

"Drama within the limitations of art":

A Study of Some Plays by Maeterlinck, Yeats, Beckett, and Pinter.

by Susan Gay Painter,

Royal Holloway College.

VOLUME 1

T
XTR
Mae, B
143.808
Sept. 78

Submitted to the University of London
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ProQuest Number: 10097454

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10097454

Published by ProQuest LLC(2016). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Abstract

The purpose is to elucidate one of the most important types of play written in rejection of late nineteenth-century secular realism. The theory of the form was most forcefully expressed by T.S.Eliot and G.B.Shaw. Although in many ways antithetical, Shaw and Eliot, in terms often curiously similar and with a crucial model in common, demanded a drama which would reject the secular ethos of realism, its formal amorphousness, and its preoccupation with the portrayal of personalities. Quite independently, in looking for an exemplary play in the whole English tradition, each fixed on the medieval Everyman. In "Four Elizabethan Dramatists" Eliot puts the point with force in a phrase pellucid yet richly suggestive: "In one play, Everyman, and perhaps in that one play only, we have a drama within the limitations of art."¹ Shaw used Everyman as the clearest example in English of the work of "the artist-philosophers".² In both Shaw's and Eliot's admiration for the medieval play lies a horror of chaos, and a demand for philosophical order. Some plays by Maeterlinck, Yeats, Beckett and Pinter are assessed according to their success or failure as "drama within the limitations of art", drama that imposes order on actuality in order to elicit a sense of order in actuality. Yeats's successful creation of a complex private mythology provided him with what the other three dramatists so cripplingly lacked - what Yeats called his "defense against the chaos of the world".³

1 T.S.Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", Selected Essays, Faber and Faber, third enlarged edition, 1951, p.111.

2 G.B.Shaw, Epistle Dedicatory to Arthur Bingham Walkley, Man and

Superman, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw : Collected Plays
with their Prefaces, volume 2, edited by Dan H. Laurence,
Max Reinhardt, 1971, p.519.

- 3 Cited by John Unterecker, A Reader's Guide to William Butler
Yeats, Thames and Hudson, 1959, p.43.

Contents : Volume 1

	<u>page</u>
A Note —	5
Introduction —	6
Chapter One : "Everyman" —	8
i The Reactions of Shaw and Eliot to Poel's Revival of "Everyman" —	8
ii "Everyman" : A Comedy and a Philosophy —	19
iii The "naiv" and the "sentimentalisch" —	30
Chapter Two : Stéphane Mallarmé, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Arthur Symons —	33
i Stéphane Mallarmé —	33
ii Villiers de l'Isle-Adam —	37
iii Arthur Symons —	51
Chapter Three : Maurice Maeterlinck —	60
Chapter Four : W.B. Yeats —	146
i Yeats, Maeterlinck and "a more ideal drama" —	146
ii "The Shadowy Waters" —	166
iii "The Hour-Glass" —	185
iv "The Cat and the Moon" —	199
v Yeats in relation to Shaw and Eliot —	221

A Note

Quotations from non-English plays, and in many cases from non-English dramatic theory, are given in the original. Translations are to be found in the notes. These are positioned together at the end of Volume 2. Where I have omitted passages in quotations I have used omission marks within square brackets : (..) ; where continuation dots are not bracketed in this way they have been used by the author.

Introduction

In one play, Everyman, and perhaps in that one play only, we have a drama within the limitations of art.¹

Where Eliot offered Everyman to twentieth-century dramatists as a healthier model than the "anarchism"² of the Elizabethans, Shaw admired the Everyman dramatist as one of the "artist-philosophers"³, to be followed in preference to the "anarchical"⁴ Shakespeare. Schiller's distinction between the naiv and the sentimentalisch artist is central here. The naiv artist has an attitude to nature which enables him to express the harmonious relation which exists between himself and the rest of nature. Everyman is naiv art : the order so envied by Shaw and Eliot is a function of the Weltanschauung which sees the life of man as being in close harmony with the rest of creation. Everyman is recommended to the modern sentimentalisch dramatist who is diseased by a self-consciousness which alienates him from his social and cosmic contexts, and who is preoccupied with the distance between his perception of reality and his perception of the ideal. The new anti-realistic drama under review aims to be what I term post-sentimentalisch. The ideal post-sentimentalisch drama should establish aesthetic and philosophical order for the twentieth century as Everyman had done for the medieval age.

In 1901 William Poel revived Everyman for the London stage. The time was auspicious, for in the nineteenth century medievalism had been of great importance in the other art-forms - in the novel, in painting, in poetry, and in architecture. This medievalism was sentimentalisch in that it looked back self-consciously to an earlier period of order which invited emulation. Similarly, when Maurice Maeterlinck initiated the

modern tradition of symbolist drama, he set what was to be the recurring tone of elegy for lost harmony. Already in the eighteen-nineties, Maeterlinck was attempting to write "drama within the limitations of art". He set out to create a pattern of order by the use of certain symbols. In the chaos of the modern world, his art strove to suggest the harmony which the author and first audience of Everyman could take for granted.

In Chapter One the importance of Everyman in relation to modern drama is suggested and Schiller's theory is outlined. In Chapter Two the intricacies of late nineteenth-century symbolist theory and practice are indicated with reference to Stéphane Mallarmé, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Arthur Symons. In Chapter Three, Chapter Four, Chapter Five and Chapter Six the differing approaches by Maeterlinck, Yeats, Beckett, and Pinter to "drama within the limitations of art" are analysed in detail.

- 1 T.S.Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", Selected Essays, Faber and Faber, third enlarged edition, 1951, p.111.
- 2 Ibid., p.116
- 3 G.B.Shaw, Epistle Dedicatory to Arthur Bingham Walkley, Man and Superman, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw : Collected Plays with their Prefaces, volume 2, edited by Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1971, p.519.
- 4 Ibid., p.520.

Chapter One

"Everyman"

i The Reactions of Shaw and Eliot to Poel's Revival of "Everyman"

William Poel staged Everyman on 13 July 1901. His revolutionary production abandoned the proscenium arch for simple staging in the open-air setting of the Master's Court of Charterhouse. Poel had persevered with his plan to accommodate the medieval play in a suitable environment; he had already been refused staging permission in Westminster Abbey and in Canterbury Cathedral. The revival of the medieval morality play took place with a success unprecedented in Poel's experiments. Performances were encouraged in the quadrangle of University College, Oxford, and in the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, before Everyman returned to London in 1902 for a run on the commercial stage. The production was then taken to the provinces, to Dublin and to Edinburgh; finally Poel sold the American rights of the production and continued his work with Renaissance drama.¹

Enthusiasm for the play was not confined to those who shared its religious assumptions. Poel himself was prejudiced against the Catholic Church. His admiration for Everyman was for a beautiful work of art which happened to express religious dogma: "I do not believe in the future of religious plays. I have come to see that their tendency is dangerous. Religion can never be acted. It is too real and personal a thing ... I did not myself produce Everyman as a religious play. As a religious play, it is bad. Its theology is indefensible. One can very easily tear it to pieces in that respect. But the whole story, Eastern and not Catholic in its origin, is beautiful as a piece of art; it offers a

hundred opportunities from the point of view of beauty, and it leaves an impression that is fine and chaste."² The story of the abandonment of Everyman by his friends ultimately derives from an Eastern fable,³ yet it is doubtful that the dramatic structure and the theological matter can be divorced in the way that Poel suggests. Lawrence V. Ryan has shown⁴ that the theology determines the structure, while Thomas F. Van Laan⁵ demonstrates how the structural pattern is immediately discernible as the recurrent religious and psychological pattern of descent followed by ascent, death followed by rebirth. Our response is conditioned by the rhythmic progression which is merged with the religious significance. Edith Wynne Matthison played Everyman under Poel's direction; she discovered that the rhythm of the action is based on the pattern of the Gospel accounts of Christ's life. She "converted (mentally) the great prayer into the agony of Gethsemane, the procession into the way of the Cross, the failure of the Soul's outermost functions into the denial of Peter and the forsaking of the disciples".⁶ Everyman's harmony lies in its equation of the falling, then rising, action with the account of rebirth which the author wishes to stress as his religious message. The order of the play lies in the inseparability of form and content.

The time was auspicious for a revival of medieval drama. In the nineteenth century the cult of medievalism had been established in the other arts⁷ - in the novel, in painting, in architecture and in poetry - and the period before the Renaissance had been regarded as a time of unity and purposefulness. This vision of lost harmony was to be exploited in twentieth-century symbolist drama. Everyman spurred Shaw and Eliot into discussions of how the medieval play, a nucleus of order, might

be used as a model for modern playwrights.⁸ The theory of the form was expressed by playwrights who did not attempt the symbolist method in their own plays but whose remarks can be used to elucidate the drama of Maeterlinck, Yeats, Beckett and Pinter.

In the preface to Back to Methuselah Shaw describes Creative Evolution as a religion. He goes on to relate his metaphysics to art : "the revival of religion on a scientific basis does not mean the death of art, but a glorious rebirth of it. Indeed art has never been great when it was not providing an iconography for a live religion. And it has never been quite contemptible except when imitating the iconography after the religion had become a superstition."⁹ Shaw was determined that his own art should take the form of religious comedy, a positive art that would supersede "a destructive, derisory, critical, negative art".¹⁰ Comedy of criticism and negativism might exert intellectual vitality but it lacked the necessary portrayal of an iconography. Shaw's "natural function as an artist"¹¹ was to write religious art. He sums up the post-medieval artistic predicament with relevance to drama: "Ever since Shakespear, playwrights have been struggling with their lack of positive religion. Many of them were forced to become mere pandars and sensation-mongers because, though they had higher ambitions, they could find no better subject matter."¹² Shaw's attempt to restore art to its natural function was to write "a dramatic parable of Creative Evolution".¹³ This parable was contained in one act of Man and Superman so that Shaw's religious expression was obscured by the surrounding comedy of the other three acts. He was determined in Back to Methuselah to "keep to the point all through".¹⁴ This preface is indicative of Shaw's religious disposition in general and, in particular, it illustrates his convictions about the function of art.

The Epistle Dedicatory to Arthur Bingham Walkley, which prefaces Man and Superman, takes up these crucial remarks with reference to Everyman. Shaw had seen William Poel's Charterhouse production and here pronounces it a triumphant revival, adding "I trust he will work that vein further, and recognize that Elizabethan Renaissance fustian is no more bearable after medieval poesy than Scribe after Ibsen."¹⁵ His appreciation of the play is not confined to its diction. The difference between medieval and Elizabethan drama is that between philosophical^{art} and "mere art". The well-made entertaining play of Scribe is the work of an "artist" as distinct from the social and philosophical plays of Ibsen. Shaw's own religious parable will rework the idea of an archetypal human figure. His expressed attraction to the morality play starts off a long digression on the "artist-philosopher" :

That the author of Everyman was no mere artist, but an artist-philosopher and that the artist-philosophers are the only ~~best~~ of artists I take quite seriously, will be no news to you.¹⁶

Shaw formulates an exact definition of the artist-philosopher, placing the Everyman author in relation to Bunyan, Blake, Hogarth, Turner, Goethe, Shelley, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Ibsen, Morris, Tolstoy and Nietzsche. The main representatives of the opposite type are Dickens and Shakespeare. The criticism levelled at them is that which is directed against the Devil by the purposeful Don Juan in Shaw's play: "The philosopher is Nature's pilot. And there you have our difference : to be in hell is to drift : to be in heaven is to steer."¹⁷ Dickens and Shakespeare have in common with the Devil in Man and Superman that "their pregnant observations and demonstrations of life are not co-ordinated into any philosophy or religion

[.]they are concerned with the diversities of the world instead of with its unities : they are so irreligious that they exploit popular religion for professional purposes without delicacy or scruple [..]they are anarchical [.]they have no constructive ideas"¹⁸ and the disapproval is strongly expressed in the summing up: "The truth is, the world was to Shakespear a great 'stage of fools' on which he was utterly bewildered. He could see no sort of sense in living at all; and Dickens saved himself from the despair of the dream in *The Chimes* by taking the world for granted and busying himself with its details."¹⁹ Shaw continues his argument on the basis of contra-absurdism, extolling as its exponents Bunyan and Nietzsche, Wagner and Ibsen, who provide effective antidotes to Dickens and Shakespeare. The artist-philosopher, as distinct from the artist, identifies himself with the purpose of the world. At this point in the discussion Shaw erupts into a passionate vehemence to which all has been a preamble :

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. And also the only real tragedy in life is the being used by personally minded men for purposes which you recognize to be base. All the rest is at worst mere misfortune or mortality : this alone is misery, slavery, hell on earth; and the revolt against it is the only force that offers a man's work to the poor artist, whom our personally minded rich people would so willingly employ as pandar, buffoon, beauty monger, sentimentalizer and the like.²⁰

Shaw's great energy and forcefulness do not allow him to conceive of mortality itself as tragic. Had a ~~he~~ encounter of Beckett's

emphasis on the tragedy of birth it is very likely that Shaw would have condemned his work. Shaw goes on to state that his four chosen artist-philosophers express the same ideas in different forms, that what is new is the replacement of the names of concepts by other names which mean the same. What is important is the polemical vehemence at the core of each artist-philosopher's writing, a vehemence which springs from an apprehension of the purposefulness of the world. There can never be style without opinion, says the tremendously opinionated Shaw, and, even if all assertions get disproved in the end (presumably even Creative Evolution will go the same way), style will endure in a fossilized didactic work. This argument is of supreme importance in considering why Everyman retains its popularity with a secular audience and why secular dramatists took the play as a model. Shaw advances here the appeal of the play as that of its philosophical completeness; its theological basis is inseparable from its structured action.

