

existence; for human grandeur best expresses itself in the quest for wholeness. The Greeks called this Knowledge The Christian, at a later date, Love. One may stumble at a positive relation between Socratic "Knowledge" and Christian "Altruism." Yet, similarity and relationship does exist in the suffering experienced by human beings who have allowed themselves to be controlled by the implication of either concept.

Negatively, *Tragedy as a Greek concept* is comprehended in a modern culture's oscillation between good and evil. Within this culture the creative energy needed to realize something better is spent in maintaining what exists—the semblance of integrity. This is the human condition, but historically the degree of intensity has varied. I am suggesting that it was an absence of struggle which allowed the Greek to concentrate his creative powers and show history the full stature of man—it was freedom.

"THE TOWER OF BABEL ARTICULATE"

There is a God who speaks in many tongues—
 "Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua . . ."

I

In the sensuousness of nature:

through sun-etched edges of leaves, in light-traced line
 engraved upon a plate of cobalt sky
 by sun incisent illum'ning chartreuse skin
 soft stretched 'cross spreading sinews' strong relief . . .

in scented vessels of flowers, blossom mouths
 and petal chalices catching daylight dew
 wherein the bee, for honey diving, dips his wing . . .

in stars, the gem-garbed courtiers of heaven's halls,
 whose twinkling gestures of homage to Him
 do fill with whisp'rings cosmic and secret sighs
 celestial caverns and universal night . . .

the quiet quest of night that, heralded by
 a copper-doubled jester (squatting near,
 then nearer, Western rims, to keep his place
 now thrusts orange-cloaked areas away from him;
 his trick now failing, his footing lost, he sinks
 to oblivion . . . sudden, soft, and slow),
 does fill and coat the wounds of creation—vales
 and mountains—with blackening balm . . .

the snowflake, crystal confection, intricate web
 of threads too frail for spiders' sport, instead
 does weave a cloak to cover the shame of an earth

so barren . . .

in sighs of seas as the moon, in kissing earth's
bare breasts, makes love to the tides, and stirs the seas'
emotions . . . fickle, quickest, easiest heart!

the flight of gulls that traces with delicate point
the sweeping motion of aerial joy . . .

the agony of antique trees whose limbs writhe up
in wooden convulsions . . .

the litheness of fish, the glimmering secrets in tresses
of oceans, arched alive and radiant above
their aqua essence into lucent air . . .

the storm that riding whistling wind with hooves
of thunder sparking fire, disrobes the air
of green expectancy; sudden penance pins
upon dismantled fairness the splendid gem
of prised sun-beams, broken sun-light, dulled fire . . .

the endless suit of sullen-rob'd night by dawn—
celestial empire sought by crown of light
pristine, in lilac set and rose secured . . .

II

In the pathos of a Satan:

desolate ruin, immortally monument,
titan once heaven-blessed,
testifies might of his Conqueror,
mind of his Author, Who
war-like and Nemesis-eyed
came in pursuit of the rebel angel.

Lucifer, hearing a cadence celestial
sound the approach of a Deity searching,
knew fear of the Lord,
Who with pacings deliberate, ponderous, massive,
o'erstrode spherly splendour in quest of his foe.
And when he saw God, he fell upon his knees,
for He was clothed in Perfection.

Poised, the resplendent Colossus o'ertowered bent Lucifer,
the Sword of Omnipotence pendent from sinewed, invincible hands;
He opened his mouth, and
a raspy-breathed wrath on the rebel descended—
a whirlwind of Righteousness spat with such vehemence,
Heaven did sigh, and Chaos was gutted,
revealing to Lucifer
bottomless, pitiless, sovereign Hell.

And He sentenced him thus :

Lucifer art thou no longer, but Satan—
no bearer of light has that shadowy wing—
hence the twilight of discord, despair, and dishonor
shall evermore dwell in thy heart, on thy brow,
forevermore brood on thy once-soaring wing.
Thy twilight from dusk to darkness shall thicken,
no more shalt thou know of Light, Love, and Peace. . . .

Thee I did fashion, from Love did create,
gave genesis, symmetry, lineament, feature.
And indeed, thou wert Lucifer,
for nobility of stature, magnificence of mind
so attended thy form, so enlightened thy visage,
the fairest of stars was o'er-shadowed next thee.

But by willful, perverted use of thy Beauty,
that once sent forth thoughts resplendent in loftiness,
but later rebellion born of base pride,
thy greatness, thy glory its worthiness forfeits—
thy nature misused, it festers within thee,
feeds on its elements,

despoiling the princely wealth of thy soul.
Insatiate perversion self-sharpened,
thy appetite fierce-hungered on others now turns ;
insidious glutton, it eyes them voluptuously.
Emaciate spirit, thy cancer spreads—
deepening, widening, lengthening,
it contends with infinity, time, and eternity ;
mistaking thy fever for light, the witless, the watchless,
too close to thy radiant contagion are drawn,
and slumber too near
to the ravenous jaws of a nature distended
by envy's voracity, that reduces with method
order to chaos, their strength to thy weakness :
yourself unable to bow, you destroy their stature,
unwilling to suffer your loss as their joy,
the possession of Beauty,
the dwelling of Me in them.

But you will fail,
for before thou wert,
I am.

And thou, O Ugliness,
ever subordinate to Beauty shall be,
for it was Beauty
conceived and confounded thee.

And thus, with tear-dimmed eyes,

God dealt a stroke that sent him,
 curst and reeling,
 to death eternal flaming below.

III

In the genius of mankind :

a Michelangelo . . .

who sculpted heaving pathos with cosmos bound,
 in figures titan-limbed and marble-tongued :

“David,” whose naked hip
 a youth’s still maiden flesh does show,
 whose sinewed members lithely manhood sketch,
 whose pensive aspect depth of human thought bespeaks . . .

“Lorenzo,” knightly patron of arts, of scrolls,
 the sire of Florence (Italy’s second dawn),
 with princely mien and statesman’s eye reflects
 in shadowed calm on crest, on shield, on crown . . .

“Moses,” whose fixed gaze fanatic zeal
 depicts, whose tendinous limbs impatient writhe,
 anticipation’s nervous grasp upon his soul . . .

a Beethoven . . .

whose brooding frenzy of passion became
 articulate in stings, sonorous in woods,
 ominous in percussion, haunting in brass . . .

a Shakespeare . . .

perception cunning bade him Clotho-like
 amuse himself . . . intent in study rapt
 of Nature’s undulate pattern of subtle design,
 the weave he unraveled, felt its grain, and marked
 its hues—his own designs he fashioned thence,
 from delicate threads of words, interlaced
 with cogitation, spun to webs soft-toned
 by connotation, woven on blank verse’s frame.

IV

All things material and spiritual, whether beautiful or ugly,
 testify to the existence of God; for Beauty is He, and Ugliness by
 implication refers to Beauty. For Beauty and Ugliness are comparative
 and complementary terms. Whereas Beauty is a positive, direct
 testimony of God’s existence, Ugliness is a negative, indirect testi-
 mony of His being. And because Beauty is God, and Ugliness is
 related to Beauty, God testifies on His own behalf through things
 beautiful and ugly.

“Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua . . .”:
 Heaven and earth are full of thy glory . . .

—COLLEEN WIGGS