarkably lenient and broadminded for a novelist whose own work could not be further removed from the tone and subject-matter of Lawrence's. Her admiration for his open-hearted enthusiasm for life argues a certain uneasiness with the cynicism she herself purveys.

Standing prim and droll on the side-lines of modernism, Rose Macaulay offers her own note of clarity and precision to the literature of the 1920's and 1930's. She formulates her problem - the plight of the intelligent female, the state of civilisation, the closeness of barbarity to sophistication, the indefinability of the human character - overlays it with a film of images, and encapsulates it in novel form. There is no redundancy, no needless elaboration.

Crispness is all. In an era of intellectual muddle - "Never, perhaps was thinking, writing and talking looser, vaguer, and more sentimental than in the years following the European War," she reflects in Told By an Idiot - she matches cool, clear phrase to cool, clear idea.<sup>42</sup> She offers her own newness. She is linguistically adventurous, enjoying "arranging words in patterns, as if they were bricks, or flowers, or lumps of paint."<sup>43</sup> Massing her contradictory ideas into her demure prose formats, she quietly subverts the course of the conventional novel, making it newly elastic, capable of multiple interpretations. She continues to experiment, too, with traditional genres, trying out in the fictions of her middle period the detective-thriller (Mystery at Geneva) the historical novel (They Were Defeated), the family saga (Told By an Idiot) and the allegory (Orphan Island). Bunkum, her unfinished play of 1924, adds another format to her repertoire. "Most novelists," she writes in 1948, "set themselves to explore the world, or some corner of the world, in which they believe themselves to live."<sup>44</sup> In her novels of the inter-war era Rose Macaulay explores a world riddled with uncertainty, full of new anxieties about politics, morals, character, purpose: against this background her people seek, with both a new earnestness and a new desperation, for insights which will confer much needed "wholeness" and coherence on their disordered lives.

Dangerous Ages and Told By an Idiot

In Dangerous Ages (1921) and Told By an Idiot (1923) Rose Macaulay's interest in the deep personal dilemmas of the questing human animal is uppermost.

The 1921 novel shows Neville Bendish, her mother, grandmother, two sisters and daughter, all seeking the "wholeness" of self-fulfilment - all (except grandmamma) are at the "dangerous ages" at which they fear the non-realisation of their ideals. Marshalling six female members of the family together, Rose Macaulay supplies a close-knit community of women engaged in quests which are all, we suspect, aspects of her own private pursuit of meaning. Nearing her fortieth birthday, beginning to make a name for herself in the notoriously precarious literary world, deeply committed to her affair with a married man, she is as much at a dangerous age as any of her characters.

Neville, comfortable middle-class wife of politician Rodney, and mother of Kay and Gerda, resolves soon after her forty-third birthday to resume the medical studies interrupted on her marriage. Sadly, she discovers that the passage of the years has brought a deterioration in her powers of concentration and she is compelled to abandon the struggle. She reverts to the role of wife and mother. A subtext of imagery now blended inconspicuously into the story confirms the nature of Neville's quest. Her morning swim, the incident on which the novel opens, merges surface realism with symbols of

universal significance. She wakes on the morning of her fortieth birthday, makes tea, collects her dog, and crosses the garden to the "deep little stream" to swim; the whole sequence is studded with carefully placed images.<sup>45</sup> Neville's name itself encapsulates an idea, denoting via its origins in the town of Neuville in Normandy, the concept of a "new town." The city imagery which has been in evidence in previous novels is again glimpsed - Neville, her name confirms, is engaged in a quest for some elusive "new city" or goal. She descends to the kitchen which is "blue with china," and dresses later "in blue cotton."<sup>46</sup> Bluebell patches round the pool where she swims are "half lit, like blue water in the sun."<sup>47</sup> Her association with blue, Mary's colour, with its connotation of truth, revelation and wisdom, underlines her role as a quester after insight. Going for her swim, she identifies herself also with the mystic qualities of water; immersing herself on her birthday morning she undergoes, it is hinted, a mysterious baptism or rebirth, emerging with a renewed sense of purpose to embark on another stage of her life's quest. The "broad, swirling pool" into which she slips is a symbol of the source of life.<sup>48</sup> Conversation with her daughter Gerda in the garden after her swim turns to the birth of a friend's baby:

'Penelope's baby's come, by the way. A girl. Another surplus woman.'<sup>49</sup>

Birth, birthdays and water are delicately meshed.

Neville's progress from bedroom to garden is also studded with images of birth. She passes from her room "into the passage, where, behind three shut doors, slept Rodney, Gerda and Kay," and via the sun-drenched kitchen into the "dissipated and riotous garden."<sup>50</sup> The movement from narrow passageway with its closed doors to open spaces and freedom is subtly redolent of the birth process.

Surreptitiously significant, too, is her walk from front garden to back yard to collect her dog Esau.

Going round by the yard, she fetched...Esau...whose hysterical joy she hushed with a warning hand.<sup>51</sup>

Maeterlinck's "double garden" metaphor re-emerges. Neville, in the course of the novel, traverses both gardens, first enjoying the sunshine of family happiness (sitting sheltered in the garden on her birthday, chatting to her son and daughter), then sampling the pain of failure, a nervous breakdown induced by her inability to resume her interrupted medical career. She learns, like Verney Ruth and Tudor Vallon, that life must span these opposites - happiness and pain, good and evil, success and failure. Her maturity is reached when she accepts that she must aim only to manage the duality, to exist within the terms of the warring opposites, not to transcend them. The presence of the dog in her morning sortie is also significant, confirming our sense of a further Maeterlinckian influence. Esau, like the dog in the essay "Sur la mort d'un petit chien," which lives simultaneously in two worlds, passes with Neville

from back yard to front garden - a guardian of her learning process.<sup>52</sup> Naming the dog after the famous biblical son who lost his birthright, Rose Macaulay draws attention to the final failure of Neville's quest: she will not attain the career, learning, independence or intellectual satisfaction to which she was at birth entitled.

Neville's mother Mrs Hilary's search for wholeness is the most poignant of the five. In widowhood she has lost the "whole" life she has enjoyed with her husband, with its comforting sense of having a role to play. Water imagery confirms her plight: her children accompany her on her birthday swim, but thoughtlessly swim out beyond her depth, leaving her forlorn and resentful. The imagery declares her situation: redundant in widowhood, she is no longer happily buoyed up and carried along by the stream of life. Stumbling in her misery upon the faddish new Freudian psychoanalysis about which her children and grandchildren read, she is briefly satisfied by the substitute wholeness it offers. Seduced by the idea of being able to recount the story of her life to a sympathetic listener, she longs for the opportunity the process will give her to make a coherent saga of her experiences, to shape events into a meaningful pattern which will confirm her sense of herself as a useful human being. She imagines her interview with the psychiatrist who prompts her release with the words, "'Now you shall relate to me the whole history of your life'":

What a comfortable moment! Mrs Hilary, when she came to it in her imagined interview, would draw a deep

breath and settle down and begin. The story of her life! How absorbing a thing to relate to some one who really wanted to hear it!<sup>53</sup>

Her new mentor helps her to mould and clarify her experience:

He reduced it all, dispassionately and yet not unsympathetically, and with clear scientific precision, to terms of psychical laws.<sup>54</sup>

Briefly, she gains the ability to see the wide pattern of her life, is reassured by its apparently logical sequences.

Rose Macaulay's reaction to Freud is, like many of her contemporaries', sceptical. She sustains a gentle mockery of his ideas through her characters - Mrs Hilary, before her "conversion," has "looked into Freud and been rightly disgusted," while twelve year-old Cary Folyot in Keeping Up Appearances suffers nightmares after having dipped into "a book about dreams" by "a man called Froot."<sup>55</sup> Writing in 1958 about the first impact of The Waste Land, she complains about the misleading simplicity of Freud's ideas:

We had been for too long used to the crude and drab simplicities of the Freudian interpretation of the subconscious mind, which tried to reduce its manifold and intricate complexities into two roots, sex and parent-trouble; 'the beginnings of religion, ethics, society and art meet in the Oedipus complex.' We had had all that drab domestic business, the father figure and the mother-lust, and the rest of the tedious furniture of which sophisticated minds had even then grown so weary (the hold these simple theories won over minds less experienced and accurate is a measure of the naive gullibility of the mass

consciousness, so quick to accept, so slow to examine and test).<sup>56</sup>

The human psyche, she clearly feels, is much too complex to be reduced to such diagrammatics. Real life, for Mrs Hilary, offers few reassuringly logical sequences. She makes the difficult pilgrimage to Rome to try to help her daughter Nan who has fled there after her rejection by Barry Briscoe. The perfect mother-daughter relationship for which Mrs Hilary has longed crystallizes for a few minutes only, before crumbling, the pattern broken:

Strange moment: and it could not last. The crying child wants its mother; the mother wants to comfort the crying child. A good bridge, but one inadequate for the strain of daily traffic. The child, having dried its tears, watches the bridge break again, one thinks it a pity but inevitable. The mother, less philosophic, may cry in her turn, thinking perhaps that the bridge may be built this time in that way; but the child having the colder heart, it seldom is.<sup>57</sup>

Constance Babington Smith indicates in her biography that the portrait of Mrs Hilary was probably based on Grace Macaulay, Rose's mother, who was deeply hurt on recognising herself.<sup>58</sup> Jean Macaulay records that Rose and her mother "didn't understand each other very well," although some kind of amends seems to have been attempted in the book's dedication, "To my Mother, driving gaily through the adventurous middle years."<sup>59</sup>

Neville's sister Nan Hilary's quest for wholeness also ends in bitterness and failure. She seeks the completeness of marriage with



Barry Briscoe, the keen young pioneer of social causes. Her decision to marry him made, she goes to Cornwall to relax and dream about the perfect relationship to which she plans to return:

Dream? No, reality. This was the dream, this world of slipping shadows and hurrying gleams of heartbreaking loveliness, through which one roamed, a child chasing butterflies that ever escaped, or, if captured, crumbled to dust in one's clutching hands.<sup>60</sup>

Life with Barry acquires for her the status of the Platonic form, the perfect real world which can only be glimpsed, distorted and shadowy, from the cave depths. Rose Macaulay's reliance on the metaphorical subtext is still strong. Unfortunately, however, Nan delays too long in communicating her decision to Barry, and loses him to her niece, Gerda. The Platonic reality is unattainable after all, it seems. Nan must make do with second best in the shadow-world to which she is confined - she allies herself with the consumptive, married, Stephen Lumley in Rome.

Neville's other sister, Pamela, in her quest lacks the Angst experienced by both Mrs Hilary and Nan. She has reached a calm plateau of acceptance, but has done so without a struggle. She is a character like Dorothy Wynne in The Valley Captives, aloof from conflict. Sharing a flat with her friend from college days, Frances Carr, she prefers a life uncomplicated by the tensions of male companionship. Passty notes that Rose Macaulay's description of this feminine ménage may well have been inspired by that of her sister Jean and her friend Nancy Willetts who shared a home together for

many years.<sup>61</sup> What "wholeness" Pamela achieves is not that of the perfect complementariness of male and female. Her contentment is merely that of total self-containment. A peculiarly Freudian image provides reinforcement for the idea:

Pamela Hilary, returning from a Care Committee meeting, fitted her latch-key into the door of the rooms in Cow Lane which she shared with Frances Carr, and let herself into the hot dark passage hall.<sup>62</sup>

Her progress is a reversal of the birth process, as she makes her way into the airless confinement of the flat. A further Freudian picture summarizes the situation: "sweet peas in a bowl" provide decoration in this small, cramped room.<sup>63</sup> Flowers and bowl represent femininity, passivity and receptivity - fitting ornaments in Pamela's calm, feminine world. There is to be similar prominent "flowers in a bowl" imagery in Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway in 1925. Clarissa, remembering her youthful infatuation with Sally Seton, has vivid memories of her habit of cutting flower heads off and making them "swim on the top of water in bowls."<sup>64</sup> Rose Macaulay's use of such clearly Freudian images in a novel in which the psychologist's ideas are a target for satire, indicates that her choices of metaphor are no accident. She may be sceptical of the over-simplicity of Freud's ideas, yet she is happy to use the symbols he offers as a readily recognisable shorthand for her own thought. Expert in various symbolic codes, she accepts his symbols while rejecting the facility of his interpretations.

Gerda (Neville's daughter) seeks, like her Aunt Nan, the love of Barry Briscoe. The dramatic imagery of the cliff-top bicycle race to which Nan wordlessly challenges Gerda during their Cornish holiday is the iconic accompaniment to their rivalry. Again the symbolism looks forward to Mrs Dalloway four years later - Sally, who recklessly "bicycled round the parapet on the terrace," is a reincarnation of Nan.<sup>65</sup> Woolf's 1925 novel resonates with tiny pictures recalling Dangerous Ages. Flying along the cliff-edge, negotiating at speed a path never intended for cyclists, Nan tacitly dares Gerda to compete for Barry's admiration. The swiftly spinning wheels of the bicycles depict the inexorable turning of the "wheel of becoming" as Nan loses the dream of happiness with Barry, and Gerda innocently accedes to it.

Only eighty-four year-old Grandmamma has found the wholeness the other generations of her family seek. Sitting in her wheeled donkey-chair at the seaside of St Mary's Bay, she has an "age-calmed soul."<sup>66</sup> She is associated with the sea, living beside it, sitting in her front garden looking out over it, unable to hear the trivial chatter of her children and grandchildren because of it. She beats time to the "ogreish words" of the hymn sung by the Salvation Army on the promenade:

Blood! Blood!  
Rivers of blood for you!  
Oceans of blood for me!  
All that the sinner has got to do  
Is to plunge into that Red Sea.  
Clean! Clean!  
Wash and be clean!<sup>67</sup>

The old woman's apparently happy acceptance of the song with its inartistic mix of blood and water images is strange but significant: blood and water represent the yang and ying principles. Her appreciation of the song is indicative of her spiritual wholeness, her ability (hard-earned) to ride with the current of life, accepting both the good and bad it offers. Finally, she sits playing casino with the young housemaid May. It is a scene vivid with the clash of opposites - youth and age facing each other across the card table, sea and rain beating outside while fire flickers inside: even the game of casino expresses tension, being "a bitter game, for you build and others take, and your labour is but lost that builded; you sow and others reap."<sup>68</sup> The old woman wins the game:

'Six and two are eight,' said Grandmamma....<sup>69</sup>

Significantly, the game closes with the utterance of the number eight, the number representing, in Chinese symbolism, the whole. Grandmamma has passed through the seven initiatory stages and reached the calm plateau of the eighth phase. There are echoes here of Michael Travis's arithmetically neat progression towards the illuminative plateau in The Secret River. Rose Macaulay's use of number imagery is now subtly blended into the text, maturely handled in a way it was not in her early poems and novels. Her technique has developed in line with her ideas. As grandmother and grand-daughter converse in the final scene of the book, we learn that the old woman has attained her wisdom only in her seventies:

...- Pamela said blandly to Grandmamma, when the old lady commented one day on her admirable composure, 'Life's so short, you see. Can anything which lasts such a little while be worth making a fuss about?'

'Ah,' said Grandmamma, 'that's been my philosophy for ten years...only ten years. You've no business with it at your age, child.'<sup>70</sup>

Pamela's wisdom is idiosyncratic.

Quests for wholeness in Told By an Idiot are those of three generations of the Garden family. Rose Macaulay sets herself a wide canvas and, swiftly sketching in an outline of world events between 1879 and 1923, whisks her family saga rapidly through four eras - Victorian, fin-de-siècle, Edwardian and Georgian. The sheer speed with which events succeed one another in this remarkably compressed historical summary emphasizes the atmosphere of flux, of perpetual change, in which characters are endeavouring to impose some meaning on their lives. All are engaged in the pursuit of coherence, in the struggle to achieve that perspective on experience from which everything seems reassuringly patterned and whole. All are seeking to "find themselves."

Gloria G. Fromm identifies Told By an Idiot as the forerunner of Virginia Woolf's novel, The Years (1937).<sup>71</sup> The chronologies of the two novels are similar, Woolf's chapters headed 1880, 1891, 1907, 1908, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1917, 1918 and Present Day, offering the same framework for events as Rose Macaulay's four "eras." The Years, she suggests, was devised as an angry rebuttal of Rose

Macaulay's "'common sense' views of family life and sex," Woolf's "grim and joyless" Pargiter family being a mirror image of the older author's serene and happy Gardens.<sup>72</sup> Rose Pargiter has her life spoiled by her frightening encounter with the man in the street, Eleanor is left at home, unmarried, to look after a demanding parent. A heavy-handed father rules the lives of his children. Woolf's surprising and un-Bloomsbury-like project of creating "a work from historical sources, with scarcely a statement in it that could not be verified," Fromm ascribes to a desire to combine her own visionary techniques with a Macaulay-an skill in handling solid fact and social commentary.<sup>73</sup>

Mr Garden, paterfamilias of Told By an Idiot, samples in his pursuit of the whole, religion after religion. He follows the volatile dictates of his conscience into Anglicanism, Unitarianism, Roman Catholicism, Agnosticism, Ethicism, Quakerism, Spiritualism, or any creed capable of satisfying, however temporarily, his craving for truth. He is a character based, by Rose Macaulay's own admission, on Thomas Arnold (1823-1900), <sup>famous Dr Arnold</sup> son of the of Rugby, to whom her own family was distantly related by marriage:

Tom Arnold (from whom I drew, rather sketchily the idea of my Mr Garden in Told By an Idiot) spent his life migrating from one church or no-church to another and back again. My mother was brought up on my grandmother's stories of him; she (my grandmother) would come in saying, with sympathetic interest, 'Poor Tom Arnold has lost his faith again,' and so he had.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, at the end of his life, Mr Garden reaches "a table-land from whence he could survey all creeds with loving, impartial pleasure";

And now, in some strange, transcendent manner, he believed them all. Nothing is true but thinking makes it so; papa thought all these faiths, and for him they were all true. What, after all, is truth? An unanswerable riddle, to which papa replied, 'The truth for each soul is that faith by which it holds.' So truth, for papa, was many-splendoured, many-faced. God must exist, he knew, or he could not have believed in Him so often and so much. The sunset of life was to papa very lovely, as he journeyed westward into it, murmuring 'I believe...I believe....'<sup>75</sup>

His experience is, by implication, almost mystical. He has reached, like characters in the early novels, a plateau in his spiritual pilgrimage where he can rest satisfied, seeing clearly that all the many creeds co-exist to form a perfect whole. He is content in his acknowledgement that "nearly everything is true."<sup>76</sup>

His daughter Rome (named during a period of his allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church) is also engaged in her own pursuit of wholeness. Cool, detached, cynical, she watches rather than participates in life.

Rome was urbane. Negligent, foppish and cool, she liked to watch life at its games, be flicked by the edges of its flying skirts.<sup>77</sup>

With the "sharp clarity of her mind," her gaze can encompass a wider span than those of other people more closely, and near-sightedly engaged in life's battles.<sup>78</sup> Her diary containing her "private

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commentary on life" bears witness to her interest in the connections she senses must exist between disparate concepts:

'T.C.' meant 'trace connection,' and was a very frequent entry. Rome looked forward to a time when, by means of prolonged investigation all the connections she had noted should be traced; that, she held, would add to her understanding of this strange, amusing life. What, for instance, was the connection between High Church dogma and ornate ritual; between belief in class distinctions and in the British Empire; between dissent and Little Englandism; art and unconventional morals; the bourgeoisie and respectability; socialism and queer clothes?"<sup>79</sup>

The total tracery of all connections would, it is suggested, produce a pattern as complete and satisfying to the questing mind as Mr Garden's plateau pattern of religions. E.M. Forster's "ardent disciple," Rose Macaulay subtly adapts his "only connect" motif for her own fiction.<sup>80</sup> Nearing the end of her life, and planning suicide as her best escape from the cancer from which she is suffering, Rome does see the world whole, as a tiny planet spinning in space:

It is, after all, but a turning ball, which has burst, for some reason unknown to science, into a curious, interesting and rather unwholesome form of animal and vegetable life.<sup>81</sup>

Her cynicism lifts for a moment, to allow her to admit that it is, in fact, "a rather remarkable ball," that the squalid story of life on earth is nevertheless occasionally lit by "amazing flashes of intelligence, of valour, of beauty, of sacrifice, of love."<sup>82</sup>

At least one writer has been tempted to see in satirical, detached Rome a self-portrait of her creator. We are apt to think of Miss Macaulay, like Miss Garden, as "clear-cut and cool" in her attitude to life.<sup>83</sup> Frank Singleton, making this connection in a review of the book in The Bolton Evening News received, however, a disclaimer from Rose Macaulay:

I was most touched by "Author-worship." But how could Proteus [pseudonym of Frank Singleton] believe that I would get myself up as the poised and elegant and woman-of-the-worldly Rome? Of course not. The only near-portrait of Rome would have been very conceited, as well as inaccurate. For one thing, she is my mother's generation not mine (actually rather like a cousin of my mother's whom I adored as a child) and that makes a difference in "idiom of mind" I think. You ought to have told me at the time what you thought and I would have corrected you.<sup>84</sup>

Other members of the Garden family attempt to contend with flux in different ways. Rome's sister Vicky aims to "see life straight as it is," and happily involves herself in all the good things it offers - marriage, home, family.<sup>85</sup> She plunges "frequently, ardently, and yet lightly, into life."<sup>86</sup> Maurice, her brother (named after Broad Churchman Frederick Denison Maurice 1805-1872) sees life, on the other hand, as a series of circumstances ranged against him, and engages in battle with them. He shares Rome's cynicism, but couples it with an anger which she does not feel. He contracts an unhappy marriage, works for a newspaper which goes out of business, and fails in his ambition to be elected to Parliament.

Maurice, in 1892, was against very nearly everything....He was a democrat impatient with democracy, a journalist

despising journalism, the product of an expensive education at war with educational inequality, a politician loathing politics, a husband chafing at his wife, a child of his age in rebellion against it, an agnostic irritated by the thoughtful, loquacious agnosticism of his day.<sup>87</sup>

Happiness comes for him only with his divorce which releases him from the wife and children who have disappointed him. He does, in the end, reach a plateau where he can contemplate life steadily and whole - his fighting philosophy is, he believes, healthier than Rome's cool disengagement from struggle. His life is meaningful in its equation of fighting with hope. He tells Rome:

'I still believe, in the teeth of enormous odds, that it is possible to make something of this life - that one kind of achievement is more admirable - or less idiotic, if you like - than another....You don't believe in sides, but I do. And I'm glad I do, so don't try to infect me with your poisonous indifference. I am a man of faith, I tell you; I have a soul. You are merely a cynic, the basest of God's creatures. You disbelieve in everything. I disbelieve in nearly everything, but not quite. So I shall be saved and you will not.'<sup>88</sup>

The younger sister Stanley (named after another Broad Church hero, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, 1815-1881, a favourite pupil of Thomas Arnold) shares Maurice's energy, his instinct that life must be ardently engaged in and its potential wrenched from it. Her energy is, however, tempered where his is not, with love. "Stanley was forever in and out of love," thinks Rome, who finds even her own "bland nonchalance" unsettled in the face of her younger sister's enthusiasm.<sup>89</sup> Her passionate nature leads her into a hurried marriage with Denman Croft: the subsequent divorce leaves her in a

correspondingly passionate fit of despair. Her optimistic philosophy does allow her, however, to see life whole:

She looked on the shocking, wicked, and ill-constructed universe, and felt that there must certainly be something behind this odd business. There must, she reasoned, be divine spirit and fire somewhere, to account for such flashes of good as were so frequently evident in it. Something gallant, unquenchable, imperishably ardent and brave, must burn at its shoddy heart.<sup>90</sup>

Briefly, Stanley experiences a moment of mystical awareness similar to those Rose Macaulay has insisted upon for so many of the characters of her early novels. On a solo cycling trip to Weybridge, she stops to savour the keen quietness of a wood, bathing in it as in a "wine-gold, sun-warmed sea."<sup>91</sup> She feels herself in a "charmed circle" from which husband, home and children are excluded, leaving her at one with herself.<sup>92</sup> Her bicycle basket full of primroses is the symbolic corollary to the scene - a moment of mystical fulfilment has been reached. We are reminded of Kitty Lasswade in The Years, lying in the woods, listening to the land "singing to itself....She was happy, completely. Time had ceased."<sup>93</sup> The sensation passes, however, and Stanley returns to her city home, now evoked with all the typical Macaulay-an imagery of enclosure:

There was the house, small, dingy, white, with a green door and a tiny square of front garden. Stanley found her latch-key, flung open the green door with a kind of impetuous, happy eagerness, and came face to face with her husband in the little hall.<sup>94</sup>

Stanley's bids for freedom - symbolised by the green door and the latch-key - have come to nothing; she is trapped in a London house with a small, square garden and a husband who is about to upbraid her for neglecting her domestic duties.

The two younger members of the Garden family, Irving (named during the period when his father had been an Irvingite) and Una (named to commemorate his Unitarianism), deal most competently with the vicissitudes of life. Unperturbed by any analytic urge, Irving faces events collectedly and with good cheer.

Irving was nearly always cheerful, except when he was cross. Irving was like that. He had been a cheerful Victorian and a cheerful Edwardian, and was now, in his late forties, a cheerful Georgian.<sup>95</sup>

Life, thus easily and unsuspectingly met, deals him no bitter blows. He is able to coast through his middle years savouring the good things which circumstances have offered him - a happy marriage, pleasing children, two homes (city and country), two cars and "a great deal of money."<sup>96</sup> The happy pattern has never, for him, been rent across: he has, therefore, unlike his brother and sisters, no hard struggle to attempt to regain it. Una, too, is from first to last contentedly at one with her environment. An earth maiden, "attuned to the soil" she asks no more of life than to be allowed to live happily with her farmer husband, Ted, to ride, walk, garden, and drive about the countryside.<sup>97</sup> She, like Irving, has the placidity of one who has never known the pattern seriously disturbed.

In the third generation, it is Vicky's daughter Imogen on whom the authorial interest focuses. Her name suggests that she is to Rose Macaulay the archetypal girl, deriving from the Old Irish ingen, "daughter" or "girl," and comparable to the Greek ἐγγόνη, "granddaughter."<sup>98</sup> A strong autobiographical element is certainly present in the portrayal - "I myself was Imogen, roughly speaking, though the circumstances were different," she writes to her god-daughter Emily Cain in 1954.<sup>99</sup> A tomboy like the author herself in her early years, Imogen exhibits some of the androgynous features Rose Macaulay considers natural in the human animal. Balancing male and female tendencies happily in her uncomplicated soul, the child is a contented blend of "yin" and "yang." The impression of childhood wholeness is emphasized by imagery: Imogen and her brother Tony love travelling round and round in the London Underground, stealing circuit after circuit for a penny fare. The cyclic movement of the train journey (an image which has been used before in What Not) suggests a pattern of perfect circles, repeating reassuringly into infinity:

And so on, past King's Cross and Farringdon Street, towards the wild, romantic stations of the east: Liverpool Street, Aldgate, and so round the bend, sweeping west like the sun. Blackfriars, Temple, Charing Cross, Westminster, St James's Park, Victoria, SLOANE SQUARE. Oh, joy! Sing for the circle completed, the new circle begun.<sup>100</sup>

As a young girl, Imogen, like her Aunt Stanley, experiences moments of mystical awareness where, senses sharpened, she sees, like

Wordsworth, into the life of things. She feels herself "caught breathless into that fairy circle like a stolen, enchanted child":

These strange, dizzy moments lurked hidden in the world like fairies in a wood, and at any hour they sprang forth and seized her, and the emotion, however often repeated, was each time as keen. They would spring forth and grip her, turning the daedal earth to magic, at any lovely hour, in wood or lane or street, or among the wavering candles and the bread and wine. She was stabbed through and through with beauty sweet as honey and sharp as a sword, and it was as if her heart must break in her at its turning. After this brief intensity of joy or pain, whichever it was, it was as if something in her actually did break, scattering loose a drift of pent-up words. That was how poems came.<sup>101</sup>

The sensation is described in terms remarkably similar to those Rose Macaulay uses to describe her own apparently mystical childhood experiences.<sup>102</sup> Imogen is like Michael in The Secret River, distilling from his flashes of mystical insight the essence of his poetry, endeavouring after the intensity has passed, to find words which can be strung together to convey the truths he has glimpsed. Briefly, Imogen sees things whole, before a bell rings and "time's voice shivers eternity to fragments."<sup>103</sup>

Story-telling and writing are for Imogen - as for Rose Macaulay herself - other passports to wholeness. As a child, Imogen has revelled in the realms of imagination to which her self-spun yarns introduce her, where she can be her own hero - Wilfrid, or Roland, or Dennis - and enjoy the high adventure of the open sea or the Wild West. The experience is again strikingly like those Rose Macaulay ascribes to her own childhood self.<sup>104</sup> Fiction provides the perfect

world in which Imogen wants to live. Later it is her written words which open the "magic casements" on the realms she longs to inhabit:

Written words opened the door, that was all. Beyond the door lay the adventure, bright and still and eerily clear, like a dream....Black marks on the paper, scribbled and niggled and scrawled, and here and there the splendour and the joke and the dream broke through them, like sunshine flashing through prison bars, like music breaking through the written notes.<sup>105</sup>

She desires the "courageous realism" which should "see things as they are," but finds herself "blinded and dazzled by her personal circumstances, warped and circumscribed in her vision by the circle of her life."<sup>106</sup> Her writing succeeds in briefly lifting her beyond the limitations, and letting her taste "the joke and the dream" glimmering beyond.<sup>107</sup>

In the end, her vision of the perfect whole is badly shaken. She falls in love it is suggested, although the text is unspecific, with a married man. Bewildered by the experience, she finds her values subverted and the meaning and laws of the world mystifyingly unclear. She breaks away from her lover and sets off for a mind-clearing year in the Pacific Islands, finding solace in the hope that in that faraway realm perhaps thought, too, was "lucid and unconfused," unlike the "desperate, mist-bound, storm-driven, helpless business it was in London."<sup>108</sup> There,

...personal relationships were too tangled; clear thought was drowned in desire. One could not see life whole, only a flame, a burning star, at its heart.<sup>109</sup>



Like so many of Rose Macaulay's protagonists before her, Imogen fails to secure the perfect whole she pursues. She must make do with the second-best "tableland of compensations," and ends like the Crevequers and Peter Margerison, cast up on the "lee shore" of her Pacific island, "a merry beach-comber on a white beach."<sup>110</sup>

Though published at the beginning of Rose Macaulay's long period of abstention from Communion, Told By an Idiot is a remarkably religious book. Characters are all seekers after faith. Novels of her middle period may be best known for their jauntiness and satire, yet the stream of serious religious interest which has flowed through the early novels has here gone only barely underground. She may have been a non-communicant, but her fascination with matters religious remains. Jean Macaulay, writing to Constance Babington Smith about a friend's remarks on "Rosie's religiosity," remembers:

Rose and I used to discuss at length every detail of church services, in the years when she cut herself off from religion, as well as after.<sup>111</sup>

Rose the satirist has by no means suppressed her religious interest. Gerald O'Donovan had been, it should be remembered, a Roman Catholic priest - her connection with him must surely in many respects have fuelled rather than dampened her enthusiasm for religion. He may, of course, have been instead a romantic substitute for the religion in which, because of her relationship with him, she could not fully participate. Her heroine Laurie in The Towers of Trebizond, like

herself illicitly in love with a married man, is to insist on the possibility of having only one or the other.

The autobiographical elements so strongly hinted at in Told By an Idiot - Stanley's and Imogen's mystical experiences, Rome's poised, ironic demeanour - indicate Rose Macaulay's unusually close engagement with this novel's quests. It is as though, debating the possibilities for her own life, she is describing an array of potential "selves." Mr Garden is her wavering, indecisive, endlessly receptive self, an extension of her Eddy Oliver prototype who does not know where to draw the line. Rome objectifies her own sharp drive towards clarity, her urge to detachment and cynicism. Maurice displays the consequences for her character of the total negativeness to which cynicism might lead - the dangers of being angrily or arrogantly "against" everything. Stanley is the strong, bicycling, vote-seeking, feminine persona, impatient, in her divorce, of smothering male influence, which is also prominently present in Rose Macaulay's own make-up. Imogen is that scion of herself which is impelled to write. It is no wonder that readers suggest the authorial presence in first one then another of her characters - she is indeed them all, we suspect, demonstrating the multiple facets which compose her "whole" personality. The accelerated rush through a family's three generations provides a focus for the examination of many selves. In Told By an Idiot, as in Dangerous Ages, the family unit is a symbol of wholeness transcending disparity. Marrocco has remarked on Rose Macaulay's preoccupation with her own image in her essays of the period.<sup>112</sup> Pieces such as "Reading," "Writing,"

"Bathing," "Clothes," "Driving a Car," in Personal Pleasures (1935) do show her chiselling away at a version of herself she is happy to pass for popular consumption.

### Women

Both Dangerous Ages and Told By an Idiot are interesting for their discussions of women's lives. Rose Macaulay evokes here, as she does, indeed, in all her novels, strong, spirited women - Neville, Grandmamma, Gerda, Nan, Rome, Vicky, Stanley, Imogen - all invigorated by non-domestic preoccupations and work, all with the vital element of self-respect. It is her descriptions of such tough, psychologically sinewy characters which have won Rose Macaulay her reputation as a feminist writer - we look forward to Catherine Grey in Staying With Relations, journeying by boat into the Guatemalan jungle, to Kate Marlowe in And No Man's Wit, gamely driving round war-torn Spain in search of her son, to Laurie in The Towers of Trebizond, exploring the Turkish coast alone by camel, and backward to Jane Potter, twin of Johnny in Potterism, who had "always been just a shade the cleverer."<sup>113</sup> Yet the woman responsible for such creations is strangely antagonistic towards her sex in some of her less well-known and seldom quoted journalism. The opinions she expresses in The Nation in December, 1931 are startling:

...it must, I fear, be admitted that the bulk of women are, and have always been, even more ignorant than the bulk of men. Certainly, far less well instructed, in the past, by their educators and by life; certainly also, I think, less intelligent. Some say that this will mend in time; others say no, that it will never quite mend, since women have the

poorer brains. This is probably so. After all, women are physically less and frailer in every part and capacity, and it is not likely that the brain should be excepted. Let it be admitted that the female sex in humanity is the less tough and robust, mentally, nervously, and physically, the less fitted to endure strain and hardness, to create, to initiate, to organize, and to perform. The stupidity of such women as those who have received little learning is a heavy retarding weight on the world's progress. The stupidity and ignorance of most mothers: these are even greater than the stupidity and ignorance of most fathers, and this is to say a great deal.<sup>114</sup>

We look in vain for signs of her tongue-in-cheek. The same denigratory tone recurs in her correspondence with R. Ellis Roberts in The New Statesman and Nation in May, 1932, in which she refers to woman's "defects of intelligence and brain," and then parenthesises: "...I don't think anyone would deny that she has, taking her and man at their average, the poorer and frailer body, nerves, and health."<sup>15</sup> One superior trait only is conceded - women's "keener insight into" and "greater understanding of individual human character."<sup>116</sup>

Even the most commonsensical women in her fiction are seen to echo such views. "Women would never amount to much in this world, because they nearly all have a nervous disease; they are strung on high wires; they are like children frightened of the dark and excited by the day," reflects Stanley Garden.<sup>117</sup> The impressively sensible Dr Kate Marlowe also expresses opinions peculiarly at odds with the evidence of her own nature:

'I have a clinic where I try to train women and children in self-control. It's uphill work. Most women start against such odds - their whole nervous system's so delicate, so easily put out of gear. And they're often so irrational, too. It's so much harder for them to

become tough and courageous than it is for men that they should be trained in it intensively from babyhood.<sup>118</sup>

"On the whole we are stupid," Rose Macaulay writes to Gilbert Murray in 1943.<sup>119</sup> It is a strange attitude for a woman so obviously an "indomitable" female character herself, and who, indeed, in a radio broadcast of 1935 vigorously opposed the motion that "women are bored with emancipation."<sup>120</sup> It is difficult to escape the suspicion that Rose Macaulay may have been too easily kidnapped by critics for the feminist cause, her Virago-fostered reputation of the 1980's misleadingly at odds with the evidence of remarks in her own journalism.

Any attempt to account for this dichotomy in her ideas must certainly take into consideration the extent of Gerald O'Donovan's influence on Rose Macaulay's life at the time. Interestingly, no anti-feminist sentiments are expressed by characters in her fiction before 1918, the year in which she met him. Constance Babington Smith records Marjorie Grant Cook's memory of O'Donovan remarking that Rose had "a brain like a man's" and that he found this attractive.<sup>121</sup> His emphasis on the superiority of the masculine trait does appear to have permeated Rose Macaulay's work and to have contributed to the attitudes she expresses in her writing. He seems to have undermined her confidence, to have disturbed her sense of self. Her opinions as a journalist display an acquiescence in a stereotypical idea of masculinity quite foreign to the creator of the quirky, atypical male characters of her early novels - Verney Ruth,

Michael Travis, Tudor Vallon, Tommy Crevequer and Peter Margerison. All the more striking, therefore, is her insistence in Dangerous Ages and Told By an Idiot on creating strings of highly intelligent female characters, and on discussing with passion, understanding and sympathy the dilemma of their necessary submission to the demands of a male-dominated world. Both novels are celebrations of the lives of women. It is as though she has had to siphon off her "subversive" feminist instincts and express them through the medium of her fiction. Newly submissive in her private life, she has yet been unable to compromise herself entirely, giving imaginative vent to what she knows to be the female predicament in her novels. Tellingly, perhaps precisely because she knew it expressed views divergent from those of the "beloved companion" whose opinions of her work she revered, Rose Macaulay considered Dangerous Ages "a bad book, on the whole," and "rather poor."<sup>122</sup> Gerald O'Donovan's influence is one of the many paradoxes in her life. Ideologically male - oppressive, chauvinistic, conventional, the source of profound disturbances to her religious and moral convictions, he was yet with her when she wrote her best novels. His presence may have provided the very tensions required for the production of her finest work.