For T.S. Eliot the versification of Everyman is its great merit. Although Shaw and Eliot look at Everyman from independent viewpoints, the former eager to use drama as a vehicle for prose didacticism, the latter preoccupied with the poetic medium as a powerful and suggestive force, the attraction for both dramatic theorists lies in the order made explicit by the play. In 'Poetry and Drama' Eliot relates to Everyman his own experience as verse dramatist. He is concerned that poetry in drama must be unobtrusive and integral with its subject, that there must be no pot-pourri of prose and verse (which would call attention to the changes in style) and that the verse must be flexible enough to accommodate every type of statement, high-flown or bathetic. He sought a neutral style

for Murder in the Cathedral, a style neither modern nor vaguely archaic, neither inexact nor too exact, since Eliot wanted to show the contemporary relevance of a twelfth-century event. He had certain advantages, since his audience was to be select and because his topic was of a type-remote, historical and religious - widely considered to be appropriate for verse-form. He was aware that he must avoid the failure of the nineteenth-century poets who had turned to drama committed to a blank verse medium devoid of the flexibility of Shakespeare's. At this stage Eliot looked to Everyman for guidance :

The rhythm of regular blank verse had become too remote from the movement of modern speech. Therefore what I kept in mind was the versification of Everyman, hoping that anything unusual in the sound of it would be, on the whole, advantageous. An avoidance of too much iambic, some use of alliteration, and occasional unexpected rhyme, helped to distinguish the versification from that of the nineteenth century. ²¹

In his use of the poetic medium Eliot was trying to effect a grand design which he elaborates in the climactic peroration to his essay. He sees poetic drama as a revolutionary medium, which must overtly compete with prose drama: "What we have to do is to bring poetry into the world in which the audience lives and to which it returns when it leaves the theatre; not to transport the audience into some imaginary world totally unlike its own, an unreal world in which poetry is tolerated. What I should hope might be achieved, by a generation of dramatists having the benefit of our experience, is that the audience should find, at the moment of awareness that it is hearing poetry, that it is saying to itself: 'I could talk in poetry too.'" Then we should not be transported into an artificial world; on the contrary, our

own sordid, dreary daily world would be suddenly illuminated and transfigured."²² What Eliot is saying here is that poetry could change actuality. It must not project an ideal, remote world, but it should exercise a dynamic relevance to life. The words Eliot uses of actuality are descriptive of dirtiness, squalor, meanness, lowness, bleakness and monotony, "our own sordid, dreary, daily world"; the revolution involves light and vision, metamorphosis in a specifically religious sense. Because these future audiences will come out with the intention of speaking poetry and of reforming communication in a radical sense, their lives will be spiritualised, and, by association, not only the whole of society but the whole of the world will be altered from sordidness to purposefulness. This is a tremendous validation of the spiritual force of verse drama, a force which Eliot tries to convey in his analysis of what he refers to as the "unattainable ideal towards which poetic drama should strive".²³ Eliot offers a dual response to art. On the one hand he makes a classical definition: "It is a function of all art to give us some perception of an order in life, by imposing an order upon it."²⁴ His next assertion vindicates romantic aesthetics :

It seems to me that beyond the nameable, classifiable emotions and motives of our conscious life when directed towards action - the part of life which prose drama is wholly adequate to express - there is a fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus; of feeling of which we are only aware in a kind of temporary detachment from action [. . .] This peculiar range of sensibility can be expressed by dramatic poetry, at its moments of greatest intensity. At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express. We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry,

and especially of dramatic poetry. Nevertheless, I have before my eyes a kind of mirage of the perfection of verse drama, which would be a design of human action and of words, such as to present at once the two aspects of dramatic and of musical order [...]²⁵

Finally Eliot resolves this duality in a definition which demands a controlling order which is at once perceived in and imposed on art :

To go as far in this direction as it is possible to go, without losing that contact with the ordinary everyday world with which drama must come to terms, seems to me the proper aim of dramatic poetry. For it is ultimately the function of art, in imposing a credible order upon ordinary reality, and thereby eliciting some perception of an order in reality, to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness, and reconciliation [...]²⁶

Eliot envisages here an artform so perfect that it will express the inexpressible. He desires a rare balance in poetic drama, a balance of the dramatic and of the musical, a delicate equality of intensity in paraphrasable action and the untranslatable beauty of an emotion expressible only in poetry, the whole functioning as a revelation of order. Eliot's concern with the observation of proper respect for genre will not allow him to concede to the decadent approach to the arts which attempt to merge words into music, so achieving perfection in sound alone. For Eliot there must be action in drama by its very nature, poetic rhythm and dramatic conflict working together so harmoniously that a condition of perfection is reached. The ideal is unattainable : of this Eliot reminds us from the beginning, and here seems to lie its attraction. Shakespeare, he feels, has created the effect of music by using the means of words and action, attaining in certain scenes "the two aspects of dramatic and of

musical order" in simultaneous perfection. If art is to reveal a pattern in the world then it must contain within its beauty ideas which relate to actuality; if art is to impose a pattern on' the world then it must contain within its matrix of ideas a beautiful musical perfection. The dual function of art operates mysteriously beyond the senses, the two aspects of order cohering to give a glimpse of perfect order, of universal coherence. Shaw's concept of the artist-philosopher can be aligned with Eliot's theory of poetic drama : the artist-philosopher identifies with the purpose of the world and he best reveals this purpose in a perfectly congruent form, thereby imposing order and eliciting purpose. That Eliot as well as Shaw holds unreserved admiration for Everyman as this type of ordered and ordering art is confirmed in "Four Elizabethan Dramatists" :

In one play, Everyman, and perhaps in that one play only, we have a drama within the limitations of art [. . .] ²⁷

The entire history of English drama contains a single example which meets Eliot's aesthetic theory. In an essay which details his antipathy to realistic drama, Everyman is offered as the one play which is not affected by realism. Eliot objects to the lack of form and rhythm in Elizabethan drama, these flaws contributing to an unordered dissonance. The disregard of limitation in drama abuses the fundamental tenets of art; the introduction of dramatic realism was debilitating and detrimental : "The art of the Elizabethans was an impure art".²⁸ The Elizabethan philosophical decay and disintegration penetrate the plays as the late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century lack of coherence is reflected in drama : "The Elizabethans

are in fact part of the movement of progress or deterioration which has culminated in Sir Arthur Pinero and in the present regiment of Europe." 29

Because of Eliot's a priori conception of the perfect drama as the demonstration of a pattern of coherence, each segment co-ordinating with the whole design in a poetic order - by definition apart from the unco-ordinated nature of reality - his attitude to realistic drama is to "drama striving steadily to escape the conditions of art"³⁰. In Aeschylean tragedy we find a coherence which stands in contrast to the disorderliness of English drama from the Elizabethans to the present day :

In a play of Aeschylus, we do not find that certain passages are literature and other passages drama; every style of utterance in the play bears a relation to the whole and because of this relation is dramatic in itself. The imitation of life is circumscribed, and the approaches to ordinary speech and withdrawals from ordinary speech are not without relation and effect upon each other. It is essential that a work of art should be self-consistent, that an artist should consciously or unconsciously draw a circle beyond which he does not trespass : on the one hand actual life is always the material, and on the other hand an abstraction from actual life is a necessary condition to the creation of the work of art. ³¹

This definition of order in drama is offered as the ideal in contrast to what Eliot rejects as the "anarchism"³² of the Elizabethans. For Shaw, the order in life and the demonstration of that order in drama are similarly of supreme importance. With the criterion of the artist-philosopher in mind he could speak of Shakespeare as "anarchical"³³ to preface his charge of absurdism against him. The necessity in modern poetic drama to return to the coherent simplicity of Everyman arises from the need to meet

the anarchism of reality - and ultimately to transcend it - with the order of art.

ii "Everyman" : A Comedy and a Philosophy

The attraction of Everyman for Shaw and Eliot was in the order it made explicit. The philosophical optimism of the play is communicated by an action comic in the sense of Dante's Divina Commedia : "For if we consider the theme, in its beginning it is horrible and foul, because it is Hell; in its ending, fortunate, desirable, and joyful, because it is Paradise"³⁴. The progression of the protagonist involves a series of disillusionments which are finally countered by a rise in fortune. The coming of death to a man at the height of his earthly attributes is potentially tragic material, but the dramatist uses the Gospel account of Christ's life as a structural basis for the action, thus introducing a pattern of affirmation into the form of the play, a pattern which teaches salvation and resurrection. It is left to the audience to follow the same rising action in their own lives, based on their free choice of the way to salvation. By watching the fortunes of Everyman on his way to the grave the audience has participated in a ritual action of rebirth;³⁵ for the modern audience, unconvinced of the theological moral re-asserted in the didactic peroration of the Doctor, the action nevertheless constitutes a positive rhythmical force uplifting in its conviction. This particular kind of comedy is endorsed by Shaw as the work of the artist-philosopher who identifies with the purpose of the world and exposes a design in the world by his affirmative creation. The alignment of the dramatic tensions with the philosophical development allows us to perceive simultaneously the two planes of poetic drama as defined by Eliot : the dramatic and the musical.

A.C. Cawley's statement that "Printed in the same decade as Machiavelli's Il Principe (1513), Erasmus's Novum Instrumentum (1516), and Luther's Thesus at Wittenberg (1517), Everyman is untouched by either Renaissance or Reformation."³⁶ leads us to see Everyman as a coherent matrix of medieval philosophy, the creation of a dramatist subscribing to a geocentric worldview in which man has unique importance. Living in an age of philosophical and theological speculation at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the English dramatist chose to translate the Dutch Elckerliic, thus confirming man's crucial position in the Chain of Being.³⁷ The disintegration of man's deepest convictions about the nature of his being was subject matter for tragedy. In contrast, the play so admired by Shaw and Eliot is a particular type of comedy written to celebrate the hope held out for mankind by the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection of Jesus, Son of God. The type of comedy at work in Everyman operates on a high philosophical level. When Shaw and Eliot turned to the stage they chose to use a similar philosophical comic genre. Shaw defined Man and Superman as "A Comedy and a Philosophy", while Eliot found that "If you want to say something serious nowadays, it's easier to say it in comedy than in tragedy. People take tragedy seriously on the surface. They take comedy lightly on the surface but seriously underneath".³⁸ Social humanitarianism, for Eliot, assumed importance only when it was seen in relation to God :

The conception of individual liberty . . . must be based upon the unique importance of every single soul, the knowledge that every man is ultimately responsible for his own salvation or damnation, and the consequent obligation of society to allow every individual the opportunity

to develop his full humanity. But unless this humanity is considered always in relation to God, we may expect to find an excessive love of created beings, in other words humanitarianism leading to a genuine oppression of human beings in what is conceived by other human beings to be their interest. 39

The humanitarianism of Shakespeare and the ephemeral romantic values of his comedies have no lasting significance for Shaw or for Eliot. Eliot looks back to Elizabethan England as "a period of dissolution and chaos"⁴⁰ and finds that Shakespeare did not intellectualise a coherent view of life. Shaw elaborates this in the preface to Man and Superman, in which he calls Shakespeare "anarchical" and "irreligious".⁴¹ An analysis of the unswervingly philosophical comedy of Everyman will demonstrate its perfection for Shaw and Eliot.

Everyman is a didactic play, demonstrating the need for repentance by an enactment of the death of a representative man. The Messenger announces the serious purpose of the action in a preliminary speech. This play demonstrates how to live one's life : be conscious of the transitoriness of earthly existence; think of the effect of one's life here on the life everlasting. God calls Everyman to a reckoning as He will call every person in the audience to a reckoning. From the start the audience is aware of the enormity of the issues involved. The generalised characters embody abstract concepts, psychological attributes and physical advantages; the protagonist is not seen as a man in a social context such as the use of individually named representatives of his friends and relatives would provide. The audience as a result perceives this action as universal, a portrayal of truth absorbing all sections of society. The spectators cannot empathise

with the stage personages because they are all the time conscious that they are watching the dramatisation of an intellectual proposition. It is up to them to receive the message as a call to action and there is constant pressure on them to do so. The device of starting the play with God's bitter denunciation of man as traitor to a cause prepares us for the ensuing lesson which He is determined to teach. God's majesty is fittingly portrayed first on-stage, to be joined by his "myghty messengere", Death. The conflict we are about to see is initiated by the powers which control man's life. The third character to appear is Everyman, walking in unsuspecting gaiety. Death's coming appalls Everyman. The potent dramatic conflict which is instigated is powerful because Everyman is neither ageing nor unhealthy - but he is rich, and we are reminded that death comes to all regardless of social status. This first lesson is stressed by Everyman's disillusionment. He is stripped of his belief in the permanence of life and he is left on-stage alone to consider his chances on the journey which his soul must take. The loneliness following each of the four disillusioning encounters - with Death, with "Felawshyp", with "Kynrede" and "Cosyn", and finally with Goods - gives us time to contemplate the solitariness of our position in life. Everyman reviews his situation after the departure of Goods. He has been pushed to shame and shame prompts him to find "Good Dedes". The weakness of this character is visualised by her immobility, and the blank book of accounts causes Everyman to cry out in fear for Jesus to help him. The action has accumulated so convincingly that we have fallen with him to the nadir of the discovery of Good Deeds's frailty. Now the dramatist introduces a character who has the means to restore Everyman's reckoning before he

meets the grave. In the process of dying Everyman has found Knowledge, the knowledge of his sin. His first step to redemption is to show his contrition. The priest-personification of Confession encourages him to undertake the sacrament of penance and, in a lengthy prayer, he asks God for baptism and penance. He re-enacts Christ's Passion in his penance. The mood is changing fast; the audience is encouraged to rise with Everyman to fresh hope as Good Deeds manages to walk and the protagonist changes his costume to denote his new-found contrition. Companions are found for Everyman without his needing further to seek them. At this stage Everyman is fully confident that he lacks nothing and that he has been rescued; his trust in Beauty, Good Deeds, Strength, Discretion and Five Wits is absolute. He bestows his Goods now as he should have done in life, resisting the devil and damnation. Five Wits details the seven sacraments and the power of priesthood to remit or to retain sin. Everyman retreats to the House of Salvation and receives the last sacraments of Holy Communion and Extreme Unction. When he emerges he has with him a crucifix, a property which reminds the audience of Christ, whose life Everyman has been re-enacting, and whose life should serve every Christian as a model. But Everyman's and the audience's emotions are tugged again when the new companions desert him. He has been forsaken as Jesus was, and he is left with his Good Deeds as his sole companion. The second disillusionment of Everyman is very disturbing. We are taught that looks leave man first, then his strength fails, thirdly his discretion deserts him, to be joined finally by the rational faculties, Five Wits. The order of departure of these personal attributes is very telling. To the last Everyman retains the faculty which could save him - Five Wits - the power by

which he can gain knowledge. The audience is to understand that repentance can never come too late this side of the grave. Everyman cries to God for mercy using Christ's words, and the proof of the efficacy of his sacramental actions is revealed by the Angel's appearance. The soul is saved and the reckoning is clear. We are not allowed to rest there - the general message is brought home by the Doctor. The polarities of salvation and damnation are always present for man's choice in his free will.

The dramatic presentation of the doctrinal material is successfully realised by the use of allegory. It is at all times clear that we are being offered a series of steps towards salvation; ^{nevertheless, for a non-Catholic audience,} the didacticism does not _^ undermine the effectiveness of the dramatic confrontation with death. Allegory is the best way to dramatise didacticism, yet the Everyman author also makes use of language and theme in such a way that suggestiveness and connotation are retained. An examination of this subtext will define in Everyman the musical order which Eliot demands of the perfect verse drama. Emanating from the central stress on the Christian symbolic action known as sacrament are themes which have acquired the proportion of symbol by means of their age-old repetition in philosophical interpretation of life. The recognition of human mortality succeeds the recognition of animal mortality in a child's consciousness and the awareness of the extinction of one's own life follows abruptly. The most important crux in life then becomes the attempt to come to terms with one's own death. The concept of time is all-important. Natural rhythms dictate the division of time into years, months and days. Exposed to these natural rhythms man is aware of their circularity : the life which ends in death just as surely begins again a new life. In the messenger's prologue a

scheme of time is presented which instigates an awareness of the hopefulness of the recurrent natural cycle. In the beginning, we are warned, we must look to our ending, and beyond the burial of the body to the fate of the soul. All the transitory possessions of life "Wyll fade from the as floure in Maye"^(1.18). The simile links human life with the fragility of a flower, mysteriously beautiful while it is fresh, but certain to wither before long. The use of the month of May as a definite positioning in time offers the connotation of the awakening to life of springtime, the season which will rhythmically pass to the appearance of summer. By the introduction of the flower image a pattern is set up which pervades the play so that the death - rebirth cycle underlies the dramatic action. A flower either wilts gradually exactly as a man can age, or else it can be trampled underfoot and killed at the height of its beauty. The suddenness of Death's appearance before Everyman at the pinnacle of his worldly situation results in a rude awakening of awareness, accentuated by the protagonist's guileless exclamation: "O Deth, thou comest whan I had the leest in mynde!" (1.119). The cycle of Everyman's life is interrupted as the cycle of a flower's can be, but the hope still lingers that rebirth, with the natural seasons, is a possibility as much for man as for the flower. Death is chilling in his reminder that "the tyde abydeth no man" (1.143) accentuating the pattern of natural rhythm. Once Everyman is left on his own, his panic leads him to make a constant commentary on the speed with which he must act, for "The tyme passeth" (1.192) and "The day passeth and is almoost ago" (1.194). In this context, greetings automatic in themselves assume ironic and heightened meaning: "good morowe, by this daye!" (1.206) says Fellowship, but, for Everyman there will be no similar greeting the following day. The episode with Fellowship

been reminded of

contrasts the sombre facts we have ^{been reminded of} concerning the transitoriness of life with the vain and specious hopes of the man who will not face up to those facts. Fellowship's anxiety to know when he will return from the journey with Everyman brands him as an ignorant, worthless sloth of a man. Everyman's frank reply is that they will return never again "tyll the daye of dome" (1.261), introducing the terminal point for worldly time, the day of judgement for all mankind. Everyman's main concern is to find a companion to help him on his journey. With each rejection that he receives, he is forced into looking at his misspent time on earth. Death's summoning has brought him to late awareness that there is no time to waste : "I lose my tyme here longer to abyde" (1.386), "And all I may wyte my spendynge of tyme" (1.436). Everyman has wasted his time on earth in his accumulation of Goods rather than of Good Deeds - yet the purpose of the play is directed at those who have done similarly, and the crucial message is that it is never too late to right one's reckoning.

The reckoning, or book of account, is a symbolic concept which is familiar. The book acts as an objectification of one's life, a record of one's progress in the dodging of vices and the celebration of virtues. The Angel who takes Everyman's soul to Jesus tells us that his record is "crystall-clere" (1.898); the epilogue delivered by the Doctor points to the result of a muddied reckoning :

If his rekenynge be not clere whan he doth come,
 God wyll saye, 'Ite, maledicti, in ignem eternum.'
 And he that hath his accounte hole and sounde,
 Hye in heuen he shall be crounde. (ll.914-917)

It is likely that the early twentieth-century audience of poets and dramatists who were introduced to Everyman through Poel's production would have interpreted the book as an image of art. We do not know if the author of Everyman intended to suggest such a meaning ; however, to those members of the audience present at the modern revival, such as Arthur Symons, who were steeped in French Symbolisme, Mallarmé's idea of the artist's aspiration to create a book reflecting the meaning of the universe would have come to mind. W.B. Yeats uses the symbol of the book in The Cat and the Moon and in that play about salvation the symbol suggests the fulfilment of the artist in the creation of his oeuvre : if the artist presents a consistent, purposeful pattern in his art then he has achieved an immortal perpetuation of his life. The concept of the book in Everyman would have been highly suggestive to a modern and predominantly secular audience with a knowledge of late nineteenth-century aesthetics.

The analysis of shallow friendship in Everyman is universally relevant. We need not share the religious assumptions of the author to appreciate that the security offered by the sharing of one's life with friends can last only as long as life itself. Fellowship is associated with murder and his nature is destructive just as Goods's is ; completely willing as he is to be Death's agent, he blithely ignores that Everyman is Death's victim :

But and thou wyll murder, or ony man kyll,
In that I wyll help the with a good wyll. (11.281-2)

Friendship, the author implies, cannot ultimately help us ; in the confrontation with death Everyman is on his own. We are told that with the knowledge of religion, and the faith in that knowledge, and with good deeds,

the corollary of that faith, hope is available to him. The Everyman author does not ignore the fact that some priests cannot be trusted to fulfil their duties to their flock. We are left with a forceful message that people of all creeds can appreciate; personal integrity, something that others cannot provide us with, is very important : it is up to Everyman to acquire a clear account in the book, the lasting testament to his life.

If man does not use his 'Five Wyttes ' then he does not realise that the testament has to be made : his eyes are blind to hope. The pattern of images concerning sight contributes a musical theme to the subtext of Everyman. God makes it obvious in his first speech that physical clarity of vision does not necessarily go with spiritual insight :

Of ghostly syght the people be so blynde (1.25)

The entire play is directed toward correcting the vision of these sightless

people. Heaven is associated with sight in an image used by Death.

The protestation is savage :

He that loueth rychesse I wyll stryke with my darte,
His syght to blynde, and fro heuen to departe— (ll. 76-7)

Faith in material goods, worthless in one's account-book, leads to the denial of spiritual sight. When Everyman is first confronted by Death he ironically confuses blindness with sight :

This blynde mater troubleth my wytte. (l. 102)

He is then abruptly enlightened with the information about his soul's journey and about the significance of his book of account.

Another set of images in Everyman concerns the juxtaposition of opposites. At the beginning God describes Christ's Passion with a vivid detailing of the red blood and the intense pain which resulted from the penetration of thorns into a vulnerable head :

To gete them lyfe I suffered to be deed;
I heled theyr fete / with thornes hurt was my heed. (ll. 32-3)

The antithetical images suggest the noble and the ignoble : the suffering from painful feet is later rendered comic in Cosyn's "I haue the crampe in my to." (l. 356), whereas the pain inflicted on the head, rational and spiritual governor of the body, is at the opposite extreme. Man's position without faith is that of an animal tormented not by questions of the spirit but by sore feet. God twice makes this distinction again :

And thus they leue of aungelles the heuenly company.(l. 39)
Veryly they will become moche worse than beestes , (l. 49)

It was to prevent this ultimate ignobility of man that the Everyman author wrote his play. He provided his audience with a twofold order : the order in his art directly reflected the order by means of which man could direct his life.

iii The "naiv" and the "sentimentalisch"

Schiller's theoretical essay Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung⁴² establishes two of the critical terms which I shall be using in subsequent chapters. Naiv and sentimentalisch will be left untranslated throughout because the English "simple" and "sentimental" have pejorative connotations.

Schiller starts his discussion by asking why nature should have such an emotional effect on his contemporaries. He finds that the idea of unity and harmony represented by flowers and birds and springs and stones and other natural objects reveals a mode of existence that is profoundly satisfying not to the aesthetic sense as one might assume but to man's moral sense, for "Sie sind, was wir waren; sie sind, was wir wieder werden sollen. Wir waren Natur wie sie, und unsere Kultur soll uns, auf dem Wege der Vernunft und der Freiheit, zur Natur zurückführen."⁴³ The qualities of nature emphasised here are those of freedom, of innocence, of goodness and of ingenuousness. The pleasing naiv condition of nature is lost to modern man, who in his envy of it feels diseased : "Unser Gefühl für Natur gleicht der Empfindung des Kranken für die Gesundheit."⁴⁴ This theory of a crisis in human history explains what Schiller sees as the main distinction to be drawn in the arts :

Alle Dichter, die es wirklich sind, werden, je nachdem die Zeit beschaffen ist, in der sie blühen, oder zufällige Umstände auf ihre allgemeine Bildung und auf ihre vorübergehende Gemütsstimmung Einfluß haben, entweder zu den naiven oder zu den sentimentalischen gehören. 45

The naiv poet is objective, unanalytical and self-effacing. In his art he describes a concord with the external world. For the sentimentalisch poet this harmony is a lost reality and has become an ideal for which he seeks: "Die Ubereinstimmung zwischen seinem Empfinden und Denken, die in dem ersten Zustande wirklich stattfand, existiert jetzt blo idealisch; sie ist nicht mehr in ihm, sondern au er ihm, als ein Gedanke, der erst realisiert werden soll, nicht mehr als Tatsache seines Lebens." 46

Sentimentalisch art is an art of ideas in opposition to the immediate expression of naiv art. It is self-conscious, analysing the impressions and reactions of the artist. This critical awareness results in the complex expression which records the distance between the real and the ideal. This expression will be either of actuality as an object of aversion, or else it will be of the ideal as an object of desire. The sentimentalisch art is therefore either satirical or elegiac. The elegiac sentimentalisch poet will express himself sadly in elegy or joyfully in idyll.

Schiller concludes that the sentimentalisch artist should create a type of idyll which synthesises both pastoral innocence and sophistication. This solution to the dilemma of the modern artist seems paradoxical: the sentimentalisch artist is alienated from his social and natural contexts and lacks identity yet he must find a new way of expressing naiv harmony. He cannot regress to the naiv condition of the ancient artists; instead he must formulate a post-sentimentalisch outlook which has the same simplicity, and he must devise a post-sentimentalisch form for his art.

In the following pages I shall discuss the attempts of some modern dramatists to achieve this outlook, ^{and this form.} Eliot's description of Everyman as "drama within the limitations of art" attributes to the medieval play a harmony such as the dramatists I shall examine try to emulate. The crucial issue becomes whether Maeterlinck, or Yeats, or Beckett, or Pinter, successfully achieves the modern post-sentimentalisch simplicity.

...oo0oo...

Chapter Two

Stéphane Mallarmé, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Arthur Symons

To trace the origins of any twentieth-century literary form will necessarily lead one to the complex Parisian milieu at the end of the nineteenth century : in poetry, fiction and drama, as well as in music and the representational arts, Paris was amazingly fertile in both practice and theory. It is therefore to be expected that an attempt to place the dramatic form under review in its historical context, and to understand the force of specific plays by Maeterlinck, Yeats, Beckett and Pinter, should involve some discussion of their French precursors. Firstly, I shall indicate Mallarmé's importance. Secondly, I shall look at the extraordinarily powerful influence of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. Finally, I shall discuss Arthur Symons, whose essays disseminated in English what was implicit in the French literature of the fin de siècle period.

i Stéphane Mallarmé

Mallarmé, like many aesthetic theoreticians at the end of the nineteenth century, saw in art a lost religion. The conversations of his famous Tuesday soirées, even more than his literary achievement, caught hold of a generation. These gatherings at Mallarmé's flat in the rue de Rome are described by his contemporaries as sacred rituals : Symons writes "Here was a house in which art, literature was the very atmosphere, a religious atmosphere; and the master of the house, in his just a little solemn simplicity, a priest." For Mallarmé poetry was a sacred art for

the initiated few, a means of recording the spiritual world in the symbols which express, in their ineffable form, the essential structure of the universe. He found in words and their formulations in poetry the reflections of ultimate truth, endowing the book with a mysterious power. He planned to write the great work which he maintained that every author had attempted, the book which, in its use of symbols, would encapsulate the meaning of the world. Mallarmé's fervent belief in the power of such a book led him to say to Jules Huret, in 1891, "Au fond, voyez-vous, le monde est fait pour aboutir à un beau livre."² With Mallarmé the function of the poet became that of the shaman, equipped with the magical strength to suggest to his followers the world of essences. The credo of art for the symbolists was expressed by Mallarmé in these words :

Nommer un objet, c'est supprimer les trois-quarts de la jouissance du poème qui est faite de deviner peu à peu : le suggérer, voilà la rêve. C'est le parfait usage de ce mystère qui constitue le symbole: évoquer petit à petit un objet pour montrer un état d'âme, ou, inversement, choisir un objet et en dégager un état d'âme, par une série de déchiffrements.³

The concept of the suggestive force of art found a sympathetic response in the last decade of the nineteenth century partly because of the renewed interest in the occult and in mysticism.⁴ Belief in the illusion of the world of actuality and the essential forms of the spiritual world had flourished in the late 1880's, so that the artist's true role could be understood on Mallarmé's terms. The true artist did not imitate nature; he explained it in reference to the supernatural. That the religion of art had radically shifted away from natural description is vigorously expressed in the novel which Symons called "the breviary of the decadence".⁵ In J.-K. Huysmans'

A Rebours (1884) des Esseintes withdraws from the natural world, taking refuge in an artificial environment where he can indulge his taste for rarefied sensation. The decadent hero finds great pleasure in reading Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe (Baudelaire's master), Verlaine, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and, above all, Mallarmé himself. Mallarmé's work expresses for des Esseintes the quintessence of the decadent movement to which Théophile Gautier had first referred in his 1869 preface to Les Fleurs du mal. Des Esseintes tells himself that he will probably never extend his library, because :

En effet, la décadence d'une littérature, irréparablement atteinte dans son organisme, affaiblie par l'âge des idées, épuisée par les excès de la syntaxe, sensible seulement aux curiosités qui enfièvrèrent les malades et cependant pressée de tout exprimer à son déclin, acharnée à vouloir réparer toutes les omissions de jouissance, à léguer les plus subtils souvenirs de douleur, à son lit de mort, s'était incarnée en Mallarmé, de la façon la plus consommée et la plus exquise. 6

Des Esseintes looks upon himself as a uniquely sensitive human being, whose desires can be satisfied only when he is isolated from mere humanity. However, his withdrawal leads to severe neurosis and his doctor prescribes a return to society. The end of the novel finds him contemplating the religious life as an alternative.

Huysmans had foreshadowed the dangers of artistic isolation early on in his novel, in the anecdote which best illustrates des Esseintes' turning of nature against itself. Huysmans' hero studs a tortoise's back with jewels arranged in a flower pattern; the tortoise is killed in the process. The episode captures the important truth about the type of art which Mallarmé propagated : art which strives to improve on nature fulfils a

death-wish in the artist. Huysmans' novel, together with Verlaine's study of Les Poètes Maudits, achieved fame for Mallarmé in 1884.

Mallarmé's attitude to the theatre is especially relevant. Hamlet is for him the ultimate play, "une tragédie intime et occulte".⁷ The figure of Hamlet, existing always in a state of potential, is behind Mallarmé's unfinished play, Igitur.⁸ Written between 1867 and 1870, the work was read by Mallarmé to Catulle Mendès and Villiers in 1870, and in several ways it anticipates Axël. Mallarmé shared Wagner's faith in the religious potential of the theatre, although he disagreed with the Wagnerian stress on the supreme importance of music in drama. Mallarmé's faith in the power of symbolist poetry, in the crucial words and in the book, forces him to relegate music to a secondary role in the theatre. Of prime importance is poetry in action, the theatre finding its true ritualistic nature in mime and silence. The potential of the undefined - the silent actor as much as the blank page - exercises the fascination of mystery. The dancer⁹ occupies an important position in drama, incorporating in rhythmic movement the evocation of music.

In 1890 Mallarmé lectured in Belgium and in Paris on Villiers de l'Isle-Adam.¹⁰ The affinity of feeling which he has for Villiers is sounded immediately: "Un homme au rêve habitué, vient ici parler d'un autre, qui est mort."¹¹ Villiers is exalted to a position almost superhuman: "véritablement et dans le sens ordinaire, vécut-il?"¹² Mallarmé relates how men of his time in Paris - including Verlaine and Catulle Mendès - heralded Villiers as a genius. The only man whom Villiers could accept as his equal was Edgar Allan Poe. Mallarmé stresses Villiers' detachment from the world of actuality: "l'homme qui n'a pas été, que dans ses

reves"¹³. He calls Axël Villiers' "testament"¹⁴ and he quotes appreciatively part of the final dialogue in which Axël rejects the future reality as incomparable with dream, and chooses death. Mallarmé's statements offer a useful introduction to Axël.

ii Villiers de l'Isle-Adam

Axël is of colossal stature in the history of symbolist drama.