### Androgyny

Rose Macaulay's fascination with the idea of androgyny is worth noting in these novels in which two of the female characters, Neville and Stanley, bear male names, "Rome's" name suggests sexual neutrality, and young Imogen Carrington fantasises about being a boy.

It is, of course, an idea which has preoccupied her from her earliest work. Jeanette Passty makes a careful and exhaustive study of Rose Macaulay's "womanly men" and "manly women."<sup>123</sup> Amongst the former are Michael Travis of The Secret River, Tudor Vallon and Laurie Rennel of The Valley Captives, Peter Margerison of The Lee Shore, Hindley Smith-Rimski of Orphan Island, John Stowe, Francis Axe and Charles Mendle of I Would be Private. Her "manly women" include Denham Dobie of Crewe Train, Joanna Vallon of The Valley Captives, Stanley Croft and Imogen Carrington of Told By an Idiot, Neville Bendish of Dangerous Ages, Miss Montana of Mystery at Geneva, Charlotte Smith of Orphan Island, Cary Folyot of Keeping Up Appearances, Dorothy Dunster of I Would be Private, Helen Michel and Barbary Deniston in The World My Wilderness. She also highlights the androgynous names of female characters - Joanna (John), Cecil, Alix, Neville, Stanley, Rome, Denham, Evelyn, Cary, Julian, Hero, Barbary, Laurie.

Rose Macaulay plays with the idea of androgyny and the opposites it conflates as she plays with the many other "opposites" which energize her themes. Displaying the closeness of comedy and tragedy, success and failure, civilisation and savagery, happiness and sadness, she indicates the essential closeness, too, of male and female. Who can be exclusively one or the other, she challenges? Androgyny represents for her yet another perfect whole. Happiness consists of discovering and accepting a satisfactory balance between the two sexes. Her sequences of "manly women" and "womanly men" symbolise the bonded coherence of male and female in the ideal state,

as do her "twin" (or sibling) couples - Maggie and John Denham in Abbots Verney, Tommy and Betty Crevequer in The Furnace, Tudor and Joanna Vallon in The Valley Captives, Lucy Hope and Peter Margerison in The Lee Shore, Joan and Nicholas Chester in What Not, Jane and Johnny Potter in Potterism.

Jeanette Passty attempts to address the problem of Rose Macaulay's own sexuality, focussing somewhat voyeuristically on evidence of the male element in her author's make-up - her straight, boyish figure as described by her friends, her desire as a child to "be a man" when she grew up.<sup>124</sup> She sees hints of Rose Macaulay's interest in female homosexuality in her selection of literary extracts about women for her 1934 anthology, The Minor Pleasures of Life - these included the well-known "hymn to androgyny" of Virginia Woolf's ice-skating passage in Orlando and a poem entitled "After the Party" by E.J. Scovell which she finds heavy with female homosexual overtones.<sup>125</sup> Passty also makes much of Rose's reference in a letter to Father Johnson to the homosexual Vita Sackville-West, "who is coming to see me in a day or two; I am very fond of her, she is v. beautiful and nice (Mrs. Harold Nicolson)", and of another letter of hers to the bisexual Virginia Woolf.<sup>126</sup> Quoting from an edited version of this letter supplied by Constance Babington Smith, she lays emphasis on what she sees as "tantalizing ellipses" - "How I wish I could see you!...I like it so much when I do see you....I would like to talk about...Coleridge...some time, as I have long had in mind a novel about a girl who would be his descendant...."<sup>127</sup>



(Woolf had recently been reviewing E.L. Grigg's Coleridge Fille: A Biography of Sara Coleridge).<sup>128</sup>

Yet Passty's sensationalism and suggestiveness require a cautious response. 'Androgyny' and 'homosexuality' are not synonymous, and it is unsound to argue that Rose Macaulay's interest in the former must suggest the latter in her own make-up. The full text, for example, of the letter to Virginia Woolf is openly available in the collection at Trinity College, Cambridge (ERM15(182), see Appendix D) and contains nothing which could in any way be construed as indicative of its writer's homosexuality. It is very difficult, on the whole, to equate such a suggestion with the incontrovertible evidence of her twenty-four year long affair with Gerald O'Donovan. Her letters to Father Johnson are full of anguish and guilt about an adulterous relationship which has clearly been intense, precious and probably physical, debarring her from access to the sacrament of Communion. Certainly any consideration of Rose Macaulay's sexuality should take into account Jean Macaulay's intriguing remarks (not mentioned by Passty) about her sister's relationship with O'Donovan:

It would be difficult for most people to believe how very small a part of the physical side of love would mean to Rose, if indeed it existed.<sup>129</sup>

Her comments are interesting, though may, of course, be attributable to either Jean's lack of knowledge about Rose's private life, or her refusal to accept the "sinful" nature of the illicit liaison. The

evidence is confusing: a writer whose work is peopled with androgynous characters becomes herself entangled in an apparently passionate, heterosexual love-affair, and yet impresses the sister to whom she is close as an essentially celibate individual. Until the closed box of letters at Trinity College, Cambridge is opened in 2012, it must be safest and fairest simply to accept that the matter is puzzling.

What is undeniable is Rose Macaulay's undoubted interest in androgyny as an idea, in the theory of two equal opposites merging to create an enriched and balanced whole. It is an idea fashionable and much discussed at the time, as a generation of recently liberated women experiment with the new - often traditionally male - roles now open to them. Virginia Woolf's well-known piece on androgynous writing in A Room of One's Own (1929) is foreshadowed by Rose Macaulay's own consideration of the theme in Mystery at Geneva (1922):

It may be observed that there are in this world mental females, mental males, and mental neutrals. You may know them by their conversation. The mental females, or womanly women, are apt to talk about clothes, children, domestics, the prices of household commodities, love affairs, or personal gossip. Theirs is rather a difficult type of conversation to join in, as it is above one's head. Mental males, or manly men, talk about sport, finance, business, animals, crops, or how things are made. Theirs is also a difficult type of conversation to join in, being also above one's head. Male men as a rule, like female women, and vice versa: they do not converse, but each supplies the other with something they lack, so they gravitate together and make happy marriages. In between these is No-man's Land, filled with mental neutrals of both sexes. They talk about all the other things, such as books, jokes, politics, love (as distinct from love affairs), people, places, religion...plays,

music, current fads and scandals, public persons and events, newspapers, life, and anything else which turns up. Their conversation is easy to join in, as it is not above one's head. They gravitate together, and often marry each other, and are very happy. If one of them makes a mistake and marries a mental male or a mental female, the marriage is not happy....<sup>130</sup>

Virginia Woolf elegantly re-words this theory of "mental neutrality":

...in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man's brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of his brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties. Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more than a mind that is purely feminine....<sup>131</sup>

Interestingly, Elaine Showalter recognises Virginia Woolf's fascination with androgyny, too, as essentially theoretical. Concentrating her mind on the serene, indifferent, androgynous state to which she aspires, she in fact escapes, Showalter feels, from the frustrating problems of her own femininity.<sup>132</sup> For both Woolf and Rose Macaulay, androgyny is an ideal. While the former commits suicide in despair at the impossibility of achieving the perfect state, the latter, calmer, more commonsensical, carries her theory of mental neutrality with her throughout her life. It surfaces again as late as May 1949 as she talks in her BBC broadcast, I Speak for Myself, about her inner and outer lives, describing them respectively as "the dream and the business":

The dream and the business: there they go, side by side, now one to the fore, now the other. And the dream is perhaps more alike in different people than the business is; it oversteps place and time, linking together different epochs, different races, different sexes. Different sexes, perhaps, above all; for the outer lives led by men and women are apt to be widely different, but their inner lives are often surprisingly the same.<sup>133</sup>

It would be a mistake to attempt to distil much information about Rose Macaulay's personal life from the ideas displayed in her fiction. The idea of androgyny, fuelled by the fashionable debate about the sexes of her day, is simply further grist to the mill of her theory of wholeness. She is as much fascinated by the male-female dialectic as she is by the tensions between tragedy and comedy, hope and despair, success and failure. To read her novels, as Passty does, as manifestos contending only that men and women should be free to behave as they wish without the artificial restraints of gender classification, is to read them too narrowly. This contention is there, but only amongst many others. For the critic regarding her work from a wider perspective, Rose Macaulay's pursuit of androgyny is merely one aspect of her pursuit of an infinitely larger, multi-faceted coherence. Thinking androgynously, creating her remarkable strings of characters who are neither fully male nor fully female, she is alert to, and draws her reader's attention to, many desirable wholenesses the more blinkered mind does not see.

Mystery at Geneva and Orphan Island

In Mystery at Geneva and Orphan Island Rose Macaulay indulges her liking for both fantasy and satire. No attempt at realism has been made. In the former, a thin and uninteresting detective-thriller, she describes the strange disappearance, one by one, of delegates to the vaguely specified "fourth (or possibly it was the fifth)" Assembly of the League of Nations.<sup>134</sup> In the latter, a much richer and more adept production, she gives rein to her inherited love of islands (her ancestor Kenneth Macaulay published The History of St Kilda in 1764) and offers a "Robinson Crusoe" plot which enables her to trace the history of an island civilisation from its inception.<sup>135</sup> Miss Charlotte Smith, escorting a group of fifty orphans from East London to San Francisco in 1855, finds herself and her charges shipwrecked on a Pacific Island. Seventy years later the Thinkwell family, descendants of one of the crew members who have abandoned them there, receive information about their ancestor's misdeeds and return to the island to find it now occupied by over a thousand inhabitants. The story consists of their observations of the culture and habits of this strange, imaginary community which has had no contact with the outside world since the mid-nineteenth century.

There are still strong elements of personal quest in these novels. Miss Montana in Mystery at Geneva seeks revenge on her former employer Charles Wilbraham; a chase through the labyrinthine maze of the Geneva sewers forms the central image of quest - the

missing delegates are found in a castle in the middle of the lake to which the sewers lead; the classical connotations of the labyrinth symbol are preserved. In Orphan Island the island itself objectifies the many quests in which the characters are engaged. All are in pursuit of their hearts' desires. Mr Thinkwell seeks out the orphans abandoned in the Pacific by his grandfather; Flora Smith longs to leave the island and see the rest of the world; Jean, the Scottish nurse shipwrecked with Miss Smith, desperately wants to return to her home town of Aberdeen before her death; Rosamond Thinkwell longs for friendship with Flora and for a voyage to the Pacific Islands which have always fascinated her. Her brother Charles wishes to marry Flora. Quests in this novel, as in all the others, however, are thwarted. Each character learns, like Charles in his delirium, that dreams are elusive:

Dreams, dreams, dreams! The perfumed island was a dream, afloat in a vast and shining ocean. Only the golden moon and the myriad stars burned on, imperishable lamps of truth. Beauty was a dream, that flashed across one's path, brilliant bird of paradise, and vanished in confusion and bitterness. Beauty fled; one woke on a cold hillside, alone and palely loitering. Dreams, dreams, dreams!<sup>136</sup>

More prominent, however, in these two novels of the early 1920's is Rose Macaulay's fascination with the idea of civilisation. Her preoccupation with characters engaged in personal quests simply parallels her wider interest in contemporary society's pursuit of a stable, civilising "wholeness." She is by no means alone amongst authors of her day in her absorption in this theme. Lucy McDiarmid has commented at length on this ideological phenomenon of the 1920's

and 30's, the preoccupation of writer after writer with "saving civilisation."<sup>137</sup> Eliot, Yeats and Auden were all engaged in a mission "to save the collective soul," producing such social tracts as On the Boiler (1938) and The Idea of a Christian Society (1940), worrying at the "heap of broken images" which they see as characterizing the newly fragmented and disordered post-war world.<sup>138</sup> V.A. Demant and Christopher Dawson, whose work Rose Macaulay certainly knew, offered Christian syntheses to heal the disintegrating whole.<sup>139</sup> The former's God, Man and Society appeared in 1933, his Christian Polity in 1936, while the latter's many books included The Age of the Gods (1928) and Beyond Politics (1939).<sup>140</sup> Clive Bell's Civilisation, with its contention that the continuance of society is dependent on the existence of a leisured élite, appeared in 1928.<sup>141</sup> Political pursuits of wholeness culminated in a series of international consultations and agreements throughout the period - The Treaty of Versailles (1919), the League of Nations Assemblies, the Locarno Pact (1925), the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928) and the Disarmament Conference of 1932-1933. Rose Macaulay's interest, in her novels of the 1920's and 1930's, in how the precarious state of civilisation is to be preserved, is strictly in line with the climate of her times. The fiction of her middle period depicts searches - her characters' and her own - for the perfect civilisation. Quests are as much for an ordered, patterned, organised world as for the personal happiness of any central character.

Mystery at Geneva, beneath the frills of its attempted fun, suggests the impossibility of ever achieving the ideal of political unity aimed for by the League of Nations. Like many of her day, Rose Macaulay has been attracted by the League's potential as a force for coherence. As "a general collective security system, under which many states unite their efforts to control any state anywhere which breaks the peace," it extends the possibility of recreating a peaceful "wholeness" out of the disrupted post-war world.<sup>142</sup> Yet the novel's drama, the disintegration of the Assembly as its delegates are mysteriously spirited away, enacts the evaporation of the ideal. The League is enervated by the inability of member states to suppress their individual interests. Delegates in the story are enticed from the Assembly in pursuit of their own special concerns. Lord Burnley, the British delegate, is lured into the fateful bookshop from which he disappears by the sight of one of his own books prominently displayed. Arnold Inglis is undone by the tale of persecution related to him by the Greek woman whose language fascinates him - he goes to investigate her case and is lost. Feminist crusaders Mlle Bjornsen and Mlle Binesco pursue one of the "fallen women" of the city in the hope of educating her back to respectability. They disappear through an archway from which they do not re-emerge. Lord John Lester is betrayed by his own sense of duty into agreeing to preach the philosophy of the League to the lakeside branches of the Union - his meeting with the spurious lady organiser leads to his disappearance. All are convinced of the validity of the lines they pursue, yet unwittingly contribute to the fragmentation of the League. The members of the fictitious Assembly cohere only briefly,



banqueting companionably in the subterranean stronghold of the island castle, before dispersing to their separate countries. The ideal of political unity, the novel is suggesting beneath its cartoon-like surface, is only temporarily tenable, another "whole" which may be desired and pursued but only fleetingly held.

For background and characters in Mystery at Geneva, Rose Macaulay has drawn upon her own observations while attending the Second League of Nations Assembly as a Daily Chronicle reporter in September 1921. A postcard sent to her brother Will bubbles with enthusiasm and interest:

I am out here for the League of Nations Assembly which is a very amusing entertainment. I have a good press gallery seat (I am reporting for the D. Chronicle, for the time being...) and a good view of the Delegates. I like the South American States, who are numerous and excitable. We made a fierce turn-up between Chile and Bolivia the other day, which Chile will probably win in the end. If she doesn't she'll leave the League. The Great Powers are calmer, but equally determined not to be done down. France is very jealous of Britain of course, and is very noisy during the English translations of the speeches, to drown them if possible. Nansen is here, and a very popular figure. Also Balfour and H. Caine.<sup>144</sup>

Real-life analogues for characters in this novel have never been suggested, but in fact could be fairly confidently identified. Gilbert Murray, Professor of Greek, and one of "the great gods of the League," must be the fictitious "Professor Arnold Inglis, that most gentle, high-minded and engaging of scholars" who specialises in classical Greek.<sup>145</sup> "Dr Svensen," "the Norwegian explorer," is undoubtedly Nansen, while "Lord Burnley," lured into a bookshop by

the sight of his book, Scepticism as a Basis for Faith might well be Earl Balfour, whose publications include such suggestively similar titles as A Defence of Philosophic Doubt (1879) and The Foundations of Belief (1895).<sup>146</sup>

In Orphan Island, Rose Macaulay's preoccupation with the theme of civilisation is even more explicit. Establishing her remote island community in the first chapter, she outlines the parameters of her interests:

What strange strands of mid-Victorian piety and prudery are woven with the primitive instincts of such a race, remote from any contacts with the wider world? What are their religions, what their outlook, what their speech, what culture or learning have they won?...Are they still a Victorian people, or have they suffered, even as we, the phases of the passing years? Or have they perhaps reverted to mere savagery?<sup>147</sup>

Interestingly, in the first version of Orphan Island's opening chapter, published in the London Mercury of August 1924, the date given for the voyage is 1858, the very year before the publication of Charles Darwin's On the Origin of Species.<sup>148</sup> It is as though by moving the date back by a further three years to 1855 in her final, book version, Rose Macaulay is stressing the freedom of her island people from the influence of Darwinism, indicating her determination to examine a civilisation as it existed before the world was turned upside down.

The plot of the novel is so similar to that of Henry Neville's The Isle of Pines (1668) that Rose Macaulay's familiarity with it can almost certainly be assumed.<sup>149</sup> In the seventeenth-century story, George Pine leaves England in 1589 on The India Merchant and is shipwrecked on an island off the coast of Terra Australis Incognita with his master's daughter, Sarah England, two white maid-servants, Mary Sparkes and Elizabeth Trevor, and a young negress named Philippa. (In her London Mercury version, Rose Macaulay, too, charted her orphans' voyage from London to Australia; only in the book version does she make their proposed terminus San Francisco). George marries all four women with whom he is cast ashore, and an insular Pine dynasty is founded. Fifty-nine years later, the community has a population of 1,789 souls. The connection between The Isle of Pines and Orphan Island is made only by Walter de la Mare in his Desert Islands and 'Robinson Crusoe' (1930), where he describes Rose Macaulay's novel as a settlement "after Henry Neville's pattern."<sup>150</sup> The two friends are clearly, like Yeats, "haunted by numberless islands."<sup>151</sup> It is tempting to imagine them exchanging notes on the subject, the one suggesting to the other that Neville's book might be of interest. Intriguingly, De la Mare's essay originated, as he explains in his preface, in a Royal Society of Literature Lecture which he delivered in 1920, four years before the publication of Orphan Island. His lecture could well have fuelled Rose Macaulay's imagination.

Despite having traceable roots in a seventeenth-century forerunner, Orphan Island is, of course, an independent and

distinctive novel. Rose Macaulay makes the story very much her own. It becomes the perfect vehicle for her satire. She focuses a sardonic eye on a class system in which the descendants of Miss Smith and Dr O'Malley (the Irish ship's doctor) have become the island's aristocracy: the division between Smith and Orphan is as deep as that between British upper and lower classes. The theme has an obvious twentieth-century analogue in Barrie's The Admirable Crichton (1902); the Times Literary Supplement reviewer of November 27, 1924 explores this parallel.<sup>152</sup> Dystopias such as those of Gulliver's Travels are also suggested. Rose Macaulay's BBC broadcast of November 1945, Swift as a Letter Writer and Diarist, though predominantly about his Journal to Stella, shows her wide-ranging knowledge of his work.<sup>153</sup> The story's framework permits her, too, a cool analysis of the origins of religious dissent on the island. Miss Smith's endeavours to transmit an untrammelled Anglicanism to her descendants are thwarted by the arrival of a shipwrecked French Jesuit missionary who denies the validity of the Smith Orders and founds a sect which "preaches the Pope of Rome."<sup>154</sup> The missionary subsequently perishes in a "no popery riot."<sup>155</sup> The island's press also emerges as a target for satire. A daily newspaper is written in the damp sand on the beach, to be washed away later by the tide. Sensationalist journalese is again the focus of mockery as Rose Macaulay derides such headlines as "Amazing Occurrence This Afternoon," "Amazing Statements," "Girl's Amazing Leap From Tree Saves Young Monkey's Life," and the perpetually recurring observation that "there were many well-dressed women present."<sup>156</sup> Rose Macaulay's guilt at her own collusion with the literary underworld of journalism is exorcised

in her attack. A whole civilisation is satirized as the three books on which their cultural heritage is based are highlighted - Miss Smith has salvaged from the shipwreck only The Holy War, Wuthering Heights, and a prim Victorian volume, Mixing in Society, or Everybody's Book of Correct Conduct. The mores and values of the island society are, it is suggested, encapsulated in the three volumes - the severe piety with its naively simple definitions of right and wrong, good and bad, the rigid social codes and the extreme romanticism with which these somehow co-exist.

Debating the nature of the perfect society, Orphan Island becomes a satire on Utopian literature. It offers no perfect world, built up from first principles, but rather one, like those inhabited by all Rose Macaulay's other characters, which is warped from its intended pattern. Miss Smith and the orphans arrive on the island only because they have been shipwrecked from the significantly named S.S. Providence, their proposed voyage never completed. Miss Smith herself is the spokesman for the perfect world which might have been expected to result in Utopian literature. Ruling her islanders like Queen Victoria, she stands in their eyes "for destiny, for sovereignty, for the accepted order of things."<sup>157</sup> She has from the beginning communicated the confident logic of her ideas to her charges:

'Why were worms made?' a disgusted orphan, digging in its little garden patch in England, had once inquired of her, and her reply was ready and simple. 'To make ground-bait for man when he fishes, my love.' And

that seemed to the orphan a very reasonable reply, as, indeed, it was.<sup>158</sup>

The force for order in the new island society, she commands "maxims of religious and virtuous living" to be inscribed on trees:

From the trunk of a great banana tree "Grace sufficient," cut in deep capitals, leaped at them. On a mango next to it was carved a large eye, and beneath it, "Thou Seest Me." On the pepper tree beyond was "Waste Not Want Not," and, on a palm, "Go to the Ant, Thou Sluggard...."<sup>159</sup>

Yet Rose Macaulay's working out of the fate of this fictitious, time-locked island community indicates that no such clinically clean order of things is likely to arise as the race evolves. This is an island on which good and evil co-exist: the Hibernian peninsula, abode of malcontents and convicts, is an integral part of the state - the idyllic South Sea island has its dark side. Sin and crime persist even amid the sunshine and palm-trees. The Smith/O'Malley descendants inherit the Irish doctor's drunken habits and the English governess's prim high-mindedness in equal measures. The island is torn by religious strife and class tensions. Its literary ideals are compromised by a gutter - or, indeed, sea-shore - press. Orphan Island is as buffeted by clashing opposites as the world the Thinkwells have embarked from.

The perfect Utopian world is not, this novel confirms, attainable. Yet perhaps, it suggests, the chequered, many-tensioned world in which good and evil, happiness and sadness, civilisation and

barbarism, tragedy and comedy all meet and counterbalance one another, is a better, more desirable one after all. Could it be the best of all possible worlds, and thus in its own, stranger, more ambivalent way, "perfect"? The best possible pattern of civilisation is not, the novel indicates, one in which all conflicts are transcended, but one in which the perpetual to-ing and fro-ing of opposing ideas creates a healthy checkering of blacks and whites. The image of a chess-board is subtly highlighted as Mr Thinkwell is drawn into a game of chess by Hindley Smith-Rimski:

A table stood at one side, holding bowls of brilliant flowers and a chess-board with roughly-cut wooden pieces.

'I must,' said Hindley, 'have beauty about me. Also chess-men. Do you play?...'<sup>160</sup>

Framed amongst the flowers, the chess-board is a symbol of a complicated wholeness to be achieved. The board in which black and white meet is celebrated as an image of a complex goal: learning to live in a civilisation animated by the clash of opposites is the only realistic goal worth aiming for.

Crewe Train, Keeping Up Appearances and Staying With Relations.

In Crewe Train, Keeping Up Appearances and Staying With Relations, Rose Macaulay blends the interest in realistic character-drawing she has displayed in Dangerous Ages and Told By an Idiot with the satire which has been to the fore in Mystery at Geneva and Orphan Island. The two elements are interwoven in a uniquely complex serio-comic

mix. Blended, too, are her evocations of personal quests for happiness and her discussions of the universal quest for civilised wholeness. Each of these novels of 1928-1930 is at once about a single character's search for self and about the perilous closeness of civilised society to barbarism.

Denham Dobie in Crewe Train searches for the truth about herself. She must come to terms with the two contradictory aspects of her nature - her longing for solitude, with the barbarous instincts she can indulge in it, and her desire to live with the civilised publisher husband she loves. Her story is that of "a savage captured by life."<sup>161</sup> Raised in Mallorca and Andorra by her father, a widowed, reclusive ex-clergyman, she grows up used to pleasing herself, to ignoring the interests of family and friends, and to solipsistic enjoyment of the wild countryside around her. On her father's death, she is brought to London by her sophisticated Aunt Evelyn and thrust, protesting, into city society. Perplexed and distressed by this new world with its multiplicity of people, vehicles and books, its insistence on perpetual talk and conventional dress, she struggles to conform to the "Higher Life" it embodies.<sup>162</sup> The contrast in life-styles is that, sharply magnified, experienced by the author herself as a girl, forced to leave the sensuous Mediterranean warmth behind for an Oxford schooling. We are reminded of the young Macaulays, fresh from Varazze, chafing at the restrictions of a civilised university town.<sup>162</sup> Denham's marriage to Arnold Chapel, a young publisher, is at first passionately happy until pregnancy and the fear that a child will further curtail her



independence trigger in her a descent into the self-preoccupation which her Andorran upbringing has allowed her to enjoy. After suffering a miscarriage, she insists on buying a cottage on a Cornish cliff-top, complete with underground cave and secret passage, and isolates herself there from her husband. Only the eventual realisation that she is again pregnant draws her back to Arnold and to a life of compromise in a Metro-land suburb - Arnold commutes to his city office, Denham can enjoy the woods and fields of the Buckinghamshire countryside. The novel ends on a note of sadness as she feels the forces of domesticity closing inexorably in on her.

Denham's quest for self is paralleled in the novel's two main strands of symbolism. She retreats to her Cornish cottage with its underground cave and secret passage to the sea. Descent into the cave is descent into self. Here she can retreat from society, abandon its requirements to wash dishes, scrub sinks and turn mattresses, and indulge her childish pleasure in consuming toffee and apples in the hideout beneath the floorboards.

The cave is one "other world" to which Denham escapes from the restrictions of civilisation: another is suggested in a vein of images which recalls E.M. Forster's short story Other Kingdom.<sup>164</sup> Rose Macaulay summarizes the plot in her critical appreciation of Forster of 1938. In it, "a young woman escapes from her pretentious humbug of a lover into a beech copse and turns into a beech tree."<sup>165</sup> Her own heroine Denham is to be found at the end of the novel standing concealed in a "dripping grove of trees" on a hillside above

her home, looking down at the villa-dotted valley of Great Missenden village.<sup>167</sup> It is as though she, like Forster's young woman, has achieved the escape of arborification. High and aloof above the valley on which she gazes, she detaches herself briefly from the civilised scene, before descending again into it to discuss with her mother-in-law her awesome timetable of household chores.

Denham's escape into the other worlds of cave and forest are, like the transitions of Rose Macaulay's mystics into realms: beyond the actual, transitory only. Her attempts to flee are censured: she is seen in them to be merely indulging her urge to selfishness, to be becoming one of "the Philistines, the Barbarians, the Unsociable...those who do not care to take any trouble," to whom the book is dedicated. She must abandon her quests for these other worlds and participate in the tug and conflict of opposites which constitute real life. She must, like Alix Sandomir, renounce her stance as a non-combatant. Her Metro-land compromise with Arnold represents the same table-land of the second-best which all Rose Macaulay's questing characters have reached before her. Denham's search for self must be abandoned and she must learn to take into account the "selves" of the many other people - Arnold, his mother, her baby - who surround her. Like the character in the song who wants to go to Birmingham but arrives instead in Crewe - like, indeed, the many other Macaulay protagonists who have charted the voyages of their lives in one direction but have been cast up on

undesired shores - she finds herself in a situation she has aimed to avoid, and must make the best of it.

Yet Rose Macaulay is intrigued in Crewe Train not only by her heroine's personal dilemma, but by the wider issues of which Denham's problems are symptomatic. She examines again, as she has done in Orphan Island, the curious interdependency of the civilised and the savage, displaying once more the paradox that the progress of civilised life must depend on some counter-element of barbarity to inspire and maintain the struggle towards higher things.

Freedom loving Denham is catapulted from the animal contentment of her Andorran solitude to the complex hubbub of London:

London. The problem was, why did so many people live in it? Millions and millions of people, swarming over the streets, as thick as flies over a dead goat, as buzzing and as busy....And then the streets. Thousands and thousands of omnibuses, taxis, vans and cars, all roaring down the streets together, like an army going into battle, mowing down with angry trumpeting such human life as crossed their path.<sup>168</sup>

We are reminded of the hectic activity of Vile Bodies, of the teeming London busyness evoked in The Secret Agent or Mrs Dalloway.<sup>169</sup> Denham is staggered by her uncle's publishing house, with its "rooms stacked from floor to ceiling with books," and by her cousins' constant compulsion to talk - "Chatter, chatter, chatter - how they talked!"<sup>170</sup> Her Aunt Evelyn warns her:

'If you go out to dinner, my dear child, you've got to talk. It's not fair on your hostess if you don't. It's not fair, either, on the men next you. Not fair, do you see. They've got to keep it up, and if you don't help they can't. Besides, it spoils a dinner to have a dead spot. If you can't talk, you mustn't go out. Women who can't or won't speak when they're out are a public nuisance. We've all got a duty to society, do you see....'<sup>171</sup>

Civilisation is presented to Denham as a vast, intimidatingly intricate tracery of connections between person and person, a suffocatingly close-knit network of communications - transport, conventions, manners, the written and spoken word - linking one human being to another. Her initial, instinctive response is to duck the responsibilities it represents and to retreat to the safety and darkness of the Cornish cave where her sense of self is unimpeded. What interests Rose Macaulay is the mysterious pull of opposites she postulates for her character which, even in the depths of her self-preoccupation in the Cornish cave, draws her back to the world she has thought she has rejected.

Because she loved Arnold, she would go and live again as he lived, surrounded by people, civilisation and fuss, she would bear his child, tend and rear it, become a wife and a mother instead of a free person, be tangled in a thousand industries and cares, a thousand relationships, instead of soaking in idleness alone.<sup>172</sup>

Love, "the great taming emotion," compels her to reunion with her husband just as her father has felt drawn to renounce his hard-won scholarly solitude to marry his brash Andorran wife.<sup>173</sup> Human beings are this complex blend of opposites, the novel insists; civilisation

is this peculiar mix of contradictory impulses. The barbaric urge in human nature can be suppressed but not removed; civilisation depends simply on the right balance being kept between the two drives. Denham, installing herself in her Metro-land villa with the Buckinghamshire countryside round about is practising just such a precarious balancing act. Her name, we realise, encapsulates the merging of opposites, offering a picture of "wholeness" such as that contained in Orphan Island's chess-board. "Denham's" Saxon origins indicate a "valley homestead," by implication the Missenden home on which she looks down at the end of the novel, and in which she feels trapped.<sup>174</sup> The first syllable of the name resembles the Greek word dendron, a tree, while the second suggests the Old English root for "home." The two conflicting impulses in Denham's nature are embodied in her name - the urge to wildness and indulgence of self, and the need for the civilised home where she finds the husband she loves. Rose Macaulay depicts in Crewe Train as she did in Orphan Island, the union of many opposites, of male and female, of intellectual and physical spheres, of the barbaric and urbane, of the self with the "other" elements of society without which, paradoxically, it cannot exist. Human civilisation essentially is, she suggests again, this patchwork of opposites.

Keeping Up Appearances describes a young girl's search for a sense of self which encompasses her whole, complex character. The novel, Rose Macaulay tells Father Johnson, "had its genesis in the reflection how manifold is human nature, and that it might be fun to present one person as two, as far thro' the book as was possible."<sup>175</sup>

Daphne Simpson accompanies the Folyot family abroad to look after their children. Poised and debonair, showing an intelligent interest in her employers' affairs - Mr Folyot's book on sculpture, Mrs Folyot's campaigns for social justice, their eldest son Raymond's studies in biology - she keeps carefully hidden from them the less attractive side of her nature. Daisy Simpson, this suppressed alter ego, is five years older than Daphne, is frightened by noises in the night, is the illegitimate daughter of the plebeian Mrs Lily Arthur of East Sheen, writes (like Rose Macaulay) articles about "the modern girl" for the popular press and has published, under the pseudonym of Marjorie Wynne, a novel entitled Youth at the Prow. Daphne's eventual engagement to Raymond is not a happy one. It becomes impossible for her to conceal Daisy's presence. In an attempt to hide from him her East Sheen background and her questionable journalism, she traps herself in a network of lies, and the engagement is broken. The truth that "each human creature is a thousand worlds, strung loosely together by some strange frail bond" is illustrated.<sup>176</sup> The idea may owe something to Gertrude Stein's Three Lives (1909), a study, unusual for its time, of a multiple personality.<sup>179</sup>

Daisy/Daphne longs to live at ease with all the myriad facets of her nature, to accept with equanimity the frustrating fluidity of her personality. "'She's like water,' remarks Mrs Folyot, '- takes any colour, slips away, changes her shape.'<sup>178</sup> Happy, sad, frightened, relaxed, cynical, loving - Daisy/Daphne becomes what other people want her to be, moulding herself to suit their expectations and

desires. There is no escape, she discovers in the end, from this multiplicity. Standing in the novel's closing scenes on the deck of an ocean liner, passported as Daphne Daisy Simpson and on her way to an American lecture tour as Marjorie Wynne, she briefly contemplates with excitement the possibility of escape from the mesh of her three lives. She resolves - a hysterical idea which she is allowed to entertain only for a moment - to inform her agents that Miss Wynne has ceased to exist, and to rush off, free from entanglements, on a solitary tour of South America:

One was, after all, oneself: one had a right to be oneself....The thing was not to give a damn what other people thought, but to take one's own path, pursue one's own private adventure through the maze ...to see and hear and touch and taste, to react in one's own private way to the universe, to enjoy it, and yet to hold it lightly at its proper value, never permitting oneself to be entangled or involved, but to keep an eye, as it were, through gaps in the walls, on the luminous, half-discerned view that stretched always beyond it....<sup>179</sup>

The vocabulary of mysticism is still present. Daisy/Daphne is as anxious to break through gaps in walls as Vincent Carter was in The Valley Captives. Rose Macaulay continues to convey her sense of other, purer, clearer worlds beyond the actual into which characters might burst triumphantly, transcending the confusion of their ordinary lives. For the heroine of this novel of 1928, however, as for the protagonists of the earlier novels, the ideal of escape is unrealisable. Approached by an admirer of her novels, "Daphne" hastens back to her slot in the composite character, presenting a poised and elegant front to her public:

A casual beckon from a stranger, and here again was Daphne, debonair, youthful, and beloved. And with her came Daisy, her shadow, weaving with lies the garments in which she appeared, building with deceits the floor on which she stood. Daisy and Daphne were not dead: they were immortal.

And what of Miss Wynne? Perhaps she, too, would live; perhaps, after all, she was even to lecture....<sup>180</sup>

She learns, like all Rose Macaulay's characters before her, that one must live with the complexity and entanglement, that the longed-for translation to the sphere where all is lucid, clear and coherent is not to be lastingly achieved.

The point is made that all characters are bizarre and multi-faceted. Mr Folyot, a "very gentle, nice, man," who is "something in the British Museum," is discovered to be deeply resentful at being allocated to speak in fourth instead of first place at a literary dinner.<sup>181</sup> Mrs Folyot, selfless campaigner for social revolutions, is so shocked by the sudden sight of herself in a shop mirror ("'Heavens,' she cried, 'I have no neck! None whatever!'" ) that she rushes out to a beauty parlour in search of instant remedial treatment.<sup>182</sup> Raymond, impassive scientist, sits reading a review copy of a book by a rival in his field, maliciously calculating the size of type he might specify for his assessment of it to appear in:

Raymond wished that his little review could be set up in pearl type, or - last ignominy - in diamond, scarcely legible by the naked eye.<sup>183</sup>



Thirteen year-old Cary, who has seemed to be a "nightmare-ridden" and nervous child, is discovered to have sufficient innate bravery to go downstairs in the night to disturb burglars.<sup>184</sup> Her brother Charles' secret life provides a light-hearted footnote to the theme - he is in the habit of stealing potfuls of strawberry jam from the kitchen and indulging in midnight feasts. Here are human souls at their most complicated and chameleon-like. There is no "coarse simplicity of types."<sup>185</sup> The only wholeness which can be achieved is an acceptance of their multiplicity.

Rose Macaulay is intent, too, however, in Keeping Up Appearances, on again showing the thin patina of ordinary businesses and preoccupations which divides the civilised from the savage. There is a concentration in this novel as in none of the others on the minutiae of daily living. At points it seems possible that she may even be engaging in a modernist - Joycean or Woolfian - experiment, evoking what Woolf describes as the "myriad impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel" received by the "ordinary mind on an ordinary day."<sup>186</sup> The story consists of a leisurely ramble through day to day events in Daisy/Daphne's life. Daisy in her London flat wakes, makes breakfast, turns on her bath, returns to bed to read the paper and her post, types her thousand words on the modern career woman while her charlady cleans. She wanders around the London streets, looking at clothes in shop windows and at the chalked mottoes of a pavement artist, lunches with her brother Edward and pays a visit to the dentist. She catalogues the many sounds of a London morning - the

"cheepings and twitterings of sparrows," the footsteps of the newspaper boys on iron stairs, the "clattering of milk cans," the chirruping of a cat-lover to her cat.<sup>187</sup> She describes the routine struggle to wrest the cardboard disc from the milk-bottle top, "stabbing it with tin-openers, knives, pencils, finger nails and latchkeys," the humdrum annoyance of answering the telephone to a caller who has the wrong number, the inconsequential ramblings of the charwoman at her work, the details of Mrs Arthur's dinner-table in East Sheen - "ham, salad, buttered egg, ginger pudding and treacle, all kinds of delicious viands."<sup>188</sup>

Even the ridiculous trivia of the popular press are seen as essential aspects of civilised life. The novel is a "rag bag" of commentaries on topics which are perpetually recurring in Rose Macaulay's published work. Mini-articles on a whole spectrum of issues are inserted, lozenge-like into the text, often with the excuse that Daphne Simpson must produce her two-hundred words on them. Issues discussed in acid asides to the story are the correct use of words (people's "catachrestic speech"), the iniquities (linguistic and ethical) of the popular press, and such feminine dilemmas as "Is the modern girl religious?" "Should clever women marry stupid men?" "Can women have genius?" - and so on.<sup>189</sup> Such journalistic nonsense does have its place in maintaining the civilising veneer on life - it is articles such as these, after all, which provide Daphne Simpson's income, as they do Rose Macaulay's. Constance Babington Smith records her cousin's anxiety at her "prostitution of her ability as a writer" in popular journalism.<sup>190</sup>

It is clear she would have been sensitive to Virginia Woolf's jibe about having sunk to such levels.<sup>191</sup> While feeling on the one hand guilty, however, that her art may be tainted by its contact with the press, she does on the other retain a strong, practical, bread-winning streak which insists that such impurity is necessary. In Keeping Up Appearances, she strikes a blow for this necessary impurity.

The points of horror in Daphne's life occur when the civilised façade she has constructed for herself slips, leaving her face to face with the "barbarous" reality beneath. She lies awake on a summer night "in eon misery and amaze," wondering, "Where was she, what and why? What was the world, scurrying so strangely, so awfully, among the dreadful vastity of the stars, and what was she upon it, crawling between earth and heaven, nay, rather, between earth and hell? Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. The gods would destroy her utterly."<sup>191</sup> The mask slips again when, on a country walk, one of the children in her charge is attacked by a wild boar and she finds herself transfixed with fear, unable to help him: this is the real Daisy Simpson who, aware that she has no audience, instinctively allows free rein to her cowardice and fear. Finally, on board her America-bound ship at the end, she stares into the abyss to discover again her real self, the essential soul of hers which is neither Daisy, Daphne nor Marjorie Wynne.

Oh, what am I to do? whispered the little bewildered voice that belonged to none of these three, and with the frightened whisper a frail little spirit, overshadowed

by the three who formed its cage, fled shivering for cover.<sup>193</sup>

It is always best, the novel suggests, to keep these depths of reality hidden. Cary Folyot slips into the realm of nightmare after surreptitious reading of Freud on dreams; Daphne attempts to raise her out of her morbid fascination with the strangeness of human sexuality by "talking to her casually, cheerfully, about marriage, as if it was quite all right, and not at all beastly really."<sup>194</sup> Clinging to one's vanities and pretences, to one's carefully preserved image - if all else fails, to one's job in hand - is what civilisation consists of. In these coherence and pattern must be found which will protect the human animal from his consciousness of the néant. The "whole" human being balances on the surfaces, while fearfully acknowledging the depths. Rose Macaulay's credo is strikingly anti-Laurentian, her insistence on the preservation of essential façades at variance with Lawrence's belief in the individual's need to know and understand the deepest, hidden strata of his inner being. There will always be, Rose Macaulay shows, the frightened part of Daisy/Daphne which will lie tremulously awake listening to the mysterious noises of the night, the prowler trying her hotel-room door; there will always, too, however, be the public self which she can draw, curtain-like over these depths, enabling her to "keep up appearances." Appearances must, for the sake of order and sanity, be kept up: in this alone does civilisation exist.

Staying With Relations "stays with" the double themes of the last two novels. Catherine Grey gradually discovers the truth about the relatives she house-parties with in the Guatemalan jungle - they are indeed as complex and many-faceted as has been suggested in Keeping Up Appearances. At the same time the novel stresses again the perplexing interrelatedness of the barbaric and the civilised.

Catherine Grey's discoveries of the truth about human nature have an obvious correlative in her journey upriver to stay with her aunt and cousins in their hacienda - it is a Heart of Darkness-like pilgrimage to the heart of things.<sup>195</sup> In the course of a hot, sultry summer, Catherine unveils in each of her hosts the complex personalities which their surface demeanours have belied. American débutante Isie, who has appeared "confident and assertive...a cheerful, tranquil young woman" is shown to exist with nerves at breaking point, miserable in her recent marriage to Adrian.<sup>196</sup> He, a shell-shock victim of the First World War, is as hysterical and nervous as she. Claudia, who has struck Catherine as "pale, ironic and delicately spinsterish," aloof from the entanglements of passion as she minces fastidiously through "a rough and coarse world," is in fact in love with the newly married Adrian.<sup>197</sup> Breaking free from the complications of this situation, she eventually announces her engagement to a rich widower with five children, an arrangement with which she is delighted since it will immediately gratify her maternal instincts. Julia, classified by Catherine as "a light lady, a mistress to a succession of lovers," is in fact a Quaker, who marries real estate man Buck James and settles contentedly down with him in

their new Santa Barbara home with its "cute garden" and "cunningest patio."<sup>198</sup> Even her youngest cousin Meg, whom she has dismissed as "just a jolly little tom-boy," a sturdy, complacent child with no imagination has, it transpires, a delicate constitution and needs to be constantly guarded against brain-fever: possessed, in fact, of a vivid imagination, she sits in bed picturing herself a princess.<sup>199</sup> She also writes poetry. Her cousin Benedict, too, Catherine has perceived as an effete and intellectual, "finicking" young man - she is surprised, however, at the stubborn vengefulness with which he pursues the infamous Mr Phipps (who has stolen items from the Cradock home) and attempts to bring him to justice.<sup>200</sup> With similar surprise she realises that her uncle the judge, a man of apparently meticulous morality, is prey to baser desires, surreptitiously searching for treasure believed to have been hidden in his home. Unexpected truths, too, are discovered about the heroine herself. The organised Miss Grey, who has presented such a calm, controlled exterior, is found to be an inveterate gambler, who has left England to escape her debts, and who is surprisingly sensitive to criticism. Rose Macaulay leaves the reader, for once, with a truth unequivocally revealed: human nature, she shows, is odd, complex, perpetually changing: a wide view is required to encompass the elusively multifarious whole.

With Crewe Train and Keeping Up Appearances, Staying With Relations completes a trio of consecutive novels in which real human dilemmas are discussed. Rose Macaulay's interest in the idea of character emerges clearly as she progresses from her description of a woman contending with two contradictory drives, the barbaric and the

civilised, in her personality; to a dramatisation of what might happen if these separated drives were portrayed as distinct individuals; to an evocation of a group of people all with natures many-sided, shifting and surprising. Characters are ideas in these novels, yet remarkably, Denham Dobie, Daisy Simpson and the principal people at the Cradock hacienda are evoked with the same degree of interested realism as the women of Dangerous Ages. Rose Macaulay has managed to strike a balance here between the demonstration of idea, which is her primary concern, and the creation of character. Still busy with the theory of quest and the working out of issues on a thematic level, she does not now forget that her figures must also be made to live and act convincingly. They do not at any point "run away with" her, develop unexpectedly or refuse to fit into their places in her patterns, yet there is certainly more of Rose Macaulay herself in their dilemmas than in those of Michael Travis or Peter Margerison.<sup>201</sup> These are her own problems being debated - her own perplexity at the conflicting impulses she notices in her personality, her sense of having multiple selves, her novelist's distressing innocence of the complexity of human character. That she should highlight Catherine Grey's problem as a writer of fiction who is unable to assess character correctly is particularly interesting. It suggests an uncomfortable awareness of her own inadequacy in this direction.

Staying With Relations carries further too, the perception which surfaced in Crewe Train and Keeping Up Appearances, that the barbaric and the civilised are surprisingly but inextricably linked. They are

the complementary parts of the "one stupendous whole" of life.<sup>202</sup> A link is forged between the Guatemalan jungle and civilised urban life:

All night, waking and sleeping, Catherine heard those sounds which, when one is passing the night in Central American forests, or near Regent's Park, link one so happily with night in city streets, for jaguars and pumas howled like motor horns, wild pigs and other creatures crashed through thickets with the noise of motor bicycles, monkeys, waking or disturbed by dreams, emitted sharp cries like milkmen, alligators in the lake clashed their teeth as milkmen clash bottles, and birds whistled like boys bringing newspapers at dawn.<sup>203</sup>

The conflation of unlikes has, we recall, been T.S. Eliot's in his response to Stravinsky's Le Sacre du printemps in the Dial, 1921. Listening to it, he has been conscious of the unification of the civilised and the barbaric, the metamorphosis of city sounds, "the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, the beating of iron and steel, the roar of the underground railway," into music.<sup>204</sup> Sailing upriver to her aunt's hacienda, Catherine spots a nutria diving into the water, a small, brown, beaver-like animal which she associates at once with the fur-trimmings she has taken for granted in the civilised world. Pigs and peccary squealing and trampling in the forest are identified by the Cradocks as sources of future food. Confronted by the profusion of forest flowers on the river-bank, Isie insists on announcing their names, classifying the tropical wildness "with the careful learning of the schoolgirl."<sup>205</sup> A group of Indians reminds Benedict of a painting - "'Look, those Indians have grouped themselves like a



Vanessa Bell fresco. Rather ravishing."<sup>206</sup> (Rose Macaulay holds herself, as usual, mockingly aloof from Bloomsbury). The novel's title is skilful, encapsulating as it does the theme of the relations between apparently diametrically opposed states - the civilised and the barbaric.

The Cradock hacienda, with its multiple architectural layers epitomises, as it stands on the edge of the forest, Rose Macaulay's sense of the odd closeness of the two conditions. The villa is "the triumph of civilisation over barbarous rusticity."<sup>207</sup> The baroque 1930's mansion in which the houseparty is set has been a tenth-century Maya palace, a Dominican priory in the 1560's, a Spanish planter's ranch house in the 1830's and an Americanised villa in the 1900's. We are reminded of similar milieux and corresponding juxtapositions of the wild with the cultivated in Lawrence's Mornings in Mexico (1927) and The Plumed Serpent (1926).<sup>208</sup> Rose Macaulay was certainly familiar with his work and may well have read these pieces on their appearance only a few years before her own South American novel.<sup>209</sup>

The earthquake and storm in which Isie wanders lost in the forest, searched for by her distraught family, provide another picture of a human soul slipped into the abyss of barbarous reality. Unable to tolerate her unhappy marriage, she abandons herself to the mercy of the elements and descends to a nadir of hopelessness. Reduced in these circumstances to all that is elemental in her, becoming "an animal crazed with fear" as she pushes her way through

the vegetation, she does, however, experience the rekindling of the impulse to civilisation: she rediscovers her instinctive religious feeling, praying desperately for rescue.<sup>210</sup> Sanity returns when she chances upon an ancient, ruined temple, mysteriously still standing proud in the chaos of the jungle:

A temple, she supposed, long ruined <sup>and</sup> probably never since discovered, buried in the heart of the jungle, which had, through the centuries, grown over and about it. One of those hundreds of ruins which lie hidden about the forest towards the Chiapas border, never to be seen by white archaeologists seeking temples.<sup>211</sup>

It is an effective symbol of hope renewed. Refreshed by sleep in the shelter of the temple, she awakens to bird song and recites to herself some poetry - the careful construction of lines and shaping of stanzas, with the rigorous effort of memory involved in the recitation, contrasts with the formless jungle of the landscape outside.

Rose Macaulay offers an emblem-like picture of the civilised and the savage: waking in the temple after the storm, Isie is delighted by the sound of an oriole singing in a nearby tree - "high on a branch among the fruit a golden bird was trilling a song to the dawn."<sup>212</sup> Around her on the ground at the same time, however, "little snakes uncurled themselves from the crevices of the walls and wriggled about the floor."<sup>213</sup> It is a carefully managed image describing the conflation of opposites, the necessary

complementariness of the beautiful and the base, the uplifting and the terrifying, the barbaric and the civilised.

She felt that, if the oriole in the jocote tree should stop his fluting, she would let go of life, or the few links that still held her to sanity, and drop down and down, drowned in the lonely horror of the drowned forest.<sup>214</sup>

The snake and the bird are inevitable cohabitators of the tree of life. Only by aspiring to the birdsong - to the values of civilisation - the picture suggests, can the human animal tolerate the jungle horrors.

Characters in this novel toy perpetually with the subject of civilisation, debating its definition in the oppressively humid hours before the earthquake. Benedict postulates "a certain proficiency in the arts and sciences, and an elaborate meshwork of laws for regulating behaviour, a certain amount of tolerance and indifference to one another's habits."<sup>215</sup> Catherine argues for "a more or less prevalent and not too low ethical standard."<sup>216</sup> Adrian believes civilisation "doesn't exist, except in individuals."<sup>217</sup> Claudia, detached to the point of nihilism, denies even the value of the debate:

'It's no use talking about it,' said Claudia, 'since everyone means a different thing by it - learning, or culture, or applied knowledge, or virtue, or good taste, or good manners, or good laws, or good housing and drainage. So one may just as well not use the word at all. Conversation about anything is useless. There are simply not enough words that mean the same thing to everyone. We talk entirely too much.'<sup>218</sup>

She evokes the abyss of hopelessness which lurks at the back of man's mind and which he dreads to recognise. Claudia's scenario denotes utter meaninglessness, a vacuum in which words have no sense and communication between human beings is impossible. Civilisation exists, Rose Macaulay suggests, purely in man's efforts to encompass this "nothingness" - to describe it in words (as in Isie's poem in the forest), to make laws, enforce standards and introduce disciplining influences which will reduce its power. "'All this damned repression,'" says Adrian to Claudia at one point, having just retreated from a hysterical argument with his wife. "'Life seems to consist of nothing else. Can't we be ourselves for a change?'"<sup>219</sup> Claudia's reply summarizes the novel's theme:

'Repression - well, of course repression is damned; it must be; one has read so. But - just think of it - suppose there was no damned repression among human creatures - life would be as lush and as obscene and as murderous as the forest. Repression is damned, but unrepression is more damned.'<sup>220</sup>

One dare not, for the sake of civilisation, recklessly "be oneself."

The novel ends with the return of the party from the jungle and with the re-assumption of the values of civilisation. Adrian and Isie find an unexpected degree of contentment together. Julia sets up a comfortable home with Buck James and plans to join his church. Claudia agrees to marry her rich widower and moves purposefully towards the responsibilities of motherhood. For all, meaninglessness

and despair are kept at bay by their disciplined adherence to the idea that they must somehow infuse their lives with coherence.

### They Were Defeated

They Were Defeated (1932) stands in a distinctive category of its own. Set in seventeenth-century England, it is Rose Macaulay's only historical novel. Though unsatirical, it is, however, alive with the author's obvious pleasure in reconstructing the language, events and atmosphere of a previous era. It displays a last, vivid burst of imagination before the sadder, less successful novels of the late 1930's.

It is the culmination of the themes which have animated her stories so far. A novel full of quests, it is busy with interest in character and with people's searches for self. Again, too, it expresses the author's preoccupation with the constant breaking in of barbarism upon civilisation. On the brink of the Civil War, the peace and order of this seventeenth-century world is about to be disturbed.

They Were Defeated is full of Rose Macaulay herself in a way earlier novels have not been. Members of her own family have inspired some of the characters. Robert Herrick is an ancestor of hers - her great grandmother was Anne Herrick, of the same family as the poet. The character of Dr Conybeare is also rooted in actual family connections, as she explains to Father Johnson:

The Dr Conybeare in *They Were Defeated* was the son of an Elizabethan school master who was my ancestor; we have the line of descent, and a little Latin book he wrote; it was edited and reprinted by my mother's cousin F.C. Conybeare, an atheistical Oxford don....<sup>221</sup>

The reference is to Letters and Exercises of the Elizabethan Schoolmaster, John Conybeare, with Notes and a Fragment of Autobiography, by William Daniel Conybeare, edited by F.C. Conybeare (1905).<sup>222</sup> Family connections are relished and celebrated. The novel is full, too, of her sense of sheer self-indulgence in writing it - it is the piece she enjoyed producing most, as she explains in a letter to Gilbert Murray in 1945:

I wonder if you will read, and if you will like, 'They Were Defeated.' I liked writing it very much, because I love the period, and felt I was living in it; and because I was interested in only using the words (in what any of the people said, I mean) that I could identify as having been used in 1640 or thereabouts. I slipped up, of course; the worst instance was that I made someone speak of 'scientists,' which no one really did till the 19th century; it should have been 'philosophers.' This was first pointed out to me by the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge - I think - or was it George Trevelyan? Anyhow, it was a bad gaffe; I can't think what I was thinking of. The book is full of my own relations - Herrick himself, and the Conybeare family (my mother's ancestors). I made up Dr Conybeare out of various members of the family - including a little, my mother's first cousin, F.C. Conybeare, whom I expect you knew at Oxford. The part of the book I liked best doing was 'Academic,' the middle section, about the Cambridge life of the day as I imagined it, with all the poets and politics.<sup>223</sup>

The novel resonates with the author's pleasure in recreating and sustaining an entire imaginary world.

They Were Defeated consists of three parts - "Bucolick," "Academic" and "Antiplatonic" - and opens in the rural Devonshire village of Dean Prior where Robert Herrick is holding his harvest thanksgiving service. A knot of central characters is introduced - the vicar-poet, his sister-in-law Elizabeth and friend John Suckling, Michael Conybeare the village doctor, his daughter Julian, a scholarly young woman who studies Latin and Greek with Herrick and writes poetry herself, Giles and Meg Yarde, grandchildren of the squire. The story moves slowly. The country peace is shattered by a witch-hunt, at the culmination of which Dr Conybeare administers poison to the bemused old woman in order to save her from the mob who victimize her. Conybeare and his daughter decide to take a trip to Cambridge to escape the outcry at Dean Prior and to visit Kit, Julian's brother, who is reading for his degree at St John's. Here however, Julian falls under the spell of Kit's tutor John Cleveland and is seduced by him. In the end she is accidentally killed in the fight which ensues between Cleveland and her other brother Frank, who has attempted to defend her honour. The novel closes in the subdued tones of the postscript, with Herrick back at Dean Prior, walking disconsolately round the parish from which he has been ejected, contemplating a world in chaos around him, yet cherishing with quiet hopefulness the prospects of his own poetry - his verse may win him an immortality which will transcend present earthly confusion.

The novel carries the stories of many quests. "Bucolick" is concerned with the villagers' malicious hunt for the witch in their midst. The quest in "Academic" is Julian's for the scholarly

learning she has longed for. The city of Cambridge symbolises a goal striven for, her hopes for perfection. The section opens on a bright, harmonious carillon, as she wakes at dawn to hear the bells of the city churches and college chapels ringing out in celebration. Here she is set to achieve her heart's desires - meeting the poets she has hero-worshipped from afar (John Cleveland, John Milton, Richard Crashaw, Abraham Cowley, Andrew Marvell), advancing her studies at the lectures on Platonism held by Henry More. Yet the final outcome of events is very different. She passes from Henry More's teaching in metaphysics to Cleveland's anti-Platonic tuition in matters physical. Her quest goes off course as she finds herself drawn to seek Cleveland's love rather than the simple intellectual delights of philosophy and poetry. The bubble of her ideal bursts and she discovers that her aspirations to poetry-writing, her hopes of attaining an intellectual maturity comparable to that enjoyed by the male scholars around her, cannot co-exist with her love for John Cleveland. He, refusing to recognise her claims to intellectual equality and her poetical gifts, regards her simply as a source of sexual gratification. Julian's ideals must be compromised if she is to attain the additional happiness she wants with Cleveland. She must depart from her single-minded, unblinkered pursuit of her own truth (the development of her own integrity) in order to please him, and in doing so loses her goal. We are reminded in Julian's story of Virginia Woolf's description in A Room of One's Own of the career of the imaginary "Judith Shakespeare," a sixteenth or seventeenth-century woman with a genius for fiction. She pictures her scribbling secretly in the apple-loft, betrothed against her will, running away



to the theatre in London. In Woolf's scenario, too, tragedy awaits her. Finding herself with child by the actor-manager who takes pity on her, she kills herself and "lies buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle."<sup>224</sup> Both women deal with the theme of "the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body."<sup>225</sup>

With its distinctively feminist message, They Were Defeated was not a novel Gerald O'Donovan found attractive. In letters to her sister, Rose expresses her gratitude that Jean at least likes the novel - "...it is a consolation that one person has been interested": "One of my great comforts has been that you and M [her sister Margaret] both like my book - it is so important to my pleasure that the family should, even if no-one else does."<sup>226</sup> It is safe to assume that the most significant absence from the list of admirers was that of the "beloved companion" himself.<sup>227</sup> Julian's dilemma with Cleveland in the story would be too close to Rose Macaulay's own with him for his comfort. She, devoted to O'Donovan as she wrote, yet writing little poetry during the long period of her alliance with him, and conscious always of the compromise to her moral standards which the relationship entailed, defiantly dramatized her own predicament in her fiction.

Julian's brother Kit is another quester. He seeks, he thinks, religious truth, being attracted to Roman Catholicism because of its illegality and the consequent cloak-and-dagger lifestyle it entails. His is a search for truth, but one which reveals his adolescent

immaturity and savours of his youthful desire for excitement and adventure. He declines to take the hard courses offered to him, of maintaining an outward observance of Anglican religious rites until his Cambridge degree is obtained, of facing his father's and his tutor's wrath. Instead he takes the weaker, self-indulgent course of setting out for a safe haven in France, evading his responsibilities at home. The harder, paradoxically more honest, course advocated by Dr Cosin of Peterhouse is not taken and confusion rules. Kit's flight to London necessitates his father's absence from Cambridge; Julian is left unchaperoned, is seduced by Cleveland and eventually dies. The consequences of deviating from the right route to a goal are for him - as they are for Julian - chaos.

They Were Defeated is a novel of thwarted quests: all indeed are defeated. It is a novel, too, however, in which the thin dividing line between civilisation and barbarity presents its usual fascination for its author. She is intrigued as always by the frustrating tendency of aimed-for patterns to disintegrate, of ordered arrangements to explode into disorder. The novel opens, for example, on Herrick's efforts to maintain "order and seamliness" in his church at Harvest Thanksgiving.<sup>228</sup> The offerings are arranged in elaborate abundance about the place:

His congregation had fully entered into the idea, and had spent a happy Saturday piling the window recesses, chancel steps, and pulpit with ripe pumpkins, melons, apples, pears, plums and enormous loaves, erecting wheatsheaves on the altar, twining barley and hops about the pillars, and standing great jugs of Michaelmas flowers in every corner. The vicar had sent fruit from his orchard, and sunflowers and Michaelmas daisies from the parsonage garden, and had

himself directed Prudence, his housekeeper, in the arrangement of them.<sup>229</sup>

All is ordered, pleasant and plentiful. Into this scene of patterned plenty, however, there erupts an element of disorder - a young pig is discovered munching happily away at a ripe melon in the display, an object of merriment to the assembled congregation. Herrick's hopes for an elaborate and civilised ceremony are dashed.

The scene is emblematic of wider events in the community. Dean Prior is established as a placid, country village, its inhabitants law-abidingly at church on a Sunday, its doctor cultivating his garden, Elizabeth Herrick sitting contentedly at her embroidery in the ingle-nook, Herrick and Suckling lingering happily over their after-dinner canary sack, discussing politics and poetry. Across these scenes of contentment, however, there cut the harsher, blacker realities of the witch-hunt. Dean Prior is the subject of no pastoral idyll, but a place where ignorance, stupidity and cruelty persist, and where one human being flees in fear from another.

Other ordered and civilised patterns which are aimed for are Julian's intellectual aspirations, associated with Cambridge, the symbol of civilisation at its peak. Julian's name suggests connections with the medieval mystic, Julian of Norwich: her progression towards the higher-insights offered by Cambridge has a submerged analogue in the mystical quest of her namesake. Herrick's

desire to publish and win recognition for his verse is, too, an aspiration towards civilised pattern and completeness.

Even against her unusual background of seventeenth-century rural England, Rose Macaulay is intent on showing that human life is an inevitable blend of the good and the bad, beautiful and ugly, civilised and barbaric. As in Orphan Island, Crewe Train, Keeping Up Appearances and Staying With Relations, she describes the human condition as a perpetual see-sawing between opposites, a continuous struggle to strike and maintain a balance between extremes. Herrick, the country parson, who can "make poetry of his loves, his friends, and his dreams, and sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers, of April, May of June and July - flowers, of May-poles, hock-carts, Wassails, wakes of bridegroom, brides, and of their bridal cakes," also discovers

...dark and dreadful lairs in his soul where ugliness and cruelty lusted and ravened; he hated them, but they haunted him, itched him, sometimes obsessed him, taking hold of his verse, twisting it into ugliness that matched the ugliness of those who disgusted him, jarring the loveliness of blossoms, song and love into fragments.<sup>230</sup>

The novel ends in a clash of discordant opposites, the "good" of Julian's love for Cleveland caught up in the "bad" of the duel which is its outcome. Love and hate collide. Julian's youth and beauty are inappropriately associated with death. The violence with which she meets her end is shockingly at odds with the neatness and order of the poetry she has just been composing. The Cambridge bells which

sound now, heralding the execution of Strafford, which coincides with Julian's death, are deliberately contrasted with the harmonious carillon which she delighted to hear on her arrival in the city.

We have a sense, at the end of the book, of being caught up in the vast, cyclic, tragi-comic pattern of the human condition. The story has travelled from the comedy of the harvest-thanksgiving opening scene to the tragedy of Julian's death in the closing ones, yet there is a suggestion that this is but the prelude to rebirth, that events will take a bright upward swing again. Cleveland senses that Julian's spirit survives, becoming in death perhaps even more truly herself than would have been possible had she lived:

He had immanacl'd her corporal rind and possessed  
her lovely body, but had he touched the freedom of her  
mind? If he had, she had regained it now, wherever  
her delicate virgin spirit might be straying, gravely  
dreaming along the gallant walks of Paradise,  
untroubled by such as he; the eternal poet, virginal,  
sexless, free and young.<sup>231</sup>

The reader has sensed all along the slow but inevitable progress of the story through the cycle of the seasons, from the autumn of the opening chapters through the Cambridge winter and the spring in which Julian dies, to the Midsummer day of the Postscript, on which Herrick contemplates his future and the possibility of attaining a kind of immortality through his poetry. Here is yet another pattern in which the opposites of life and death merge and which promises, in its very checkering, hope and renewal. Julian in her death has not succumbed to the "death of hope."<sup>232</sup> All the characters are defeated, yet

there is a recognition still of the wider, natural pattern in which failure will always, somehow, evolve into success.

### Conclusion

They Were Defeated shows Rose Macaulay at her most typically paradoxical. Describing the failure of her characters' quests - Julian's, Kit's - she yet allows in her imagery for a mysterious extra dimension in which a more lasting, if immaterial, degree of success might be achieved.

In these novels of 1921-1932, she is at the height of her powers as a master of paradox. Time after time we see her land her characters at the end of their stories on the compensatory plateau between success and failure. Neville Bendish accepts the loss of her career and intellectual independence, yet experiences an odd, wry happiness in her very ability to achieve this mature acceptance. Rome Garden knows she is dying of cancer, yet knows, too that she will defeat the pain in an overdose of veronal. The Thinkwell family, trapped on Orphan Island, are unable to realise the worldly goals they have aspired to - the publication of learned articles in anthropological magazines, marriage, fame - yet in the end quite contentedly accommodate themselves to the many "best possibles" their alternative life on the island offers them. Denham Dobie makes do with life in the suburbs, poised between the countryside she loves and the city she must accept as a term of her marriage contract. Daisy-Daphne, her love-affair ended, wraps her many selves around

her, accepting that she must, like everyone else, play the civilised game, and that life must go on. What is success? What is failure? Rose Macaulay poses the question as a challenge in each of these stories. In novel after novel, her characters seem, simultaneously, to achieve both.

Leaving her people on the point of intersection between success and failure, Rose Macaulay offers a distinctive blend of tragedy and comedy. The death of Mr Jayne, for example, in Told By an Idiot is an incident which teeters on the verges of both. Sitting on a park bench in Bloomsbury Square, the unhappily married man asks Rome if she will run away to Italy with him, and she momentarily ponders her reply.

But the words, whatever they were, which she would have uttered - and neither Mr Jayne nor any one else was ever to know - were checked before her tongue formed them. For some one jumped out of the trees behind the bench on which they sat, and jabbed a long knife into Mr Jayne's back, between the shoulders, and rushed away.<sup>233</sup>

Events and characters are so briefly and economically pencilled in that for a moment we feel that the episode has occurred only on the level of cartoon, that the death is ridiculous, laughable, ludicrously coincidental. Yet the quick strokes have brought real tragedy to Rome. Her life will never be the same again. She will retreat more and more into her coolness, irony and spinsterly detachment. Avenues offering excitement have been closed. The whole scene is remarkably orchestrated, its writer treading a hazardous

path between the tragic and the comic, allowing interpretation, briefly, at either level.

As her characters can be both near-cartoon and real, they can, too, be both satirised and sympathised with. Miss Smith, laughable pseudo-Queen Victoria that she is, with her eccentricities and obsessions, is yet clearly also a sad old lady, drinking herself to death. The faithful nurse Jean is certainly meant to be laughed at for her much repeated longing to return to her Aberdeen home, yet the real sadness of her plight in never returning is obvious. Again Rose Macaulay works carefully on two levels, allowing her satire to bite, yet rounding her characters just sufficiently for the seriousness of their dilemmas to be felt.

In the same way, her novels during this period can be simultaneously highly symbolic and intensely realistic. Neville's progress towards her morning swim is drenched in imagery, yet the images in no way impede the narrative. Again Rose Macaulay is operating a skilful duality, creating a plane of ideas in her symbols, while at the same time carrying forward actions and events on the more accessible level of the plot.

A similar skill is, of course, detectable in her trick of modulating from her account of a character's personal quest to a discussion of some universal issue. Character-drawing and ideas are interwoven in the consistently complicated fabric of her tales.



Mastering all these opposites, Rose Macaulay achieves in the novels of her middle period a sophisticated "wholeness" of vision. Her stories of failure incorporate success, her tragedies incorporate comedy, her novels of ideas are also convincingly about people, or herself. In their own way, her books demonstrate the desirable wholenesses her characters seek. Displaying in their tantalising closeness to one another the many opposites she perceives, Rose Macaulay, in the very act of writing, encompasses them. The novels which result, between 1921 and 1932, are intensely, challengingly, vividly paradoxical.

Chapter 5 : Into the Abyss : Novels 1934-1940

The novels Rose Macaulay produced between 1934 and 1940 are sadder and poorer than those of her bright "middle period." In Going Abroad, I Would Be Private and No Man's Wit, we have a sense of an imagination failing, of a writer who is fatigued and struggling to sustain plots. There are intimations here that she is winding unhappily down to the ten-year period of her fictional silence between 1940 and 1950 when she published no novels at all.

Poetry

Her poetry writing continues to be sparse during this period. Only two published pieces can be traced. The first, a mock period piece entitled "The Chase," attributed to Anon, c. 1675, in her anthology The Minor Pleasures of Life (1934), caused her some embarrassment when its inauthenticity was discovered.<sup>1</sup> Challenged by John Hayward, she replied:

Unfortunately you happen on the only thing in that book which is not quite as it seems. The fact is that I wanted a poem about women hunting and couldn't lay my hands on one at the moment, so I thought I would write one myself, and it amused me to put it into 17th century garb and date it "c. 1675"....It wasn't meant as a leg-pull, only as a private experiment of my own.<sup>2</sup>

Again the work of a writer who enjoys celebrating the strengths of active, "manly" women, it shows her also fascinated by language, its

origins and the infinitely extendable, many-splendoured English vocabulary. The second, "Peace Treaty," commemorates the signing of the Versailles Treaty on June 28th, 1919, and was published in the Pacifist anthology, All in a Maze, which she edited with Daniel George in 1937.<sup>3</sup> The post-war peace to be enjoyed by the tennis-playing civilian survivors is contrasted with that experienced by the soldier who has lost his life fighting for it:

And there's no peace so quiet, so lasting  
As the peace you keep in France.<sup>4</sup>

#### Biographical Background

Rose Macaulay's writing outside her fiction between 1934 and 1940 expresses her growing anxiety about the state of the world. She is distressed by her vision of a civilisation darkening down once again for war, and perplexed by the peculiar political environment of the late 1930's. Worry about the problem of Pacifism features perpetually in her letters and journalism. In 1936, she became a sponsor of Dick Sheppard's Peace Pledge Union, clearly - if unexpectedly, given his reputation for facility - impressed by his enthusiasm for his cause. "I was sorry you missed Dick Sheppard on the wireless," she writes to her sister Jean in August that year. "We thought him excellent; quite the best wireless sermon I have ever heard, very stirring and keen. I wish more sermons were like that. He really did make goodness sound like an urgent and desperately important job to be tackled....It was a great change from the usual

conventional maunderings of the clergy."<sup>5</sup> In October of the same year, however, she tells Gilbert Murray that she is "haunted" by his saying that he thought the advocates of complete pacifism were doing harm. "It is a fearful thought, that I often have. But then, what human activity isn't doing harm in this matter? (No: that is an idiotic remark)."<sup>6</sup> She is troubled in this letter by the problem of armaments:

I always doubt if it is wise for those who may differ from you even slightly to hear you speak, as they stand in grave risk of having their minds changed. Mine is, on armaments, so wavering anyhow, that it is particularly in danger; and all the time you spoke, I was agreeing. I have had to remember since, that I don't really believe we ought to imitate the crocodile's methods, even to keep him at bay....<sup>7</sup>

By October 1937, however, she has quelled her doubts sufficiently to accompany Dick Sheppard on his successful campaign for the Rectorship of Glasgow University.<sup>8</sup> There is ambivalence in all Rose Macaulay's political thinking at this time. It is apparent, too, in her attitude to the emerging wave of Spanish Fascism. Helping to organize a "Writers' Anti-Fascist Meeting" at the Queen's Hall in June 1938, she yet writes to Daniel George afterwards that, though she is glad they have had it, "heaven knows what good we think it will do."<sup>9</sup> Her pacifist writing is full of similar tensions: she follows the publication of All in a Maze with a note to her co-editor Daniel George:

I have been thinking, if ever it gets to another edition, that we might try and insert some more pieces applicable to the present situation, from the view of those who think

that even war is not so dreadful and wrong as letting people be bullied and enslaved. This is the one criticism I have had from readers - that, as it stands, it is too exclusively pacifist propaganda - saying that war is horrible, but not that there are (to-day) things worse.<sup>10</sup>

Her letter to the New Statesman and Nation of May 22, 1937, is an impassioned appeal for the Pacifist argument, for the "religion, humanity, civilisation, intelligence" of the Pacifist stance as opposed to the "primitive," the "coarse, unintelligent and barbaric technique" of war.<sup>11</sup> Yet she writes (possibly in May 1939, the letter is undated) to Daniel George that, "Pacifists do, I think, do a lot of harm."<sup>12</sup>

What appals her most is the sheer barbarism which war represents, the toppling of the civilised façade which she, as a sensitive human being and artist, has been so anxious to maintain. Her 1937 article, "Aping the Barbarians," is a forthright statement of opinion:

This business of acting like savages because other people do is a mistake that all savages make. It gets civilization nowhere. The vicious circle wants breaking, by some original, strong, and intelligent power, which cares enough for the long run of civilization to stake its possessions on the gamble of disarmament, which cares enough for intelligence and humanity to reject utterly and without compromise these barbarous imbecile methods of controversy....The point about the disarmament experiment is, what is the alternative? War and more war, stupid and cruel distinction, the savage dancing his tribal dance, whooping in his feathers, tomahawk and war-paint, until the jungle swallows him up and the world as we know it crashes in ruins.<sup>13</sup>

Again in her pamphlet, "An Open Letter to a Non-Pacifist," her horror of fragmentation, of disorder, of the savage disruption of the civilised pattern, is explicit:

The situation seems urgent. For if civilisation even such as it is, is to go under in hatred and lies, blown to bits by crashing hoards of bombing planes, as it is even now being in Spain, it is going to be pretty difficult to put the pieces together again....Culture will be gone, barbarism will reign, the clock will have swung back through the centuries to a darker age, because not enough people would reject the conventions of contemporary warfare as too cruel, too horrible, for civilised humanity to accept as a conceivable method of settling differences with one another.<sup>14</sup>

In all her writing, both fiction and non-fiction, of the late 1930's, we find Rose Macaulay less and less convinced that such imagery of hope as has been apparent in the steadfastly changing seasons at the end of They Were Defeated, can be sustained. The novels of her waning imagination insist increasingly that, in the face of the forces of barbarism ranged against it, civilisation is indeed disintegrating, that the pursuit of the whole is in fact ridiculous.

### Going Abroad

Pursuits of the whole in Going Abroad are intended, as the epigraph insists, to be a matter of "unredeemed levity."<sup>15</sup> Characters in this thinly plotted story are collected at the resort of Zarauz, the stage set for a stylish "holiday novel." Bishop Aubrey is a missionary in Xanadu who has made his life's work the compilation of a book on "Early Christian Heresies as Exemplified

among Modern Primitive Men."<sup>16</sup> His wife is a former Cambridge classical don who has as her consuming interest the reconstruction of the Garden of Eden and the identification of the forbidden fruit. Also present are Colonel and Mrs Buckley, their son and daughter, Giles and Hero, and a party of Oxford Groupers.<sup>17</sup> Hero in the course of the novel falls under the charismatic influence of the Groupers and is converted to their ideals. M and Mme Josef, beauticians of Basque origin who have made their fraudulent fortunes in London, are additions to the party, as is Mrs Dixon, an embittered middle-aged divorcée who has been permanently scarred by the Josefs' beauty treatments. Very little occurs until the half-way point, when there is a suddensurge of action as the entire party is kidnapped by Basque brigands and held for a week in a mountain stronghold. It transpires that the Josefs have abandoned their two plain-faced daughters to be raised by their grandparents and have failed to supply sufficient money for either their upbringing or their dowries: the hotel party is held until Mme Josef's conscience is stirred by the Groupers' leader Ted Baines, and the money is paid.