Maeterlinck was to acknowledge Villiers as his master in terms of the highest praise : "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam est la grande admiration, le plus beau souvenir et le grand choc de ma vie. Ma vie a deux versants : avant, après Villiers. D'un côté, l'ombre, de l'autre la lumière. Au contact de Villiers, j'ai compris ce que devaient éprouver les Apôtres."¹⁵ Yeats's impression of the 1894 Parisian production of Axël at the Théâtre Montparnasse stayed with him for thirty years. In his 1924 Preface to H. P. R. Finberg's translation of Axël Yeats declares that he "can see how those symbols became a part of me, and for years to come dominated my imagination, and when I point out this fault or that (. . .) I but discover there is no escape, that I am still dominated. Is it only because I opened the book for the first time when I had the vivid senses of youth that I must see that tower room always, and hear always that thunder?"¹⁶ The enigmatic nature of Axël is appreciated when the critical crux of the play is examined. Axël ends in the double suicide of its protagonists. There are two possible reactions to this. Either Villiers, who was Catholic, was condemning his protagonists, exiling them from heaven by their mortal sin, or else he was expounding an idealist philosophy and extolling his protagonists' escape from illusion into the

world of essences. I shall examine the evidence for both interpretations, taking into account the fragments discovered after Villiers' death, and show how Axël was in a very extraordinary sense Villiers' "testament".

In the Paris of the 1880's avant-garde theatre was dominated by naturalism. In 1882 Les Corbeaux, and in 1885 La Parisienne, were pioneering plays by Henry Becque. Antoine's experimental Théâtre libre was founded in 1887, opening with four naturalistic plays, including the dramatisation of a conte by Zola. In 1894, at the height of naturalistic drama's first success, Villiers hired a conference hall for the purpose of giving a commentary on his own new play. He was very much aware that he had to prepare his public for "Une littérature dramatique nouvelle",¹⁷ representative of a genre alien to that of secular realism. His lecture introduced the avant avant-garde. First of all Villiers announces that his audience can expect to find none of the dramatic features particularly interesting: "l'intrigue, les 'caractères', et l'action théâtrale, ne sont que d'intérêt secondaire".¹⁸ The importance of the play does not lie in the action; in fact, Villiers has reservations about Axël's stage-worthiness: "C'est assez vous dire que le drame d'Axël n'est nullement écrit pour la scène et que la seule idée de sa représentation semble, à l'auteur lui-même, à peu près inadmissible."¹⁹ Axël, he continues, will offer most interest when it is read, and it is not for those who bemoan the length of a monologue such as Hamlet's "To be or not to be". Villiers' subject is now announced, following naturally after the reference to Hamlet: "la grand anxiété humaine devant l'énigme de la vie", "ce constant, ce terrible et lointain souci".²⁰ Villiers to some extent pleads with his lecture-hall audience, asking them to accept his lofty subject as suitable material for a play. He

is admitting that, in their eyes, he has chosen an extraordinary genre in which to air his deepest convictions. He hopes that he need not excuse himself for attempting to embody "dans une action scénique, une conception de l'ordre transcendantal"²¹. After these comments, Villiers announces that he will read one or two preliminary sections in order to accustom his audience to the style of Axël. These extracts are unfortunately missing.

Villiers' awareness of Axël's stage limitations and also of its startlingly new area of subject-matter is very revealing. In the context of the naturalism of the 1880's Villiers was re-introducing with Axël what had always been the traditional subject-matter of the naïv dramatist. The author of Everyman would not have found it necessary to gather together his audience before the first performance of his play in order to issue a warning about its universal and philosophical content. The procedure was necessary for Villiers because the philosophical is bound to be subjective and individualistic in an age divided over religion, so that hostile reactions are likely. Naturalistic plays retreat from this divisive area and discuss secular issues. Villiers' caveat was wise too in that he was concerned with the play's dramatic qualities. The detailed notes and philosophical flights of the play require slow reading and Axël must endure cuts before it can be performed.²²

The importance of Axël for Yeats was not that it seemed a consummately executed work of art but that it seemed to embody the emotion of his "tragic generation". I shall quote in full his remarks on this aspect of the play because they are crucial in an assessment of Axël's impact on the contemporary literary scene. It is this impact that I am above all concerned with, because of the implications for later dramatists :

I was quite certain [...] that it (Axël) was about those things that most occupied my thought and the thought of my friends, for we were perpetually thinking and talking about the value of life, and sometimes one or other of us - Lionel Johnson perhaps - would say, like Axel (sic), that it had no value. It did not move me because I thought it a great masterpiece, but because it seemed part of a religious rite, the ceremony perhaps of some secret Order wherein my generation had been initiated. Even those strange sentences so much in the manner of my time - "as to living, our servants will do that for us"; "O to veil you with my hair where you will breathe the spirit of dead roses" - did not seem so important as the symbols: the forest castle, the treasure, the lamp that had burned before Solomon. 23

Axël for Yeats and his contemporaries was a "Sacred Book"²⁴. In the Autobiographies Yeats once more associates Axël with Lionel Johnson; commenting on Johnson's withdrawal from the world, he quotes "As for living, our servants will do that for us."²⁵ In 1928 Yeats writes to Sturge Moore: "I remembered when I got back that when I sign a book for anybody I put a line of verse, very commonly 'For wisdom is a butterfly and not a gloomy bird of prey.' I used to write, in cheerful youth, 'As to living our servants will do that for us.'²⁶ More important than the haughty line - which certainly sums up the fin de siècle malaise as typified in À Rebours - were the symbols of Axël. These symbols were to re-appear in Maeterlinck, whose early plays Yeats admired.

Yeats mentions that Axël "filled the minds" of his Paris friends; he tells us that Verlaine "insisted, having evidently forgotten all about it, that Villiers meant that nothing mattered but love"²⁷. Yeats assumes that Verlaine must have forgotten the contents of Axël because Yeats remembers the play differently, but the opposing interpretations, made by these two disciples of very extraordinary poetic perception, do not discredit each other.

The great force of the play depends upon the fact that there are many facets, each brilliant with an individual meaning which can catch any one reader's eye and blind him to the meanings of the other facets. For Yeats Axël most importantly expressed a weary renunciation of life. H.P.R. Finberg's remark that "Plainly the sympathies of the artist who created Axel (sic) and Sara were not undivided."²⁸ formulates the perplexity of those who have sought in the play for a consistent explanation of Villiers' philosophy. It is appropriate to discuss here the anomalies of the post-humously-published volume. The 1890 edition of Axël contained a note by Huysmans, together with a fragment which he maintained that Villiers had intended to insert in a crucial scene. Other fragments were published later in the same year by Remy de Gourmont. Taken together these fragments indicate an emphatic authorial viewpoint which is subdued in the main text.

A summary of the main text is necessary in order to appreciate the subsequent confusion. Axël is in four parts, each offering us the essence of a world, of a particular way of life: "le Monde religieux", "le Monde tragique", "le Monde occulte" and "le Monde passionel".²⁹ Villiers was undecided about his genre; was his play a Tragédie métaphysique, a Drame lyrique, or an Étude lyrique?³⁰ The characters and their decisions are undoubtedly allegorical; Villiers is giving us his concept of the four worlds which he represents through these characters and decisions. The conflicts analysed in the play are those between body and soul, hedonism and asceticism, physicality and spirituality. In "le Monde religieux" Ève Sara Emmanuèle de Maupers makes the crucial choice. Uttering one word, "Non",³¹ she commands the scene, impressively silent in contrast with the long

speeches of l'Archidiacre and l'Abbesse. On Christmas Eve, in about 1828, Sara rejects the veil and with the veil "la Lumière, l'Espérance et la Vie". She has opposed the asceticism of the Church and, bolting the Archdeacon in the vault, she escapes from the convent into the night. "Le Monde tragique" transports us from the French Flanders convent to an isolated castle in the middle of the Black Forest. It is now the eve of Easter and a storm is raging. Count Axël d'Auërsperg, a pensive, pale, Hamletesque character, clad in solemn black, mysterious recluse and student of the occult, clashes with his cousin, le Commandeur Kaspar d'Auërsperg. Kaspar announces that he is called "la vie réelle".³² He is greedy to recover the treasure-horde that lies buried beneath the castle, a horde which was assigned in the Napoleonic wars to Axël's father for safety, the whereabouts of which is buried with him, and about which Axël does not care to trouble himself. In the ensuing duel, Axël kills le Commandeur. "Le Monde occulte" stages the confrontation between Axël and the omniscient Maître Janus, teacher of the occult. Axël has been infected with Kaspar's longing for the gold and for the outside world. Maître Janus controls the action to come as he makes clear : "Elle aussi va venir, celle qui renonça l'idéal Divin pour le secret de l'Or, comme tu vas renoncer, tout à l'heure, à tes sublimes finalités, pour ce méprisable secret. Voici donc en présence la dualité finale des deux races, élues par moi, du fond des âges, pour que soit vaincue, par la simple et virginale Humanité, la double illusion de l'Or et de l'Amour, - c'est-à-dire pour que soit fondée, en un point de Devenir, la vertu d'un Signe nouveau."³³ Axël's choice is predestined, paralleling Sara's choice : when Janus asks "Acceptes-tu la Lumière, l'Espérance et la Vie?", Axël, after a long silence, replies "Non".³⁴

He has rejected a philosophy which entails the conquering of passion and covetousness, which maintains that in man's own will he can realise his capacity for the divine, that by seeing oneself as part of a life force, and by making choices which strengthen that force in oneself, one can become an immortal essence, beyond individual limitation and free of the transitoriness of one's physical nature. Janus has stressed that men live on illusions and that freedom exists only once the choice of dedication has been made. He has emphasised the superiority of intelligence over the tangible actuality of an illusory world, and when Axël rejects Janus's philosophy he gives the clearest expression of his despair for humanity. At the end of the act Sara is seen momentarily in the hall. Janus's work has come to fruition : "Le Voile et le Manteau, tous deux renonciateurs, se sont croisés : l'Oeuvre s'accomplit." ³⁵

Sara has come to claim the treasure and in the final part, "le Monde passionnel", she meets with Axël in the gallery of tombs under the castle crypt. The treasure surrounds the couple as Sara's beautiful speeches pour forth exotic, sensuous images of a world that will be open for herself and Axël, a world to share in the delightful transports of romantic love. Axël finds her words so beautiful that the thought of their realisation abhors him : "Notre existence est remplie, - et sa coupe déborde! - Quel sablier comptera les heures de cette nuit? L'avenir? ... Sara, crois en cette parole : nous venons de l'épuiser. Toutes les réalités, demain, que seraient-elles, en comparaison des mirages que nous venons de vivre? ... La qualité de notre espoir ne nous permet plus la terre. Que demander, sinon de pâles reflets de tels instants, à cette misérable étoile, ou s'attarde notre mélancolie? La Terre, dis-tu? Qu'a-t-elle donc jamais réalisé,

cette goutte de fange glacée, dont l'Heure ne sait que mentir au milieu du ciel? C'est elle, ne le vois-tu pas, qui est devenue l'Illusion! Reconnais-le, Sara : nous avons détruit, dans nos étranges coeurs, l'amour de la vie - et c'est bien en RÉALITÉ que nous sommes devenus nos âmes! Accepter, désormais, de vivre, ne serait plus qu'un sacrilège envers nous-mêmes. Vivre? les serviteurs feront cela pour nous." ³⁶

The grim world of actuality is renounced when the couple make the supreme choice ; Axël and Sara drink poison and die together. We know that the young page, Ukko, and his bride, will succeed Axël in the castle management. The play has ended on a double suicide, the couple have exiled themselves from heaven, but life will go on in Axël's castle with his blessing.

Villiers could not undertake his projected revision of the final scene in the agony of his terminal illness. Huysmans' evidence depicts Axël as a convert to Christianity, and the invocation to the cross discovered by Remy de Gourmont indicates Axël's repulsion from the act of suicide. ³⁷ We have no firm evidence concerning Villiers' Catholicism; his may have been a last minute conversion to the faith and, if so, this was a move by which his revision would seem to have been inspired. ³⁸ However, with regard to the unrevised text, Mallarmé, Yeats and H.P.R. Finberg are surely justified in assuming that the exaltation in the final moments of the play invests the suicide with the glory of martyrdom : the beauty of the rhetorical prose and the idealised renunciation of worldly values work together to achieve this effect. Yeats is emphatic about Villiers' intention : "The infinite alone is worth attaining and the infinite is the possession of the dead. Such appears to be the moral. Seldom has utmost pessimism found a more magnificent expression." ³⁹ Finberg describes the suicide as "essentially a self-immolation for the love of God". ⁴⁰ He also notes that "For the

imaginative artist it is never an impossible sacrifice to renounce external realities, however splendid, in favour of his own secret meditations.

"Therefore he (Villiers) shaped hero and heroine to his own likeness, placed the scene of their adventure upon the furthest confines of the modern world, and made the whole tragedy an image of his mortal disillusionment. [...] Here (in the final scene) it is not Axel (sic) of Aversperg (sic) alone that speaks, but the creator of Axel (sic) through his mouth : a circumstance which colours the whole drama with a certain ambiguity." ⁴¹

It seems clear that, in Axël, Villiers was exploring the three paths to truth which he had explored in his lifetime. We know that he was converted to the Catholic faith, that he was a highly admired dramatist and prose writer, and that he was interested in Rosicrucianism. Joséphan Péladan, the playwright and organiser of the modern doctrine of the Rosicrucians, was influenced by Villiers. ⁴² Péladan made clear Villiers' position as a master of the Association de l'Ordre du Temple de la Rose et Croix. In 1890 Péladan founded the Théâtre de la Rose-Croix in opposition to Antoine's Théâtre Libre, thus furthering Villiers' work towards a new avant-garde of mystical drama. We need not accept arguments that attempt to make of Axël a Catholic allegory, or a statement of Rosicrucian faith. It is more rewarding to look at Axël as a threefold allegory : of the artist, of the Catholic and of the Rosicrucian, and to see in its triangular motif Villiers' own three moves to spirituality. If Villiers' preliminary lecture is taken into account, with its emphasis on the philosophical importance of Axël, then we cannot doubt that "la vie réelle" (allegorised as Kaspar) is condemned for its vulgarity and its lack of spirituality. Axël says over Kaspar's corpse : "En ton étroite suffisance ne s'affinèrent, durant tes jours,

que les instincts d'une animalité refractaire à toute sélection divine!
 Rien ne t'appela, jamais, de l'Au-delà du monde! Et tu t'es accompli.
 Tu tombes au profond de la Mort comme une pierre dans le vide, - sans
 attirance et sans but."⁴³ Villiers' subject is that of how to reject actuality.
 Withdrawal from the active world, whether in the abbey or in the castle,
 promises light, life and hope. Axel and Sara reject spirituality and
 become as animalistic as Kaspar had been, as real life, according to
 Villiers, is. In his manipulation of events (and Villiers leaves this
 manipulation deliberately vague in order to stress the ambiguity of human
 destiny) Janus looks two ways - towards life and towards death. The
 illusions of love and gold are destroyed as Janus had forecast, but at the
 cost of two lives. Villiers emphasises on one level that death is preferable
 to a life devoid of spirituality and, as Kaspar was killed, so must Axël
 and Sara be punished. In the final scene however, despite Axël's condem-
 nation of the human race, we have a magnificent argument which shines
 through that blackness : it is a vindication of the power of the imagination
 when Axël asks "Toutes les réalités, demain, que seraient-elles, en
 comparaison des mirages que nous venons de vivre?"⁴⁴ The realisation
 of one's dreams in actuality cannot be compared with the dreams themselves.
 The artist can better actuality in his ivory tower (as Huysmans' des Esseintes
 had tried to do) but, cut off from "la vie réelle", the process brings with
 it an inevitable death-wish (as in the anecdote about des Esseintes' tortoise).
 Villiers seems to be warning his readers that such art has its dangers as
 well as its attractions. Axël and Sara can return to spirituality not through
 the religious philosophies which they have rejected, but only through the
 third path of art. Their turning inward to the imagination for succour

leaves them empty in the world of humanity. They approach the super-human - Sara remarks "Ce sont là des paroles surhumaines" and "c'est presque divin"⁴⁵ of Axël's death-wish - but at the same time they kill the human. Sara realises this at first : "Cest inhumain plutôt même que sur-humain!"⁴⁶ She asks "Entends-tu le rire du genre humain, s'il apprendrait jamais la ténébreuse histoire, la folie surhumaine de notre mort?"⁴⁷ but she is persuaded by Axël's idealism. Sara had tempted Axël with her beautiful descriptions of exotic places (her first name is Ève) and Axël's temptation to suicide is capable of fulfilment because of Sara's poison ring. Sara at this point allegorises the artistic imagination, the dedication to which is Axël's substitute for religion. Villiers makes it obvious in the final pages of Axël that the artist's reliance on the imagination can only be an ersatz religion. The suicide - of a young, handsome couple, endowed with love and wealth - takes place as Easter Sunday dawns. Ironically, they are banished from heaven on the day of the resurrection. We hear Ukko singing "Salut à mon jeune amour!" Ukko and his bride will literally "live for" Axël and Sara, endowed with the riches of love and youth, and, presumably, with the treasure once it is discovered. This "twin" couple lead healthy, uncomplex lives, and the implication is that, for such as Ukko, it is good to be alive.