Quests in this novel are intended to be funny. Mrs Aubrey, "slightly unbalanced by the Mesopotamian sun," pursues the Garden of Eden.<sup>18</sup> Giles Buckley seeks peace and quiet. The Josefs' quest for cosmetic beauty for their gullible customers is an interesting downgrading of the serious search for beauty to which Michael Travis was committed in The Secret River. This quest for beauty is ridiculous, Mme Josef's beauty hints clearly designed to provoke smiles:

'Are you an auburn? Or are you tanned or weather-beaten? Then a lettuce-green foundation cream and a cabbage-green powder on top of this will tone down the face, and a green tint skilfully imparted in the hair will enhance its copper note....'<sup>19</sup>

Smile-provoking, too, are the so-scholarly title of the Bishop's book and the Groupers' quest for converts.

Only Hero Buckley's quest seems to be evoked with Rose Macaulay's customary serio-comic ambivalence. Her story has its humorous moments - her embarrassingly public outpouring of past "sins" after her conversion, her hopeless love-affair with her employer, her naive confusion of her commitment to the Buchmanite cause with her attraction to Ted - but she is, on the whole, more seriously treated. Beneath the veneer of Hero's controlled outward demeanour - she is depicted as a poised, carefree young débutante - there lurks a desperate seeker after security. Like Daisy Simpson in Keeping Up Appearances, she lies awake at night, fearful of death, appalled by the precariousness of life. At the root of her horror is her memory of a friend who has been killed in a car crash that summer. The incident suggests an echo of Agatha Runcible in Waugh's Vile Bodies, whose death in a similar smash barely intrudes on the lives of her too-bright, cocktail-drinking companions.<sup>20</sup> In Waugh's novel, too, a party of evangelists briefly offers the revellers cut-and-dried religious coherence - but there are rejected. Hero's willingness to embrace the bright, attractively simplistic ideas of the Buchmanites is indicative of her need for a sense of shape and meaning to counteract her hopelessness. As Ted Baines cheerfully



dismisses her fear of death, she surrenders gradually to his certainty:

Of course, if one could believe death to be that [the opening of a door], not merely the cold dark grave or the wandering sea she feared, not the dreadful, ineluctable, lightless dark, for ever and for ever - well, if one could believe that, both life and death must wear a different look.<sup>21</sup>

She leaves her family to help further the Buchmanite cause in the Basque-country - using the opportunity, the reader is left to assume, to pursue her almost indistinguishable interest in Ted Baines. Rose Macaulay's treatment of Hero's case is interesting in that she seems to have set the stage for straight satire, but in the end to have pulled her punches. We are shown the obvious targets for her fun, yet Hero in her naivety remains a character with whom we do sympathise - we almost envy her her blinkered certainties.

The novel's quest theme is confirmed by its central image, the breathtaking upward climb of the bus (which glances at the imagery of Forster's The Celestial Omnibus) along the steep mountain track to the scene of the party's kidnapping.<sup>22</sup> Itself on the borderline between comedy and seriousness, the incident encapsulates the novel's ambivalence, its evocation of real human perplexity amid the trappings of a comic tale. Yet Going Abroad does end as previous novels have not on a note of rueful despair, its characters brought down finally to the level of figures in a comic film, the seriousness of their quests denied. Sir Arthur Denzil, Mrs Aubrey's brother,

suddenly sees the "rich tapestry" of experience as being like a steadily running film:

'And now here we are....sitting in Cambridge and watching Charles and Richenda make a bonfire of their weeds, and pursuing our studies and hoping to dine in hall this evening, and turning our backs on Basque bandits, beauty-parlour rampers, life-changers, lacquered toe-nails, and sea-side life in general, just as if it were all a rather absurd comic film. Perhaps we are right, and it is.'<sup>23</sup>

The Bergsonian metaphor reduces and trivialises, sweeping characters and concerns, complexities and contradictions into the nonsensical continuum of a comic film.<sup>24</sup> Individuals are allowed to exist only at the level of cartoon, their lives divested of significance. It is a conclusion at which the Christian bishop, pondering his brother-in-law's metaphor, must baulk:

A comic film....No; it would never do to let oneself think that life in this world was anything of that nature. No; dear me, that would never do at all.<sup>25</sup>

Gilbert Murray, too, has baulked, seeking assurances from its author that she has intended no such ending of despair as the comic film metaphor seems to suggest. She replies:

Of course you and the Bishop are right - if life were really all a comic film, we should all throw up the sponge.<sup>26</sup>

Her protestations after the event may be comforting, yet it is difficult to escape the feeling that Rose Macaulay has meant her

metaphor to stand, and that, for a time at least, a sponge has been thrown up.

Going Abroad dramatizes her worst fear - the eruption of barbarity into the civilised scene. People pass beyond the barriers which have kept them within the safe, cultured arena of civilisation. "'Aren't we the barrier-breakers?'" Ted Baines asks his fellow Groupers, and indeed his convert Hero does transcend the barrier of innate self-restraint as she stands up before the Group meeting to announce that she has been "changed."<sup>27</sup> The Josefs, too, quarrelling frantically over their daughter's dowries, let a basic wildness intrude upon civilisation. Such depths must, Rose Macaulay is convinced, be curtained from public view, such barriers not broken down. Giles Buckley, in conversation with his mother, is determined to emphasize the value of civilised restraint. To her suggestion that parents should permit their grown children to "do - within limits - what they like," he replies:

'What they like! What an extraordinary notion! Why should people do what they like, instead of being made to do what is sensible and intelligent and right?'<sup>28</sup>

Giles' view is clearly Rose Macaulay's own. Writing a critique of a radio play, Poison Pen, a Study in Repressions, probably in the spring of 1950, she remarks on the fact that the play's heroine, who has been addicted to writing anonymous slanders to her neighbours, is explained as being "too much repressed," and explodes in disbelief:

But to any normal listener to this play, it seemed obvious that the wicked woman, like the rude wall-artists, had been repressed not too much but far too little. More repression is surely what we should practise, and have practised on us from childhood. Civilised life is, or should be, a long series of repressions of our more degraded desires, whether these are to write slanderous letters or to draw vulgar pictures on walls. The prospect of even less repression among our neighbours than now obtains is intimidating.<sup>29</sup>

Character after character is shown in this novel as being a complicated mixture of the civilised and barbaric. Even in her search for the Garden of Eden, the refined Mrs Aubrey illustrates an intriguing symbiosis of the two states. A highly sophisticated ex-academic, she broods obsessively over the abundant, uncultivated garden:

She had planted it, in her mind, with the appropriate trees - cedars, firs, palms, odorous gums and balsams, thornless roses, vines, myrtles, acanthus, the tree of life blooming ambrosial gold, the tree of knowledge next it....<sup>30</sup>

It is perhaps the wildness and strangeness of the garden in its perfect pre-Fall state which exerts such an influence on her. Significantly, however, her studies engage her in an attempt to manage and control - to civilise - that wildness. She endeavours to discover the precise species of the trees of life and knowledge, the nature of the apple which was eaten, the location of the walled garden in the shadow of the "shaggy hill."<sup>31</sup> She imposes order on the inchoate, insists on substantiating the mythically insubstantial, filling her manuscript books with notes and references, collecting

her maps, plans and sketches. Civilised and scholarly she pursues the barbaric. The object of her research is significant in that the Fall symbolises the birth of civilisation itself. The fruit of the tree of knowledge eaten, man is suddenly alert to the contradictions of good and evil and to the need for the wildness and disorder of the latter to be subdued.

A similar conflict of impulses can be detected in her husband the bishop, who labours stolidly at his examination of the early Christian heresies he has been intrigued to find among modern tribesmen. His interest in the unregulated, in the pagan and primitive forces personified by the peoples among whom he works, is counterbalanced by his urge to impose upon them the clarity and order of orthodox Christian doctrine - and by his desire to record their paganism in a book.

The Oxford Groupers, too, are a peculiar mixture of the civilised and the barbaric. They are on the one hand, people of surfaces, declining to entangle themselves too closely with the theological or ethical issues, settling for the most facile of aims in life - "'I want to be happy,' the ball-throwers were loudly singing as they threw. 'I want to be happy....'"<sup>32</sup> On the other, there are points where they seem entirely animal-like in their avoidance of sophistication. Mrs Buckley wonders what they talk about. "'Cars, I suppose, and games, and bathing, and life's simpler barbarian pleasures!'"<sup>33</sup> Their guileless animality is indicated as they call to one another on the beach:

'Oy! Oy! Oy!'

Jolly voices resounded about them, as several persons gave tongue from the beach.

Mr Baines and Miss Turton ejaculated 'Oy' in reply, and Mr Baines explained, 'The Pack. Noisy people aren't they? I'm afraid you may think some of them need strait waistcoats. But they mean well. It's a case of sea air to the head, that's all.'

'Or sea water on the brain,' Frankie suggested. 'I think we had better go and calm them, Ted.'

'They're ravening for the next meal, I suppose,' Ted said. 'We call ourselves the Pack, you know,' he explained, 'because we go hunting in a crowd like this. And packs do raven, don't they?'<sup>34</sup>

They may encourage the construction of a civilised structure of ideas across the emptiness Hero fears, yet they are simultaneously insistent on the barbaric practice of total recall in their converts' public confessions. Surrenderers to the Buchmanite fold are required to plumb the depths of self-denigration in a manner which is the reverse of civilised.

The Josefs, also, are on the borderlines between the two states. Recommending their customers to erect barrier after barrier of cosmetic artifice between themselves and nature, they are yet at times reduced to the barbaric naturalness of furious quarrels with each other in the guttural Basque tongue.

Language itself in this novel is shown as crystallizing the dialectic between the two. Mrs Aubrey is a keen student of Basque and, vocabulary in hand, eavesdrops on native conversations. Convinced she has recognised many of the terms used, she concludes

that her subjects have been discussing such elevated issues as religion, revolution and autonomy.

... 'Ertxadon is parish church. Lakanun liberty...  
Uskurtz, religion; matxinada, revolution. Legezar,  
the ancient laws, or fueros, burujabetasun,  
autonomy....<sup>35</sup>

It takes a kindly disposed Basque interpreter to explain to her that she has heard not the words she thought, but those (very like them) for "brandy," "silk," "lace," "grain," "grapes" and "fish" - the discussion has been about smuggling.

Rose Macaulay's tracery of themes in Going Abroad is familiar. What is new is her resignation here to the failures she describes - the quests which do not reach their goals, the disruption of the civilised pattern by barbarity.

### I Would Be Private

Pursuits of the whole in I Would Be Private are, like those of Going Abroad, also intended to be laughable but again, sadly, are not. It is as though Rose Macaulay had promised herself the pleasure of writing another apparently light-hearted island story like Orphan Island and had set herself the familiar scenario of exotic palms, coral reefs, lagoons and bread-fruit trees, only to find in the end that the actual working out of the tale was unbearably strenuous and that she must with difficulty drag it to a close. The same sense of

weariness which has darkened Going Abroad eventually punctures the attempted fun of this new island novel too.

Policeman Ronald McBrown becomes the father of quins and attempts to escape the resulting publicity by removing his family (on the proceeds of donations from an overawed public) to a Caribbean island.<sup>36</sup> Passty notes the likelihood that the figure of Ronald McBrown was inspired by the policeman figure of Robert Buckingham, E.M. Forster's lover.<sup>37</sup> His quest for privacy is also one for his own integrity. He is anxious not to be corrupted by the easy wealth suddenly available to him as a consequence of the babies' birth. Pursued by journalists and the gaping general public, he endeavours to maintain the detached purity of his own soul. Rose Macaulay's anxiety about the invasion of privacy and erosion of the quality of life by the rapacious popular press is again to the fore.

The novel is patterned with the stories of many quests in addition to the central one of P.C. McBrown. Ronald's wife Win pictures herself embarked on the exotic journeys of popular travel writing, making her way through icy mountains and steamy jungles, over volcanic peaks and across "palmy coral islands" to the goals of her dreams.<sup>38</sup> Gert Grig (sister of Win) and her Venezuelan admirer Monty are determined to locate the treasure rumoured to be buried on the island and devote fruitless hours to digging for it. Linda Dunster, elder daughter of the island's vicar, is in perpetual pursuit of the artistic young men who reside in the former lunatic asylum. Journalists pursue the quins. The artists pursue their



crafts - John his painting, Charles his novel-writing, Leslie his production of potboilers. The McBrowns arrive on the island in search of their long-lost parent (Win's father), who maintains a happy, bigamous household there. (The "Papagayo" island is a play on his contented, fatherly existence). Charles is engaged in a veiled homosexual pursuit of Ronald.

Yet the images of quest in I Would Be Private are peculiarly downgraded, mutations of symbols used for success and happiness in previous novels. There is a variation, for example, of Rose Macaulay's much employed castle-on-the-hill image as an externalisation of ideals hoped for. The travellers are offered accommodation in a disused lunatic asylum on a hill, "a kind of bungalow, with a lot of rooms in a row, facing on a verandah."<sup>39</sup> This is no proud, high, assertive symbol of an ideal, but a low, extended, horizontal building, redolent of the mental disorder of its former inmates. The image has been modified and diluted, as though to suggest a goal not worth pursuing. The picture is repeated in Ronald's and Charles' walk up the slopes of the island's "Sugar Hill," their goal the ruins of an eighteenth-century sugar-squire's great house:

The old house had stood on the higher slopes of Sugar Hill; it had had a stone-pillared gate, and the gate-posts still stood, grown over with trailing moonvine, entrance to a ghostly track through tangled jungle to a flight of stone steps and the great broken, crumbled walls that encircled the roofless ghost of a dwelling....You could still see where the walled garden had lain, how it had been cleared out of the encircling forest, which now had claimed it again, for, where it had been, rose trees and palm trees still grew among the tangled bush; and there

was a stone pedestal on which a naked boy bestrid a dolphin and had once fountained water over green sward.<sup>40</sup>

This is the first instance in Rose Macaulay's work in which she uses one of her stock images in deliberate disarray. Rose trees are overgrown with weeds, the fountain is dry. The elements of the pictures of perfection (the roses and fountain in the Lateran courtyard in Abbots Verney, for example) are present, yet they are now presented against a background of ruin. As is to become even more evident in each of her next two novels, And No Man's Wit in 1940 and The World My Wilderness in 1950, things are beginning to fall apart.

Ronald's quest does not reach its desired conclusion. He and Win discover that perfect peace is not to be attained. They cannot detach themselves from the world in which the excited, envious public hound their unusual offspring. They cannot be "non-combatants," but must engage in the struggle, however distasteful, to preserve their integrity in the face of public clamour.

Rose Macaulay's preoccupation with the disintegration of civilisation is again paramount. I Would Be Private bristles with images of disorder. The novel opens on a note of strangeness as Win produces five offspring instead of the expected two. (There is a veiled reference here to Aristophanes' perfect, original "whole" human being, an image much used in Rose Macaulay's early fiction: the McBrowns have anticipated neatly paired twins, but produced

instead a monstrous, odd number of children which defies easy patterning). Win is appalled by her departure from the norm, shocked by the letters of disapproval she receives:

MADAM, - Beg to state that, in my opinion, you has overdone it. Man was made in the imidge of God (Gen. 1.26) not that of dogs, cats or rabbits. Women was never intended to have litters. Nowhere in Scripture does we hear of greater numbers than two at one go (Gen 38). Trusting this will not occur again, I am, madam,  
Yours truely,

GEO. BARNES (taxi-driver).<sup>41</sup>

The perfect pattern proposed by the creation of man in the divine image has been disrupted.

The novel is full of odd matches. Win's father's second marriage to a native woman is bigamous. "Improper," too, is Linda Dunster's pursuit of the homosexual young men at the asylum. Her attentions are unwelcome, the relationships abortive. Gert Grigg marries the sharp-practising Venezuelan Monty - a marriage based on unevenness, as he is a former cattle thief with other wives possibly still living, she an alert young woman who makes her devious income by reporting infringements of the Lord's Day Observance laws. Theirs is a bizarre union, not the neat dove-tailing into coupledness of romantic fiction. Charles Mendle's pursuit of Ronald, with its homosexual undertones, is another intriguing mismatch, Charles' imperviousness to the feminine wiles of Linda Dunster contrasting with Ronald's incontrovertibly heterosexual interest in his wife.

There is oddness, too, in the art produced by the young men from the lunatic asylum. Rose Macaulay blithely mocks the artistic process as John paints on the beach:

He sketched in a number of round, long and triangular shapes lying in a row on a beach; some seemed skulls, some cast-off limbs, others again more like bottles. Some of the legs sprouted out of the bottles; wild pawpaws and cactus sprouted out of some of the skulls ....It struck him that the picture would be called Woman and Putrefying Owl, and he scribbled this name in a corner.<sup>42</sup>

The International Surrealist Exhibition had been held in London in June 1936. Rose Macaulay is evidently among the many who reacted sceptically to the newly bizarre and imaginative work displayed there by, amongst others, Graham Sutherland, Picasso, Dali, Miro, Ernst and Giacometti. John Stowe's fantastic construction of shapes, limbs and plants glances at John Tunnard's preoccupation, becoming clear in the 1930's, with geology and technology. Leslie Grig (Win's brother) is set to make his name as a successful author despite a lack of talent which is openly acknowledged by his fellow writer, Francis Axe:

'No, my dear Ronald. He writes badly. He will probably always write badly. But he may sell well.'<sup>43</sup>

Full of the incongruities of odd relationships, bad art and poor quality writing, the world of this novel is almost apocalyptic in its strangeness and disarray. Ronald and Charles linger morosely among the remains of the old mill-house on their walk:

They wandered for a little about the ruins, stumbling over great broken fragments of fallen wall, of forest-grown floor, strolling through the ghosts of great living-rooms, the green, embosked sites of outhouses, slaves' quarters, and stables.<sup>44</sup>

The scenario evoked is that of the lowering last days of Ecclesiastes 12, in which the grinders have ceased because they are so few (Rose Macaulay's choice of mill ruins is significant) and when "the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern."<sup>45</sup> Ronald sits on an old mill-wheel, contemplating a fountain which no longer works.

In the end, he is left, like Benjamin Bunter in Views and Vagabonds, cultivating his garden, attempting rather desperately to extract some order from wildness and disarray:

He was gardening by the pool, engaged in planting a quincunx of sea-grape shrubs. This elegant quincuncial ordination of vegetables had taken his fancy; gardening was in his blood, and he pleased himself with elaborate and ingenious patternings, graftings and experiments.<sup>46</sup>

Life's barbarous elements - represented by the lush, exotic island growth, with its human correlative in the amazing fertility of the McBrowns - must be teased into the civilised shapes and patterns the human mind seems instinctively to crave for. The urge for pattern is natural, even if it can only be the odd, asynchronous patterns of five-sided elements. The Papagayo islanders, agog at the miraculous

McBrown children, are swayed to the belief that "the quinary view of the universe" is the correct one:

The vicar had to do some theologising with his flock on behalf of the Trinity, for it seemed now to many of them that Five Persons, a Quinary, more probably reigned in heaven, and the ancient quintheistic heresy revived, insidiously poisoning Parrot Island with its error.... Five-rayed fish, five-foiled twigs, five-pointed leaves, nests of five eggs, were gathered and lovingly cherished: every garden became quincuncial, a garden of Cyrus.<sup>47</sup>

The symbol of the quincunx summarizes the typically Macaulay-an paradox on which the novel attempts to end. Though an odd number, "five" represents in the pentangle, the figure of perfection. For all its disorder and disarray, this may be the best possible world which can exist. It embraces evenness and oddness, good and evil, comedy and tragedy. It sustains characters' efforts to tease pattern out of apparent asymmetry. The theory of the novel is clear, Rose Macaulay performing her much-practised trick of offering hope in the evidently hopeless moment, ascribing a saving patina of success to seeming failure. It is, however, an ending which does not convince. The characterisation in this novel has been so thin, the storyline so slight, that the twist into hopefulness at the end sounds merely academic. It is as though she has attempted to re-run the paradoxical sequences of her successful middle-period novels, to re-energize the tensions which made them vital and interesting, but, imaginatively exhausted herself, has failed. I Would Be Private offers only a ghost of Rose Macaulay's former, satirically courageous self.

And No Man's Wit

And No Man's Wit is a dreary, unwieldy novel which makes no pretensions at all to comedy. It is full of the author's personal unhappiness. Her car accident with Gerald in June 1939 had left her shaken and guilt-stricken. Desperately anxious for his recovery, she persevered with her novel-writing, producing in the end a piece of work heavy with her own unexpressed misery. "I am dead sick of my novel," she wrote to Daniel George in October 1939, "but must push on. I'd so much rather get on to my beasts [the bestiary which she was compiling with him]. But no one would look at them in war-time, I imagine. And my rent must be paid, alas, and these intimidating taxes. So I put down words, enjoying none of them....I live in hopes of better days, when...my Animals can flourish."<sup>48</sup>

In this novel full of failed quests, Rose Macaulay throws her characters together against the backdrop of the war-ravaged, politically incoherent Spain of 1939. Dr Kate Marlowe sets out in search of her son, Guy, who has disappeared after his service with the International Brigade. Accompanied by her other son Hugh, her daughter Betsey, Guy's fiancée Ellen Green and driver/mechanic Ernie Kent, she tours the country in search of the prodigal. The party calls at the home of Spanish aristocrat Ramon del Monte, a former friend of Guy's, to enlist his help. Ramon is attracted to Ellen, and decides to join the group as a guide, using his influence to ask at prison camps for news of Guy. The young man is eventually found, wandering with a band of gypsies, whom he in the end leaves to try to

make his way back to France. The novel closes on a scene of companionship as he sits with his fellow escapees drinking beer at the Bar Basque.

The failure of quests in And No Man's Wit is deeply tragic. Kate Marlowe does not succeed in winning back her son. Betsey, who has sought in her obsessive novel-reading and writing, escape into the securely patterned realms of art, is likewise unsatisfied. Most seriously, Ellen Green drowns. Rose Macaulay's lapse into fairy-tale for the telling of Ellen's story, though artistically unsound, is unnerving and memorable. The girl, it transpires, has mermaid blood, being descended from a Cornish parson and a mermaid cast up on rocks near his home. Her mother, aware that the girl will at some point be drawn instinctively back to the sea, has made her promise never to swim. Now, however, heat-wilted and exhausted after her journey across sun-baked Spain, Ellen forgets her promise and slides with delight into the water. Answering the sea's call, she swims out to try to re-enter the mer-world of her own people, but finds herself exhausted and unable to do so.

She knew now with a strange certainty that none of her kind remained among the sea's creatures. Once, perhaps; but now no more. Like the unicorn, like the centaur, like the basilisk, they had perished out of a world too alien. As she herself must perish, for the earth too marine, for the sea too earthly, from both expatriate...She was lost utterly, forsaken of earth and sea, of humankind and all other, quite doomed. Crying, she swam out into the Mediterranean, up the track of the cold moon.<sup>49</sup>



Like so many of Rose Macaulay's characters, Ellen has attempted to pass, for fulfilment, from one world to another, but failed. Her death ends the most poignant of quests.

Images of quest are, like those of I Would Be Private, again downgraded. The castle on the Del Monte estate is ruined, a symbol of centuries of Spanish aristocracy brought down by the Franco regime. The Del Monte house is set in a large garden, but one in which the stone pond is empty and the fountain dry. Barrenness, hopelessness and disintegration are the notes struck. The novel ends on a peculiarly mutated image. Guy sits with Ramon and Armand musing on the insidious badness of the modern world:

Life was what it was, people what they were. Cruelty was the devil, and most people were, in one way or another, cruel. Tyranny, suppression, persecution, torture, slavery, war, neglect - all were cruel. The world was acid and sour with hate, fat with greed, yellow with the triumph of the strong and rich.

The answer would appear to be a lemon. Still, here they sat and talked, three friends together in the Bar Basque, with perhaps some nuisance coming to-morrow.<sup>50</sup>

The picture is not the half-expected one of the triumphal gold of a rising (or even a resplendently setting) sun, but a parody of the same, the rude yellow of a sour lemon.

The Spanish Civil War world of And No Man's Wit is one in which we find "all coherence gone."<sup>51</sup> Rose Macaulay recognises the relevance of Donne's seventeenth-century perception to her own day - she makes Guy rather pointedly quote him.<sup>52</sup> It is a world in which

the barbarity of war has triumphed and the civilisation which is left is one in which things have fallen apart, the centre has not held.<sup>53</sup> Everything is disintegrating. Kate Marlowe's family is incomplete, her son even at the end of the novel is not restored to her. Post-war Spain is depicted with its multiplicity of rival factions. Images of wholeness explode. Betsey slips and breaks the plaster statue of St Teresa in her room in the Del Montes' home, leaving the red-tiled floor strewn "with black, white and coloured shards."<sup>54</sup> (The neat checkering of black and white of the chess-board image in previous novels has disappeared). Even the Church, the incident suggests, has lost its efficacy as a force for wholeness in this troubled Spain.

Ellen's subsea world is another perfect civilisation sought but not found. Rose Macaulay's fascination with mermaids is of long standing, associated, of course, with her own great love of swimming. The motif of "water-people" follows her from her earliest work to her latest. Michael Travis in The Secret River has listened to the voices of the "water-babies," the "hidden people" who inhabit the riverbanks; Gerda Benish in Dangerous Ages is at one point likened to "a little mermaid lost on earth;" Imogen Carrington in Told By an Idiot recites Arnold's "The Forsaken Merman" as she is spun round in the subterranean world of the London Underground.<sup>55</sup> Julian Conybeare is described as sitting as though "at the bottom of deep water in some strange drowned world" as her brother Francis rails at her for her behaviour with Cleveland.<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, her namesake Julian of Norwich also has a vision of an undersea world.<sup>57</sup> In And No Man's

Wit, however, the significance of the mer-world is expanded as it has not been before. It is the paradigm of a perfect civilisation - the polar opposite of the war-spoiled Spain of the rest of the novel. Soothing memories of the author's idyllic seaside childhood at Varazze have revived to confirm this synonymity of a sea-world with perfection. There are interesting parallels between the Ellen Green episodes of And No Man's Wit and Herbert Read's novel The Green Child (1935).<sup>58</sup> Read describes a perfect, ordered, undersea world such as Rose Macaulay's Ellen seeks. His tale extends, like hers, across two realms, an upper, earthly one, and an undersea. In the story's first half, Olivero establishes himself as a dictator in Roucador, South America; creating a Utopian state. In the second, having relinquished his position by faking his own assassination, he discovers the unearthly, transparent-skinned Green Child in a stream near his home and is led by her to the watery underworld at the stream's source. Here the individual in the course of his life must proceed from one rock ledge to another in the pursuit of perfection. He may stay on the lowest ledge till he is "satiated with the pleasures of youth," before proceeding to the second ledge to "enjoy the pleasures of manual work," then to the third for those of "opinion and argument," and finally to the highest pleasure of "solitary thought" for which he must retire to a grotto.<sup>59</sup> We are reminded of the stages of advancement towards Platonic perfection which Rose Macaulay so frequently proposed for her characters in her earliest novels. The purpose of life in Read's underworld is "to attain everlasting perfection," a state which here is only ultimately achieved with the crystallization of the body in death.<sup>60</sup> For this

race, the production of a perfect crystal is synonymous with the attainment of perfection itself:

The science which we call crystallography - the study of the forms, properties and structure of crystals - was the most esteemed of all sciences in this subterrestrial country, indeed, it might be regarded as science itself, for on it were based, not only all notions of the structure of the universe, but equally all notions of beauty, truth and destiny.<sup>61</sup>

Read's world, in which so much effort is expended on realising perfection, is like the one Ellen Green has swum out hoping to discover. His Olivero does attain the sophisticated level of perception which allows him to see that:

...the very concepts of Order and Disorder might be taken as the polar opposites that together constituted a single harmonious whole; and that this might be the very principle of a universe constituted of space and emptiness, darkness and light, attraction and repulsion, life and death....<sup>62</sup>

Ellen, however, does not. Olivero lives successfully both on earth and undersea, creating a Utopia on the one and reaching ultimate crystallization on the other. Ellen, "forsaken of earth and sea," can survive in neither element.<sup>63</sup> Similarities of idea - and of characters' names - between Read's and Rose Macaulay's novels are striking. Rose Macaulay certainly read widely on the subject of undersea existences and compiled a radio programme in the Time for Verse series in 1946 composed of extracts from her bibliography on the topic.<sup>64</sup> Authors quoted were T.S. Eliot, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Thomas Heyrick, George Darley, Margaret Cavendish (Duchess of

Newcastle), Drayton, Southey, W.J. Turner, Walt Whitman and Herman Melville. It seems unlikely that she would have missed a well-known contemporary author tapping the same vein of imagery as her own.

The whole concept of coherence has in this novel been invalidated. If there is hope at all, it is suggested, it exists not in wide movements of ideas or in the encouragement of political allegiances, but in the singular, independent strengths of individuals, fighting solitary battles against the evils of the modern world. "It is people that matter," Guy concludes. "One can differ about anything, and still sit and talk."<sup>65</sup> There is no invigorating sense in And No Man's Wit as there has been in the earlier novels, of the play of tensions between the civilised and the savage. In this most despondent of her fictions, Rose Macaulay seems rather to have surrendered to the feeling that civilisation is not, after all, worth struggling for, and that man's only hope must be - somehow - to preserve the integrity of his own soul.

### Conclusion

And No Man's Wit is a confusing novel, dealing with confusing politics in a confusing world, the work of a tired woman who, having produced twenty novels, is conscious of her imagination waning. Even the fantasy episode of Ellen Green's story offers her no release or refreshment. Out of place and clumsy in this otherwise bleakly realistic book, it relates the saddest of her failures. Soon, worn out by personal tragedy - the deaths of her lover and sister, the

loss in the Blitz of her flat and all her belongings - Rose Macaulay is to descend into a fictional desert from which for the next ten years, no novels spring. Therapeutically busy with her non-fiction writing (Life Among the English (1942), They Went to Portugal (1946), Fabled Shore (1949)), with her heavy schedule of broadcasting (she contributed to over fifty BBC programmes between 1940 and 1950) and with her journalism (her pieces appeared with daunting frequency in the Spectator, Horizon, New Statesman and Nation and Time and Tide), she is to find herself incapable of the sustained imaginative effort required to bring a novel to fruition. That she should produce no full-length fiction during the Second World War is significant in itself, suggesting as it does an understandable inability to put sufficient distance between herself and the horrors which were manifesting themselves so shockingly for the second time in her life.

## Chapter 6 Out of the Wilderness : Novels 1950-1958

### Biographical Background

Rose Macaulay's ten-year fictional silence began in 1941 with a series of massive upheavals in her personal life. The death of her sister Margaret on March 1 that year was followed on May 10 by the loss of her flat and all her belongings in the Blitz. Items destroyed included notes for the book, a modern bestiary, on which she had been working with Daniel George. She herself developed a gastric ulcer in November 1941. Her recovery was followed by a strenuous period in June and July 1942 during which she made frequent visits to Gerald O'Donovan who, suffering from cancer, was then in his last illness. He died on July 26.

The catastrophic effects of such a sequence of events are hinted at in various of her writings of the time. The loss of a life-time's collection of books and belongings for a sixty-year-old woman was devastating. "I am bookless, homeless, sans everything but my eyes to weep with," she exclaims to Daniel George, four days after the tragedy.<sup>1</sup> She describes in her piece for The Spectator in November that year the "first stunned sickness" of realisation, the vain scrambling over ruins in search of lost treasures:

Of furniture, books and pictures nothing stayed but a drift of loose, scorched pages fallen through three floors to street-level, and there lying sodden in a mass of wreckage smelling of mortality, to trouble me with hints of what had been. Here was a charred, curled page from one of the twelve volumes of the Oxford Dictionary, telling of hot-beds, hotch-potch, hot cockles, hotes and hotels; there, among a pile of damp ashes and smashed boards, were a few pages from Pepys, perhaps relating of another London fire, a few from

Horace Walpole, urbane among earthquakes, revolutions and wars, knowing that all things pass.<sup>2</sup>

The experience is fictionalized in her short story, "Miss Anstruther's Letters," written at the beginning of 1942 for Storm Jameson's collection, London Calling, and which she describes to Daniel George as "unoriginal, but veracious (mainly)."<sup>3</sup> The fiction vibrates with the emotion of the experience as The Spectator's factual account cannot. Miss Macaulay is the Miss Anstruther "whose life had been cut in two on the night of May 10th, 1941, so that she now felt herself a ghost, without attachments or habitation, neither of which she any longer desired."<sup>4</sup> (She in real life saved her May and June marmalade ration from the ruins, like her persona in the fiction).<sup>5</sup> The overwhelming poignancy of the piece derives from the fact that Miss Anstruther rescues from the house in the seconds before the bomb explodes a few books, her wireless, her typewriter, a china cow and walnut-shell ornament - not the collection of precious letters from her dead lover spanning the twenty-two years of their love, and which she had been saving to re-read until the pain of mourning for him was past. All that is left of the letters is a charred fragment of one, written twenty-two years before, in which he has remonstrated with her, "...leave it at that. I know now that you don't care twopence; if you did you would..."<sup>6</sup> Written before Gerald's death, but in the final months of his illness, the story must express her impending sense of desolation that, after he dies, there will be nothing left of their love, shrouded as it has been all this time in secrecy. The happy holidays recorded in Miss



Anstruther's lost letters - "the little wild strawberries at Andorra la Vieja...morning coffee out of red cups at Villefranche...truffles in the place at Perigueux...the motor bus over the Alps...climbing Dunkery Beacon to Porlock, driving on a June afternoon over Kirkdale pass..." - may well be Rose Macaulay's own with Gerald.<sup>7</sup> Now comes the sadness of realisation that these pleasures have been illicit and fleeting, and that she must henceforth suffer an even greater emptiness than she would have done if she had not permitted him to be part of her life in the first place. The story offers her a channel through which to express her emotional devastation at the twin tragedies to hit her in the early 1940's.

The experience left her unfit for novel-writing. "I'm not much good at ordinary novels just now, I think," she writes to Daniel George. "Am I tired of private lives? I mustn't get like that or it will be the end of me as a novelist."<sup>8</sup> Writing later to Father Johnson about the period of research which preceded her publication of They Went to Portugal (1946), she expands:

I was very unhappy just then, and had to deaden it by work; I couldn't have done a novel possibly. I always talked over my novels with my companion, who stimulated my invention; when he died my mind seemed to go blank and dead.<sup>9</sup>

Rose Macaulay's sense of unhappiness, of restlessness and despondency with the age is expressed perpetually in her writings around this time. "This war is thoroughly demoralizing," she writes to Virginia Woolf, complaining of feeling "(a) sleepy (b) mentally disintegrated"

as a result of it.<sup>10</sup> It is a point she makes again in an unidentified piece on the condition of women in war-time in which she foresees with apprehension their lapse into "a kind of lazy mental inertia and disintegration of mind, such as followed the last war."<sup>11</sup> "We are trapped in an age of ever increasing nationalism, totalitarianism, and state control," she continues in her piece, "The Fifth Freedom: Getting About." "An age of worry and concern about trifles has set in; an age of morbid inquisition into other people's affairs."<sup>12</sup> She fears what she sees as the apparent swinging of life "out from the personal into the communal" in the impending post-war world in which people will have become accustomed to communal sleeping arrangements in air-raid shelters, communal cooking and other mass activities.<sup>13</sup> "Here is a world perishing from lack of goodness," she exclaims to Father Johnson, a world which is "all going to pieces and losing."<sup>14</sup> Fears of fragmentation and disintegration which have haunted her fiction and informed its imagery, loom large in her experience of the real world.

The problem of fragmentation in literature is one which begins to exercise her at this time. In her 1946 piece, "The Future of Fiction," included by John Lehmann in New Writings and Daylight, she charts the changes in the art of short-story writing:

It used to be required to have a beginning and an end; it was supposed to be self-contained, to have a plot, a story; it ended with the closing of a door on the incident or situation depicted....So the form was exacting: it was a drama in miniature, cut out and sewn together without loose ends; it made more demands than a novel on the concentration, relevance, and story-telling deftness of the narrator....But now a short story

may be, and often is, quite different; it can be an odd length chopped off a piece; any bit of a novel-in-progress will do; you merely cut it off and serve. Your readers have a sense of dipping into the middle of some untold tale....It is too easy, too dull; everyone can do it, there seems no reason why anyone should.<sup>15</sup>

The reason she suggests is that:

...life has during the past years been disintegrated, broken into odd, unshapely bits, one not fitting into another; discontinuity has been the mood of our brittle time. Can we fit the pieces together, weld them into a coherent shape?<sup>16</sup>

Life has, she feels, become "a tragedy too vast, too gross, too ill-understood" for expression in traditional formats.<sup>17</sup> The writer is a victim of his time:

The communal living, the unsteady, chancey drug of danger, the constant keying up of nerve and sinew, may have broken his mind into disorderly fragments, made consecutive thought, initiative and concentration difficult; if he writes, he may write in spasms and fragments, without coherent pattern....Fragments, impressions brief glimpses - these are, on the whole, the mode.<sup>18</sup>

Disintegrating literary formats simply hold up a mirror to life.

### Poetry

Her preoccupation with the need for shape in art inspires her to turn her hand again, in the 1940's and 50's to poetry. Although little was published during this period ("The Pleasures of Tiberius,"

"Dirge for Trebizond" and "Hadrian's Villa"), typescripts of several other poems remain to indicate the wider extent of her revived interest in the form.<sup>19</sup> As these have never been mentioned or examined before in any critical appraisal of Rose Macaulay, they are worth quoting at some length.

"Ash Wednesday 1941" may have been associated with Margaret's death in March that year.

(...I have made a league with death).

Not with caught breath, not with too hard  
resolving,

The year revolving seals our league with death.

The winter's night is done; the north wind  
breathing

Brings the light forth out of the crystal  
north.

We have endured the dark; we have no fear;

Death has been near; from all uncertainty

Certainty comes; so from your hand I take it,

So in pale sun, in morning calm you come,

Between my eyes you seal the dust I am.

The fires are sunk to ashes, leaving this:

The morning calm, and on my brow death's kiss.

Here are meaning and matter, the real and the  
shade

Met as in death's hour, in time's ending;

Here is our league with death. So whether

soon,

With blast and rending, or in slow declension,

This way or that way, death comes not amiss,

Because the body knows itself today,

Because with ashes marked upon my ashes,

Life's mark on death, form upon matter printed,

You let me go in peace, so as you said,

In peace, the order of love; death is

prevented,

For we are dead. And we have seen your coming,

You when you stopped, O merciful and just;

You with your finger writing in our dust.