Axël's difficulty and his tragedy, like Hamlet's and undoubtedly like Villiers', is that he thinks too much. His is the debilitating quality of the modern sentimentalisch man. The division between Axël and his context reflects an internal division in himself; he is critically aware of religion and of society, where the naiv man could accept them unproblematically, and is critically aware of his own thoughts and actions. Axël only achieves an identity when he chooses death, finally acting out of a will

of his own, whereas, previously, he had been dominated by Kaspar and by Janus. Villiers is the sentimentalisch playwright in Schiller's terms. He writes both satire and elegy : he satirises "real life" in Kaspar, as well as the corrupt representatives of the Church, and the Rosicrucian master, and he also emphasises the lost ideals which his protagonists cannot rediscover in time to prevent their tragic deaths. It is not surprising that Yeats found Axël's sentiments to be indicative of the contemporary malaise : Villiers' play is the "testament" of a sentimentalisch age.

In Axel's Castle Edmund Wilson stresses Villiers' affinity with the later symbolists; he argues of Proust's withdrawal that "We begin to be willing to agree [. . .] that Proust is guilty of the medieval sin of accidia, that combination of slothfulness and gloom which Dante represented as an eternal submerge⁴⁸nce in mud." In Axël this accidia had already been suggested. Axël's boredom with the ascetic life causes his temptation by the demons of love and gold; he has renounced spiritual service in the sloth which leads to his self-destruction. In Axël's mental struggle there is a fascinating closeness to the extant descriptions of the sin of sloth, which date back to the fourth century. Siegfried Wenzel has investigated accidia or acedia⁴⁹ in the medieval world. I take this following information from him. The medieval sin of sloth, with its Greek name, was first defined among Egyptian desert monks in the fourth century A.D. Evagrius Ponticus lived among the hermits of Mount Nitria from 382 to 399. Born in 346, he had become a preacher in Constantinople. He has been called the creator of Christian mysticism, and he gave the first full account of acedia. Sloth was made a chief vice for it led to the ultimate rejection of

religion. Its symptoms were spiritual weariness, listlessness and apathy caused by the boredom and monotony of the ascetic life. The effects at first were dejection and restlessness, followed by hatred of the cell and the fellow-monks, and the desire to leave to seek salvation elsewhere. The greatest temptation in ascetic life could be overcome by relieving the monotony with variety, reading being interspersed with meditation and prayer. The thought of heaven would repulse the demon, and the monk who did overcome his demon would have gained in strength and application. The concept of accidia or acedia was related very closely to the medieval worldview; presupposing that man was struggling to reach heaven, the sin of accidia was originally the sin of sloth in God's service - in other words, a spiritual disillusionment which led to a turning away from God, to depression and inaction, and finally to despair and suicide. In the Renaissance a term with a less specifically theological implication was devised: "melancholy". The descriptions of the mental condition of an accidiosus are relevant for the depressives of any era. The following very early account of accidia by the fourth-century preacher, Evagrius Ponticus, may be compared with Axel's invasion of despair after he has killed Kaspar:

The demon of accidia, also called 'noonday demon', is the most oppressive of all demons. He attacks the monk about the fourth hour and besieges his soul until the eighth hour. First he makes the sun appear sluggish and immobile, as if the day had fifty hours. Then he causes the monk continually to look at the windows and forces him to step out of his cell and to gaze at the sun to see how far it still is from the ninth hour, and to look around, here and there, whether any of his brethren is near. Moreover, the demon sends him hatred against the place, against life itself, and against the work of his hands, and makes him think he has lost the love among

his brethren and that there is none to comfort him. If during those days anybody annoyed the monk, the demon would add this to increase the monk's hatred. He stirs the monk also to long for different places in which he can find easily what is necessary for his life and can carry on a much less toilsome and more expedient profession. It is not on account of the locality, the demon suggests, that one pleases God. He can be worshipped everywhere. To these thoughts the demon adds the memory of the monk's family and of his former way of life. He presents the length of his lifetime, holding before the monk's eyes all the hardships of his ascetic life. Thus the demon employs all his wiles so that the monk may leave his cell and flee from the race-course. 50

This description could in all probability speak of Villiers' accidia as well as Axel's. Eliot said of Baudelaire that "His ennui may of course be explained, as everything can be explained in psychological or pathological terms; but it is also, from the opposite point of view, a true form of acedia, arising from the unsuccessful struggle towards the spiritual life." 51

Villiers de l'Isle-Adam struggled similarly and in Axel he depicted that struggle.

The symbolist dramatists after Villiers take over the images of accidia, but they reject Axel's unwieldy form; in their attempt to express the naïv harmony they emulate the succinctness of "drama within the limitations of art". Villiers had re-introduced the philosophical play and in this respect he was their master; he had expressed the malaise which they also would express. Arthur Symonds says of Villiers :

He had been preparing the spiritual atmosphere of the new generation. Living among believers in the material world, he had been declaring, not in vain, his belief in the world of the spirit; living among Realists and Parnassians, he had been creating a new form of art, the art of the Symbolist drama, and

of Symbolism in fiction. He had been lonely all his life, for he had been living, in his own lifetime, the life of the next generation. 52

iii Arthur Symons

The definition of "symbolism" is problematic. Mallarmé refused to head a "school" although he was the acknowledged master of the symbolist movement; in 1926 Paul Valéry made the following definition :

Ce qui fut baptisé le Symbolisme, se résume très simplement dans l'intention commune à plusieurs familles de poètes (d'ailleurs ennemies entre elles) de reprendre à la Musique leur bien. 53

Arthur Symons's attempt to establish in several volumes of essays "the concrete expression of a theory, or system of aesthetics in the arts"⁵⁴ is the comprehensive record of the literary theory in which Maeterlinck and Yeats were steeped. In 1899, Symons dedicated to Yeats his The Symbolist Movement in Literature; in 1903, he dedicated to Maeterlinck his Plays, Acting and Music. In these and in his later volumes Symons endeavours to express the religious purpose of symbolist art, and he stresses the importance of music and dance. In this section I shall trace these three facets of the theory, as Symons defines them, because of the immediate implications for Maeterlinck and for Yeats, and because of the repercussions for Beckett and for Pinter.

Although Symons makes the broad statement that the arts are equal branches of "the universal science of beauty"⁵⁵ he makes some qualification of this in the individual essays. It is relevant first to look at his attitude to drama. He insists that "Nothing but beauty should exist on the stage"⁵⁶. Plays should be both melodramatic and poetic to succeed

on the deepest level, and the contemporary dramatists who have failed are those who have neglected one or the other of these requirements. Symons has great praise for three dramatists who have restored to the stage its original purpose - that of portraying man's relation to the universe. These three are Maeterlinck, Yeats and Synge :

The dramatist of the future will have more to learn from Maeterlinck than from any other playwright of our time. He has seen his puppets against the permanent darkness, which we had cloaked with light; he has given them supreme silences. [..] The Irish Literary Theatre has already, in Mr. Yeats and Mr. Synge, two notable writers, each wholly individual, one a poet in verse, the other a poet in prose. [..] who else is there for us to hope in, if we are to have once more an art of the stage, based on the great principles, and a theatre in which that art can be acted? 57

It is evidently the philosophical subject and the combination of poetry and melodrama, which also underline for Symons the beauty of Everyman :

The Elizabethan Stage Society's performance of "Everyman" deserves a place of its own among the stage performances of our time. "Everyman" took one into a kind of very human church, a church in the midst of the market-place [..] The verse is quaint, homely, not so archaic when it is spoken as one might suppose in reading it [..] "Everyman" is a kind of "Pilgrim's Progress", conceived with a daring and reverent imagination, so that God himself comes quite naturally upon the stage, and speaks out of a clothed and painted image. Death, lean and bare-boned, rattles his drum and trips fantastically across the stage of the earth, leading his dance ; Everyman is seen on his way to the grave [..] The pathos and sincerity of the little drama were shown finely and adequately by the simple cloths and bare boards of a Shakespearean stage, and by the solemn chanting of the actors and their serious, unspoilt simplicity in acting. 58

Symons's appreciation of Everyman, and of the modern dramatists who strive for its unity, implies that he has discovered in this type of drama what he finds so admirable about the English cathedral, "an instinct", "that essential harmony, which is really a kind of soul, not a pattern".⁵⁹

This "soul" is what he asks of the symbol: "What is symbolism if not an establishing of the links which hold the world together, the affirmation of an eternal, minute, intricate, almost invisible life, which runs through the whole universe? Every age has its own symbols, but a symbol once perfectly expressed, that symbol remains, as Gothic architecture remains the very soul of the Middle Ages."⁶⁰ Symons does not say what symbolism "is"; he does suggest how symbolist art at its best succeeds. A symbol emanates suggestion in such a way that it seems to contain within its harmonious form a multiplicity of truths. A symbol seems to reflect the inexplicable order of the universe, perfect and mysterious in its inseparability of form and content. Music, in its unique ability to suggest rather than state, is a perfectly symbolic art form: once the cryptic notes on the page are transformed into sounds they are open to innumerable interpretations. Moreover, music is always appreciated simultaneously for form and for content. Symons writes of its peculiar characteristics in a way which also formulates symbolist criteria in literature: "Music has no subject, outside itself; no meaning, outside its meaning as music [...]. The composer himself, if you ask him, will tell you that you may be quite correct in what you say, but that he has no opinion in the matter."⁶¹

The symbol is similarly autonomous; it is interpreted by the "receiver" rather than by the creator who imposes on it no definite meaning; in order to interpret the symbol we must have an instinctual, rather than an

intellectual, approach to its deep significance. The symbolist dramatist must try to achieve a purity of expression, involving stage image and gesture and sound (and absence of image, lack of gesture and silence) which will be as much beyond the range of paraphrase as music is. Walter Pater's essay of 1877, "The School of Giorgione", explores this region in an influential appraisal of the arts : "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music. For a while in all other kinds of art it is possible to distinguish the matter from the form, and the understanding can always make this distinction, yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it."⁶² Symons's debt to Pater is acknowledged in the dedication which prefaces Studies in Seven Arts.⁶³ Symons and Pater isolate the non-rational element in art, ignoring the area of cerebral, didactic literature, in order to accentuate the religious and the universal.

Beethoven is for Symons the ideal artist, whose communication of mystical profundity is that for which each artist should strive. In the 1904 essay he records his admiration in terms which are very similar to those used by Schiller in the description of the naïv artist. Beethoven is characterised by his innocence, his childlike wisdom, his naïveté and his close harmony with nature.⁶⁴ Schiller had cited the child as an object of envy for the sentimentalisch man : with his lack of self-consciousness and his innocence, the child is in spirit with the rest of nature ; the child has what the sentimentalisch man longs for. What Symons stresses again and again is that the musician is impersonal; he can "do without life, be uncontaminated by life".⁶⁵ His lack of self-awareness, and his lack of criticism are what Symons envies. He says of Beethoven that "His art was his religion";⁶⁶ the spiritual peace which Beethoven derived

from his art depended upon his naiv characteristics : "to Beethoven nature was still healthy, and joy had not begun to be a subtle form of pain [...] his music was neither revolt nor melancholy".⁶⁷ It is the unnameable that Beethoven speaks : "The deepest poetry and the deepest philosophy in words have been for the most part questions to which no answer has been offered; like the soliloquies of Hamlet and the thirty-eighth chapter of Job. When Beethoven is greatest his music speaks in a voice which suggests no words, and is the outpouring of a heart or soul too full for speech, and says speechless things."⁶⁸ Symons rejects the adulteration of music by its appearance in drama : "Why need music, if it is the voice of something deeper than action, care to concern itself with drama, which is the ripple on the surface of a great depth?"⁶⁹ Here Symons voices the crucial paradox. Maeterlinck's drama of inaction and silence attempts to bring drama closer to the condition of music, while Beckett's concern with his failure to express the unnameable painfully accentuates the separation between, and the different areas of concern in, the genres of drama and music. The condition of music itself, as Symons describes it in his essays, as a perfectly harmonious expression of the deepest religious concerns, dispensing with words and so approaching more closely areas of mystery, is what the symbolist playwrights under review attempt to attain in the medium of poetry, symbol and silence. As we have seen, Symons postulated for successful drama the criteria of poetry and melodrama. The broad area of action which "melodrama" defines will be seen to disappear in plays which are, in this sense, undramatic.

In the 1898 essay "The World as Ballet" Symons classes dance as pre-eminent in the symbolist aesthetic.⁷⁰ This short paper concentrates

an important ideal. The symbolist artist is viewed as a Faust-figure, yearning to create life. We have seen how Huysmans' *des Esseintes* and Villiers' *Axël* desire to go beyond the bounds of humanity and how, in each case, the aspiration towards the superhuman state leads to self-destruction. Symons, however, imposes no warning on his account of the artist's desire to create something more than art. The Pygmalion myth attracts him and the art of ballet offers him an ideal: "it is more than a beautiful reflection, it has in it life itself, as it shadows life; and it is further from life than a picture [...] more natural than nature, more artificial than art".⁷¹ Later in the same essay Symons states explicitly the artistic ideal which is most faithfully embodied in this, the ultimate of the arts:

The artist, it is indeed true, is never quite satisfied with his statue which remains cold, does not come to life. In every art men are pressing forward, more and more eagerly, farther and farther beyond the limits of their art, in the desire to do the impossible; to create life. Realising all humanity to be but a masque of shadows, and this solid world an impromptu stage as temporary as they, it is with a pathetic desire of some last illusion, which shall deceive even ourselves, that we are consumed with this hunger to create, to make something for ourselves [...]. And something in the particular elegance of the dance, the scenery; the avoidance of emphasis, the evasive, winding turn of things; and, above all, the intellectual as well as sensuous appeal of a living symbol [...] has seemed to make the ballet concentrate in itself a good deal of the modern ideal in matters of artistic expression. Nothing is stated, there is no intrusion of words used for the irrelevant purpose of describing [...] and the dancer, with her gesture, all pure symbol, evokes, from her mere beautiful motion, idea, sensation, all that one need ever know of event. There, before you, she exists, in harmonious life; and her rhythm reveals to you the soul of her imagined being.

The essence of the symbolist aesthetic is to be found here. The emphasis on "the evasive, winding turn of things", on the "intrusion of words", on rhythm and on harmony is repeated in the symbolist plays I shall examine. Balletic rhythm suffices for structure in Maeterlinck's Les Aveugles, while in Yeats's The Cat and the Moon the dance is an important climatic feature of the play. Beckett offers a parodistic dance in Waiting for Godot and his structure is balanced in a way appropriate to the ballet form. The balanced characters and rhythms in Pinter's No Man's Land are also reminiscent of the art of dance. Symons makes it clear that art should improve on life, that art should be invested with the qualities of religion.

In The Symbolist Movement in Literature, Symons vindicates the mystical power of symbolist art. In the conclusion he states that, although mysticism does not provide guides or explanations, it does provide a familiarity with mystery, and "it is at least with a certain relief that we turn to an ancient doctrine, so much the more likely to be true because it has so much the air of a dream. On this theory alone does all life become worth living, all art worth making, all worship worth offering."⁷³ The breakdown of traditional values in the second half of the nineteenth century led to faith in "ancient things and the stuff of dreams".⁷⁴ Symons writes in the conclusion of the void of life, of the trapped nature of humanity and the fear of death. The nature of art is of escape and so are religion and passion escapes from the void: "religion being the creation of a new heaven, passion the creation of a new earth, and art, in its mingling of heaven and earth, the creation of heaven out of earth".⁷⁵ Once more Symons has equated art with the creation of the immortal and the super-

human, the artist by definition being a God-artist. In the introduction to this volume Symons announces that he is writing of "a literature in which the visible world is no longer a reality, and the unseen world no longer a dream".⁷⁶ Symons is very close to suggesting that art of this kind is an adequate surrogate for religion :

There is such a thing as perfecting form that form may be annihilated. All the art of Verlaine is in bringing verse to a bird's song, the art of Mallarmé in bringing verse to the song of an orchestra. In Villiers de l'Isle-Adam drama becomes an embodiment of spiritual forces, in Maeterlinck not even their embodiment, but the remote sound of their voices. It is all an attempt to spiritualise literature, to evade the old bondage of rhetoric [.] in this revolt against exteriority, against rhetoric, against a materialistic tradition; in this endeavour to disengage the ultimate essence, the soul, of whatever exists and can be realised by the consciousness; in this dutiful waiting upon every symbol by which the soul of things can be made visible; literature, bowed down by so many burdens, may at last attain liberty and its authentic speech. In attaining this liberty, it accepts a heavier burden; for in speaking to us so intimately, so solemnly, as only religion had hitherto spoken to us, it becomes itself a kind of religion, with all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual. 77

The key words in this extract are "spiritual", "essence", "soul" and "ritual". The symbolists are trying to discover in an art^{form} the religion of which they are deprived. The naïv author of Everyman had been intent on relaying a religious message and, at the same time, he had achieved a perfect form "that form may be annihilated"; the sentimentalisch symbolists concentrate on achieving that perfection and in their attempt to achieve religious resonance they increasingly rely on form alone.

In the next chapter I shall examine Maeterlinck's attempt to achieve such mystical form. Symons writes, "Maeterlinck has realised, better

than any one else, the significance, in life and art, of mystery." ⁷⁸ In
Maeterlinck we shall find the practical application of the theory of
symbolism.

...ooo0ooo...

Chapter Three

Maurice Maeterlinck

Maeterlinck searched all his life for spiritual revelation. He documented the stages of this quest in volumes of philosophical essays, in books devoted to the workings of nature, in prefaces to his translations of mystic writing, in collections of Pascalian pensées, and in essays on scientific developments, as well as in poetry and in the plays which brought him renown. His open-mindedness involved him in contradiction which he boldly defended. In the 1936 volume of pensées, Le Sablier, he wrote in reply to criticism that contradiction was not his overlooked carelessness but his principle, because his position of ignorance meant that it was not within his power to dictate truth. He was merely progressing towards knowledge :

Que celui qui croit tenir la vérité me dise ce qu'elle est, je l'accepterais avec reconnaissance si elle me paraissait acceptable. Jusqu'ici, je ne l'ai pas découverte ; c'est pourquoi, je la cherche encore à droite et à gauche, devant et derrière moi, dans la lumière et dans les ténèbres [...]. Je ne m'attriste pas parce qu'un nouvel effort détruira ce qui fut péniblement édifié et emportera les ruines dans l'inconnu. C'est tout ce que peut faire un homme de bonne foi ; et je ne ferai pas autre chose jusqu'au jour où d'autres m'auront convaincu qu'ils ont raison. 1

Maeterlinck's philosophical indefiniteness made him in his own eyes a man of good faith, yet his religious disposition sought expression in literary form. When he was led by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam to the writings of a medieval Flemish monk he found inspiration to translate the mystic work and, in his preface to this translation, he seemed already to be devising for himself a literary method. He explained that he had translated

Ruysbroeck's writing because such works of mysticism seemed to him the most precious expressions of mankind. In his description of the work he could be referring to his own dramatic method : "Toute cette oeuvre, d'ailleurs, est comme un verre grossissant, appliqué sur la ténèbre et le silence ; et parfois on ne discerne pas immédiatement l'extrémité des idées qui y trempent encore."² In Maeterlinck's symbolist phase of the 1890's he spurned melodramatic conventions and hoped with his static plays to capture the large areas of mystery in human experience. Like Ruysbroeck, he turned his magnifying glass on darkness and silence offering ideas which are not immediately discernible. He tried in his literary aesthetic to express how symbolism might be used in drama to create a religious atmosphere suggestive and by its very nature non-didactic, indefinable yet harmonious, simple yet yielding to complex interpretation. His was the first attempt to achieve the form which I have described as "post-sentimentalisch", the type of poetic and religious drama which Eliot defined as "drama within the limitations of art".

Shaw's attack on Shakespeare's pessimism in the preface to Man and Superman is with particular reference to the absurdism at the heart of King Lear ; Eliot's perception of the Elizabethan "dissolution and chaos"³ and his acknowledgement that Shakespeare had no "coherent view of life"⁴ are directly related to the concept of the emergence of the sentimentalisch self-awareness: "What influence the work of Seneca and Machiavelli and Montaigne seems to me to exert in common on that time, and most conspicuously through Shakespeare, is an influence toward a kind of self-consciousness that is new ; the self-consciousness and self-dramatization of the Shakespearian hero, of whom Hamlet is only one. It seems to mark

a stage, even if not a very agreeable one, in human history, or progress, or deterioration, or change."⁵ Maeterlinck agrees with Shaw that Shakespeare's metaphor of the "stage of fools" closely corresponds with Shakespeare's own pessimistic worldview, and he agrees with Eliot that Shakespeare's drama is characterised by self-consciousness. However, whereas both Shaw and Eliot denounce such pessimism as destructive, Maeterlinck finds that in the expression of despair Shakespeare most profoundly captured the nature of human experience:

(Shakespeare) se révélait un grand mélancolique, un grand sceptique, un grand désespéré, en un mot l'homme qui a le mieux senti, le plus profondément compris ce qu'est la vie humaine : "A tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." (sic) 'Une histoire contée par un idiot, pleine de fureur et de bruit et qui ne veut rien dire', ce qui, en attendant des révélations ou des découvertes sur l'humanité et l'univers, est sans doute le dernier mot de notre vérité. 6

The source of Maeterlinck's philosophical indefiniteness is to be found in this analysis of Shakespeare the man. He identifies with the absurdist element in Shakespeare, the expression of despair which must, he writes, be accepted as the most profound truth. In his own plays he set out to isolate the Shakespearean despair, to abstract it from any surrounding action and to present it in a form, plotless and static, which would accentuate the feeling of chaotic life and bewildered humanity. However, in his use of symbolism, Maeterlinck produces an impression of metaphysical harmony which works against the expression of disintegration; by using the naïv religious art[̄]form such as the Everyman author had employed, Maeterlinck reflects both the doubts and divisions of sentimentalisch man and also his longing for the resolution of conflict in the knowledge of an

optimistic universal truth. He was drawn to the writings of mystics as much as to Shakespearean tragedy, and in his early plays he reflects the twin interest, the necessity for religious perception together with his resignation to the tragic conclusion that man's existence is meaningless. In Maeterlinck's preface to his translation of Macbeth his interest is centred on the play's background of mystery and this element he made the sole content of his own early plays : "Un drame comme Macbeth où les forces de l'intelligence proprement dite ne tapissent que l'arrière-plan, vient nous montrer qu'il y a des beautés plus prenantes et moins périssables que celles de la pensée ; ou plutôt que la pensée ne doit être qu'une sorte de premier fond, si naturel qu'il semble indispensable, sur quoi se profilent des choses infiniment plus mystérieuses." ⁷

Throughout Maeterlinck's career his name was linked with Shakespeare's due to Octave Mirbeau's extravagant 1890 review of La Princesse Maleine. Mirbeau claimed that "M. Maurice Maeterlinck nous a donné l'oeuvre la plus géniale de ce temps, et la plus extraordinaire et la plus naïve aussi, comparable - et oserai-je le dire? - supérieure en beauté à ce qu'il y a de plus beau dans Shakespeare." ⁸ Maeterlinck's first play was not judged in performance but it achieved notoriety through Mirbeau's remarks, and it placed Maeterlinck as the first important symbolist playwright since Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. In the preface to the Théâtre volumes, Maeterlinck admits that the dangerous simplicity, the several superfluous scenes and the repetitive dialogue of La Princesse Maleine might seem to warrant revision ; however he had attempted by these methods to render "une certaine harmonie épouvantée et sombre". ⁹ This harmony was achieved with greater success in L'Intruse, Les Aveugles,

Les Sept Princesses, Pelléas et Mélisande, Alladine et Palomides, Intérieur and La Mort de Tintagiles. These early plays will be examined in relation to Maeterlinck's symbolist aesthetic. Aglavaine et Sélysette is a play of transition, heralding Maeterlinck's later turn to realism and his relinquishment of the form of "drama within the limitations of art". The fantasy L'Oiseau Bleu will be seen as a movement towards allegory and "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir," marking Maeterlinck's reversion to his early form fifty-two years after L'Intruse and Les Aveugles, will be assessed as a complete surrender of symbolism to allegory.

The violent drama and Gothic paraphernalia of La Princesse Maleine are unmuted. One strangulation, one murder by dagger wound, the king's blood-matted hair, the appearance of seven chanting nuns, the sounds of mysteriously creaking furniture, of groaning wind, and of storms, a breaking vase, red lights and an extinguished lamp : such coups de théâtre are (in the case of the murders and lurid visual effects) omitted altogether in the later plays, or else are (in the case of the sound effects and lighting) used with more subtlety and pointedness. Yet already in La Princesse Maleine Maeterlinck appeals to the emotion of fear more than to any other emotion or to the intellect. The most overworked word in the play is étrange, and the atmosphere is markedly abnormal; illness and death overpower the characters. There is a compelling sense of abnormality in nature, contributing to the total malaise. Maeterlinck's use of the pathetic fallacy was to be exploited in his other early plays. In La Princesse Maleine weeping willows and cypresses dominate the natural images, indicative of sickliness and death; a dog leads Maleine's nurse to the princess's corpse; animals gather together in the cemetery before the

murdered princess is discovered by Hjalmar. A second characteristic of Maeterlinck's early plays is to be found in embryonic form in La Princesse Maleine. The handling of dialogue develops from the stumbling and repetitive questions of these characters, whose sensitivity to the manifestations of fate remains bewildered :

DEUXIEME PAUVRE	Que faites-vous ici?
LA NCURRICE	Nous sommes perdues. 10

The philosophical statement behind this exchange inaugurates the obtrusive Maeterlinckian theme.

The preface to the Théâtre collection indicates Maeterlinck's specific area of concern. He is attempting to animate the powerful, unknown and evil forces of fate, the forces which control human existence. Two of these powers, hostile to life, peace, and happiness, are love and death. Capricious and unjust, these evil powers exercise themselves on the innocent. Maeterlinck tries to classify the metaphysical system to which such forces belong, succeeding only in stating that his drama merges the idea of the Christian God with that of classical fate. Ultimately the powers are unknown. In the early plays they most often take the form of death : "La présence infinie, ténébreuse, hypocritement active de la mort remplit tous les interstices du poème (...) c'est une mort indifférente et inexorable, aveugle, tâtonnant à peu près au hasard, emportant du préférence les plus jeunes et les moins malheureux, simplement parce qu'ils se tiennent moins tranquilles que les plus misérables, et que tout mouvement trop brusque dans la nuit attire son attention." || Our perception of existence must be dominated by such a view, Maeterlinck adds,

until our knowledge is extended in some way, perhaps by scientific revelation or by the establishment of communication with another world. In his attempt to describe our immense weakness, Maeterlinck thus assumes that he has approached "la vérité dernière et radicale de notre être".¹² Those who face "ce néant hostile"¹³ will at the most manage a few gestures of tenderness, a few gentle words of fragile hope, of pity and of love; these characters exist in the knowledge of a horrific truth so that their energy and their desire to live are frozen. Maeterlinck writes in terms comparable to Sartre's and, although he does not at this stage know how to formulate a specific philosophical system from the concept of "le néant", he does understand "la nausée" that his characters must endure, and he does maintain that we must not accept the uselessness with which we are faced. We must take into account our fundamental ignorance and try to see beyond the apparent meaninglessness of life :

Chantons durant des siècles la vanité de vivre et la force invincible du néant et de la mort, nous ferons passer sous nos yeux des tristesses qui deviendront plus monotones à mesure qu'elles se rapprocheront davantage de la dernière vérité. Essayons au contraire de varier l'apparence de l'inconnu qui nous entoure et d'y découvrir une raison nouvelle de vivre et de persévérer, nous y gagnerons du moins d'alterner nos tristesses en les mêlant d'espoirs qui s'éteignent et se rallument [...]. La vérité suprême du néant, de la mort et de l'inutilité de notre existence, où nous aboutissons dès que nous poussons notre enquête à son dernier terme, n'est, après tout, que le point extrême de nos connaissances actuelles [...]. Avant que d'être tenu de l'admettre irrévocablement, il nous faudra longtemps encore chercher de tout notre coeur à dissiper cette ignorance et faire ce que nous pourrons pour trouver la lumière. 14

Nothingness is conceived as a positive base from which truth can be

discovered. Maeterlinck stresses again that our lack of knowledge can be seen as advantageous.