- a shadow's dream we are,

But ah the dream of, God, your shadowing;

And thus to us reversed your meanings through;  
On you our eyes are set,  
From mortal net to pluck our tranced feet;  
So, step by step, foot after foot we move,  
We trace the gestes, we thread the tracks of  
love  
We are the shadow's dream,  
And as in shadow - play reversed the theme  
unreels  
Thrown by your light across our dust it moves,  
Your whole, our partial being - we the dream,  
The shadow's dream -, and in reverse, like  
shadows  
The reel has turned, faintly discerned,  
Your light across our dust the moving shade  
projecting.<sup>20</sup>

The poem is almost seventeenth-century in the density of its word-play. Rose Macaulay may have been attempting to slip for solace yet again into the idiom of her favourite era. We are struck by the tightness with which opposites are welded together and by the emergence of familiar ideas - the border-ground between light and dark, life and death, the Platonic image of the souls in the cave, reading the play of shadows from the world above, the wholeness of deity subsuming the partiality of humanity, the sense of striving towards union with God. It is striking for being Rose Macaulay's first overtly Christian poem and as such, for being written ten years before her well-known reconciliation with the Anglican church in 1951.

Her poem "The Ruined Garden 1740, 1941" (probably written in the latter year) encapsulates her sense of modern chaos eclipsing traditional order. An opening paragraph describes the patterned

garden of 1740 with its artificial ruins and calculated, romantic decay:

Her ancestor who built the Hall two centuries  
ago  
Made rills through rocky channels flow, and  
threw a waterfall  
Down terraced slopes in cascates that tossed  
a rainbow spray  
Over the forms of nymphs at play in green and  
mossy dells.  
He filled the groves with Greek arcades and  
temples from Baalbek,  
And here and there a Gothic wreck stood mould'ring  
in the glades,  
A time-struck abbey, choked with weeds, with an  
owl, a ghost, a bat,  
And in a cell a hermit sat, and told his wooden  
beads.  
A tottering tower housed the hind who baked the  
squire's loaves.  
And clear through the Virgilian groves the  
smooth lake serpentined  
'Twas all so neat, 'twas all so wild, 'twas  
like a curious dream,  
Where laws of time and space all seem by some  
strange spell beguiled.

A change of metre announces the arrival of the garden's modern owner,  
two hundred years later, who envisages it as a whole "campus  
ruinarum," and has her dream realised at last by the destructive  
forces of war:

All the universe of wild ruin  
Lay in her dreaming brain -  
Mesopotamia, Assyria,  
The green jungles of New Spain  
Drowning the temples of the Maya  
And the lost cities of Peru;  
Petra and Thebes and Babylon  
A-wash in the lilac blue  
Of the shifting, silting desert sands  
That shimmer beyond view.

She dreamed of a wild chasmed landscape,  
Scarred like the moon's face;  
Heaven and hell had place in it;  
It was carved out of cold space.  
A fathomless lake lay darkly  
Whispering and reed-bound.  
Its waters lapped over green hulks  
Of ships lying drowned;  
And by the lake of Avernus  
No birds are found.

Dreaming of her lunar landscape  
She roamed the Virgilian glade,  
Past the temples and the Gothic dairy  
That her ancestors had made.  
Then from the heavens fire roared  
And laid the landscape waste.

She should have died hereafter:  
For, mira fides, now at last,  
Was her garden to her taste.<sup>21</sup>

The lunar landscapes of bombsite ruins which are to figure so prominently in The World My Wilderness (1950) have their first glimmerings here. The poem is, in fact, reworked, with very minor alterations, as "Pleasures of Landscape Gardening, 1751, 1951" in a later typescript, an indication that Rose Macaulay was still haunted by its themes ten years later.<sup>22</sup>

A sequence of probably unfinished poems entitled "Sicut erat in principio I and II," "Et nunc I and II," "Et Semper I and II" is clearly inspired by experiences of the Second World War.<sup>23</sup> There are no indications of precise dates, although two of the poems are pencil-headed "[Post 1945?]",. The interest of the pieces exists not in their craftsmanship, for they are uniformly poor, but in their expression of the perennial Macaulay-an themes - the quest for

perfection, the devastation of the modern world, the yearning for pattern, the inefficacy of the struggle.

"Sicut erat in principio I" describes the birth of life:

Dandled in slime, rocked by oozy sea snakes,  
Cradled by the shine of beamy jellies drifting,  
A lunacy of moons, a milky way,  
Among the quiet shadows of fins shifting,  
The heart comes to birth....

The resulting civilisation is unpleasant, slothful, gross:

...more creatures still are fashioned,  
Born in extravagance, profusion, haste,  
Swept out and lost in the destroying waste  
That booms on the bounds with the soft heavy  
beat  
Of guns, of guns, and the swish of elephants'  
feet  
Through jungle grass, treading a lumbering  
measure.<sup>24</sup>

It is a waste land indeed. "Sicut erat in principio II" tells the story of a young American of Sicilian origin who is sent to his native island during the war and wounded. It is a poem about the loss of the golden-age of childhood, not only of the boy's own, growing "Peaches, oranges, lemons, grapes and citrous/Near the borders of Mexico," but also of his Sicilian ancestors before him - their island is now torn by war and, for the young soldier, a place of pain.<sup>25</sup>



"Et nunc I" is a more powerful expression of the need for pattern in a world upturned by war. Rose Macaulay has been intrigued by the miscellany of races flooding into Britain as a result of war's cataclysm, absorbing them into the kaleidoscope of her first paragraph:

From the difficult north stray blond Vikings,  
Dazed with dark-keeping, blinking light lashes,  
Tempestuous Poles with soft Highland accents,  
Small round Belgians, scornful Free Frenchmen,  
Dutchmen and Danes, the sad tribes of Jewry,  
Gay toughs from Texas, lads from Illinois,  
Virginia, Alabama, California, Carolina,  
Canada and Oregon, New Mexico, New England,  
All our late colonies, all our ancient rivals,  
Drifting in from Europe, to make some pattern,  
So old, so new, so dim it is forgotten,  
Buried in the ruins of the struggling  
centuries,  
Foundered in the deeps of the cold swinging  
seas.

There is somewhere the shape, somewhere the  
answer

Somewhere the pattern, drowned, blurred over,  
The clue to the maze, the key to the door,  
The words on the wall, the intricate riddle,  
Posed and discovered, the picture unveiled,  
The shadows stilled in wavering waters.

Should we but once hear the cagey sirens  
Sing one to another, or the singular planets  
Humming as they wheel, or observe the spirits,  
Pass in and out on their reticent errands,  
And know what they do, we should hold the  
pattern,

Whole in our hands: our eyes would dazzle;  
The night-dazed Vikings would be light-blinded.  
The Poles would stammer in some strange accent;  
Disdain would drop from the freest Frenchman;  
Our late colonials would all fall silent,  
Dreaming of a world, dreaming of something  
Incomprehensible, half comprehended,  
Seen in a mirror, and fast forgotten....  
It would slip from our hands, we could not hold it,  
It would sink once more in the swallowing ocean,  
With a rumour of bells on a drowned church  
steeple.

It would flounder and drown, while that elfin

rumour  
Chimed in deep seas, chimed beyond hearing.<sup>26</sup>

Poor poem though it is, it does emphasise the poet's recurring themes - her sense that the pattern, though striven for, can at best only momentarily be held.

"Et nunc II" has as its subject a soldier landing on a beach, fearing he is about to meet his death. "Et semper I" suggests the few glimmerings of hopefulness which might be retained against the background of devastation, the "silver jumping moments caught/And hooked alive out of the slipping river/Where shadows eddy and drift."<sup>27</sup> "Et semper II" is a defiant cry of hope: two versions exist, but the last stanza is identical in both:

You may yoke the unicorn and bind the Pleiades,  
Loose Orion's bands and snare leviathan.  
In thrice a million years you shall not appease  
The raging insensate magnificence of man.<sup>28</sup>

The standard of the poetry in this sequence is clearly low, Rose Macaulay too often forcing her ideas against the metre, insisting on rhymes in stanzas which would often be better blank. Yet they are of interest as the only poetical record we have of her reaction to the Second World War, and do state her apocalyptic vision of the future, her fear of fragmentation and decline. One other sequence of poems seems to have been written around 1950-1951. In a letter to Father Johnson in December 1950, she writes:

I am just now writing, (by fits and starts) poetry: a disease of which I have always had periodical attacks. I tried to make a complete poem of those 3 lines I used for the title page of the Wilderness but didn't do very much of it. Then I turned to Hadrian's Villa, Tiberius and Capri, Sybaris, etc. All rather time-wasting, but I like it. It is probably the "primitive droning," that meets so deep a need.<sup>29</sup>

The resulting set of poems includes "Pleasures of Tiberius," "Pleasures of Sybaris," "Pleasures of Hadrian," "Pleasures of Building Carthage," "Pleasures of Art" and "Pleasures of Landscape Gardening 1751, 1951."<sup>30</sup> They show the influence of her researches, being conducted concurrently with the poems, for her massive book for Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Pleasure of Ruins (1953).<sup>31</sup> Her sense of the many layers of time being caught in the architectural styles of her ruins, which has been detectable in the imagery of Staying With Relations, and which is to be even more apparent in The Towers of Trebizond, is to be found also in these poems. The ancient town of Sybaris is trapped underground:

Should we dig deep for Sybaris, our picks  
would strike on marble,  
For there, safe cased in river mud, the streets  
and temples sleep.  
Pillars more huge than Paestum's, more ancient  
halls than Athens,  
Lie broken there, not seven fathoms deep.

Could we dig down to Sybaris, an age would leap  
from darkness,  
And greater Greece in Italy would vex the world  
again.  
Drive down, drive down the shafts, the drills,  
Strike deep the picks and shovels,  
And wake from sleep this drowsing lost  
Cockayne.<sup>32</sup>

The perception merges with the Macaulay-an image of the undersea world in "Pleasures of Building Carthage:"

Dido dreamed of cities drowned in time.  
See where they lie, great castles sunk,  
Drowned fathoms deep, like whales sea-drunk.  
Surging shadows and whispered lappings,  
Strange faint murmurs of a ghostly chime  
Stir like fishes on the sands of ages,  
Where one on other the great wrecks pile.  
Peer deep, deeper, mile below mile,  
Into the green  
Where cities founder and are no more seen.  
From the piled wrecks a whisper comes -  
"You too will join us: here is place  
For a myriad empires, sunk without trace."<sup>33</sup>

The best poem in the sequence is, however, "Pleasures of Art," in which Rose Macaulay's preoccupation with pattern and quest are explicit. After evoking the pleasures of real life in the poem's first two paragraphs, she proceeds to those of art:

And still the unsated heart  
Drives for the stars, beats on a breaking door,  
And out of the flesh and the spirit is born  
art.  
Colour is splashed on canvas or rocky wall;  
The dream finds words to carry it like a winged  
horse  
Singing through space; the music bursts  
Out of the bursting heart; stones soar  
In towers and palaces up to the high sky;  
Gardens and fountains and courts round them  
lie.  
Out of marble, limbs are hewn, and the lively  
grace  
Of horses and men and gods, and the fair face  
Of beauty beyond the mortal, beauty of dreams.  
Jewels are cut, secret and intricate,  
Brooding moons of fire in shadowed shrines.  
Jewels of glass and stone wedged together,  
Glimmering gold and blue on dim vaults,  
Patterning emperors and saints and tritons

under water.  
Pomp of Byzantium, glittering the world over.

Nothing in earth or heaven but is caught  
In the net of glory flung  
By the passionate will, by the soaring pranks  
Of the son of man, the curious lusting dreamer,  
He can make music out of a drift of air;  
He can build Venice on a cluster of mud banks.

O what is the vision, and what our strange  
hearts,  
Where the endless, primeval, unconquerable wish  
Struggles and strains and leaps like a leaping  
fish?<sup>34</sup>

Probably the last poem that Rose Macaulay wrote was "Dirge for Trebizond," published in the Times Literary Supplement of June 24, 1955. Here the imagery of The Towers of Trebizond is prefigured, the lost city of Trebizond the symbol of an elusive goal. The poem evinces even more clearly than the novel her sense of civilisation being at an end: Trebizond is overrun by barbarians, her stanzas echoing with her poignant repetition of the word:

The Trapezuntines say  
The barbarians are in, for a while.  
Soon the barbarians will go,  
In a week, in a month, in a year.  
In two years, in five, in ten.  
Or it may be fifty, it may be more....  
Barbarians must go.

But barbarians will always stay.  
Five slow centuries, they still are here.  
No more Masses, no more marvels,  
No more reasoning in the banquet halls  
In the Greek of Trebizond.  
The mouldering marbles, the plastered churches,  
Bright saints and emperors under snow;  
The muffled women, the sloe-eyed men,  
The tall minarets, and the clamouring bazaars  
The inhospitable Euxine, the desolate Pontine,  
(Caesar have pity on the black bitter sea!)

Byzantium lost, and the last Greek gone,  
The barbarians will always stay.<sup>35</sup>

Rose Macaulay's return to poetry in the 1940's and 50's is interesting for its coincidence with Gerald O'Donovan's death. The "beloved companion" on whom, by her own admission, she relied for advice and inspiration for her novel-writing, could well have been responsible in some way for the suppression of her poetic urge.<sup>36</sup>

Rose Macaulay has associated poetry-writing before with "ghost-consciousness" - it is significant that her two ghost stories are produced at the beginning and end of her career, when her poetic output is at its strongest.<sup>37</sup> "Whitewash" (1953) is the story of a young girl, holidaying on Capri with her aunt (the relationship is a forerunner of that of Laurie and Aunt Dot in The Towers of Trebizond), who swims out to investigate the caves in which the notorious Emperor Tiberius is reputed to have committed atrocities.<sup>38</sup> She is trapped in one of the caves by an overwhelmingly evil presence which refuses to release her until past horrors - the throwing of people to a shark - have been re-enacted in sound around her. She emerges at last shaken and relieved, convinced that no amount of modern re-writing of history will ever succeed, for her, in whitewashing Tiberius's reputation. She accedes to her aunt's wisdom:

Evil does exist, and monsters have always been monsters.  
Nero, Tiberius, the Borgias, Richard III, John, our  
contemporary tyrants...I believe in them all.<sup>39</sup>

This ghost story of Rose Macaulay's seventy-second year features a malign host as "The Empty Berth" (1913) did not. While the early story was an enactment of the Christian resurrection, this is a confirmation, in its albeit slight way, of the author's awareness of evil in the world. A darker tale, it shows her mature and sceptical in a darker era.

### The World My Wilderness

The World My Wilderness, which she began writing in 1948 after her return from a research visit to Portugal, and which she published in 1950, is the expression of just such a mature and sceptical state of mind.<sup>40</sup> It is her culminating statement of her sense of disorder, one to which she has been building in the last novels of her middle period and in her poetry of the 1940's. Here is a post-war world in perhaps irremediable disarray. At the heart of the story is a disordered family in which the tangled mesh of aborted relationships causes distress to one after another of its members. Helen Michel has been divorced by Sir Gulliver Denniston and is now the widow of her second husband, French collaborator Maurice Michel. A complex tracery of offspring has resulted from the marriages. Michel's first wife died young, leaving him a son, Raoul; a baby, Roland, has resulted from his marriage to Helen. Helen's own first marriage to Gulliver Denniston had produced a son, Richie and, apparently, a daughter Barbary - it later transpires that Barbary's father is in fact a Spanish artist, Vicente Rodriguez. Sir Gulliver's second marriage, to Pamela, has produced another baby, David. Various

tensions inevitably ensue. Barbary, for years her mother's darling, is latterly cold-shouldered by her after Helen suspects that she has been in some way involved in a Maquis plot to cause Maurice's death by drowning. Barbary craves the renewal of her mother's love and carries, suppressed, the burden of guilt for the role she has played in her stepfather's murder. She dotes on baby Roland, but is severed from him by Helen's decision to return her to her father in London for a civilised education at the Slade School of Art. She resents her stepbrother David as having ousted Roland from his rightful place in the family pattern. Barbary is in turn resented by Pamela, who sees her as an unwelcome reminder of Sir Gulliver's first marriage and dislikes her wild manners. Barbary is, of course, aptly named for the barbarian element she represents and which Rose Macaulay sees in this post-war world as being all-pervasive. Later, when Barbary is severely injured in one of her escapades across the London bomb-sites and Helen Michel arrives to nurse her, Pamela suffers the anguish of seeing her husband's first wife return to her former home and of watching Gulliver's interest in Helen revive. In this disordered family, with its messy, painful criss-crossing of relationships, Rose Macaulay epitomises the whole world in disarray. "The smashing of thousands of homes must have its effect" she has remarked in a Second World War piece - here is an effect illustrated.<sup>41</sup>

Other disorders are shown. The novel opens on the bohemian chaos of the Villa Fraises, Helen's home at Collioure, France. Amid



the profusion of fruit and flowers in the undisciplined garden, Helen sits in a hammock,

the table lay by her side littered with a miscellany of assorted amusements - Greek plays, French novels, playing cards, a chess-board, bottles and glasses - how little of a French widow she with her deep-yellow linen dress and lounging air appeared.<sup>42</sup>

The litter of playing cards around the hammock - bound woman suggests not only her obsession with games of chance but - in pointed juxtaposition with the previously used picture of the chess-board - the horrifying randomness of the unpurposeful lives of all at the Villa Fraises. Cards have been used before to symbolise order and the creation of pattern - in the poem "Cards" and in Dangerous Ages.<sup>43</sup> Now they carry more threatening connotations of chaos. Helen, in her easy self-indulgence, gives no heed to Barbary and Raoul who run wild in the surrounding countryside, conspiring with the Maquis in their schemes to overthrow authority. There is disorder, too, in the politics of the Villa Fraises family. Maurice Michel has collaborated with the Vichy government, securing his own comfort and prosperity for the duration of the German occupation. His wife, on the other hand, has on occasion helped escaped allied prisoners to cross the Pyrenees, sheltering them at the Villa before their journey. There is a lack of commitment and coherence in the family's politics, an absence of consistency and integrity in husband and wife's willingness to follow whatever political line will afford them most immediate convenience.

Products of this background, Barbary and Raoul in London are drawn towards the ruinous bomb-sites of the recently blitzed city - the visual correlative of familial and political disorder:

Barbary wondered what the ruined waste lands looked like after dark, with the night lying over the deep chasms, the pits, the broken walls and foundations, the tangled greenery, the roofless, gaping churches, the stone flights of stairs, climbing high into emptiness, the hidden creatures scrambling and scuttering among brambles. Strange it would be, and frightening, the lost waste maquis in the dark, haunted by who knew what of wandering, sinister, lurking things of night. For it was there, surely, that such beings would foregather, as they had foregathered in the Forêt behind Collioure, the uneasy fringe that hung about the Resistance, committed by their pasts to desperate deeds. Where should the London Resistance movement have its headquarters but among the broken alleys and caves of that wrecked waste? It had familiarity, as of a place long known; it had the clear, dark logic of dream; it made a lunatic sense, as the unshattered streets and squares did not; it was the country that one's soul recognised and knew.<sup>44</sup>

Here is the most frightening development in Rose Macaulay's study of disorder - the chaos itself is seen to make sense. As Helen Michel's playing cards have lain beside a chess-board and Greek plays, items symbolically associated with reasoned exposition and order, so the devastated bomb-sites are deemed to make a "lunatic sense." Our glimpse of this grotesque new order is confirmed in the episode of Barbary's shoplifting. Rose Macaulay's choice of the adjective "moonish" is significant as she describes the array of good things on which the child fixes her eye:

Galaxies of desirable objects, glittering into the focus of attainability, shone with a new moonish lustre, as of fruit ripe for plucking and within

reach....She gazed like Traherne,  
'Wandering with ravishment all things to see,  
Such real joys, so truly mine to be,'  
and would have repeated, had she known the words,  
'Transcendant objects doth my God provide,  
In such convenient order all contriv'd.'<sup>45</sup>

The order here is the twisted order of items arranged to facilitate the shoplifter's art. The symbolism of quest has been subverted. This nightmare world of upturned logic which the soul so readily recognises and knows is a travesty of the Golden Age dream-world, which the soul conventionally recognises. Barbary has lost this Golden Age of childhood, the secure dependable world in which her mother tucks her into bed. She contemplates her re-furnished old room:

The bed had grown to full size; it was not the one in which she had slept and woken, in which she had lain and waited nightly for the step on the stairs, the tall figure bending over her, the light caress followed by the close embrace, the butterfly kisses from thick lashes moving over her face, the tickling of the ribs bringing uncontrollable giggles, the final cuddle and tucking in of bed clothes. Sometimes after all this, to send her to sleep there would be a few minutes of story telling: Perseus and Andromeda, the Golden Fleece, Theseus and the Minotaur, something out of Herodotus. One hand, or both, would be holding tightly to the large cool hand that lay on the bed; the low, trailing velvet voice, like rich cream, would flow on...flow into a dream.<sup>46</sup>

Significantly, the stories are from the reasoned age of classical Greece. Now however, Barbary's soul is drawn to the dark mirror-image of that Golden Age, the primordial chaos which is its opposite. She is attracted to the very depths which Rose Macaulay's other characters have always been concerned to circumvent, to the

meaningless, patternless void which all other protagonists have, in their different ways, diligently endeavoured to span.

The World My Wilderness debates whether these depths can be spanned or not. Helen Michel, luxurious, sensuous, careless, suggests that there may be no point in bridge-building, that descent into the void is inevitable:

'We shall none of us do well,' she returned, still grave. 'We shall all go down and down into catastrophe and the abyss. We must snatch what good we can on the way.'<sup>47</sup>

It is in the haphazardness of the snatching she advocates that the novel's sadness lies; for her there is no determined forging of a pattern to dispel the hopelessness - not for her the cultivated gardens of Benjamin Bunter or Ronald McBrown - but rather a listless detachment from the struggle. "'This garden is paradise,'" she says of her luscious, unrestrained Collioure grounds, equating its alluring disorder with perfection.<sup>48</sup> She preaches the easy creed of abandonment to aimlessness:

'One understands so well,' said Helen languidly teasing a small green lizard cupped in her hand, 'the desire not to work; indeed, I share it to the full. As to one's country, why should one feel any more interest in its welfare than in that of other countries? And as to the family, I have never understood how that fits in with the other ideals - or indeed why it should be an ideal at all. A group of closely related persons living under one roof; it is a convenience, often a necessity, sometimes a pleasure, sometimes the

reverse; but who first exalted it as admirable,  
an almost religious ideal?<sup>49</sup>

The pattern and coherence offered by patriotism and family life are disparaged. It is left to the weaker, incidental voice of the local priest, Abbé Dinant, to redress the balance, to halt the plunge of ideas into chaos with his dry rejoinder, "'My dear Madame, not almost. It is a religious ideal.'"<sup>50</sup> Not by chance is Helen shown holding a lizard in her hand; the picture is that modified of Isie in the forest watching the snakes on the floor in Staying With Relations, or of Ronald McBrown watching the reptiles slither across the ground in the derelict garden; yet while they have both heard simultaneously the sound of birdsong as an uplifting counterbalance to the sight of the creatures on the ground, Helen does not.<sup>51</sup> Aspiring to no ideals, she is equated with the reptiles she caresses.

Richie, Helen's delicate, aesthete son, has a sense of the Church as a possible pattern-maker in a distorted world. Himself "trapped into barbarism" during three years of war, he now turns in reaction to the "rich elegances of life", the "ivory tower of aristocratic culture" which he can shore against the ruins of modern upheaval.<sup>52</sup>

While cities and buildings, lovely emblems of history, fell shattered, or lost shape and line in a sprawl of common mass newness, while pastoral beauty was overrun and spoilt, while ancient communities were engulfed in the gaping maw of the beast of prey, and Europe dissolved into wavering anonymities [sic], bitter of tongue, servile of deed, faint of heart, always treading the frail plank over the abyss, rotten-ripe for destruction, turning a slanting, doomed eye on death that waited round

the corner - during all this frightening evanescence and dissolution the historic churches kept their strange courses, kept their improbable, incommunicable secret, linking the dim past with the disrupted present and intimidating future, frail, tough chain of legend, myth, and mystery, stronghold of reaction and preserved values.<sup>53</sup>

The lines have a Yeatsian resonance, summoning his, "Many ingenious lovely things are gone./That seemed sheer miracle to the multitude," and in their "beast of prey," his "rough beast" which "slouches towards Bethlehem to be born."<sup>54</sup>

Barbary, more tentatively, recognises the same quality of the stronghold about the church building as she wakes after a night in the ruins to see the dome of St. Paul's against the skyline:

Waking, cramped and chilly, in the faint beginnings of dawn, she looked out from her terrace over the cold grey tumbled waste, the cratered landscape of the moon, and saw the great dome riding beyond it, pale curve of dove grey against a dove's breast sky. Mighty symbol dominating ruin; formidable, insoluble riddle; stronghold, refuge and menace, or mirage and gigantic hoax? Accepting it as the former, Barbary saluted it with a deprecatory sign of the cross, before picking up her belongings and descending the broken stairs to Fore Street.<sup>55</sup>

We are reminded of Verney Ruth in Rome, sensing in his delirium the tantalising ambivalence, as a symbol, of the Dome of St. Peter's: does it represent, the hot, fever-ridden city, or does it simply mask the cool fountain in the Lateran courtyard?<sup>56</sup>

The London life-style of Sir Gulliver Denniston offers another attempt at pattern-making. The professional world in which he works as a judge is all that is ordered and elegant, while his home-life with Pamela (ex-Roedean) is the epitome of domestic propriety. The Scottish shooting lodge at which they spend holidays boasts:

a well-planned garden in front, where bright flowers bloomed in beds beneath smooth gravel paths and fruit trees climbed walls and a fountain played in a water-lily pond.<sup>57</sup>

In its geometric neatness it contrasts clearly with the riotous garden at Collioure. Here all is named and disciplined - Lady Maxwell (Gulliver's sister) knows the names of "all the roses and other plants in the garden and greenhouses."<sup>58</sup> It is a garden, however, in which the brutal cultivator nips off the heads of flowers still in bloom. Pamela, agitated by her brother-in-law's admiring talk of Sir Gulliver's former wife, cuts off as she gardens a flower not yet withered:

Sir Angus realised that his description of Helen was largely responsible for the sharpness of the last word, and for the execution of the rose in bloom.<sup>59</sup>

This neat garden will not support the fully blown rose, which is the symbol of perfection. However carefully one strives for the perfect pattern, the image suggests, it will be unattainable. In the end, Helen removes Barbary from this high, ordered world where she has

been unhappy to the relaxed confusion of Collioure. She spares a wistful thought for Sir Gulliver's patterned millieu:

Gully, vir probe et fortis, you stand nearly alone, my dear, or it is just my ignoble world to whom you are so alien? Is there another nobler world where people like you are common? I suppose I couldn't breathe in it...and certainly Barbary couldn't.

Worlds flickered before her, strange, fantastic, amusing, intimidating, remote. I am taking my child away from the higher to the lower, she thought. But what have I or Vicente passed down to her that should make her a fit inhabitant of that rarefied air that Gully breathes? She would freeze in it and wither up. She must have sunshine, geniality, laughter, love; and if she goes to the devil she shall at least go happily, my poor little savage.<sup>60</sup>

The novel ends in impasse. Barbary may either freeze or go to the devil. The rose will not flourish in either the overgrown Collioure garden or the neatly checkered Scottish one of Barbary's Maxwell cousins. Chess-board and playing-cards lie side by side. Barbary is torn between two parents, Sir Gulliver between two wives. No one is happy. Sequences of intertwined opposites spill through the closing paragraphs. Richie, the lover of civilisation, pauses to watch excavators at work uncovering the foundations of the city wall near St. Giles's. A symbol of continuity through past ages - "Middle Ages, the Dark Ages, Londinium, Rome", it stands on a site which will be cleared for re-building, so representing hope for the future, though demolition must precede reconstruction.<sup>61</sup> Time stretches at this point simultaneously backwards and forwards. Bright summer flowers, "michaelmas daisies, milky ways of tiny blue stars," erupt amongst the sinister tangle of bomb-site weeds, the "withered rose-



bay, the damp brown bracken, the sprawling nightshade and the thistles."<sup>62</sup> Tidy garden plots, images of order and hope, are beginning to appear in cleared patches in the wilderness:

the fire brigade already had one, trim and neat, with trenches of scarlet tomatoes, outside the wall....<sup>63</sup>

This one is, however, beside "the old Jews' burying ground" - death and decay are in inevitable juxtaposition to the burgeoning gardens.<sup>64</sup> A bonfire, symbol of hope and fertility used before by Rose Macaulay in both prose and poetry, crackles blue smoke over the landscape, scenting the air like incense, but it is a bonfire of weeds:

So men's will to recovery strove against the drifting wilderness to halt and tame it; but the wilderness might slip from their hands, from their spades and trowels and measuring rods, slip darkly away from them, seeking the primeval chaos and old night which had been before Londinium was, which would be when cities were ghosts haunting the ancestral dreams of memory.<sup>65</sup>

The novel closes on a question-mark. Richie does set out pilgrim-like, across the waste land towards the beckoning dome of St Paul's, yet,

Behind him the questionable chaos of broken courts and lanes lay sprawled under the October mist, and the shells of churches gaped like lost myths, and the jungle pressed in on them, seeking to cover them up.<sup>66</sup>

Rose Macaulay's "Wilderness," as she was to write to Father Johnson some two years later, was "largely an unconscious prayer."<sup>67</sup> She is still, at the end of this novel, awaiting an answer.

### The Towers of Trebizond

The answer came, as is well documented, in the summer of 1950, shortly after the publication of The World My Wilderness, in a letter from Father Hamilton Johnson, a Cowley Father working with the society's American branch in Cambridge, Massachusetts, who wrote to her expressing his admiration for They Were Defeated.<sup>68</sup> The letter was to be the start of a long correspondence between the two, during which Rose Macaulay came to depend on Father Johnson for spiritual guidance, and as a result of which she, in early January 1951, made her first confession in nearly thirty years. Her return to the Anglican Church in her seventieth year after her long estrangement was a joyous affair, deeply satisfying both spiritually and intellectually. Her letters are full of relief and delight at this sudden straightening out of her life. Hamilton Johnson, it transpired, was a fourth cousin of Rose Macaulay's so the correspondence acquired the warmth born of family ties; both could also recall Rose's attendance at a Retreat for Women in the summer of 1916 under the auspices of the Cowley Fathers - Father Johnson had conducted this and heard her confession; both had pleasure in realising that their spiritual relationship was in fact of long standing. The pattern of Rose's life changed from this point, and the letters abound with references to her attendance each morning at

early communion at Grosvenor Chapel. Not surprisingly, we find her using the vocabulary of "pattern" and "wholeness" to describe her experience of reconciliation, writing to Father Johnson:

I like what you say about being in the Church; yes, isn't it a wonderful corporate feeling of being carried along, being part of the body, not looking at it from outside, from beyond a fence. And, as you say, everything in it fits gradually in, forming the pattern of the whole; and the bits one doesn't yet grasp, or that don't mean anything much to one, may one day. Anyhow, that doesn't matter to the whole pattern and movement in which one is involved, as if it was a great sweeping symphony that one can hear a little meaning of now and then.<sup>69</sup>

The Forsterian symphonic metaphor, reminiscent of Howard's End, is unlikely to be accidental.<sup>70</sup> Rose Macaulay, by now a close friend of Forster's, as well as a long-standing admirer of his fiction, had driven him to Abinger to put flowers on his mother's grave a few weeks before this was written.<sup>71</sup> In her late letters, as in her early fiction, she slips easily into his idiom.

It would be wrong to assume, as it usually is, that Rose Macaulay's recognition of the Church as a force for coherence emerges suddenly in 1951 with her reconciliation to it.<sup>72</sup> To conclude that the novels of her middle period, which coincided with her estrangement from the Church, are, because they are in many cases memorably satirical, only satirical, is seriously to misinterpret her work. Her characters have, all through these middle novels, slipped into churches, or considered doing so in the course of their quests. In Dangerous Ages,

Mrs Hilary passed a church. Religion. Some people found help there. But it required so much of you, was so exhausting in its demands. Besides, it seemed infinitely far away - an improbable, sad, remote thing, that gave you no human comfort; psycho-analysis was better; that opened gates into a new life.<sup>73</sup>

The happiness she briefly experiences as a result of psycho-analysis is "of the religious type":

a deep, warm glow, which did not lack excitement. She felt as those may be presumed to feel who have just been converted to some church - newly alive, and sunk in spiritual peace, and in profound harmony with life.<sup>74</sup>

Stanley Garden in Told By an Idiot turns for help to the Church:

She would turn into dark and silent churches, seeking desperately the relief from herself that life denied her and fall on her knees and there stay, numb and helpless, her forehead dropped on her arms, till the sweet, often incense-laden atmosphere, (for that was the kind of church she preferred), enveloped her like a warm and healing garment, and she whispered into the dim silence, 'God! God! If you are there, speak to me and help me! God, God, God!'<sup>75</sup>

Daisy Simpson in Keeping Up Appearances enters a church in a similar appeal for sanctuary:

Three days before Christmas, Daisy, reduced by the frightful streets, the nightmare shops, to a state of tired nervous strain that made her flee from life as from a terrifying juggernaut, turned into a church to find peace. The misty and incensed air crept about her, as she knelt with her chin on her arms, staring through weary tears at the red sanctuary light. Here was comfort and security, something to

hold in chaos. If not objective truth - and who was to know that? - here to her was one kind of truth, shining like a lamp through the falsehoods and entanglements of her uneasy and frightened life.<sup>76</sup>

The Church has all through these novels been considered as a possible source of cohesion or unity. Dr Franchi in Mystery at Geneva has identified his hopes for the future of the League of Nations as "an extension of country-love into world-love, and a purified version of the Christian faith" - political and religious goals are merged.<sup>77</sup> (As an ex-communicated priest himself, of course, he cannot be happy with the present state of the church he has had to leave - reform is of the essence). Miss Smith in Orphan Island keeps her community together by means of her sermons from her homespun scriptures; her misremembered texts may be laughable, yet even this form of religious observance serves as an important civilising influence. Denham in Crewe Train joins the Roman Catholic Church before her marriage to Arnold Chapel (whose surname is significant). She assumes her Church membership like a civilising mantle, reflecting that "putting on Roman Catholicism was probably no more difficult than putting on culture."<sup>78</sup> Kit Conybeare in They Were Defeated is attracted to Roman Catholicism because "the Roman Catholics have an order, and enforce it."<sup>79</sup> In the Church of his birth, on the other hand, "one person says bow and another says, by no means, and there's no correct order."<sup>80</sup> The Bishop in Going Abroad feels that his own Anglican creed has the advantage over that of the Buchmanites of being able to affect souls in a "coherent and enduring" fashion.<sup>81</sup>

Rose Macaulay's personal views on the value of the Church during the period of her abstention from Communion are not hard to seek. We find her writing in St. Paul's Review of May 1929 of "A Church I Should Like," stressing that it must have "wheels and a motor attachment, so that it is not static but dynamic", moving on from time to time during the service to new views.<sup>82</sup> The tone is humorous, yet there is a core of sincerity in her stipulation that ideal sermons should "emphasize the heroic difficulty of the Christian quest after virtue, and deal with particular ethical problems....Their aim is to leave their bearers with an increased regard for the finer virtues, courage, honesty, friendship, unselfishness, tolerance," with the result that "for some hours after a service those who have attended it are addicted to noble actions, useful works, agreeable words, and idealistic dreams."<sup>83</sup> More caustically in her 1931 piece in The Nation, entitled "What I Believe," she champions the Church as a civilising force:

Religion at its best is a force for good beyond calculation; but how often is it at its best, as absorbed by the human race? What part should and will this strange, tremendous force play in civilisation? All I can say I believe about this is that it should be given its chance, and that it might take it and help to stand between men and the wreckage of this world.<sup>84</sup>

Her Some Religious Elements in English Literature, a gallop through nineteen centuries of religious writing, was also published in 1931, ample testament to her absorbing interest in the subject.

It is, therefore, not a surprising new development that Rose Macaulay's twenty-third and last novel should have as its central idea "the struggle of good and evil in the human soul, and its eternal importance, and the pull and power of the Christian Church on the divided mind, its torment and its attraction."<sup>85</sup> She is explicit about her symbolism: "Trebizond stands for not merely the actual city...but for the ideal and romantic and nostalgic vision of the Church which haunts the person who narrates the story."<sup>86</sup> "The real point, of the novel," she continues later, "is a great nostalgia for the Church, on the part of the central character, who is lapsed from it."<sup>87</sup> Rose Macaulay has been building to this novel from the very first. The Towers of Trebizond (1956) is the ultimate quest story - Laurie's travels by camel with her aunt across Turkey are the visual correlative of her search for reconciliation with the Church, and with God. The urgent need for the discovery of pattern is also more apparent here than in any of the previous novels. It provides a culminating treatment of her recurring themes, not a sudden upsurge of new ideas simplistically ascribable to her recent return to the Church.

The story itself is slight - Laurie accompanies her Anglican Aunt Dot and Father Chantry - Pigg on a missionary visit to Turkey; when the two elders depart on an illicit visit across the Russian border, Laurie proceeds on her journey on her aunt's (mad) camel and eventually meets her lover Vere with whom she has been having an adulterous affair for many years. On the last stage of their return journey to London, after a subsequent visit to Venice, Laurie, in her

impatience at traffic lights, drives out in front of an oncoming bus and Vere is killed. The autobiographical elements in the story are obvious. Laurie's personal and religious dilemmas are Rose Macaulay's own. We are reminded of her appeal to Father Johnson in a letter of April 1951, referring to her relationship with Gerald O'Donovan: "Oh why was there so much evil in what was in so many ways so good? Why did it have to be like that, all snarled up and tangled in wrong, when if we had been free it would have been the almost perfect thing."<sup>88</sup> The novel repeats the question, dwelling on the incompatibility of the two impelling forces in Laurie's life - her desire for union with the Church, and her love for Vere.