The preface continues with reference to the nineteenth-century evolution in human thought. The dramatist has, because of this evolution, surrendered his most powerful material: the uncertainties about man's purpose which had once inspired the most profound and beautiful literature, those speculations about the nature of existence which had provided the greatest subjects for drama, have been ignored in the majority of modern plays. Maeterlinck finds that great poetry consists of three elements: verbal beauty, the portrayal of actuality, and, most important of all, the poet's idea of the unknown. He goes on to examine the difference between the modern lyric poet and the modern dramatist. Although it is still considered permissible for the lyric poet to generalise about the universal forces of life, because we demand of the lyricist a subjective emotional quality, the dramatist is expected to depict the unknown forces at work in the world of actuality, to show how the cosmic principles act on the lives of men and women. Maeterlinck's concern with these genres is crucial: we shall see that his drama is criticised by Eliot for its over-poetic qualities. Maeterlinck's anxiety is that drama should be restored to its original function as an exploration of the relationship of man to the cosmos. Too often, he continues, the modern dramatist has not dared to risk trespassing beyond the bounds of actuality; this type of playwright has confined his study to human feelings and their material and psychological effects; because old truths have been obliterated, and where new truths have not been formulated, the modern dramatist finds it safer to restrict his sphere of inquiry. Maeterlinck observes that,

although within these limitations the dramatist can create powerful plays, he will never attain to the more profound beauty of the great poems which attempt to include within their scope the infinite questions about life and the nature of humanity. Maeterlinck emphasises that the modern dramatist must not cease to aim for profundity. He is confident that future dramatists will find a way of realising such beauty. In his own time two dramatists have succeeded in their attempt to transcend the limited portrayal of the world of actuality. Maeterlinck cites here Tolstoy's The Power of Darkness and Ibsen's Ghosts. Tolstoy's play was first performed by Antoine's Théâtre libre in 1889; Ghosts was performed by Antoine in 1890 and was the first Ibsen play produced in Paris.

Maeterlinck finds these two modern plays exemplary because they stress "l'angoisse de l'inintelligible".¹⁵ This phrase is of great importance not only for Maeterlinck but also for the other symbolist dramatists under review. The anguish of the unknown becomes in Maeterlinck, Yeats, Beckett and Finter the primary subject matter. In 1883, in Also Sprach Zarathustra, Nietzsche had described the modern dilemma with succinct expressiveness in three words. With the acceptance of Nietzsche's pronouncement that God is dead the modern dramatist who is willing to stumble into metaphysical territory is brave indeed. He can no longer describe with certainty the laws of being and is obliged to grope in darkness for a knowledge so nebulously conceived that his greatest difficulty becomes how to express the inexpressible anguish of his search. It is to this paradoxical situation that Maeterlinck refers when he says that, since we no longer admit the a priori divine intervention in human affairs,

the vast issues have become almost too difficult to present satisfactorily in drama. Thus, although in the past playwrights have succeeded in writing plays which capture the mystery of life, Maeterlinck is convinced that this indispensable element, the poet's idea of the universe, has yet to be rendered successfully by a modern dramatist. He insists that he is waiting for such a genius among the moderns. Maeterlinck ends his preface by describing his attempt to turn aside from the concentration on the force of death which had dominated his earliest plays. In Aglavaine et Sélysette he found it impossible to do so. He has not been led to any truths by his exploration other than the supreme truth of nothingness with which he began. He admits that in his failure to depict metaphysical issues he can only await the revelation of a new dramatist. He adds that his later plays, Ariane et Barbe-Bleue and Soeur Béatrice, are not in the same category as his early plays, and that these light pieces do not pretend to reveal philosophical truths.

Maeterlinck's self-declared failure to depict "l'angoisse de l'inintelligible" can be measured by an examination of the early plays, of their inspiration and their technique. In 1885, when Maeterlinck, together with his two school friends Gregoire Le Roy and Charles Van Lerberghe, discovered the literary fervour in Paris, he was influenced by the playwright whom he considered a genius: "je rencontrai un soir Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, l'homme providentiel qui, au moment prévu par je ne sais quelle bienveillance du hasard, devait orienter et fixer ma destinée"¹⁶. Villiers awoke in Maeterlinck his mystic disposition; his symbolist drama and his very characters existed because of this revelation: "La princesse Maleine, Mélisande, Astolaine, Sélysette et les fantômes qui suivirent attendaient

l'atmosphère que Villiers avait créée en moi pour y naître et respirer enfin."¹⁷ Yet it was Mallarmé who brought Maeterlinck to the attention of the literary world, for it was at Mallarmé's instigation that Mirbeau wrote his article on La Princesse Maleine.¹⁸ It is important to note that Maeterlinck was at this stage Mallarmé's protégé; the priest of the symbolist movement in poetry was choosing an unknown Belgian lawyer to fulfil his (Mallarmé's) symbolist aesthetic in drama. In 1888 Charles Van Lerberghe had written an important symbolist play Les Flaireurs which appeared in La Wallonie in 1889, yet Mallarmé had not brought this play to public attention. Maeterlinck acknowledges his debt to Les Flaireurs in a letter attached to the programme for the 1892 performance by the Théâtre d'Art. L'Intruse was published a year after Les Flaireurs and bears strong resemblances to Van Lerberghe's play. Maeterlinck perhaps over-compensates Van Lerberghe in his anxiety to establish the priority of Les Flaireurs, declaring that "il y a ici une puissance de symbolisation qu'on ne retrouve pas dans ma petite pièce."¹⁹ Van Lerberghe in his turn testifies to Maeterlinck's help in the composition of Les Flaireurs²⁰ and calls Maeterlinck the only genius since Villiers, one who has brought into his art "un frisson et une beauté nouvelle."²¹ Les Flaireurs does owe to Maeterlinck's guidance, but it was Van Lerberghe who conceived of the subject and developed it, who took for the basis of his effect the terror of a knock at the door. Les Flaireurs involves three generalised characters: La Fille, la Mère, and une Voix (who seems to be la Mort). In Act One the voice that asks for shelter declares that it belongs to a water-carrier; in Act Two it is the laundry-man; in Act Three it is the coffin-maker who calls. The frightened girl will not allow

the visitor to enter ; her mother lies dying. The crescendo is agonising. Each act ends with the clock striking until in Act Three, on the stroke of midnight, the door falls open. Van Lerberghe's play makes great use of musical effects, using the orchestra to play a funeral march at the very beginning. He plays upon fear by depicting the enormous contrast between the girl's apprehension and the mother's acceptance that the visitor is none other than the Virgin Mary. Maeterlinck's L'Intruse appeals to the same emotion; in the absence of orchestral effects our imaginations work harder. The play intensifies the situation of Les Fleureurs.

L'Intruse was Maeterlinck's first publicly performed play, given by Paul Fort's Théâtre d'Art in a Verlaine-Gauguin benefit performance on 21 May 1891. The matinée programme consisted of several pieces - the recital of poems by Lamartine, Hugo, Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe and others - and four plays. The combination of drama and poetry was the usual practice of the Théâtre d'Art; L'Intruse was last on the bill, and the plan was to omit Maeterlinck's play should the programme seem too long. L'Intruse was the success of the day, inspiring excellent reviews. The reviewer for Le Figaro stated : "Le succès de la matinée a été pour L'Intruse ... L'auteur belge n'est pas le Shakespeare annoncé, mais il a su produire un effet de terreur indiscutable : il a fait passer les spectateurs par toutes les affres de la peur."²² while La Plume reviewer acknowledged "L'énorme succès fut L'Intruse. Du symbolisme, oui, mais du théâtre et du théâtre génial".²³ A Mercure de France reviewer later recalled "Ce fut la révélation de la journée pour nous."²⁴ L'Écho de Paris enthused "puissance scénique et impression pathétiques extra-

ordinaires ... L'oeuvre est une des plus saisissantes qui soient ...
 Art puissant et sensible ... C'est une forme nouvelle, profondément
 étonnante, du tragique humain au théâtre." ²⁵

The quirk of fate that allowed the performance of L'Intruse a year in advance of Les Flaireurs meant that Maeterlinck's play established on stage the recurrent modern dramatic form. The characters lack individualisation; we are told in the Personnages list only one fact about one of them: the grandfather is blind. They are members of a family and, although the generic names imply that this is to be an action common to all families, the mother is conspicuously absent from the list, while the inclusion of a sister of mercy adds a note of anxiety before we begin to approach the text. The curtain goes up on a modern room which is rather dark despite the glass windows and the glass pannelled door in the background. Each of the stage images is charged with the significance lacking in realistic presentation. The old castle in which the room exists is a descendant of Axël's castle, impenetrable stronghold of withdrawal; an intruder in such a fortress will be forceful and unwelcome. The three doors in this gloomy and claustrophobic atmosphere will take on an important aura of apprehension; they are exits from a trap and undefended points through which a stranger might enter. The large Flemish clock points to the great importance of time in the ensuing action and hints at the nationality of the family. This placing of the action, while it does not detract from the generality of the situation, affords us a glimpse into the Belgian playwright's preoccupation with his country's sombre nature; Charles Van Lerberghe wrote of his and Maeterlinck's attitude: "cette conception de la mort est du reste plus dans notre race

et en même temps plus saisissante, me semble-t-il."²⁶ The lamp is lit but it makes no impression on the sinister and overpowering shadowiness of the room. The uneasiness of the characters is immediately stressed when the dialogue opens with references to the darkness of the room and the coldness of the night. The grandfather warns that "on ne sait pas ce qui peut arriver"²⁷. The unpredictable happenings of L'Intruse will reflect the non sequiturs of life; this non-Aristotelian play makes no concession to its audience's desire for intrigue with beginning, middle and end. It is obvious that a female character has been saved from an illness of some sort; we assume that this is the mother of the family but this is not confirmed by direct information at the start of the play. The blind grandfather possesses an insight that the others lack and immediately his mystical sense that the woman is doomed convinces us more than the others' pragmatic acceptance that all is well. Very early in the action the uncle makes the equation between the entry of illness into a house and the coming of a stranger into a family. The intruder has come in the form of the woman's sickness and has taken up residence. He is with her through the door to the left, which is indicated by the grandfather in his reference to the ailing woman. We know that this door will emit the intruder at some point in the action and, after its indication (four pages into the text), the audience watches it as a potent and fearful source of the unknown. In the course of conversation we gather that in the room opposite the woman's is her newborn child, whose unhealthiness is stressed by its never having cried. The grandfather's two sentences finally establish the situation for us five pages into the text: "Je crois qu'il sera sourd, et peut-être muet ... Voilà ce que c'est que les mariages consanguins ..."²⁸ The family's inbreeding has attracted the hostile forces which

dominate our existence ; love has led to illness and to a deformed new generation, and the threat of death, the most potent force which oppresses humanity, increasingly threatens to play its role in undermining the family's confidence. The announcement is followed by a "silence réprobateur"²⁹ which stresses more than words could the burden of guilt which these people must bear. The expression of "l'angoisse de l'inintelligible" is accomplished here by silence, and this use of silence is widespread in the genre of drama which aims at the adequate staging of the inexpressible.

The anxiety increases, afflicting the audience and drawing them into the action. Maeterlinck very skilfully preys upon our sense of fear, and he does so at first through the grandfather's nervous expressions of worry. His wish that the evening would pass reacts on our already heightened conception of the horror that lies behind the action. The young girls are sent to examine the scene outside the room; in their descriptions of the wind, of the frightened swans, and of the sudden cessation of the nightingales' song and of the dogs' barking, Maeterlinck exploits the pathetic fallacy, as he had done in Ia Princesse Maleine, to indicate the presence of the unknown. The father sums up our foreboding when he comments, "il y a un silence de mort"³⁰; at the end of the play we will find this particular silence in the stage direction, the silence which speaks of the most appalling and inconceivable hiatus of all, not only a void of words but of life. In his essay on silence, included in the 1896 collection Le Trésor des humbles,³¹ Maeterlinck distinguishes this type of active silence from the passive silence of sleep and lethargy. Active silence provokes fear and unease; it offers us the deepest com-

munication of angeisse ; it is of far greater profundity in this respect than are words. The use of silence in drama unites audience and actors in their appreciation of the unknown. L'Intruse makes effective use of silence in this way, the absence of words at crucial moments greatly intensifying the atmosphere of anxiety.

Physical discomfort is the next malaise to be experienced by the grandfather. His coldness affects the audience, arousing the senses in the same way as the unusual noise of the gardener's scythe-sharpening attacks our nerves. The mention of the scythe is especially evocative; the image is associated with medieval allegorical portrayals of death. The grandfather is singled out by the uncle and the father :

LE PERE	Il est comme tous les aveugles.	
L'ONCLE	Ils réfléchissent un peu trop.	32

Blindness is associated with mystic contemplation and insight here as it is in Les Aveugles. In the essay "Le Réveil de l'Âme", in Le Trésor des humbles,³⁵ Maeterlinck details his view of history as the perpetual rising of the spiritual order over the intellectual; ours is a spiritual epoch and we are progressing towards the spirituality which will enable our souls to communicate without the intervention of the senses. The grandfather in L'Intruse is closer to this state of pure spirituality than any of the other characters. One of his physical senses is useless but he has acquired a new sensitivity to the world beyond the known visible world. In contrast, the uncle and the father are boorishly insensitive and through their conversation Maeterlinck makes subtle use of irony. The uncle is describing what he considers to be the terrifying world of

the blind and as his words unfold we understand that this description is universally applicable, that it details the human dilemma ; it is not the blind who are like this but those who "see" only the world immediately around them:

L'ONCLE Ne pas savoir où l'on est, ne pas savoir
 d'où l'on vient, ne pas savoir où l'on va,
 ne plus distinguer midi de minuit, ni
 l'été de l'hiver ... et toujours ces ténèbres
 ... j'aimerais mieux ne plus vivre ... 34

When the eleventh hour chimes there is a further disturbance of the audience's emotions ; with one hour left of the day it seems that time is running out for the family. The next sound that shatters the dialogue is, Maeterlinck tells us, as if someone has entered the house. The uncle is certain that it is his and the father's sister. A knock at the third door, the door that does not lead into a sickroom, intensifies our panic. The audience has been waiting for someone to enter the room since the first moments of the play. When the servant appears there is a strong sense of relief, but almost immediately we surrender that relief for renewed fear : the servant declares that no one has entered the house, contrary to all expectation. The grandfather senses that someone is sitting with the family at the table, and at this point the audience has been aroused in such a way that an image of death with his scythe appears to have taken a seat, the unknown threatening power joining life.

The grandfather bursts out in his exacerbated fear : he is certain that his daughter has become worse. His words mirror the family's common situation and at the same time they absorb the audience's

predicament : "Je suis ici, tout seul, dans des ténèbres sans fin! Je ne sais pas qui vient s'asseoir à côté de moi! Je ne sais plus ce qui se passe à deux pas de moi!"³⁵ He repeats time and again that someone has come among them; he asks how many there are in the room and calls by name the individual members of the family to assure him of his or her presence. The repetition of the word "personne" ("no one") is harrowing. No person has come among them but a strange force has intruded their lives. The grandfather's blindness is overtly equated with his compensatory insight when he exclaims "Mais vous n'y voyez pas, vous autres!"³⁶ He can perceive beyond the others, declaring "Je voudrais percer ces ténèbres."³⁷ Like Maeterlinck, he is struggling to penetrate the shadowy mysteries beyond human control. He begs to know the truth - but the uncle replies that there is no truth. A long speech from the grandfather describes the contact which he had made the previous day with his sick daughter; the passage, with its emphasis on the tender way he had taken her hand, on her changing appearance over the weeks, and on her bony face, conjures up for the audience another spectre - with death sits a wasted young girl. The grandfather repeats "Il y a des moments où je suis moins aveugle que vous, vous savez?"³⁸ He likens the paleness of the shocked family faces, the paleness which he can sense without needing to see it, to the whiteness of those dead. His simile deepens the tension. The audience is by now terrified and expectant of disaster. Through the medium of the sensitive old man Maeterlinck arouses his audience to feel the anguish of the unknown. As they watch now, the dim light of the lamp flickers. After some discussion it is agreed that they should stay in the dark without searching for oil. A silence comes

at this crucial stage; in the gathering darkness the silence is profound and the clock sounds abnormally loud, a fact commented on by the grandfather. The silences increase from this time until the final scene, interrupted by comments on the stillness of the atmosphere, by the pacing of the uncle up and down, by the approach of midnight and the closing of the window. The final scenes are full of momentum. A ray of moonlight casts strange lights here and there in the room. Midnight sounds and on the final stroke there is a noise as if someone has hastily arisen. In the ensuing fracas, when each of the members of the family denies having left the table, a wail of fright issues from the baby in the next room. The wailing continues to increase in degrees of terror until the end of the play. Muffled sounds and footsteps are heard in the opposite room, the sick mother's room. The family is trapped between the two sounds and then comes "un silence de mort". They listen to the silence in dumb terror until the door of the sickroom slowly opens. Their eyes and the audience's (but not the grandfather's) are riveted to the light coming from that room beyond, source of profound terror. The sister of mercy appears in her black garments; she makes the sign of the cross to announce the woman's death. The sighted ones understand her gesture and, leaving the grandfather, they enter the sickroom. The old blind man is left stumbling around the table in the darkness. Ironically, he knew all the time that his daughter was dying, but because he cannot see the gesture of the sister of mercy he is uninformed of the truth after all. The last image that Maeterlinck offers us is of a blind man in the dark, asking where his family have gone and sobbing that he is left alone. We watch this pathetic old man with the terrified cries of a baby ringing in our

ears.