It is the most mature and complex of all her novels, a rich, vigorously whisked *mélange* of the philosophies and observations distilled from over seventy years' existence. Into this novel she crams the kaleidoscopic "whole" of life. Nugget after nugget of event from her own circumstances is inserted to swell the tale. Her own friends are mentioned by name - Professor Gilbert Murray, Archbishop David Mathew, David Talbot Rice, Patrick Kinross, Joe Ackerley, John Betjeman, the Cowley Fathers.<sup>89</sup> The visit to Turkey, is, of course, her own of the summer of 1954. Grosvenor Chapel features in the list of churches with which Aunt Dot's Turkish friend Dr Halide is experimenting.<sup>90</sup> Aunt Dot's longing to see beyond the Russian border is shared by Rose, as she explained to Emily Smith in a letter of July 1954:

I should like to see the Caucasian mountains and the long-tailed ponies galloping [sic] over them with



Tartars hanging under them upside down. In Turkey I wasn't allowed near enough to the Russian frontier to see these things, though I went all down the Black Sea to Trebizond.<sup>91</sup>

The very words are used by Laurie, who starts to dream "of Caucasian mountains, over which Tartars galloped upside down on long-tailed ponies, shouting horribly, wild mares with their koumiss foaming into green pitchers, sledges and droshkys speeding over the steppes..."<sup>92</sup> "Have you read 'Apes, Angels and Victorians?' I am just about to," she enquires of Gilbert Murray on New Year's Day 1956 - a clue to the episode towards the end of the novel in which Laurie attempts to train an ape for civilised existence - taking him to church, teaching him to drive and to play tennis.<sup>93</sup> She is at this time, too, very busy with BBC broadcasting commitments, appearing at regular intervals between May 1954 and March 1955 on The Critics programme, on which a topical book or radio programme was assessed by a panel. The BBC recording van features as a comic leitmotiv in The Towers of Trebizond, a humorous suggestion that Rose Macaulay is by this time feeling overburdened - indeed haunted - by her responsibilities to the Corporation. One item for discussion by The Critics was an Interview with Billy Graham broadcast on May 17, 1954 - Billy Graham is the subject of some light-hearted remarks in the novel.<sup>94</sup> Laurie tells Father Chantry-Pigg how she had "been to Harringay arena with my friend Joe, who was a literary editor, because we had press tickets lent us by John Betjeman...", and proceeds to describe the effect of Dr. Graham's preaching.<sup>95</sup> The incident is lifted from real life, as she relates in a letter to Gilbert Murray on May 15, 1954:

This next week the radio will be interview [sic] with Billy Graham, the American Evangelist who has taken the stadium of Harringay by storm. I went there one evening with Joe Ackerley, the editor of the Listener; we weren't converted, unfortunately, though I hoped that Joe would be, he is now what some call a pagan, others an agnostic. A great lot of the spell-bound audience walked up after the address to be saved, but were disappointingly quiet!<sup>96</sup>

John Betjeman is given a friendly mention, too, we may assume, because he was about to participate with Rose in a radio discussion on Changes on Morals for the BBC a few weeks later on June 15.<sup>97</sup> Even a comic cameo incident at the beginning of the book in which Father Chantry-Pigg is described as driven to distraction by squads of dissenters who deface his church notices, has its basis in reality. Although he is uncertain whether it is those signing themselves "Catholic Commandos" or "Protestant Storm Troopers" who are to blame, he knows that, "When he put a notice on his church door containing the words Eucharist, or Mass, or even Priest, (particularly if the priest was going to hear confessions), these words would be struck out by ardent representatives of one or another of these guerilla armies, or perhaps by both..."<sup>98</sup> Speaking of her own Church, Rose Macaulay records in a letter to Dorothea Conybeare how:

Someone yesterday crossed out the word 'Priest-in-Charge' from the Church Notice outside and substituted 'parson'. It may have been either an R.C. or a Protestant enthusiast.<sup>99</sup>

It is as though ideas and incidents from the passing show have simply been swept into the novel and, barely, fictionalised. All Rose Macaulay's life is here. Along the thread of the meandering plot are strung the many and various jewels of her remarks on every topic under the sun - outside broadcasting, American evangelism, the defection of Burgess and Maclean, modern poetry, the Church of England, women's rights, the labelling of medicine bottles, the linguistic curiosities of phrase-books, the pleasures and tribulations of driving a car. It is a fascinating, hybrid creation on the blurred borderline between novel and travelogue, part autobiographical and part fictitious. Yet for all its liveliness and apparent whimsicality it is not frenetic. The story slips from event to event in the nonchalant, detached, calmly consequential tones of the narrator Laurie who "and's" occurrences together in rhythmic, measured lists. It is a style she has adopted deliberately, she says, "to put Laurie at a remove from myself."<sup>100</sup> So prominent a feature of the novel are these "anded" lists that the reader finds himself reflecting that if events or items are "anded" to infinity, a perfect "whole" of total experience will have been encompassed. The text is crowded with "strings," densely suggestive in their summoning of sights and atmospheres. Antioch is a maze of:

crooked winding streets and deep arches and little tiled mosques, and donkeys and camels hitched to rings in the open squares which had once been caravan halts, and trees growing about, and carpenters and potters and goldsmiths and copper-smiths all working away in tiny shops in their trade streets.<sup>101</sup>

Russia is, succinctly,

the Caucasus, Circassian slaves, Tartars, wild mares, koumiss, churches, clergymen, and women.<sup>102</sup>

Laurie journeys by camel along the caravan routes of the Levant, seeing:

Aleppo and Tortosa and Ruad and Byblos and Beyrout and the mountain garden coast of Lebanon, and Baalbek and Palmyra and Sidon and Tyre and Damascus and Amman, and Jerash emerging in Corinthian splendour from its rocky hill, and half a dozen Crusader castles, and deserts and mountains and valleys....<sup>103</sup>

A profusion of life is evoked. The piling on of item after item suggests a world teeming with activity, endlessly diverse.

The same effect is achieved by means of the deliberate evocation of oddness, the forcing together of opposites to suggest a many-faceted reality. The novel opens, for example, on an arresting burst of incongruities:

'Take my camel, dear,' said my Aunt Dot, as she climbed down from this animal on her return from High Mass.<sup>104</sup>

The incongruities are coolly elaborated on:

I did not care for the camel, nor the camel for me, but, as I was staying with Aunt Dot, I did what she bade me, and dragged the camel by its bridle to the

shed which it shared with my little Austin and, till lately, with my Aunt's Morris, but this car had been stolen from her by some Anglican bishop from outside the Athenaeum annexe while she was dining there one evening with Professor Gilbert Murray and Archbishop David Mathew. On camel and car, Gothic gargoyles looked down, on account of the shed being enclosed by the walls of an eighteenth-century folly built out of stones from the restored Perp. and Dec. village church.<sup>108</sup>

The world which houses an Arabian camel and a baby Austin under the same roof, where a bishop is guilty of car theft, in which a twentieth-century garage jostles with eighteenth-century masonry, is an absurd one indeed.

Rose Macaulay evokes in this novel, too, not only the "wholeness" of the infinitely varied present scene, but also the more sophisticated "wholeness" of time itself. Again and again, she shows past, present and future merging. Her travellers stand gazing at the site of Troy, overgrown with grass and thistles, unable to see much of what had been built there - "there had been no excavations since 1932" - but picturing the successive Troys - "fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth" - the ruins of which must be piled in chronological order underneath.<sup>106</sup> Rose Macaulay has been fascinated by this phenomenon, this accumulation upon one another of layers of time, in Pleasure of Ruins, on which she worked immediately before her last novel, and in which she also contemplates Troy:

Layer below layer, theory after theory, have been during the past eighty years exposed; and now we see the ruins of the great Mycenaean Walls and towers of Homer's walls and those of the great Roman city built on these. All are marked with their successive periods; in imagination city

after city rises over that wide and stony plain,  
looking across the Scamander to Sigeum and the  
Sea.<sup>107</sup>

Everything is fluid and changing, one Troy succeeding another, the very name of the place protean - Troy, Trua, Iljum. The uncertainty about the actual location of Troy - was it at Alexandria Troas or on the Troy plain? - adds to the sense of liquidity. Changes in Trebizond, too, are reflected in the mutation of its name into "Trabzon". The travellers are confronted by the discrepancy between the Trebizond they have dreamt of - the fabulous capital city of the Byzantine empire - and the twentieth-century reality which has succeeded it, a Turkish port "with a black beach littered with building materials, and small houses and mosques climbing the hill, and ugly buildings along the quay."<sup>108</sup> Laurie muses on the glories of old Trebizond, and sees how the past is still, strangely, interlinked with the present:

now the wealth and the pride and the power had ebbed away and Trabzon was like the descendant of some great line who has become of small account, and has a drab name, without glory or romance, but is still picturesque, though the new harbour works that had been planned were a desolate litter on the unclean beach, making it a waste land.

Yet I liked the city, and its people, and I knew that I should come back, to find the glory and the legend, to find Trebizond, the ghost that haunted Trabzon.<sup>109</sup>

Again Laurie travels by camel to the port of Giresun, intrigued by the fact that it is reputed to be the ancient town of Cerasus. Later

she visits Jericho, sensitive as she passes through the modern streets, to its many layers of history:

As for Canaanite Jericho, that city of palms and balsams and stately buildings whose walls had been too ill-built to stand up to trumpet blasts, and as for the Jericho which Anthony gave to Cleopatra, and the Roman Jericho which Herod built up and beautified, I saw little of any of them, and thought I had better come back in about twenty years, when the excavators had made more of them....<sup>110</sup>

In Jerusalem she finds herself unperturbed by the march of time:

one does not mind the original sites and buildings having been destroyed long ago and others built on their ruins and destroyed in their turn, again and again and again, for this shows the tenacious hold they have had on men's imaginations.<sup>111</sup>

The wholeness of time, the linking of age with age, is persistently expressed and mused upon.

The concept of the "pursuit of the whole" is more explicit here than in any other novel. Cities, as usual, represent the perfect goals sought. Laurie visits many of these on her travels - Troy, Trebizond, Ani (the ancient Armenian capital), Byzantium, Venice. Trebizond, of course, carries the weight of the symbolism: Laurie has a vision of the ancient city:

not Trebizond as I had seen it, but the Trebizond of the world's dreams, of my own dreams, shining towers and domes shimmering on a far horizon, yet close at hand, luminously enspelled in the most fantastic unreality, yet the only reality, a walled and gated

city, magic and mystical, standing beyond my reach, yet I had to be inside, an alien wanderer yet at home, held in the magical enchantment; and at its heart, at the secret heart of the city and the legend and the glory in which I was caught and held, there was some pattern that I could not unravel, some hard core that I could not make my own, and, seeing the pattern and the hard core enshrined within the walls, I turned back from the city and stood outside it, expelled in mortal grief.<sup>112</sup>

It represents to her all that is perfect and to be aspired to, a reality beyond the actual. For her and her lover Vere, Venice, too, betokens a state of perfection. Their last holiday there, days before Vere's death in the car accident, is unmarred by any blemish:

When Venice was the setting for all this, it was like  
(but with important omissions) paradise, where  
'...they live in such delight,  
Such pleasure and such play,  
As that to them a thousand years  
Doth seem as yesterday?'<sup>113</sup>

The wholeness they find there is that of love itself. Laurie and Vere together make the perfect pattern they desire so much: "There were never two so cut out for one another," Laurie says, comparing herself and her lover to Florimel and Olinda in Secret Love.<sup>114</sup>

It would be neat to be able to say that here in this climactic last novel, the heroine's quest is crowned with success, the pattern she has sought found and held. No such pleasing conclusion is reached, however. The wholeness of Laurie's and Vere's love is transient, the perfection cut through and ended with Vere's death days later. Their relationship has been at its most paradisaical in



Venice, that most fluid of cities; the pattern of their love cannot be held against such a background of continuous change. The pattern and the hard core of Trebizond, picture of the Church, is not attained either. Aunt Dot interprets its meaning in vain to her niece:

'One mustn't lose sight of the hard core, which is, do this, do that, love your friends and like your neighbours, be just, be extravagantly generous, be honest, be tolerant, have courage, have compassion, use your wits and your imagination, understand the world you live in and be on terms with it, don't dramatize and dream and escape. Anyhow, that seems to me to be the pattern so far as we can make it out here. So come in again [to the Church] with your eyes open, when you feel you can.'

But I did not feel that I could. Even the desire for it was killed.<sup>115</sup>

The novel abounds in abandoned, mutilated patterns. Landscape after landscape of ruined grandeur - at Troy, Trebizond, Jericho, Antioch - makes the point visually. Aunt Dot offers the Anglican Church as a "shaper" which might stand solid against the flux of disintegrating patterns, yet Laurie sees how the <sup>Christian</sup> Church has failed, deteriorating from the ideal state of its inception and becoming "blood-stained and persecuting and cruel and war-like" as internal factions have developed.<sup>116</sup> This, she realises,

is what happens when a magnificent idea has to be worked out by human beings who do not understand much of it but interpret it in their own way and think they are guided by God, whom they have not yet grasped....<sup>117</sup>

Human passions mar other projected patterns. Dr Halide, a Turkish woman who has been converted to the Church of England, finds her noble ideals of spreading the Christian faith in her native country undercut by her love for a devout Moslem man. Laurie ponders:

how sad it was, all this progress and patriotism and marching on and conquering the realms of culture, yet love rising up to spoil all and hold one back....It had submerged Anthony [sic] and Cleopatra, and Abelard and Heloise, and Lancelot and Guinevere, and Paolo and Francesca, and Romeo and Juliet, and Charles Parnell and Faust, and Oscar Wilde and me, and Halide and her Moslem man, and countless millions more.<sup>118</sup>

A burst of anger makes Laurie drive out in front of the oncoming bus which is jumping its traffic lights, and cause Vere's death. The perfect pattern of their love is destroyed by the baser passion of anger. The civilised pattern insisted on by the traffic lights is exploded by the bus-driver's selfishness. Laurie's attempt to educate her ape, to "find out how high it could climb up the path of civilisation, and how near to a man or woman it could get," further illustrates the ridiculousness of man's efforts to impose discipline and shape on his amorphous existence.<sup>119</sup> The creature's endeavours to master such highly patterned exercises as chess, croquet and tennis-playing as well as car-driving, are deliberately laughable. The human animal, like the ape, is incapable of ever attaining a perfectly civilised state.

The point which emerges from the sophisticated fabric of the novel, is that the pattern is never complete, that life is perpetual

flux, that the truth instinctively aimed for is itself protean, therefore cannot, ever, be "held." Laurie muses:

Churches are wonderful and beautiful, and they are vehicles for religion, but no Church can have more than a very little of the truth. It must be odd to believe, as some people do, that one's Church has all the truth and no errors, for how could this possibly be?...But most of us know that nothing is as true as all that, and that no faith can be delivered once and for all without change, for new things are being discovered all the time, and old things dropped, like the whole Bible being true, and we have to grope our way through a mist that keeps being lit by shafts of light, so that exploration tends to be patchy, and we can never sit back and say, we have the Truth, this is it, for discovering the truth, if it ever is discovered, means a long journey through a difficult jungle, with clearings every now and then, and paths that have to be hacked out as one walks, and dark lanterns swinging from the trees, and these lanterns are the light that has lighted every man, which can only come through the dark lanterns of our minds.<sup>120</sup>

The novel's ending is deeply unsettling and haunting. It closes on an awesome note of despair, Laurie left standing outside the walls of the "fabled city," enchanted by the prospect of its towers, but debarred from entering. However much she longs, she cannot attain:

Still the towers of Trebizond, the fabled city, shimmer on a far horizon, gated and walled and held in a luminous enchantment. It seems that for me, and however much I must stand outside them, this must for ever be. But at the city's heart lie the pattern and the hard core, and these I can never make my own: they are too far outside my range. The pattern should perhaps be easier, the core less hard.

This seems, indeed, the eternal dilemma.<sup>121</sup>

As Rose Macaulay's sister Jean wrote to Constance Babington Smith, The Towers of Trebizond "is a story of utter failure and despair."<sup>122</sup> Although it is dangerous to assume a too-simple relationship between an author's life and art, it is intriguing that a woman so recently and joyously reconciled to the Anglican Church should leave her heroine at such a nadir of existence. It does offer a modus vivendi as, indeed, all its predecessors have done: Laurie will make a life for herself: she will "go about, do [her] work, seek amusements, meet [her] friends, life will amble on, and no doubt in time [she will] find it agreeable again."<sup>123</sup> The vision of Trebizond's towers is retained. Yet Laurie is left in the last lines stranded in the hopelessness of impasse, confronting the "eternal dilemma," but making no heroic bid for hope - fearing too, the final falling "down and down and down" into the "dark void of death."<sup>124</sup> It is all very well for Rose Macaulay to minimise the significance of this portrayal of despair after the event. In her letter to Father Johnson of November 14, 1956, she pulls Laurie out of the pit in which the novel has left her:

Yes, the Times Literary Supplement reviewer (don't know who) took me to be more "in the dark" than I am. Laurie was, of course, still, when the book ends. So, once, was I. Laurie will come later on to where I am now, give her time.<sup>125</sup>

In August of the following year she writes to her god-child Emily Smith offering a similar life-line:

I had a long letter from some Right Rev R. Catholic father, all about purgatory, in which he thought

Laurie didn't believe. He was quite troubled for her. He asked what happened to her later. I told him she is now a church-going Anglican again. That wouldn't do her much good in his eyes, no doubt.<sup>126</sup>

Neither letter, however, can stand as a valid appendix to the novel. Within its own limits as a work of art, The Towers of Trebizond does leave its heroine in despair and is powerfully sad.

The Towers of Trebizond is locked in paradox. Received by Anthony Burgess in The Spectator as "an Anglican book," by John Raymond in The New Statesman and Nation as "Anglican propaganda," by John Betjeman in the Daily Telegraph and Morning Post as the testament of its "unashamedly, honestly, learnedly, charitable 'high Anglican'" author, it yet leaves its protagonist desolate outside the Anglican fold.<sup>127</sup> "Miss Macaulay," as C.V. Wedgwood rather more brutally admits, "is without the sentimentality that would have hurried Laurie in at the eleventh hour through the pearly gates."<sup>128</sup> It is the highest of ironies that a novel which ends on such a note of - perhaps even unChristian? - despair should be hailed as one of the twentieth-century's most luminous Christian novels. "Many people have told me it changed their religious standpoint and their lives, and that some clergy have read the bits about the church to doubtful ordinands to encourage their faith, which it seems it did," Rose Macaulay writes to Maisie Fletcher in July 1958, clearly delighted that this should be the case.<sup>129</sup> She is similarly exultant in her report to Father Johnson of how a friend who had been considering joining the Roman Catholic Church had been so impressed by the

accounts of "the C. of E. and its glories" in The Towers of Trebizond that he was now "going for that instead!"<sup>130</sup> The paradox encapsulates, of course, Rose Macaulay's point. She has shown the hopelessness which ensues when religion is rejected, when the human animal, given the choice of God or self, stolidly, weakly, pettily persists in choosing self. Vere and Laurie's love has only masqueraded as the perfect; it is in fact the last, most tantalisingly misleading of the pis allers for which Rose Macaulay's characters have always settled. Religion will, this novel insists, provide release from the spiritual bankruptcy of the second best, if only Laurie has the courage to choose it. That she does not leaves her outside the Christian fold, but throws into relief The Towers of Trebizond's profoundly Christian message.

Rose Macaulay has enjoyed leaving her novel on this point of paradox, the story forever open-ended and alive ready to receive the myriad interpretations of the myriad readers who approach it. She has side-stepped in the end the simplicity of showing the pattern delineated for Laurie or the goal of her quest defined. In this final most complex of her novels, evoking as it does more nearly than any of the others, life in the "wholeness" of its endless variety, she is content to show only that the pattern is deliquescent, the goal forever surging forwards or receding according to the ardour of the soul who pursues it. It is surely her most sophisticated perception.

\* \* \* \* \*

Venice Besieged

Rose Macaulay did continue writing after The Towers of Trebizond, though in view of her premonition of her death in 1958 she may all along have sensed that it was to be her climactic last novel.<sup>131</sup> Notes and a first chapter remain for a proposed twenty-fourth, a story entitled Venice Besieged, which opens with a fatal road accident on Midsummer Night on the way to Stonehenge. It would be not only dangerous but impossible to draw conclusions about such a barely realised fragment of work, yet we find ourselves intrigued by her preoccupation with the image of Venice for light it might shed on The Towers of Trebizond, in which the city has also featured. She seems to have been fascinated by the prospect of Venice disappearing under water, to have been reading Horatio Brown's Life on the Lagoons, Beryl de Selincourt and M.S. Henderson's Venice, and to have been compiling a list of "Venetian Ghosts" including "Hobhouse, Byron, Shelley, Corvo, Leigh Hunt, Lady Blessington, Henry James" and others.<sup>132</sup> Venice has appeared from early on in Rose Macaulay's fiction as a symbol of the ideal. In The Lee Shore (1912) it is the beautiful city to which Peter repairs to collect for his employer the fabulous Berovierie goblet. It is the scene of his hoped for happiness -

Couldn't one be happy in this lovable water-city, which had, after all, green ways of shadow and gloom between the peeling brick walls of ancient houses, and, beyond, the broad spaces of sea?... There surely never was such a jolly world made as this, which had Venice in it for laughter and

breathless wonder and delight and her Duomo  
shining like a jewel.<sup>133</sup>

As early as this, however, the ideal is shown as besieged - the  
bourgeoise Miss Barnett at the boarding house is vulgarising the  
place with her intention of painting pictures for a book entitled  
Venice, Her Spirit.

'I am trying,' she said, 'to catch the most elusive  
thing in the world - the Spirit of Venice....'<sup>134</sup>

Later she leaves Peter appalled by her interrogation:

'What are you to Venice, Mr Margerison, and Venice to  
you? What, I mean, are you going to get out of her?  
Which of her aspects do you especially approach? She  
has so infinitely many, you know. What, in fact, is  
your connecting-link?'<sup>135</sup>

Venice appears fleetingly again in The Making of a Bigot (1914) where  
guests at the ill-assorted dinner party at the Deanery discover with  
relief that the city is a subject on which they can all contribute  
conversation:

Venice is a coherent whole, not rings within rings,  
so they could talk, albeit with reservations and a  
few cross purposes.<sup>136</sup>

Again in "The Pleasures of Art," one of her unpublished poems of the  
early 1950's, Venice is evoked as one of man's most successful



artistic creations, while in her report for The Queen of her Adriatic cruise of summer 1958, she describes the party's return to the city:

An enchanted voyage. Nothing but Venice could have broken the descent to ordinary life on land; but then Venice is not, of course, ordinary life, nor yet life on land; balanced on those perilous piles, she floats, man's loveliest artefact, an evanescent mirage.<sup>137</sup>

Venice in The Towers of Trebizond is, of course, the place of apparently perfect love about to be marred.

Drawing on the accumulated symbolism, it seems probable that Venice Besieged was to be the story of further ideals beset by imperfection. Constance Babington Smith suggests the possibility of a second Deluge about to surge across an evil world as a prelude to the emergence of new life.<sup>138</sup> Certainly Rose Macaulay's own notes suggest the recurrence of old themes:

Haunting from desert lagoon islands, and from ruined parts of house. Continual ambush, pressing in of evil and barbarism. Sins, pushed out of consciences, relegated to the marginal darkness, kept at bay, lay constant siege....<sup>139</sup>

She may have been planning to pass from her perception of the "deliquescence" of the pattern in The Towers of Trebizond to total liquidity, and a drama in which the pattern is wiped out altogether. Whatever she may have been proposing, it is clear from her continued preoccupation with the sadness of lost ideals that she had intended Trebizond to represent no easy solution.

## Conclusion

"It is stupid to think that just because I never cared to marry I have no experience of life," Rose Macaulay is once reported to have remarked.<sup>1</sup> All her novels, from earliest to latest, attest that this "most prominent spinster in England" has had experience of life which is wideranging, rich and intense.<sup>2</sup> She channels into her writing her perceptions about the most serious and perplexing of human dilemmas. Her fiction of fifty years is the testament of a constant search for "the pattern and the hard core."

Her first writing shows her experimenting with the ideas of quest and wholeness in the medium of poetry. Childhood reading, especially of the romantic poets, has fostered an interest in mysticism which grips her with its promise of "other worlds" from which coherence can be glimpsed. She is fascinated by systems of ideas - Hermeticism, Platonism, Christianity - which offer wholeness, rationality and stability. In the Edwardian literary climate in which De la Mare, Brooke, Yeats and others toyed with the quasi-mystical transcendental, verse presents itself as the most natural format for the initial expression of Rose Macaulay's ideas.

Moving into fiction at the end of the century's first decade, she carries much of the burden of her poetry with her. Her prose is heavily symbolic. Mystical, Hermetic, Platonic and Christian images crowd into her pages, suffocating the stories. She is intent on tracing always, in these early novels, the individual's ordered

progression towards insight, on showing his difficult but determined struggle towards "higher things." Life is here essentially a coherent business, her protagonists' problems only that they cannot always attain the objectivity required for that coherence to be obvious.

In her four novels of around the First World War, Rose Macaulay's tone alters sharply. She abandons attempts to gain the global, systematic perspective. Searches for coherence become reined-in and narrowly concentrated. Personal "wholeness" becomes synonymous with Pragmatism. The symbols which have been so prominent a feature of the first novels, intrusive tokens of systematization, now begin slowly to evaporate. Images blend more easily into the text. Satire, too, dilutes and complicates her ideas for the first time. Here is an author newly uncertain whether the coherence she has stolidly sought is available, but who sees that in satire she may balance precariously between seriousness and comedy, despair and hope, hedging her bets. Quests for the whole in these novels may be both seriously engaged in and dismissed with a laugh.

Her widely acclaimed fiction of between the two wars shows her exploiting this newly sophisticated uncertainty. She shimmers between extremes, offering seriousness in comic disguise, charging what are apparently simple tales about quirky individuals with universal significance. Her accounts of now doggedly but vainly questioning men and women emphasise her anxiety that the entire world may be shivering on the edge of incoherence. Barbarism constantly

nudges civilisation into the abyss - vistas of despair begin to open for an unsettled and sceptical writer.

Hopelessness is only barely held at bay in the three novels Rose Macaulay writes in the years leading up to the Second World War. As patterns of civilised life dissolve, quests are grimly acknowledged to be pointless.

Only with her return to the Anglican Church in the early 1950's does she climb slowly out of this entrenched bleakness. The Christian coherence of her early fiction is, paradoxically, regained. Here, it is accepted, is a goal worth searching for, a standard of morality worth preserving, a system of ideas worth sustaining. Yet the vision of coherence offered now is much more complex than that of The Secret River or The Furnace. It is expressed in a novel full of contradiction and strangeness, jagged with oddity and conflated opposites. Its hope flickers through the story of a woman's despair. Stubborn and despondent outside the Church at the end of the book, Laurie throws into relief the very desirability of belonging to it. Wise in her new conviction, Rose Macaulay exploits the skill in paradox which she has discovered in her satirical, middle-period novels, and produces a maturely nuanced testament to her profoundly unsimple faith.

To read Rose Macaulay's fiction from 1906 to 1956 is to watch an author growing up. We see her pass from the easy answers of youth, through the qualms and terrors of the middle years, to the hard-won

placidity of intelligent old age. "'Nobody ever zig-zagged more, either driving a car or walking through life,'" her friend Alan Pryce-Jones wrote of her.<sup>3</sup> She has zig-zagged from early certainty, through doubt, to certainty once again. Her writing has matured with her, her handling of symbolism progressing from the crude encrustation of image on idea which is so much a feature of her first novels, to the skilful blending of pictures with text which gives richness and resonance to her latest.

It is important to be able to trace, as it has now been for the first time, the development of this single theme through all Rose Macaulay's novels. "The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole" is her motivation to write. Convinced from childhood that life must offer some coherence worth seeking, she toys and wrestles with the concept in each of her works. We watch her form and explode hypotheses, advance down promising pathways then retreat, draft and redraft her ideas. It is not enough to place her, as the commentators of her own day do, in the category of light-hearted and breezy wit. Read sensitively, she must be seen as leaving a deeper mark. In middle, as well as early and last novels, she worries about the issues of Life and Death, Hope and Despair, Comedy and Tragedy. Rose Macaulay's "deep earnestness" must be given its due.<sup>4</sup>

"'My books won't live. Yours may,'" she said to her friend Ivy Compton-Burnett, worn down by contemporary critics' insistence on classifying her with the lightweight.<sup>5</sup> It is time that this self-deprecatory judgement was overthrown. Rose Macaulay's novels can

live. At their best, evoking as they do that most basic of human quests, man's search for meaning in life, they certainly deserve to.

On Being Fastidious

They say that the coarsest brute has his fine point of taste or honour, his limit, which he will not overstep, some act of grossness which he will not commit -

- A platitude, but with truth in it.

I know, for example many a rough fisherman who would not for anything try for salmon with a Red and Teal, or trout with a Jock Scott,

And when they catch a tiny fish they throw it back (a thing I have never done and never intend to do). And one friend of mine can face battle, murder & sudden death, but not a guineau-pig with a pink spot;

And another (an awful swindler) shuns all shops not on the White List of the C.S.U.

In short, everyone draws his line somewhere, whether it be at the Athanasian Creed, or sugar in his tea, or Miss Corelli, or the Great Adult Review.

But Peter (someone I know) accepted all these things; accepted, in fact the whole universe with glee,

And fishes that tipple in the deep know no such liberty.

He would breakfast off hot plum-pudding and ginger-beer, reading  
meanwhile (propped against the butter) Answers, or the  
Adult Review above mentioned, or the Spectator, or Law's  
Serious Call,

Or Casablanca, or Genesis, or anything else handy, being equally  
and immensely interested in them all.

He would then go and buy an indescribable assortment of objects, such  
as flutes, dormice, pyjamas, and buns,

(All of which seemed to him equally delightful to possess).

As for his conversation, it was like the sun's,

With good and bad alike, and many of his friends led fearful lives,

And used yesterday's handkerchief, or even last week's, and ate gravy  
with their knives,

His taste in Art was catholic; he admired impartially Giotto's  
frescoes & "The Soul's Awakening,"

And on his walls Bellini Madonnas jostled coronation Portraits of  
our King



But you must not suppose that Peter did not regret ranking in nice feeling below the coarsest brute;

On the contrary, he felt it deeply; he crept about the world ashamed, longing to draw the line somewhere, like others, but unable to do it;

Till at last he was, as they say in chapels, saved. He was in the wild Highlands, seven miles from the nearest shop, and desperately required red ink;

So he asked his uncle, with whom he was staying, what did he think

Could be done? His uncle said, "Prick your finger, as prisoners do, or, better, someone else's finger, or take (as they say in cookery books) a nice young rabbit"...

And Peter, with a shock of glad surprise, found that he considered that a disgusting habit.

So he used blue chalk, thereby forfeiting his chance of a considerable sum, but he cared nothing, so proud was he of having at last drawn his line, been revolted, thought something too hideous;

And no longer is he ashamed before the coarsest brute, for he, too, is in one point fastidious.

1911 ERM8(59)

A Letter to the New Professor of Latin in the University of Cambridge

That to the winds the plains spread out:

The winds, they blow from far,

For a moment since they swept about

Where the Ural Mountains are.

From east to west the land is kind,

And level like the sea,

And dear to lads that have a mind

To the grey-green river tree.

The Romans, they died long ago;

Their bones, they rot away;

Deaf lads, they will not heed or know,

Talk Roman as you may.

Oh dally not in halls of death;

You were not born, 'tis clear,

To make dead words of living breath

For living lads to hear.

Come out, come out, man, and be wise;

Book-love, 'tis all a sham,

While still the water-ouzel cries

Beside the banks of Cam.

In London town, I hear men tell,

Poets, they never thrive;

They must forget, like souls in hell,

The songs of men alive.

But in the west, in deep-hedged lanes,

You made good songs of clay;

Now of the chalk of eastern plains

Make songs for us to-day!

?1911 ERM8(57)

Thoughts from Great Minds on Crying for the Moon

'The moon came down,' said Endymion,  
And was thenceforth sick of the earth and sun.

The churches proclaim, 'To be devout  
Learn the religion of doing without.'

Mr Wells echoes, 'The lust to possess  
Is the curse of an age of selfishness.'

Maeterlinck says, 'It's ours if we love it,'  
And Moses, briefly, 'Thou shalt not covet.'

My gillie said, 'Ye may fish all day,  
But ye'll no get a saumon oot that way,  
So ye'd best be content wi' a half-pound trout.  
Some folks have brains, some maun do wi'out.'

Likewise Buddha preached, 'Slay desire,  
That burns thy peace like a wasting fire.'

The poets babble of finite clods,  
And infinite yearnings that make men gods,

And reach beyond grasp, and sublime desires,  
For brutes are content, but man aspires.

Well - is this the moral of all my rhyme?  
My nurse used to say it was waste of time,  
And added, that if I desired to cry  
She would give me a better reason why.

But I say, if one must spoil one's eyes,  
(A pity, of course) then it seems most wise  
To waste no tears on a captive balloon,  
But pull it to earth, and cry for the moon.

(And Pygmalion cried till he was heard,  
And the wholly impossible occurred.)

1910 ERM8(56)

Appendix D

Flat 7

8 Luxborough Street, W.i.

10 Oct: 1940

Dear Virginia

Your letter was enormously good to get - how I wish I could see you! It's one of the sad things about this war, seeing people has become so much more difficult, at the same time more important. I like it so much when I do see you. I'm glad you're getting on with Coleridge. I would like to talk about him some time, as I have long had in mind a novel about a girl who would be his descendent [sic] (great great grandchild, the fruit of mild and rural sin) and would take after him - I suppose she would be a very odd girl, wouldn't she - opium, metaphysics, flow of talk, cadging on friends, even poetry, but it needn't be as good as his. I don't know if I shall ever write her - or, indeed, if one will ever write anything. Even my Animals languish, as there is so little time, and one feels (a) sleepy (b) mentally disintegrated. I expect this war is thoroughly demoralizing. We shall emerge (so far as we do emerge) scattered in wits, many of us troglodytes, others all agog for new excitements each day - the interest each day is discovering which was 'the famous street', 'the historic square', the fashionable church', etc. I'm sorry Mecklenburgh was among these. Round me there are rather a lot of smashes. I have always said I will not be buried alive but

cremated instead, and I shall feel it unjust if these orders are disregarded by God.

Time and Tide had doubts if they ought to have printed my piece about the air raid, as it seems the Censor has requested the press not to be too vivid about these affairs. They did cut out one sentence. What the demolition worker really said to me (besides the bit that is printed) was 'How long will people stick it? Where'll it all end?' This Time and Tide decided the Censor would boggle at, so they cut it out. Accounts of raids have to be cheery - communal meals and singing, and people shouting 'We can take it'. Probably Kingsley Martin's account of the tube shelterers among the margarine boxes went rather far - but, after all, margarine goes rather far itself, and I dare say wasn't affected by such treatment.

I like my ambulance colleagues, male and female. You would too, I think. They teach me to knit, and are not unduly cast down by what they have to see and to do. I always hope that victims beneath the ruins are a little stupified [sic] by their odd predicament, and don't feel their position quite so acutely as one might suppose, though they do make agonizing conversation often.

I wanted to come to see you in August, from Hampshire, but hadn't a car there. I would love to come for a night sometime, if that would be possible - some Friday or Saturday night, most likely. Then we could discuss all the things we can't go into, including Coleridge.

My love meanwhile

R.M.



Abbreviations Used in the Notes to this Thesis

AV	<u>Abbots Verney</u>
F	<u>The Furnace</u>
SR	<u>The Secret River</u>
VC	<u>The Valley Captives</u>
VV	<u>Views and Vagabonds</u>
LS	<u>The Lee Shore</u>
MB	<u>The Making of a Bigot</u>
NC	<u>Non-Combatants and Others</u>
WN	<u>What Not: A Prophetic Comedy</u>
P	<u>Potterism</u>
DA	<u>Dangerous Ages</u>
MG	<u>Mystery at Geneva</u>
TBI	<u>Told By an Idiot</u>
OI	<u>Orphan Island</u>
CT	<u>Crewe Train</u>
KUA	<u>Keeping Up Appearances</u>
SWR	<u>Staying With Relations</u>
TWD	<u>They Were Defeated</u>
GA	<u>Going Abroad</u>
IWBP	<u>I Would Be Private</u>
ANMW	<u>And No Man's Wit</u>
WW	<u>The World My Wilderness</u>
TT	<u>The Towers of Trebizond</u>

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TBC            The Two Blind Countries

LSister       Letters to a Sister

LF            Letters to a Friend

LLF           Last Letters to a Friend

ERM           The Papers of Emily Rose Macaulay (ERM), held at Trinity College, Cambridge.

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12. Rose Macaulay, "The Free Run of the Shelves," p.487.

13. Rose Macaulay, "Losing One's Books," Spectator, 7 Nov. 1941, p.444; Rose Macaulay, In My Library, BBC broadcast, 19 Apr. 1949; Johann David Wyss, The Swiss Family Robinson (1812-13).

14. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.40; William Cowper, "The Diverting History of John Gilpin," in his Poems, II, (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1793), pp. 343-359: the first children's edition of the ballad was published by John Harris in 1806: an edition of 1828, published by Charles Tilt, had illustrations by George Cruikshank; Devon Boys is probably a reference to the song Devonshire Boys: the Devonshire Boys' Courage and Loyalty to their Majesties King William and Queen Mary.... by P. Brooksby, J. Deacon, J. Blare, J. Back (London: 1690); Edna Lyall (pseud), In the Golden Days (London: Hurst & Blackett, [1885?]); Story after Story has been impossible to trace.

15. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 25 Sept. 1948, ERM17 (116):-

"As a child brought up on his [Andrew Lang's] Fairy Books and on his *Odyssey*, I was his admirer long before I knew of his qualities as a literary man and scholar..."

Andrew Lang produced several volumes of fairy stories, each named after a different colour; the first, The Blue Fairy Book, was published in 1889; Andrew Lang and S.H. Butcher, Odyssey (London: Macmillan, 1879).

16. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Neville Braybrooke, 1 Oct. 1958, ERM15 (18). (In reply to his request for juvenilia for an anthology he proposed to compile).

17. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 8 May 1951, LF p.124; Rose Macaulay, I Speak for Myself, 1949.

18. Grace Macaulay's Diary, ERM1 (35), entry for 24 May 1877; Ibid., ERM1 (43), entry for 2-5 May 1886.

20. Ibid., ERM1 (35), entry for 10 Oct, 1877; Ibid., ERM1 (39), entry for 9 Sept. 1880.

21. Ibid., ERM1 (42), entries for Nov. and Dec. 1883.

22. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King (1859; rpt. London: Macmillan, 1892), including "The Marriage of Geraint," ed. G.C.

Macaulay (1892), "Gareth and Lynette," ed G.C. Macaulay (1892); "The Holy Grail," ed. G.C. Macaulay (1893) and "Guinevere," ed. G.C. Macaulay (1895); Matthew Arnold, Poems, selected and edited by G.C. Macaulay (London: Macmillan, 1896).

23. Edward Conybeare's Diary, ERM2 (5), entry for 5 Apr. 1895.

24. John Gower, The English Works, ed. G.C. Macaulay (London: Early English Text Society, 1900-1901); John Gower, Selections From the Confessio Amantis, ed. G.C. Macaulay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903).

25. Rose Macaulay, "The Free Run of the Shelves," p.487; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, 12 Dec. 1938, ERM16 (52):

"I haven't a Tennyson at hand, mine is in Hampshire, but I think I know that 'Oh were I loved' isn't in my collected Edition, which, when a child, I knew practically by heart...."

26. Rose Macaulay, "The Free Run of the Shelves," p.487.

27. Ibid., p.487.

28. Ibid., p.487.

29. Ibid., p.487.

30. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 23 Jan. 1945, ERM17 (76).
31. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 11 Nov. 1952, ERM17 (147):  
"Browning...had so much in common with our most modern poets...I was brought up on him."
32. ERM8 (40-50).
33. Note with ERM8 (40-50).
34. ERM8 (41).
35. Rose Macaulay, "The Sea," Oxford High School Magazine, December 1898; two verses of this poem are quoted by Constance Babington Smith in her "Rose Macaulay in her Writings," p.149; Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, [Sept/Oct 1959], ERM4 (15).
36. DA, p.134; TBI, p.132; Ibid., p.133.
37. SR, pp.79 83, 87.
38. Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness (London: Methuen,

1911); Evelyn Underhill, The Mystic Way: A Psychological Study in Christian Origins (London: Dent, 1913).

39. P., Epigraph; Evelyn Underhill, The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today (London: Methuen, 1922); Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 29 July 1951, LF p.163:

"Another book I am reading is Evelyn Underhill's Life of the Spirit. One chapter in particular, "Psychology and the Spirit" is really excellent. At her best she can be v.g. She is, of course, deeply soaked in Boehme, and in Law's Liberal and Mystical Writings, and has a very good intellect. She is never merely emotional."

40. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 12 Mar. 1951, LF p.94:

"I never knew Fr. Underhill, though I met his sister Evelyn, who wasn't quite as good as her books."

41. Rose Macaulay, "Religious Writing," Times Literary Supplement, Special Issue, "The Frontiers of Literature," 17 Aug. 1956, pp.xiv-xv. Draft in ERM8 (11) and ERM8 (39).

42. R.H. Benson, Mysticism (London: Sands, 1907); W.R. Inge, Christian Mysticism (London: Methuen, 1899); W.R. Inge, Studies of English Mystics (London: J. Murray, 1906); W.R. Inge, Light Life and Love: Selections from the German Mystics (London: Library of Devotion, 1905); W.R. Inge, Personal Idealism and Mysticism (London:

Longman's, 1907); Coventry Patmore, The Rod, the Root and the Flower (London: George Bell, 1895); F. von Hügel, The Mystical Element of Religion (London: Dent, 1908).

43. R.H. Benson is referred to, LF p. 40; W.R. Inge is referred to, LF pp.97, 203-204, LLF p.167; Coventry Patmore is referred to, LLF p.165; her article, "Coventry Patmore," appeared in New Statesman and Nation, 28 Mar. 1931, pp.v-vi; F. von Hügel is referred to, LF pp.91, 250, 290, LLF pp.106, 142, 197.

44. Richard Rolle is referred to, LLF p.85; Margery Kempe is referred to, LF pp.85, 89, 90, 91, 100, 237, LLF p. 84; Julian of Norwich is referred to, LF p.85, LLF p.85.

45. Rose Macaulay, I Speak for Myself, 1949.

46. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 18 Jan. 1951, LF p.58.

47. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 23 Feb. 1951, LF p.86.

48. Rose Macaulay, I Speak for Myself, 1949.

49. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 18 Jan. 1951, LF p.58.

50. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 20 Feb. 1951, LF p.82; Rose Macaulay, I Speak for Myself, 1949.
51. SR, p.11; TBI, pp.231-232.
52. Mary C. Sturgeon, Studies of Contemporary Poets, rev. enl. ed. (London: Harrap, 1920), p.181.
53. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.49.
54. Rose Macaulay, "Via Appia," ERM8(52).
55. Rose Macaulay, "Crastini Temporis Cognitio," ERM8(53).
56. John Keats, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," in his Complete Works, ed. H. Buxton Forman, III (Glasgow: Gowers and Gray, 1901), p.25.
57. Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Adonais," in his Complete Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchison (London: Oxford University Press, 1905), p.443.
58. Rose Macaulay, "Completion," in The Two Blind Countries (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1914), pp.41-43.

59. Rose Macaulay, "Sestina of the Seashore," ERM8(54); Rose Macaulay, "The End of a Holiday," ERM8(61); Rose Macaulay, "Turning Back," TBC, pp.48-49.
60. Rose Macaulay, "The Thief," TBC, p.9.
61. Rose Macaulay, "Keyless," TBC, p.5.
62. Rose Macaulay, "Summons," TBC, p.18; Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights (1847; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p.67; Rose Macaulay, "Keyless," TBC, p.5.
63. Rose Macaulay, Introd., Wuthering Heights, by Emily Brontë (1847; rpt. London: Travellers' Library, 1926), pp.v-xi; Rose Macaulay, Novels Dead or Alive, BBC broadcast, 4 June 1946.
64. Rose Macaulay, "Trinity Sunday," TBC, p.4.
65. Rose Macaulay, "The Door," TBC, p.13.
66. Rose Macaulay, "The Thief," TBC, p.9.
67. Sturgeon, Studies of Contemporary Poets, p.186.
68. Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, 4th ed. (1911; rpt. London: Methuen, 1912), p.286; Ibid., p.287.



69. Rose Macaulay, "Fear," TBC, pp.34-35.
70. Rose Macaulay, "The Losers," TBC, pp.15-16.
71. Rose Macaulay, "Hands," TBC, p.55.
72. Ibid., p.56.
73. Rose Macaulay, "Foregrounds," TBC, p.29.
74. Harold Monro, Some Contemporary Poets (London: Leonard Parsons, 1920), p.179.
75. Richard Ellmann, "Two Faces of Edward," in his along the riverrun: Selected Essays (London: Hamish Hamilton 1988), pp.150-151.
76. Rose Macaulay, "Coming to London," p.158.
77. Walter de la Mare, "Sleep," The Listeners and Other Poems, 1912, rpt. in Complete Poems of Walter de la Mare (London: Faber, 1969), p.118.
78. Ibid., p.50.
79. Rose Macaulay "The Alien," TBC, pp.1-2.

80. Walter de la Mare, "The Listeners," The Listeners and Other Poems, 1912, rpt. in Complete Poems, p.126; Rose Macaulay, "Keyless," TBC p.5.

81. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Walter de la Mare, 4 Dec. 1939, ERM15 (46).

82. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.61.

83. Grace Macaulay's Diary, ERM1(44), entry for 25-27 Aug. 1887; Ibid., ERM1(45), entry for 13 June 1888.

84. Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, 3 Nov ERM4(71).

85. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.49 and Margaret Macaulay's Diary, ERM2(10).

86. Rose Macaulay, "Coming to London," p.158.

87. Rupert Brooke, Letter to Mrs Brooke, 29 Oct. 1907, The Letters of Rupert Brooke, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Faber, 1968), p.113.

88. Rupert Brooke, Letter to Mrs Brooke, Sunday [Nov. 1908], Letters, p.145.

89. Rupert Brooke, Letter to Mrs Brooke, [17 Aug. 1910], Letters, p.253.
90. Rupert Brooke, Letter to Mrs Brooke, Monday [May 1910], Letters, p.239.
91. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 25 Sept. 1952, LLF p.31.
92. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Walter de la Mare, 7 May 1915, ERM15(136).
93. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Roger Senhouse, 24 Oct. 1946, ERM15(187).
94. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Edward Marsh, [month unclear] 1939, ERM15(184).
95. David Ley, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, 1 Oct. 1972, ERM4(213).
96. VV, p.168.
97. Rupert Brooke, "The Path of Dreams," in his Poetical Works, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Faber, 1970), p.194; Rose Macaulay, "The Thief," TBC, p.9; Rose Macaulay, "The Flame," TBC, p.40.

98. Rupert Brooke, "Second Best," Poetical Works, p.145.
99. Rose Macaulay, "Completion," TBC, p.42.
100. Rose Macaulay, "Fear," TBC, pp.34-35.
101. Rupert Brooke, "The Song of the Pilgrims," Poetical Works, pp.148-149.
102. W.B. Yeats, The Wind Among the Reeds (London: Elkin Mathews, 1899); W.B. Yeats, The Green Helmet and Other Poems (Dundrum: Cuala Press, 1910).
103. Margaret Macaulay's Diary, ERM2(10), entry for 1 Aug. 1906.
104. Rose Macaulay, "Coming to London," p.162.
105. Rose Macaulay, "Completion," TBC, p.43; W.B. Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats (London: Macmillan, 1950), p.44.
106. Rose Macaulay, "Questions," ERM8(62); W.B. Yeats, "Ephemera," Collected Poems, p.16.
107. Rose Macaulay, "Cards," TBC, p.17.
108. Rose Macaulay, "The Door," TBC, p.13.

109. Ibid., p.13.

110. Eliphas Levi, Histoire de la magie (Paris: 1860); Zohar, Kabbala Denudata, trans. S.L. MacGregor Mathers (London: G. Redway, 1887); Hélène Petrovna Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled (London: Rider, [n.d.]; 2nd ed. 1877); A.P. Sinnett, Esoteric Buddhism (London: Trubner, 1833); John Unterecker notes Yeats' interest in these sources in A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats (London: Thames & Hudson, 1959), p.20.

111. J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough (London: Macmillan, 1890), (2nd rev. enl. ed. 1900).

112. Rose Macaulay, The Writings of E.M. Forster (London: Hogarth, 1938), p.20.

113. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Victor Gollancz, 17 Aug. 1931, ERM15(92).

Chapter 2 The Ordered Frame : Novels 1906-1912

1. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.49.

2. The subject of heredity was much discussed in scientific circles in the first years of the twentieth century. Bergson's Creative Evolution was published in 1907, translated into English in 1911; Mendel's ideas were "rediscovered" by European scientists about 1900; Francis Galton was pioneering the study of eugenics; C.B. Davenport, De Vries and Havelock Ellis concerned themselves with the topics of "social hygiene" and the transmission of human genetic codes.

3. AV, p.325.

4. Ibid., p.324.

5. Ibid., p.325.

6. Ibid., p.325.

7. Ibid., p.385.

8. Maurice Maeterlinck, Le double jardin (Paris: Charpentier, 1913).

9. Maurice Maeterlinck, "Feuillage du Coeur," Serres chaudes (1889; rpt. Paris, Gallimard, 1983), p.40.
10. Rose Macaulay, "Thoughts from Great Minds on Crying for the Moon," ERM8(56). Published in Westminster Gazette, 8 Sept. 1910.
11. W.B. Yeats, "The Secret Rose," Collected Poems, pp.77-78.
12. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.39.
13. Note accompanying letters, Margerie Venables Taylor to Constance Babington Smith, ERM18(103).
14. Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, 8 Oct. 1959, ERM4(16):

"Rose dropped her first name (Emily or Emilie) as much as she could, as she called it her "police name," to avoid publicity when she got into trouble with the police about her car (which happened fairly often, I think). Noone [sic] except me was supposed to know it, but in letters to her family she often signed herself E.R.M. and always called herself Rose. It doesn't matter who knows now. Her driving was rather a joke among her friends! It always frightened me!"

15. AV, p.148.

16. Ibid., p.149.
17. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Margerie Venables Taylor, 19 Feb. 1907, ERM15(53). She describes her first novel as an, "unconscionably large, not to say unwieldy book, which so badly needs compression and pruning but now it is too late for that or for any other of the many amendments which might with much advantage be made in it. I suppose it was just like being there again, you know, & walking abt the streets - but it's rather shockingly expanded."
18. Underhill, Mysticism, p.214; Ibid., p.214.
19. Ibid., p.206.
20. Ibid., p.454.
21. Ibid., p.494 et passim.
22. AV, p.264; Ibid., p.253.
23. J.C. Cooper, An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), p.84.
24. AV, p.256.
25. Ibid., p.258.



26. Ibid., p.258.

27. Ibid., p.268.

28. Ibid., p.264.

29. Ibid., p.230.

30. Ibid., p.385.

31. Ibid., p.383.

32. Ibid., p.294.

33. F. p.81.

34. Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse (1927; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p.5; Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (1925; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p.33.

35. F. p.89.

36. Plato, The Symposium, a new translation by W. Hamilton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951), p.59.

37. F. p.15.

38. Ibid., p.169.
39. Rose Macaulay, "Villa Macolai," pp.46-49.
40. F. p.167.
41. Plato, Symposium, p.64.
42. Ibid., p.64.
43. G. Lowes Dickinson, Plato and his Dialogues (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1947), p.150.
44. F. p.93.
45. Underhill, Mysticism, p.170. Quoting Albertus Magnus, A Suggestive Enquiry into the Hermetic Mystery.
46. F. p.167.
47. Richard Rolle, The Fire of Love, translated into modern English with an introduction by Clifton Wolters (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p.102. For evidence of Rose Macaulay's knowledge of Rolle's work see Chapter 1, n.44 and her Some Religious Elements in English Literature, pp.54-55.
48. F. p.222.

49. Ibid., p.235.

50. Edward Conybeare's Diary, ERM12(5), entry for 12 Mar. 1909.

51. SR, p.76; Plato, Symposium, p.94.

52. SR, p.15; Ibid., p.76.

53. SR, p.30. Part III is entitled "The Tent of Darkness";  
Ibid., p.76.

54. Rose Macaulay's use of the Platonic cave metaphor should also again be noted. The image illuminates Michael's experience, in Part III, of the dark pit:

"He knew how what men call facts, action, happenings, are but the shadows truth projects; the shadows that reveal the substance to a blind world who need such tokens and always deal in a currency of symbols, ignoring what lies behind it. The shadows cannot have being without the substance; but the substance has its eternal being independently of the shadow." (SR, p.34).

He is, it is suggested, a prisoner in a cave, looking up towards the light and seeing the shadows pass along the wall above. As he does so, he is reminded that they merely represent the reality beyond.

55. Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, 28 Feb. 1963, ERM4(66).

56. Verney, frustrated in his pursuit of the "absolutes" he desires, is continually struck by the ugliness around him. "Rome was very ugly. He had not known before quite how ugly it was." (AV, p.163). "It was an irony that fate should have laid upon Verney the painting of this grotesque city just at the time when he had discovered its manifold ugliness." (AV, p.225). Warren Venables and Prudence Varley realise that their own limited perceptions are due to their underdeveloped awareness of beauty. "'I've hated ugliness so much that I haven't tried - I haven't even wanted - to see the beauty that's always tangled into it,'" says Prudence. (F, p.220) Warren she analyses as lacking, "I think, perhaps, the sense of beauty." (F, p.220). The Crevequers, on the other hand, "haven't known, really, what ugliness was...." (F, p.220). Wide-eyed, childlike, they are the ones who do at least achieve some kind of happiness. Verney, the Crevequers, Michael, later Peter in The Lee Shore, all seek love and find it synonymous with beauty.

57. SR, p.20.

58. Ibid., p.69.

59. Ibid., pp.81-82.

60. Ibid., p.85.

61. Ibid., p.86.
62. Ibid., p.93.
63. Underhill, Mysticism, p.206.
64. SR, p.103. Part VIII is entitled "Old Gold."
65. Ibid., p.116. Part IX is entitled "The Prison-House."
66. E.M. Forster, The Longest Journey (London: William Blackwood, 1907). Rose Macaulay's description of Agnes as a "bright, handsome, practical, efficient, cunning, ambitious, self-confident, hard, narrow, bustling, intellectually limited and inert young woman bent on moulding [Rickie] to her ambitious desires," (The Writings of E.M. Forster, p.50) matches her picture of her own Cecilia.
67. SR, p.173.
68. Ibid., p.173.
69. Ibid., p.175.
70. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Margerie Venables Taylor, 2 June 1909, ERM5(54).

71. SR, p.1, Epigraph to Part I: H. Belloc, "The Early Morning," in his Complete Verse (London: Duckworth, 1910), p.31; Ibid., p.45, Epigraph to Part IV: Maurice Maeterlinck, "Feuillage du coeur," Serres chaudes (1889; rpt. Paris, Gallimard, 1983), p.40; Ibid., p.55, Epigraph to Part V: W.B. Yeats, "The Secret Rose," Collected Poems, p.77; Ibid., p.78, Epigraph to Part VI: Thomas Browne, Religio Medici (1642; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p.103; Ibid., Frontspiece: Fiona MacLeod, "The Lords of Shadow," Poems and Dramas (London: Heinman, 1910), p.225; Ibid., p.116, Epigraph to Part IX: Fiona MacLeod, "Dreams Within Dreams," Poems and Dramas, p.244; Emerson's image of the secret river seems to have inspired the novel's title:

"Man is a stream whose source is hidden....When I watch that flowing river, which, out of regions I see not, pours for a season its streams into me, - I see that I am a prisoner, - not a cause, but a surprised spectator of this ethereal water; that I desire and look up, and put myself in the attitude of reception but from some alien energy the visions come." (Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Over-Soul," in his Essays, Lectures and Orations (London: William Orr, 1848), p.140.

Rose Macaulay had certainly read Emerson, as quotations from his work form epigraphs to F, Part IV, p.53 and F, Part XII, p.208; Walter de la Mare's "Under the Rose (the song of the Wanderer)," (Bells and Grass; A Book of Rhymes, 1941, rpt. Complete Poems, p.450), contains

the same mixture of rose, tree, river and veil images as The Secret River. The introduction to Bells and Grass indicates that a considerable number of the rhymes were in fact written before the end of 1906.

72. The use of the surname "Bodger" for this tyrannical family is interesting, in that the headmaster of Rugby School during the period of Rupert Brooke's attendance there, the Rev. H.A. James, was nicknamed "the Bodger." As has been noted, George Macaulay taught at Rugby between 1878 and 1887, so that his children may well have been familiar with this nick-name.

73. VC, p.9; Ibid., p.11.

74. LS, p.215, quoting Thomas Traherne (for whom Peter's baby son may well be named), "The Salutation," in his Poetical Works, ed. Bertram Dobell (1903; rpt. London: B. Dobell, 1906), pp.1-3. As Traherne's poems had only recently been discovered, his notebook picked up on a London bookstall around 1896-1897, his mysticism would be topical; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 8 June 1952, LF pp.323-324.

75. VC., p.68.

76. Ibid., p.28.

77. Georgette Leblanc, Introd., Morceaux choisis, de Maurice Maeterlinck (Paris: Nelson, 1933), p.vii.

78. VC, p.16.

79. Ibid., p.155.

80. Ibid., p.155.

81. For epigraphs from the works of William Sharpe ("Fiona MacLeod") and W.B. Yeats, see above, n.71.

82. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, see above, Chapter 1, n.15; VV, pp.204-205; Cecil feels "as if I'd been at the back of the North Wind. Diamond learnt the Secret, and I have too."; WW, p.42: Barbary's books include George MacDonald's At the Back of the North Wind (London: [Blackie?], 1871).

83. VC, p.266.

84. Ibid., p.270.

85. George MacDonald, The Princess and the Goblin (1872; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p.18.



86. Rosamund Ilbert in Abbots Verney is exercised by the problem of how far an individual has the right to interfere in the lives of others:

"'There are so many risks in life,' she said.

'One is that you may let people make a hash of themselves and their affairs without ever putting out a finger to help when perhaps even the little you could have done might have been some good.

Another is, of course, that you may meddle stupidly, and blunder...that may have horrid consequences, of course....'" (AV, p.99).

Involving oneself in the affairs of others represents a startlingly large "assumption of rights." (AV, p.93). There are barriers to be broken down, too, in this first novel between Verney and his grandfather - a goal which is partially achieved:

"The wall still stood: but it was as if it had assumed a new transparency, so that they could see each other through it."

(AV, p.362).

The theme is continued in The Furnace in Rose Macaulay's tracery of connections between lives. Wall imagery again conveys her vision of discrete, self-enclosed existences, and the need for these barriers to be broken down: Tommy and Betty Crevequer "pierce" the hearts of

Prudence and Warren, making them feel love, hatred, shame, sympathy, and forcing them to realise that their actions and attitudes necessarily affect the lives of others.

87. VC, pp.9-10.

88. A.E. Housman, "Into my Heart an Air that Kills," A Shropshire Lad (1896; rpt. London: Richards, 1922), p.57.

89. Maurice Maeterlinck, "Sur le mort d'un petit chien," Le double jardin, pp.1-32.

90. Ibid., p.18.

91. Ibid., p.24.

92. VC, p.2.

93. Ibid., p.52.

94. Ibid., p.218.

95. Ibid., p.218; Ibid., p.219.

96. Ibid., p.49.

97. Ibid., p.222; Ibid., p.99.

98. Ibid., p.1.

99. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Margerie Venables Taylor, 2 June 1909, ERM15(54).

100. Francis Paget, The Spirit of Discipline: Together with an Introductory Essay Concerning Accidie (London: Longman's Green, 1891), pp.22-24.

101. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.73.

102. VC, p.328.

103. Ibid., p.332.

104. Ibid., p.325.

105. LS, p.21.

106. Ibid., p.23.

107. Ibid., p.23.

108. Ibid., p.51. Chapter IV is entitled "The Complete Shopper."

109. Ibid., p.53.

110. Ibid., p.87.

111. Ibid., pp.56-57.

112. Ibid., p.73.

113. Ibid., p.159.

114. Ibid., p.160.

115. Ibid., p.160.

116. Ibid., p.57.

117. Ibid., p.262.

118. Ibid., p.267.

119. Ibid., p.293.

120. Ibid., p.293.

121. Rev. Philip Napier Waggett, S.S.J.E. (1862-1939) was ordained a deacon in 1885 and a priest in 1886. In 1889 he became head of the Charterhouse mission in Southwark, where he began a busy career as a parish worker. He joined the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cowley, in 1892, and served for four years as priest-in-charge at St.

Philip's Church, Cape Town. In 1911 he became head of St. Anselm's House in Cambridge, which would be when Rose Macaulay came under his influence. He also served as an army Chaplain in the First World War, and in 1927 accepted the living of St. Mary's the Great, Cambridge. He died on July 4, 1939.

122. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 15 Dec. 1950, LF p.38.

123. Edward Conybeare's Diary, ERM2(5), entry for 24 Feb. 1910; Ibid., entry for 14 Mar. 1910.

124. P.N. Waggett, Knowledge and Virtue: the Hulsean Lectures for 1920-1921 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924), p.31.

125. Ibid., p.30.

126. LS, pp.57-58.

127. Ibid., pp.57.

128. Waggett, Knowledge and Virtue, p.31.

129. See above, Chapter 1, n.44 and Some Religious Elements in English Literature, p.61.

130. LS, p.1; Ibid., p.2; Ibid., p.3.

131. Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, translated into modern English and with an introduction by Clifton Wolters (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p.141.

132. LS, p.11.

133. Ibid., p.1.

134. Ibid., p.71.

135. Plato, The Republic, trans. John Llewelyn Davies and David James Vaughan (London: Macmillan, 1882), p.xvii.

136. LS, p.74.

137. Frances Cornford, "Youth," Collected Poems (London: Cresset, 1954), p.19.

138. Paul Delany, The Neo-Pagans: Friendship and Love in the Rupert Brooke Circle (London: Macmillan, 1987), p.7.

139. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.18.

140. L. Cope Cornford, William Ernest Henley (London: Constable, 1913):

141. LS, p.291.

142. Ibid., p.271.

143. Views and Vagabonds appeared on 10 Feb. 1912, while The Lee Shore appeared on 30 July 1912, winning Hodder & Stoughton's £1,000 prize in its novel competition. See Edward Conybeare's Diary, ERM2(5), and Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.62.

144. VV, p.141.

145. Ibid., p.66.

146. Ibid., p.1.

147. Quoted in Delany, The Neo-Pagans, p.23.

148. Ibid., p.29.

149. H.G. Wells, New Worlds for Old (London: Constable, 1908), pp.242-3, p.303.

150. The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws reported in 1909 recommending that Poor Law administration should henceforth be concerned with preventing and curing destitution, not merely with running the traditional workhouse system. Labour exchanges and trade boards were established as a result of the Report and health and unemployment insurance introduced. Other proposed reforms were,

however, slow to be realised because of the administrative inefficiency of John Burns, president of the Local Government Board.

151. Delany, The Neo-Pagans, p.96.

152. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.63.

153. VV, p.53.

154. Ibid., p.53.

155. Ibid., p.54.

156. Ibid., p.68.

157. Ibid., p.133.

158. Ibid., p.220.

159. Ibid., p.221.

160. Ibid., p.56.

161. LS, p.58 and VV, p.58.

162. VV, p.307.



163. Ibid., p.4.
164. E.M. Forster, Howard's End (London: E. Arnold, 1910).
165. VV, p.122; Ibid., p.122.
166. Ibid., p.122.
167. Ibid., p.267.
168. The image is, of course, Richard Rolle's. See above, n.47, and Chapter 1, n.44.
169. VV, p.287.
170. Ibid., p.255.
171. Ibid., p.296.
172. Ibid., p.163.
173. Ibid., pp.163-164.
174. Ibid., p.307.
175. Ibid., p.308.

176. P, p.9.

177. Herbert Spencer, System of Synthetic Philosophy (London: George Manwaring, 1860-1877).

178. J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough (London: Macmillan, 1890), (2nd rev. enl. ed. 1900); Leslie Stephen, The Dictionary of National Biography, (London: Smith, Elder, 1885- ).

179. W.B. Yeats, Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry (London: W. Scott, 1888); W.B. Yeats, The Celtic Twilight (London: Lawrence & Butler, 1893); W.B. Yeats, The Secret Rose (London: Lawrence & Butler, 1897).

180. Sigmund Freud, Die Traumdeutung (Leipzig & Wien, 1900).

181. William James, "The Stream of Thought," in his Principles of Psychology, I, (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), pp.224-290 and William James, "The Stream of Consciousness," in his Psychology, Briefer Course (New York: Henry Holt, 1892), pp.151-175.

182. Frances Parthenope Verney, Memoirs of the Verney Family During the Civil War (London: Longmans, Green, 1892).

Rose Macaulay makes frequent references to the "Verney Papers" throughout her work:- "On Linguistic Changes," English Association Essays and Studies, 20 (1935), pp.118-120; "Lyly and Sydney," in The

English Novelists, ed. Derek Verschoyle (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936), p.44; "Losing One's Books," Spectator, 7 Nov. 1941, p.44; Life Among the English (London: Collins, 1942), p.23, p.28; "Books in General," New Statesman & Nation, 16 Mar. 1946, p.195; In My Library, BBC broadcast, 19 Apr. 1949; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, Shrove Tuesday 1951, LF p.67.

There are remarkable similarities between the real Verney and the fictitious Ruth families. Frances Parthenope Verney recounts the life-stories of Sir Frances and Sir Edmund (two half-brothers) and the latter's four sons, Ralph, Tom, Edmund and Henry. Rose Macaulay describes the two brothers, Meyrick and Donald, and their four sons, Verney, Roger, Humphrey and Charles. The eldest sons are alike in their lack of principle; the real-life Sir Francis leaves England and turns Turk (Memoirs of the Verney Family p.63); while the fictitious Meyrick, gambler, embezzler and forger, is disinherited and forced to live abroad. Tom Verney, writing home from Barbados to beg for money (Memoirs of the Verney Family p.151) is like Verney Ruth pleading from Rome for the same. Edmund Verney, appealing to his brother Ralph for help in his university scrapes (Memoirs of the Verney Family p.163) resembles Charles Ruth summoning Verney to extricate him from similar undergraduate escapades. It is as though the records of real-life events which Rose Macaulay clearly enjoyed reading have provided the backbone of a solid Victorian tale and supplied a springboard for her eventual fiction-writing.

Another interesting coincidence of names should be noted.

Margaret Macaulay records in her diary of June 15, 1906:

"Drove with Mother in afternoon to tea with Miss Stephen, to meet her cousin Lady Verney, nice, elderly, intelligent sort of person, keen on education." (ERM2(10)).

This may have been Lady Margaret Verney, wife of Sir Edmund Hope Verney (1838-1910), whose address is listed in Who Was Who 1897-1915 as Plas Rhoscolyn, Holyhead. The Macaulays were living in Aberystwyth at the time. Abbots Verney was published on 5 Dec. 1906.

183. Granville Barker, The Voysey Inheritance: A Play (1905); Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1900); Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1902); Henry James, The Ambassadors (London: Methuen, 1903); H.G. Wells, Kipps (London: Macmillan, 1905); H.G. Wells, Love and Mr Lewisham (London: Harper, 1900); Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh (London: Grant Richards, 1903).

184. Rizzo, Rose Macaulay: A Critical Survey, p.9. Rizzo suggests there are hints of Isobel Archer (Portrait of a Lady) in Prudence Varley and of Neuman (The American) in Warren Venables. There may even, he thinks, be traces of the children in The Turn of the Screw in Tommy and Betty Crevequer.

Further proof that Rose Macaulay was reading Henry James around the time of her earliest novel-writing is contained in a letter to her god-child Emily Smith, 16 Jan. 1956:

"Do [you] read Henry James' Golden Bowl? I read it when it came out, about 50 years ago; it is beautifully surfaced, and keeps breaking through into deep water as though brittle ice. Lovely workmanship."

(ERM16(167))

The Golden Bowl was published in 1904.

185. E.M. Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1905); E.M. Forster, A Room with a View (London: E. Arnold, 1908); E.M. Forster, Collected Short Stories (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1948).

186. Rose Macaulay, The Writings of E.M. Forster, p.16.

187. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.52 quoting a letter of Rose to Margerie Venables Taylor.

188. Rose Macaulay, "Writing," Personal Pleasures (London: Gollancz, 1935), pp.377-378.

Chapter 3: Pursuit and Pragmatism: Novels 1914-1920

1. Rose Macaulay, "Coming to London," p.166; Ibid., p.166.
2. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, pp.78, 79, 83, 80.
3. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 29 Jan. 1951, LF p.64.
4. Rose Macaulay, "Picnic, July 1917," Three Days (London: Constable, 1919), pp.11-13.
5. Ibid., p.11.
6. Rose Macaulay, "The Shadow," Three Days, p.17.
7. Ibid., p.17.
8. Rose Macaulay, "Sanity," Three Days, p.24.
9. Rose Macaulay, "The Gate," Three Days, p.63.
10. Rose Macaulay, "The Adventurers," Three Days, p.40; Rose Macaulay, "London at Night," Three Days, p.42; Rose Macaulay, "Farmer's Boy," Three Days, p.41.
11. Rose Macaulay, The Writings of E.M. Forster, p.20.

12. Rose Macaulay, "The Empty Berth," Cornhill Magazine, 1913, pp.186-196.
13. Ibid., p.196.
14. E.M. Forster, "Cnidus," (1904) in Abinger Harvest (London: E. Arnold, 1936), pp.170-174; Rose Macaulay, The Writings of E.M. Forster, pp.20-21.
15. Rose Macaulay, "Farmer's Boy," Three Days, p.41.
16. Rose Macaulay, "Picnic, July 1917," Three Days, p.12.
17. Rose Macaulay, "Sanity," Three Days, p.24.
18. Rose Macaulay, "The Passport," Three Days, pp.59-61.
19. Rose Macaulay, "Revue," Three Days, pp.25-27.
20. MB, p.12.
21. Ibid., p.95.
22. Ibid., p.294.
23. NC, p.53.

24. Ibid., p.54.
25. Ibid., p.33.
26. Aldous Huxley, Brave New World (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932).
27. Potterism is dedicated "To the unsentimental precisions in thought, who have, on this confused, inaccurate, and emotional planet, no fit habitation."
28. Noel Annan, "The Intellectual Aristocracy," p.255; David Ayerst, "Guardian:" Biography of a Newspaper (London: Collins, 1971), pp.22-23.
29. P., p.13.
30. Ibid., p.19.
31. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, pp.91-93.
32. Henri Bergson, Le rire (Paris, 1890): an English version appeared as Laughter, trans. Cloudesley Bereton (London: Macmillan, 1911).
33. CT, p.33; Rose Macaulay, "Enquiry into Pleasures," [1947], ERM8(29).



34. Henri Bergson, Laughter, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell, New ed. (London: Macmillan, 1913), p.37.

35. Ibid., p.33.

36. Rose Macaulay, "Coming to London," p.163.

37. P, p.17; Ibid., p.39.

38. NC, p.17; Ibid., p.39.

38. NC, p.5.

39. VC, p.3; Ibid., p.12.

40. CT, p.5; Ibid., p.44.

41. William James, Psychology, Briefer Course (New York: Henry Holt, 1892), p.159.

42. MB, pp.196-197.

43. Ibid., p.9.

44. Rose Macaulay, "Revue," Three Days, pp.25-27.

45. WN, p.169.

46. Rose Macaulay, "New Year, 1918," Three Days, p.21.
47. H. Wildon Carr, Henri Bergson: the Philosophy of Change (London: Jack, 1911), p.12.
48. Rose Macaulay, "Revenants," Three Days, p.49.
49. MB, p.140; Ibid., p.80.
50. Ibid., p.291.
51. Ibid., p.300.
52. Ibid., p.298.
53. William James, "What Pragmatism Means," Selected Papers on Philosophy (London: Dent, 1917), pp.199-200, discussing C.S. Peirce, "How to Make our Ideas Clear," Popular Science Monthly, 7, Jan. 1879.
54. MB, p.277-278.
55. Ibid., pp.278-279.
56. Ibid., p.291.
57. NC, p.150.

58. Ibid., pp.138-139.

59. Ibid., p.47.

60. Ibid., p.150.

61. Ibid., p.172.

62. The Peace Pledge Union was founded late in 1934 by H.R.L. Sheppard, vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields and Dean of Canterbury. One of Britain's most influential clergyman, he was well known for his many broadcasts from his church. He asked for pledges in the form of postcards to be sent to him by all males stating that they would never support another war and would persuade others to this opinion. By 1935, 100,000 pledges had been secured. Among adherents to the movement were Aldous Huxley, Vera Brittain, Alexander Wood, Bertrand Russell, Charles Raven, Siegfried Sassoon, George Lansbury and Rose Macaulay.

63. MB, p.179.

64. F, p.83; SR, p.149; LS, p.186; VV, p.221; MB, p.140.

65. NC, p.181.

66. MB, p.300.

67. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, pp.91-93.
68. Francis Galton, Probability: the Foundation of Eugenics (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907); R.C. Punnett, Mendelism (London: Macmillan & Bowes, 1905).
69. WN, p.254.
70. Ibid., pp.209-210.
71. Ibid., p.198.
72. William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (London: Longmans, Green, 1907), pp.43-81.
73. P, p.75.
74. Rose Macaulay, Bunkum (an unfinished play), ERM5(1,44-45).
75. P, p.101. Part III, Ch.1., is entitled "The Terrible Tragedy on the Stairs."
76. MB, p.278.
77. William James, Pragmatism, passim. See also Joad's interpretation:  
"...the essence of the pragmatic theory of truth is the

identification of truth with emotional satisfaction.

Starting from the proposition, 'people hold beliefs to be true which are emotionally satisfying,' Pragmatism proceeds to the entirely different assertion, 'a true belief is one which is emotionally satisfying,' or, as it is usually put, 'a true belief is one which works.'"

(C.E.M. Joad, Guide to Philosophy (London: Gollancz, 1943), p.452.

78. P., pp.231-232.

79. Albert Einstein, The Special Theory of Relativity, 1905.

Note also Rose Macaulay's (albeit flippantly) stated interest in the subject:

"I am interested in a good many things about which I am ignorant - such as philosophy, astronomy, metaphysics, the Einstein theory, primitive man, the races of mankind, geology and geography." ("The Witchery of Words and the Charm of Elsewhere," Daily Herald, 13 Aug. 1928, p.4).

80. Elizabeth Bowen, Introd. Staying With Relations (1969), p.1;

Rose Macaulay, Letter to Mr & Mrs D. Macaulay, 19 Apr. 1924, ERM15(59).

81. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 7 Apr. 1948, ERM17(107).

82. Rose Macaulay, The Critics (Detective Fiction), BBC Broadcast, 27 Feb. 1949.
83. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Miss Florence Trotter, 13 Nov. 1952, ERM15(61).
84. Rose Macaulay, "The Passport," Three Days, pp.59-61.
85. P, p.242.
86. Ibid., p.200.
87. AV, p.325.
88. MB, p.254.
89. Ibid., p.123.
90. WN, p.164.
91. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.81.
92. WN, p.252; Ibid., p.253.
93. NC, pp.112-113.
94. Cooper, Traditional Symbols, p.83.

95. MB, p.239.

96. WN, p.202.

97. WN, p.202.

Chapter 4 : Pursuit and Paradox : Novels 1921-1932

1. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 8 May 1951, LF p.125.
2. Lascelles Abercrombie, New English Poems: A Miscellany of Contemporary Verse Never Before Published (London: Gollancz, 1931); Poems by Rose Macaulay (pp.234-243) are entitled "Empty," "Mexicans in California," "The Last Race," "Reading-Room," and "Underground."
3. Rose Macaulay, "Has the Sea Form?" Literary Digest, 107, 15 Nov. 1930, p.27.
4. Rose Macaulay, Letters to Walter de la Mare, 7 Aug. 1920 and 28 Aug. 1920, ERM15(138) and ERM15(139).
5. J.D. Beresford, The Hampdenshire Wonder (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1911).
6. Elizabeth Bowen, "Coming to London," in Coming to London, ed. John Lehmann (London: Phoenix House, 1957), p.79.
7. Ibid., p.79; Victoria Glendinning, Elizabeth Bowen: Portrait of a Writer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p.44; Elizabeth Bowen, Encounters (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1923).
8. Elizabeth Bowen, "Coming to London," p.79.



9. Glendinning, Elizabeth Bowen, p.51; Ibid., p.60; Elizabeth Bowen, The Hotel (London: Constable, 1927).
10. Virginia Woolf, Diary, II, p.57, entry for 10 Aug. 1920.
11. Ibid., p.123, entry for 5 June, 1921.
12. Ibid., III, p.70, entry for 27 Mar. 1926.
13. Virginia Woolf, Letter to Quentin Bell, 24 Jan [1934], The Letters of Virginia Woolf, ed. Nigel Nicolson, V, (London: Hogarth, 1979), p.272; Virginia Woolf, Diary, II, p.93, entry for 18 Feb. 1921; Ibid., III, p.60, entry for 24 Feb. 1926; Ibid., III, p.204, entry for 7 Nov. 1928.
14. Fromm, "Reinscribing The Years," p.294ff.
15. Virginia Woolf, Diary, III, p.185, entry for 31 May 1928.
16. Ibid., IV, p.351, entry for 5 Nov. 1935.
17. Ibid., III, p.60, entry for 24 Feb 1926; Ibid., III, p.186, entry for 31 May 1928.
18. Ibid., III, p.60, entry for 24 Feb. 1926.

19. Ibid., II, p.93, entry for 18 Feb. 1921; Ibid., III, p.60, entry for 24 Feb. 1926.

20. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Virginia Woolf, 22 Oct. 1928, ERM15(175); Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 16 May, 1952, LF p.315.

21. Ibid., p.315.

22. Rose Macaulay, "Virginia Woolf," Horizon, 3 Jan. 1941, p.31.

23. Ibid., pp.316-317.

24. James Joyce, Ulysees (Paris: Shakespeare & Co., 1922); May Sinclair, The Life and Death of Harriet Freaan (London: Collins, 1922); T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1922); Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway (London: L&V Woolf, 1925).

25. Rose Macaulay, "Coming to London," p.162; Rose Macaulay, "Religious Writing" (draft), ERM8(11,2); Rose Macaulay, "The First Impact of 'The Waste Land,'" in T.S. Eliot: A Symposium for his Seventieth Birthday, ed. Neville Braybrooke (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1958), p.30.

26. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Emily Smith, 16 Jan. 1956, ERM16(167); Rose Macaulay, "Coming to London," p.162.

27. Evelyn Waugh, Decline and Fall (London: Chapman & Hall, 1928); Evelyn Waugh, Black Mischief (London: Chapman & Hall, 1932); Rose Macaulay, In My Library, BBC Broadcast, 19 Apr. 1949; Rose Macaulay, "Evelyn Waugh," in Writers of Today, II; ed. Denys Val Baker (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1948); p.135.
28. Ibid., pp.137-138.
29. Rose Macaulay, "The Future of Fiction," in New Writings and Daylight, ed. John Lehmann (London: Longmans, Green, 1946), p.71.
30. Aldous Huxley, Crome Yellow (London: Chatto & Windus, 1921); Aldous Huxley, Antic Hay (London: Chatto & Windus, 1923).
31. Elizabeth Bowen, The Hotel (London: Constable, 1927); Elizabeth Bowen, The House in Paris (London: Gollancz, 1935); Elizabeth Bowen, The Death of the Heart (London: Gollancz, 1938).
32. Elizabeth Bowen, A World of Love (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955); Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 8 Mar. 1955, LLF p.194.
33. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Emily Smith, 16 Jan, 1956, ERM16(167); Elizabeth Bowen, To the North (London: Gollancz, 1932).
34. Katherine Mansfield, Bliss, and Other Stories (London: Constable, 1920); Katherine Mansfield, The Garden Party, and Other

Stories (London: Constable, 1922); Rose Macaulay, "Books in General," New Statesman and Nation, 16 Mar. 1946, p.195.

35. Rosamond Lehmann, Dusty Answer (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927); Rosamond Lehmann, A Note in the Music (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930); Rosamond Lehmann, Invitation to the Waltz (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932); Rosamond Lehmann, The Weather in the Streets (London: Collins, 1936).

36. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 8 Mar. 1955, LLF p.194; Rose Macaulay, rev. of A House and Its Head, by Ivy Compton-Burnett, ERM8 (12,3), [1935/36?].

37. Ibid., ERM8(12,3).

38. Rose Macaulay, "The Present State of English Writing," London Forum, BBC Broadcast, 3 June, 1951; Graham Greene, Stamboul Train (London: Heinemann, 1932).

39. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 16 Mar. 1951, LF p.98; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 20 Sept. 1951, LF p.196.

40. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 2 Aug. 1957, LLF pp.256-257.

41. Ibid., p.256.

42. TBI, p.306.
43. Rose Macaulay, "Writing," p.377.
44. Rose Macaulay, "Evelyn Waugh," p.135.
45. DA, p.3.
46. Ibid., p.2; Ibid., p.9.
47. Ibid., p.3.
48. Ibid., p.3.
49. Ibid., p.12.
50. Ibid., p.2.
51. Ibid., p.3.
52. Maurice Maeterlinck, "Sur le mort d'un petit chien," Le double jardin, pp.1-32.
53. DA, p.88.
54. Ibid., p.219.

55. Ibid., p.30; KUA, p.173.
56. Rose Macaulay, "The First Impact of The Waste Land," pp.30-31.
57. DA, p.254.
58. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.98.
59. Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, 21 June 1959, ERM4(9).
60. DA, p.83.
61. Passty, Eros and Androgyny. (book) p.74.
62. DA, p.74.
63. Ibid., p.74.
64. Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, p.38.
65. Ibid., p.39.
66. DA, p.20
67. Ibid., p.32.

68. Ibid., pp.266-267.

69. Ibid., p.268.

70. Ibid., p.269.

71. Fromm, "Reinscribing 'The Years,'" pp.289-306; Virginia Woolf, The Years (1937; rpt. London: Hogarth, 1979).

72. Fromm, "Reinscribing 'The Years,'" p.302.

73. Ibid., p.303.

74. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 8 Apr. 1951, LF p.111. Rose Macaulay's cousin G.M. Trevelyan, was married to the daughter of Mrs. Humphrey Ward (Mary Augusta Arnold), whose father was Tom Arnold.

75. TBI, p.264.

76. Ibid., p.265.

77. Ibid., p.20.

78. Ibid., p.21.

79. Ibid., p.25.

80. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.103.
81. TBI, p.313.
82. Ibid., p.313.
83. Ibid., p.71.
84. Rose Macaulay, Postcard to Frank Singleton, 29 Nov. 1950, ERM15(68).
85. TBI, p.29.
86. Ibid., p.314.
87. Ibid., pp.110-111.
88. Ibid., pp.269-270.
89. Ibid., p.31; Ibid., p.32.
90. Ibid., p.46.
91. Ibid., p.97.
92. Ibid., p.97.



93. Virginia Woolf, The Years, p.300.
94. TBI, p.99.
95. Ibid., p.272.
96. Ibid., p.272.
97. Ibid., p.273.
98. E.G. Withycombe, The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.161.
99. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Emily Cain, 22 Nov. 1954, ERM16(164, 1).
100. TBI, p.201.
101. Ibid., p.231-232.
102. Rose Macaulay, I Speak for Myself, BBC broadcast, 10 May 1949.
103. TBI, p.232.
104. Rose Macaulay, I Speak for Myself, BBC broadcast, 10 May 1949.

105. John Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale," Complete Works, p.102;  
TBI, pp.277-279.
106. Ibid., p.276.
107. Ibid., p.279.
108. Ibid., p.310.
109. Ibid., p.310.
110. AV, Ch.20, "The Tableland of Compensations"; TBI, p.311.
111. Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, 3 Sept.  
1962, ERM4(64).
112. Marrocco, The Novels of Rose Macaulay, p.243.
113. P, p.5.
114. Rose Macaulay, "What I Believe," Nation, 16 Dec. 1931, p.665.
115. Rose Macaulay, "What a Piece of Work! A Correspondence  
Between Rose Macaulay and R. Ellis Roberts," New Statesman and  
Nation, Suppl., 7 May 1932, p.iv.
116. Ibid., p.iv.

117. TBI, p.129.
118. ANMW, p.176.
119. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 28 Dec. 1943, ERM17(67).
120. Rose Macaulay, Are Women Bored With Emancipation? BBC broadcast, 2 Nov. 1935.
121. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.96.
122. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 29 Jan. 1951, LF p.64; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, 7 June 1938, ERM16(25); Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 12 June 1951, LF p.144.
123. Passty, Eros and Androgyny, (book), p.11.
124. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.17.
125. Rose Macaulay, The Minor Pleasures of Life, pp.323-324; Ibid., pp.632.
126. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 16 May 1952, LF p.315; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Virginia Woolf, 10 Oct. 1940, ERM15(182), edited version quoted by Passty in Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, pp.154-155.

127. Passty, Eros and Androgyny (book), p.25.
128. E.L. Griggs, Coleridge Fille : A Biography of Sara Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1940).
129. Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, 15 Aug. 1960, ERM4(26).
130. MG, pp.150-151.
131. Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (1929; rpt. London: Grafton, 1977), pp.93-94.
132. Elaine Showalter, "Virginia Woolf and the Flight into Androgyny," in A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing, 2nd ed. (London: Virago, 1982), pp.263-297.
133. Rose Macaulay, I Speak for Myself, BBC broadcast, 10 May 1949.
134. MG, p.1.
135. Kenneth Macaulay, The History of St. Kilda (London: Printed for T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, 1764).
136. OI, p.290.

137. Lucy McDiarmid, Saving Civilisation: Yeats, Eliot and Auden Between the Wars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

138. Ibid., p.2; W.B. Yeats, On the Boiler: Essays and Poems (Dublin: Cuala, 1939); T.S. Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society (London: Faber, 1939); T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," Collected Poems 1909-1962 (London: Faber, 1962), p.63.

139. V.A. Demant is referred to, LF p.161; Christopher Dawson is referred to, LLF pp.57, 103, 107.

140. V.A. Demant, God, Man and Society: An Introduction to Christian Sociology (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1933); V.A. Demant, Christian Polity (London: Faber, 1936); Christopher Dawson, The Age of the Gods (London: John Murray, 1928); Christopher Dawson, Beyond Politics (London: Sheed & Ward, 1939).

141. Clive Bell, Civilisation: An Essay (London: Chatto & Windus, 1928).

142. F.S. Northedge, The League of Nations: its Life and Times 1920-1946 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), p.i.

143. TBI, p.311.

144. Rose Macaulay, Postcard to Will Macaulay, 11 Sept. 1921, ERM15(113).

145. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 1 Sept. 1952, ERM17(146); MG, p.127.
146. MG, p.39; A.J. Balfour, A Defence of Philosophic Doubt (London: Macmillan, 1879); A.J. Balfour, The Foundations of Belief (London: Longmans, 1895).
147. OI, pp.28-29.
148. Rose Macaulay, "Orphan Island," London Mercury, 10 Aug. 1924, pp.350-359; Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species (London: John Murray, 1859).
149. Henry Neville, The Isle of Pines (London: Printed for A. Banks and C. Harper, 1668).
150. Walter de la Mare, Desert Islands and 'Robinson Crusoe' (London: Faber, 1930), p.170.
151. W.B. Yeats, "The White Birds," Collected Poems, p.47.
152. J.M. Barrie, The Admirable Crichton (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914); Rev. of Orphan Island, by Rose Macaulay, Times Literary Supplement, 27 Nov. 1924, p.794.
153. Rose Macaulay, Swift as Letter Writer and Diarist, BBC broadcast, 14 Nov. 1945; Jonathan Swift, Swift's Journal to Stella,

ed. F. Ryland (London; Bell, 1897) in The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Temple Scott (1897-1908).

154. OI, p.62.

155. Ibid., p.63.

156. Ibid., pp.80-81.

157. Ibid., p.312.

158. Ibid., p.12.

159. Ibid., pp.135-136.

160. Ibid., p.252.

161. CT, p.50.

162. Ibid p.41. Part II is entitled "The Higher Life."

163. Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, [n.d.? 1968], ERM4(81).

164. E.M. Forster, "Other Kingdom," in The Celestial Omnibus (London: Knopf, 1911), rpt. Collected Short Stories (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954), pp.59-85.

165. Rose Macaulay, The Writings of E.M. Forster, p.30.
166. Ibid., p.30.
167. CT, p.298.
168. Ibid., pp.42-44.
169. Evelyn Waugh, Vile Bodies (London: Chapman & Hall, 1930); Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent (London: Methuen, 1907); Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (London: L&V Woolf, 1925).
170. CT, p.45; Ibid., p.59.
171. Ibid., p.133.
172. Ibid., p.300.
173. Ibid., p.299.
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175. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 1 Jan. 1952, LF p.299.
176. KUA, p.29.



177. Gertrude Stein, Three Lives (New York: Grafton, 1909).
178. KUA, p.119.
179. Ibid., pp.300-301.
180. Ibid., p.303.
181. Ibid., p.6; Ibid., p.9.
182. Ibid., p.207.
183. Ibid., p.220.
184. Ibid., p.42.
185. Ibid., p.29.
186. Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," The Common Reader (London: L&V Woolf, 1925), p.189.
187. KUA, p.69; Ibid., p.69.
188. Ibid., p.70; Ibid., p.56.
189. Ibid., p.51.

190. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.107.
191. Virginia Woolf, Diary, III, p.61, entry for 24 Feb, 1926:  
"She is writing an article for an American paper on London after the War. It is [this] sort of thing that one distrusts in her. Why should she take the field so unnecessarily?"
192. KUA, pp.1-2.
193. Ibid., p.303.
194. Ibid., p.176.
195. Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1902).
196. SWR, p.20.
197. Ibid., p.38; Ibid., p.38.
198. Ibid., p.44; Ibid., p.301.
199. Ibid., p.49.
200. Ibid., p.15.

201. Rose Macaulay, "Writing," Personal Pleasures, p.378.
202. Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Man," Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen, 1963), p.514.
203. SWR, p.24.
204. T.S. Eliot, "London Letter," Dial, Oct. 1921, p.452.
205. SWR, p.20.
206. Ibid., p.22.
207. Ibid., p.33.
208. D.H. Lawrence, Mornings in Mexico (London: Secker, 1927);  
D.H. Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent (London: Secker, 1926).
209. Rose Macaulay refers to D.H. Lawrence in her letter to Father Johnson, 2 Aug. 1957, LLF p.256.
210. SWR, p.120.
211. Ibid., p.121.
212. Ibid., p.123.

213. Ibid., p.123.
214. Ibid., p.123.
215. Ibid., pp.78-79.
216. Ibid., p.79.
217. Ibid., p.79.
218. Ibid pp.79-80.
219. Ibid., p.215.
220. Ibid., p.215.
221. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 27 Nov. 1950, LF  
p.35.
222. F.C. Conybeare, ed., Letters and Exercises of the Elizabethan Schoolmaster, John Conybeare, With Notes and a Fragment of Autobiography by William Daniel Conybeare (London: Henry Frowde, 1905).
223. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 4 Mar. [1945], ERM17(77). ("1946" has been added later in a different pen: note says "Must be 1945.").

224. Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, p.47.
225. Ibid., p.47.
226. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, pp.122-123 (Letters are not included in LSister and no dates are given).
227. Ibid., p.9.
228. TWD, p.20.
229. Ibid., p.19.
230. Ibid., p.83; Ibid., p.84.
231. Ibid., p.425.
232. Ibid., p.430.
233. TBI, p.107.

Chapter 5: Into the Abyss: Novels 1934-1940

1. Rose Macaulay, "The Chase," in The Minor Pleasures of Life, p.211.
2. Quoted Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.126.
3. Daniel George and Rose Macaulay, eds. All in a Maze: A Collection of Prose and Verse Chronologically Arranged (London: Collins, 1938), pp.419-420.
4. Ibid., p.419.
5. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Jean Macaulay, 10 Aug. [1936], LSister p.80.
6. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 8 Oct. 1936, ERM17(53).
7. Ibid., ERM17(53).
8. Rose Macaulay is mentioned in the Glasgow Herald's interview with H.R.L. Sheppard after his election ("Pacifist Lord Rector," Glasgow Herald, 29 Oct. 1937). Voting at the election was low, 26% of men (886 out of 3311) and 53% of women (517 out of 962) casting their votes. The results were: Winston Churchill (281 votes), Professor W. Macneile Dixon (Professor of English at the University,

364 votes), J.B.S. Haldane (220 votes), Dick Sheppard (1538 votes). The campaign was almost certainly orchestrated by the Rev. Archie Craig, University Chaplain, who was a member of the Union and popular with the students. The Principal, Hector Hetherington, however, disapproved of the activities of the Peace Pledge Union.

9. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, 13 June 1938, ERM16(27).

10. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, [n.d.], ERM16(51).  
Note added by Daniel George saying 4 Dec. 1938.

11. Rose Macaulay, "Mr Joad and the PPU," New Statesman and Nation, 22 May 1937, p.844.

12. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, [n.d.], ERM16(71).  
Note added by Daniel George saying 16 May 1939.

13. Rose Macaulay, "Aping the Barbarians," p.16.

14. Rose Macaulay, "An Open Letter to a Non-Pacifist," p.1

15. GA, epigraph.

16. Ibid., p.9.

17. Frank Buchman (1878-1961) was an American Lutheran minister who founded the movement known as the "Oxford Group," the "Moral Re-Armament Campaign" or the "Buchmanites." His ideas constituted a Christian renaissance, and stressed the importance of absolute love, honesty, purity and unselfishness. He introduced house-parties for the promulgation of these concepts, the first important one being held in Oxford in 1921 and accounting for the name "Oxford Group." The aim of the movement was to establish a new, God-led, social order.

18. GA, p.7.

19. GA, p.71.

20. Evelyn Waugh, Vile Bodies (London: Chapman & Hall, 1930).

21. GA, p.65.

22. E.M. Forster, "The Celestial Omnibus," The Celestial Omnibus (London: Knopf, 1911), rpt. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954), pp.41-58.

23. H. Wildon Carr expands Bergson's idea that the intellect is cinematographical:

"This description is perhaps the happiest of any of the images that Bergson has used to illustrate his theory.

The cinematograph takes views of a moving scene; each



view represents a fixed position, and when the views are arranged side by side on the film and passed across the screen in rapid succession they present to us a moving picture. The views as they lie before us on the ribbon, as we look at them in passing from one to the next, do not give us this picture; to have this picture we must restore the movement, and this the cinematograph does. The fixed things that seem to us to lie side by side of one another at every moment in space are views that the intellect takes. These views seem to us to form the movement by their succession, the replacement of one by another seems to be the change, but the reality is the movement; it is a continuous change, not a succession of states, and the fixed things are views of it."

(H. Wildon Carr, Henri Bergson: The Philosophy of Change (London: Jack, [1911?]), p.24).

25. GA, p.238.

26. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 18 July 1934, ERM17(52).

27. GA, p.23.

28. Ibid., p.230.

29. Rose Macaulay, "Odd Things They Say," draft of unlocated article, [n.d. Stamped "Paid 25 Mar 1950"], ERM8(26, 1-3).

30. GA, p.7.

31. Ibid., p.8.

32. Ibid., p.52.

33. Ibid., p.53.

34. Ibid., p.37.

35. Ibid., p.159.

36. "Quins" were a subject of much popular interest at the time, as the Dionne quintuplets - Emilie, Yvonne, Cecile, Marie and Annette - had been born to Olivia and Elzire Dionne at Callandar, Ontario on 28 May, 1934.

37. Passty, Eros and Androgyny (book), p.60.

38. IWBP, p.45.

39. Ibid., p.131.

40. Ibid., pp.171-172.

41. Ibid., p.31.
42. Ibid., pp.143-144.
43. Ibid., p.270.
44. Ibid., p.176.
45. Ecclesiastes, Ch.12, V.6 (RSV).
46. IWBP, p.287.
47. Ibid., p.285.
48. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, 5 Oct. 1939,  
ERM16(87).
49. ANMW, pp.328-329.
50. Ibid., pp.383-384.
51. John Donne, "An Anatomy of the World," Complete English  
Poems, p.276.
52. ANMW, p.355.

53. W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming," Collected Poems, p.211:  
"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold."

54. ANMW, p.69.

55. SR, pp.7-8; Ibid., pp.21-22; DA, p.155; TBI, p.201.

56. TWD, p.419.

57. "On another occasion I was led in imagination down on to the sea-bed, and there I saw green hills and valleys looking as though they were moss-covered, with seaweed and sand. This I understood to mean that if a man or woman were undersea and saw God ever present with him (as indeed God is) he would be safe in body and soul, and take no hurt..."  
(Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, p.77). For evidence of Rose Macaulay's familiarity with the work of Julian of Norwich, see above, Chapter 1 n.44.

58. Herbert Read, The Green Child (1935; rpt: Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).

59. Ibid., p.134; Ibid., p.134; Ibid., p.134; Ibid., p.134.

60. Ibid., p.140.

61. Ibid., p.138.

62. Ibid., p.144.

63. ANMW, p.329.

64. Rose Macaulay, Time for Verse 41: A Collection of 'Under the Sea' Poems, BBC broadcast, 28 July 1946.

65. ANMW, p.383.

Chapter 6: Out of the Wilderness: Novels 1950-1958

1. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, 14 May 1941, ERM16(107).
2. Rose Macaulay, "Losing One's Books," Spectator, 7 Nov. 1941, p.444.
3. Rose Macaulay, "Miss Anstruther's Letters," London Calling, ed. Storm Jameson (New York: Harper, 1942), rpt. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, pp.161-170; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, [n.d.], quoted Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.159.

4. Rose Macaulay, "Miss Anstruther's Letters," rpt. p.161.

5. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George; 24 May 1941, ERM16(108):

"...(yes, I got my May and June Marmalade ration, and a few bits of glass and china - of all things - which had been marvellously guarded in my kitchen dresser - all else burnt to ashes.)"

See also Storm Jameson's account of a conversation with Rose Macaulay after the loss of her flat, in her autobiography, Journey From the North, II (1970: rpt. London: Virago, 1984), pp.111-113.

6. Rose Macaulay, "Miss Anstruther's Letters," rpt. p.169.

7. Ibid., pp.168-169.

8. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Daniel George, [n.d.], quoted Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.158. Must have been shortly after moving to Hinde House, June 1941.

9. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 16 Apr. 1951, LF p.116.

10. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Virginia Woolf, 10 Oct. 1940, ERM15(182).

11. Rose Macaulay, Draft of unidentified article, first two pages missing, headed by cataloguer "during the Second World War," ERM8(15, 2).

12. As n.11, ERM8(15, 3).

14. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 28 Sept. 1950, LF p.30; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 30 Aug. 1950, LF p.28.

15. Rose Macaulay, "The Future of Fiction," pp.71-72.

16. Ibid., p.72.

17. Ibid., p.73.

18. Ibid., p.73.

19. Rose Macaulay, "The Pleasures of Tiberius," Times Literary Supplement, 21 Dec. 1951, p.822; Rose Macaulay, "Hadrian's Villa," New Statesman and Nation, 5 July 1952, p.17; Rose Macaulay, "Dirge for Trebizond," Times Literary Supplement, 24 June 1955, p.342.

20. Rose Macaulay, "Ash Wednesday 1941," ERM8(74).

21. Rose Macaulay, "The Ruined Garden 1740, 1941," ERM8(92).

22. Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Landscape Gardening, 1751, 1951," ERM8(990, 1-2).

23. Rose Macaulay, "Sicut erat in principio I," ERM8(80, 2-3) and ERM8(81, 1-2), (two versions); Rose Macaulay, "Sicut erat in principio II," ERM8(80, 4-5); Rose Macaulay, "Et nunc I," ERM8(78, 1-3); Rose Macaulay, "Et nunc II," ERM8 (78, 4-5); Rose Macaulay, "Et semper I," ERM8(79, 1-2); Rose Macaulay, "Et semper II," ERM8(79, 3) and ERM8(79, 4), (two versions).

24. Rose Macaulay, "Sicut erat in principio I," ERM8(81, 1-2).  
Two versions exist, see above n. 23: I have quoted from what I judge to be the later.



25. Rose Macaulay, "Sicut erat in principio II," ERM8(80, 4-5).
26. Rose Macaulay, "Et nunc I," ERM8(78, 1-3).
27. Rose Macaulay, "Et semper I," ERM8(79, 2).
28. Rose Macaulay, "Et semper II," ERM8(79, 4). Two versions exist, see above n.23: I have quoted from what I judge to be the later.
29. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 23 Dec. 1950, LF p.44. She is referring to the title-page of The World My Wilderness (1950).
30. Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Tiberius," ERM8(87, 1-2); Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Sybaris," ERM8(85, 1-2) and ERM8(85, 3-4), (duplicates); Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Hadrian," ERM8(84, 1-2); Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Building Carthage," ERM8(82, 1-2); Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Art," ERM8(97, 1-2); Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Landscape Gardening, 1751, 1951," ERM8(90, 1-2).
31. Rose Macaulay, Pleasure of Ruins (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953).
32. Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Sybaris," ERM8(85, 2).
33. Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Building Carthage," ERM8(82, 2).

34. Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Art," ERM8(97, 1-2).
35. Rose Macaulay, Dirge for Trebizond," Times Literary Supplement, 24 June 1955, p.342.
36. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 29 Jan. 1951, LF p.64; Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 16 Apr. 1951, LF p.116.
37. Rose Macaulay, The Writings of E.M. Forster, p.20.
38. Rose Macaulay, "Whitewash," in A Book of Modern Ghosts, ed. Cynthia Asquith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp.66-70.
39. Ibid., p.70.
40. The purpose of the journey was to undertake research for her book Fabled Shore: From the Pyrenees to Portugal (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949).
41. Rose Macaulay, Draft of unidentified article, see above n.11, ERM8(15,3).
42. WW, p.22.
43. Rose Macaulay, "Cards," TBC, p.17; DA, pp.266-268.

44. WW, p.61.
45. Ibid., pp.178-179, quoting Thomas Traherne, 'Hosanna,' Traherne's Poems of Felicity, ed. H.I. Bell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), pp.129-131.
46. Ibid., p.42.
47. Ibid., p.94.
48. Ibid., p.89.
49. Ibid., p.142.
50. Ibid., p.142.
51. See SWR, p.123 and IWBP, p.174.
52. WW, p.149; Ibid., p.149; Ibid., p.150.
53. Ibid., p.150.
54. W.B. Yeats, "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," Collected Poems, p.232; W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming," Collected Poems, p.211.
55. WW, p.186.

56. AV, p.264. See above, Chapter 2.
57. WW, p.95.
58. Ibid., p.96.
59. Ibid., p.113.
60. Ibid., pp.250-251.
61. Ibid., p.252.
62. Ibid., p.252; Ibid., p.252.
63. Ibid., p.253.
64. Ibid., p.253.
65. Ibid., p.253; the smoke image has been used before to signify fertility or impending insight, see Rose Macaulay, "The Door," TBC, p.13; the smoke from both Verney Ruth's and Tommy Crevequer's cigars is significant, (AV p.388, F, p.225); Michael approaches the Gate of the Rose amid "smoke-tainted air" (SR, p.66; Julian and the Yarde children return home after Herrick's Harvest Thanksgiving service, "the smell of bonfires drifting to their noses," (TWD, p.34); Going Abroad closes with Bishop Aubrey and his wife sitting in their Cambridge garden, contemplating their visions of life, smelling "the

bonfires that professors and dons and their families kindle in their gardens on the day of leisure, burning up the weeds," (GA, p.234).

66. WW, p.254.

67. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 22 Mar. 1952, LF p.292.

68. Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay; LF; LLF.

69. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 14 June 1952, LF p.325.

70. Helen Schlegel listening to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in E.M. Forster's Howard's End (1910; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1941), pp.31-34.

71. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 30 Jan 1952, continuing 1 Feb. 1952, LF p.261.

72. For example, Gloria Fromm:

"No one reading the irreverent and satiric novels of Rose Macaulay's middle years - Potterism, Dangerous Ages, Mystery at Geneva, Told By an Idiot, Orphan Island, Keeping Up Appearances, Staying With Relations, - could have dreamed that the Church would one day come to serve

as the cherished companion others seek and find in tangible human relationships."

("The Worldly and Unworldly Fortunes of Rose Macaulay,"

New Criterion, 5, No.2 (1986), p.43.

73. DA, p.108.

74. Ibid., p.217.

75. TBI, p.133.

76. KUA, p.169.

77. MG, p.79.

78. CT, p.51.

79. TWD, p.192.

80. Ibid., p.192.

81. GA, p.78.

82. Rose Macaulay, "A Church I Should Like," St. Paul's Review: The London Diocesan Quarterly, May 1929, p.12.

83. Ibid., p.13; Ibid., p.14.

84. Rose Macaulay, "What I Believe," p.666.

85. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Maisie Fletcher, 23 July 1958,  
ERM15(82).

86. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 6 Feb. 1956, LLF  
p.219.

87. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 26 May 1956, LLF  
p.225

88. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 16 Apr. 1951, LF  
p.116.

89. Gilbert Murray and David Mathew are mentioned on p.9; David  
Talbot Rice and Patrick Kinross are referred to on p.80; Joe Ackerley  
and John Betjamin are referred to on p.56; the Cowley Fathers are  
referred to on p.59.

90. TT, p.53.

91. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Emily Smith, 8 July 1954,  
ERM16(162).

92. TT, p.20.

93. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 1 Jan. 1956, ERM17(168); William Irvine, Apes, Angels and Victorians: A Joint Biography of Darwin and Huxley (London: Readers Union, 1956).

94. Rose Macaulay, The Critics: Interview with Billy Graham, BBC broadcast, 23 May 1954.

95. TT, p.56.

96. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Gilbert Murray, 15 May [1954], ERM17(160).

97. Rose Macaulay and John Betjeman, Changes in Morals, BBC broadcast, 15 June 1954.

98. TT, p.23.

99. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Dorothea Conybeare, date unclear, headed by cataloguer" 1953", ERM16(176).

100. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Frank Singleton, 23 Sept. 1956, ERM15(72).

101. TT, p.193.

102. Ibid., p.20.



103. Ibid., p.199.

104. Ibid., p.9.

105. Ibid., p.9.

106. Ibid., p.35.

107. Rose Macaulay, Pleasure of Ruins, p.45.

108. TT, p.76.

109. Ibid., p.102.

110. Ibid., p.199.

111. Ibid., p.205.

112. Ibid., pp.209-210.

113. Ibid., p.279.

114. Ibid., p.279.

115. Ibid., p.286.

116. Ibid., p.205.

117. Ibid., p.205.
118. Ibid., p.110.
119. Ibid., p.250.
120. Ibid., pp. 236-237.
121. Ibid., p.288.
122. Jean Macaulay, Letter to Constance Babington Smith, 7 Nov. 1961, ERM4(53).
123. TT, p.287.
124. Ibid., p.288; Ibid., p.287.
125. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 14 Nov. 1956, LLF, p.239.
126. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Emily Smith, 3 Aug. 1957, ERM16(171).
127. Anthony Burgess, "The Pattern and the Core," Spectator, 2 July 1965, p.20; John Raymond, "New Fiction," New Statesman and Nation, 29 Sept. 1956, p.38; John Betjeman, "Recalling All Our Yesterdays," Daily Telegraph and Morning Post, 14 Sept. 1956, p.8.

128. C.V. Wedgwood, "That Strange Bright City," Time and Tide, 8 Sept. 1956, p.1073.

129. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Maisie Fletcher, 23 July 1958, ERM15(82).

130. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Father Johnson, 1 Oct. 1956, LLF pp.234-235.

131. Rose Macaulay, Letter to Jean Macaulay, 22 Mar. [1955], LSister p.174:

"I have an intuition that I shall die in three years, i.e. in 1958, so must bustle about and do a lot of things in the time. When do you expect to push off? My own death is very credible to me now, tho' it usedn't to be."

132. Horatio R.F. Brown, Life on the Lagoons (London: Kegan Paul, 1884); Beryl de Selincourt and M.S. Henderson, Venice (London: Chatto & Windus 1907). Rose Macaulay, Venice Besieged: A Fragment of a Novel in LSister p.321.

133. LS, pp.86-87.

134. Ibid., p.81.

135. Ibid., p.81.

136. MB, p.123.
137. Rose Macaulay, "Pleasures of Art," ERM(97, 1-2); Rose Macaulay, "The New Argonauts," The Queen, 30 Sept. 1958, p.43.
138. Constance Babington Smith, Introd., Venice Besieged: A fragment of a Novel by Rose Macaulay, in LSister pp.299-300.
139. Rose Macaulay, Novel Notes 1957, in LSister pp.314-315.

Conclusion

1. Alan Pryce-Jones in "The Pleasures of Knowing Rose Macaulay," Encounter, March 1959, rpt. in Babington Smith, Rose Macaulay, p.226.
2. Quoted in Hilary Spurling, Secrets of a Woman's Heart: the Later Life of Ivy Compton-Burnett 1920-1969 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1984), p.135.
3. Alan Pryce-Jones, "The Pleasures of Knowing Rose Macaulay," rpt., p.227.
4. Rose Macaulay, "Full Fathom Five," p.434.
5. Quoted in Spurling, Secrets of a Woman's Heart, p.133.

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a) Emilie Rose Macaulay.

BOX ERM 1

Grace Mary Conybeare's Diaries, 1867-1898.

George Macaulay's abridged edition of the Diary of the Rev. Aulay Macaulay during the time he spent in Brunswick. (TS).

Grace Macaulay Conybeare's annotated edition of Morning Light.

BOX ERM 2

Letter from George Macaulay to his father, Samuel Herrick Macaulay, 7 July 1868.

Copy of cutting, "Fashionable Marriage," reporting wedding of Grace Mary Conybeare and George Macaulay, 19 Dec. 1878.

Transcripts of Edward Conybeare's Diaries, 1882-1925.

Margaret Macaulay's Diary.

BOX ERM 3

Photographs of the Macaulay family.

BOX ERM 4

Transcripts of Dorothy Brooke's Diaries, 1921-1924.

Letters from Jean Macaulay to Constance Babington Smith,  
1959-1968.

Letters from Freya Stark, Frank Swinnerton, David Ley and  
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BOX ERM 5

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BOX ERM 6

TS of They Went to Portugal (1946).

TS of They Went to Portugal - unpublished chapters.

BOX ERM 7

TS of They Went to Portugal - unpublished chapters.

BOX ERM 8

Notebook containing MS drafts of Venice Besieged or Midsummer Moon (1957-1958).

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ERM8(40,41) "One day a lovely vision kept..."

"Oh who so ever thou art..."

ERM8(42) "Delicate thou art as may..."

"Oh Sir, I was wrath indeed..."

"Maiden, oh sweet maiden fair..."

"I am not wroth [sic] my unknown freind [sic]..."

ERM8(43) "Oh, whose is the face that I see..."

ERM8(44) "Here the days are dark & drear..."

ERM8(45) "You do not all displease me sir..."

ERM8(46) "Your face is still and calm..."

ERM8(47) "I am going far, far away..."

ERM8(48) "My love, /Thou'rt more lovely than a flower..."

ERM8(49) "Sir your picture of me's wrong..."

ERM8(50) "Oh my lovely cyasures [sic]..."

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Box 9

Letter from Rose Macaulay to her mother, Grace Mary Macaulay,  
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about the disposal of her letters.

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Box 10

Letters to Constance Babington Smith concerning her edition of Letters to a Sister.

Research notes for Letters to a Sister.

Box 11

Research notes for Letters to a Sister

Letters to Constance Babington Smith on publication of Letters to a Sister.

Cuttings of Reviews of Letters to a Sister.

Box 12

Letters from Rose Macaulay to Father J.H.C. Johnson.

Closed until 12 June 2012.

Box 13

Research work for Letters to a Friend.

Letters to Constance Babington Smith on publication of Letters to a Friend.

Cuttings of Reviews of Letters to a Friend.

Box 14

Research notes for Last Letters to a Friend.

Letters to Constance Babington Smith on publication of Last Letters to a Friend.

Cuttings of Reviews of Last Letters to a Friend

Box 15

Letters from Rose Macaulay to (amongst others):

Alexander Wood, Cecil Gould, Neville Braybrooke, Hilary Corke, Walter E. Stewart-Roberts, Hanns Ebensten, Anthony Powell, G.B. Stern, Gerard Irvine, Alan Pryce-Jones, Donald Macaulay, Florence Trotter, Frank Singleton, J.A.L. Hardcastle, Marjorie Grant Cook, Raymond Mortimer, Victor Gollancz, Harold Monro, Harold Nicolson, Stuart Hibberd, S.C. Carpenter, Frank Swinnerton, Walter de la Mare, Rosamond Lehmann, John Hayward,

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Box 16

Letters from Rose Macaulay to Daniel George, 1936-1956.

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Box 17

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Box 18

Letters from Gilbert Murray to Rose Macaulay, 1941-1954.

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b) R.C. Trevelyan

Box RCT 19

Letter from Rose Macaulay to R.C. Trevelyan, 19 Sept. 1944.

Box RCT 21

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