The progressive tension of L'Intruse gives it a dramatic force as powerful as that of Everyman. Maeterlinck's portrayal of life and death uses the one-act form to achieve a climatic ending, which is so successful because it is at once a resolution of the anxiety communicated to the audience throughout and also a revelation of the state of life and death : the wailing cries of the child and the fear of the solitary old man signify the blankness which is humanity's only way to face death, insecure and disturbed, protesting and blind. The intruder is felt very intensely by the audience because of the cumulative effect of suggestion and hints, indefinable sounds and dimmed light. This way of suggesting an intrusive presence replaces the embodiment of death which the Everyman dramatist had used naturally. Maeterlinck cannot use the technique of allegory because he has no commitment to a specific religious system from which to draw didactic material ; he can offer no character called "Knowledge" to explain the way to salvation, and this aspect of the woman's death is not considered. He is not concerned primarily with the person dying, as the Everyman author was, but with the impact on the living of the intrusive force of death. Maeterlinck can offer no solutions to the enigma of death :

Le grand secret, le seul secret, c'est que tout est secret. Apprenons du moins à l'école de nos mystérieux ancêtres à faire, comme ils l'avaient fait, la part de l'inconnaissable et à n'y chercher que ce qui s'y trouve, c'est-à-dire la certitude que tout est Dieu, que tout est en lui et y doit aboutir dans le bonheur, et que la seule divinité que nous puissions espérer de connaître, c'est au plus profond de nous-mêmes qu'il la faut découvrir. 39

In L'Intruse Maeterlinck communicates the certainty of ignorance. The only character who tries to look deeply into his own soul, and who tries to communicate with the others on the same level, is spurned by his family and left alone at the close. Yet the old man certainly embodies Maeterlinck's ideal; the grandfather strives for self-knowledge and communion with the unknown. In his first play to be staged Maeterlinck chooses to emulate the naiv form such as the Everyman author had adopted, with universal characters, unspecified place, the image of physical blindness to denote spiritual insight, and poetic speech qualities. L'Intruse is remarkable, as is Everyman, for its welded form and content. Maeterlinck's characters do not merely discuss metaphysical anguish; they experience it so evidently that anguish can be said to be the shaping force of the play as well as its subject. It is the accumulation of language and silence, sounds and lights that gives us the subject; there are no other subjects. From its title to its final despairing image L'Intruse offers us the actuality of fear before the unknown. Maeterlinck's trapped characters cannot be helped yet the artistic harmony of the play is a consoling feature for the audience. Maeterlinck isolates the terrors of the unknown in the harmonious form of poetic drama⁴⁰; we are forced to empathise with the characters' fear but we are capable of transcending the raw emotion because it is encapsulated in artistic tidiness and symmetry. The therapeutic value of such experience is indisputable; by the climax of the play we have attempted to penetrate the mystery of death also. Although Maeterlinck's form shares the characteristics of the naiv Everyman, the content is not allegorical. Here lies the crucial difference between the naiv and the sentimentalisch playwright: Maeterlinck concentrates on the modern lack of belief;

unable to commit himself to a religious system, he points out man's lack of knowledge, he sees man as a feeble plaything in the power of evil forces, he builds his faith on trust that one day man will discover his purpose, yet he has recourse to the naiv form which provides for him the artistic completion, beauty and harmony that he lacks in life. It is this characteristic that we shall see repeated in the other symbolist playwrights under review.

Maeterlinck details his innovatory symbolist technique in his 1896 collection of essays, Le Trésor des humbles. He finds fault with Greek tragedy and with Racine's drama. He criticises the former because the element of mystery in the plays is too far off; he criticises Racine for building walls of words behind which there is no other existence for his characters. In the modern spiritual epoch literature must involve a greater spirituality.⁴¹ Maeterlinck provides an example of this necessary element in modern drama when he declares that a present-day Hamlet would perceive the evil souls of Gertrude and Claudius because communication now takes place on a deeper level.⁴² The essay entitled "L'Etoile" further investigates the different emphasis of modern drama. The man-centred catastrophes of Shakespeare, Racine, and their successors are compared with the fatalism of the Greek worldview. The latter was inaccessible and no one dared to question it. Maeterlinck continues with a description of the leading characteristic of modern spiritual plays, a characteristic which we have seen in the action of L'Intruse :

On ne s'arrête plus aux effets du malheur, mais au malheur lui-même, et l'on veut savoir son essence et ses lois. Ce qui était la préoccupation inconsciente des premiers tragiques et ce qui formait l'ombre solennelle qui entourait à leur insu les gestes secs et violents de la mort extérieure, la nature même du malheur, est devenu le point central des drames les plus récents et le foyer aux lueurs équivoques autour duquel tournent les âmes des hommes et des femmes. Et l'on a fait un pas du côté du mystère pour regarder en face les terreurs de la vie. 43

In Maeterlinck's analysis the essential concern of modern tragedy is the preoccupation with the tragic core, the fatality beneath cause and effect, action and interaction of character. Incident and fact are minimal, subordinate to the examination of the disaster itself. L'Intruse does not leave us questioning what will become of the family after their confrontation with death: we are too much concerned with that confrontation itself. Maeterlinck has a specific goal in mind when he creates the fear of the audience: he is trying to prepare the audience to face the terrifying meeting with death. He holds that one must not only accept that death is inevitable but that one must question its nature and experience its terror. Maeterlinck's emphasis is on the lack of free will. Man is shaped by the powerful forces of destiny, heredity, love and death, and these forces must be approached more closely in an age which is growing in spiritual potential. Maeterlinck is thus using his drama to declare the need for an increased awareness of human spirituality.

Maeterlinck's aesthetic is most clearly stated in the essay "Le Tragique Quotidien". He finds the tragic element in daily life far more profound than the tragedy that is in great adventure. Although dramatists have given us passing glimpses of this profound tragedy, there

has not been a full concentration on its terrors. Action should be relegated to an inferior position and the tragic element should be in the foreground. He asks : "Est-il donc hasardeux d'affirmer que le véritable tragique de la vie, le tragique normal, profond et général, ne commence qu'au moment où ce qu'on appelle les aventures, les douleurs et les dangers sont passés?"⁴⁴ Maeterlinck is suggesting that the truly tragic moments in life are those suffused with the feeling of nullity which arrives when action ceases. Life itself is tragic ; Maeterlinck's drama will depict this fact untrammelled by adventure and patterns of action. He will release the subtext from great Shakespearean tragedy, looking to the area of mystery which prompts conflict and disaster. In watching Shakespeare the audience is continually forced to neglect the subtext in order to concentrate on the action, the way in which destiny works itself out, rather than simply on the fact of destiny. Maeterlinck's drama will be non-specific, impersonal and passive, in an effort to present on stage the mysterious forces of destiny, love, and death. Maeterlinck denounces drama that emphasises tempestuous deeds and murders most foul; this is an outdated mode, while that of the true dramatist is comparable to the art of the good painter. The analogy which Maeterlinck draws here is crucial. He is trying to use his stage like a canvas, concentrating on single images to increase our consciousness of life :

Un bon peintre (. . .) représentera une maison perdue dans la campagne, une porte ouverte au bout d'un corridor, un visage ou des mains au repos ; et ces simples images pourront ajouter quelque chose à notre conscience de la vie; ce qui est un bien qu'il n'est plus possible de perdre. 45

The utmost simplicity of one detail focused upon by an audience : this is the concept that Maeterlinck transfers from painting to the stage. The title of one of Maeterlinck's plays for marionettes, Intérieur, captures this shift from the canvas. The family gathering of L'Intruse would similarly provide scope for detailed observation from the artist. The image of the old man is one on which Maeterlinck concentrates, finding in his portrait the possibility of capturing wisdom and vital essence. He uses this image in comparison with Othello and Hamlet. Hamlet is seen by Maeterlinck, as by Mallarmé and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, as a model for passive drama ; he takes from Hamlet the emotional undercurrent and offers it as autonomous. This entire passage should be quoted because it records the credo that is behind all Maeterlinck's early plays. At the same time it looks forward to Beckett's drama and in particular to Krapp's Last Tape :

J'admire Othello, mais il ne me paraît pas vivre de l'auguste vie quotidienne d'un Hamlet, qui a le temps de vivre parce qu'il n'agit pas. Othello est admirablement jaloux. Mais n'est-ce peut-être pas une vieille erreur de penser que c'est aux moments où une telle passion et d'autres d'une égale violence nous possèdent que nous vivons véritablement? Il m'est arrivé de croire qu'un vieillard assis dans son fauteuil, attendant simplement sous la lampe, écoutant sans le savoir toutes les lois éternelles qui règnent autour de sa maison, interprétant sans le comprendre ce qu'il y a dans le silence des portes et des fenêtres et dans la petite voix de la lumière, subissant la présence de son âme et de sa destinée, inclinant un peu la tête, sans se douter que toutes les puissances de ce monde interviennent et veillent dans la chambre comme des servantes attentives, ignorant que le soleil lui-même soutient au-dessus de l'abîme la petite table sur laquelle il s'accoude, et qu'il n'y a pas un astre du ciel ni une force de l'âme qui soient indifférents au mouvements d'une paupière qui retombe ou d'une

pensée qui s'élève, - il m'est arrivé de croire
 que ce vieillard immobile vivait, en réalité,
 d'une vie plus profonde, plus humaine et plus
 générale que l'amant qui étouffe sa maîtresse,
 le capitaine qui remporte une victoire ou "l'époux
 qui venge son honneur". 46

Maeterlinck finds valid the type of drama which depicts the recurrent passive confrontation of man and the surrounding cosmic forces. The three stereotyped situations which he mentions at the end of the passage deal with the superficial confrontations which are out of the ordinary run of things, which do not impress us as containing important truths about the nature of existence. It is existence itself that Maeterlinck wishes to put on stage and this objective necessitates "un théâtre statique".⁴⁷ He is hopeful that he will be able to achieve a static technique although there exist possible objections to the form. Maeterlinck ^{realises that he} may be reminded, for example, that the depiction of a motionless situation can only be rendered dramatic by conferring action upon it, yet it seems to him that Aeschylus and Sophocles have come very close to static drama in their portrayals of the individual's struggle with the universe.

The dialogue in Maeterlinck's plays is undirected to an action, revealing instead the profound yearnings of the soul. His plays do not appeal to the intelligence alone ; rather they aim for a much deeper communication which he hopes to achieve by portraying the most profound regions of human mystery : "il y a en l'homme bien des régions plus fécondes, plus profondes et plus intéressantes que celles de la raison ou de l'intelligence."⁴⁸ In Ibsen's The Master Builder Maeterlinck finds a rendering of the profundities of human experience ; in his own plays he isolates the deepest conflicts in life by offering static images painted in

the most delicate tints.

Maeterlinck's concept of static drama is close to Browning's similar theory which was set out in the preface to the first edition of Paracelsus in 1835. Maeterlinck may well have known this preface⁴⁹ and without confirmation of this it is nevertheless interesting to look at the Browning text. Browning insists that he is writing not a play but a dramatic poem. People in action, caught up in a network of incidents and events, do not interest him. He has instead tried to capture a mood, "its rise and progress",⁵⁰ the action being subordinate to the effects of that action. The reader must co-ordinate the scenes and establish the action for himself. Maeterlinck's own attempt at describing a mood contains just such a subordination of causal action. However this is as far as the comparison can be taken because Browning is concerned with the revelation of individual character as Maeterlinck in his early plays is not. Les Aveugles, the next static play which I shall examine, is concerned with archetypal rather than individual emotion. It is nevertheless possible to call it a "dramatic poem": the genres are fused as they are in Browning's Paracelsus.

Les Aveugles was performed by the Théâtre d'Art in December 1891. It is the most sustained of Maeterlinck's static plays; its subject is waiting, and its tour de force presentation anticipates Beckett's Waiting for Godot. The Jungian archetypes and sickly atmosphere of Les Aveugles create a poetic structure of life's meaninglessness and man's ignorance. On an island, in a very ancient forest, under a densely starred sky, sits an extremely old priest. The intensity of the atmosphere, and its awesomeness, are built up by the age and excess of each image.

There is a glut of stars, an over-ripeness which extends to mankind, whose relationship with the cosmic background is immediately appreciated. The play explores this relationship so thoroughly that, in the process of watching it, the audience experiences the vertiginous horror of the sightless characters. The central human image is dead ; we are forced to concentrate on the dead priest throughout, seeing him as the blind characters cannot, responding to his pallor, his weariness and his eyes, eyes which seem to bleed under a burden of sorrows. He has died leaning against a tree ; the association with the suffering of Christ is completed by the note that he carries a great burden. Six blind women sit facing six old blind men, balanced participants determining the balletic quality of the play to come. These people are uniformly dressed, emphasising their interchangeability, their representative nature. Motionless, their heads buried in their hands, they seem like sculptures on the theme of despair. Funereal trees - yews, weeping willows and cypresses - cast shadows on the group of deformed people. The forest bears down on them, waiting like an evil force to suck the crowd into death, to witness a mass funeral instead of the solitary death it has already caused. The sickly flowers which flourish near the priest's corpse seem to be in sympathy with the trees, tokens of death, oppression, and sinister, relentless morbidity.

The central image of blindness is the central image of Oedipus Rex and King Lear. Whereas in Sophocles and Shakespeare the image is included within a welter of events Maeterlinck abstracts the image and gives weight to it, showing it twelve times, depicting its torture and terror for the people in the forest. The feeling of man's ignorance, pettiness and

lostness is presented in this static way by image and situation which combine to reinforce the mood of anxiety. The sea surrounds these people ; their refuge is miles away, beyond access, because their leader and saviour, the wisest of the community, is dead. The mood of vertigo and insecurity is intensified until the climax and discovery. Once it is ascertained that the priest is dead, the dozen blind people are left to nurse their unbearable knowledge in the darkness, the snow and the silence. There is no possibility of escape because the nuns never venture out in the evening and the lighthouse keepers ironically look to the sea for those who need salvation. The blind men and women try to find hope in the sea's moaning and the wind's sigh ; at the end they seem to hear footsteps, but of these sounds there is no confirmation in fact, and the approach could be that of an evil force. Man's nakedness and need for artificial surroundings are constantly stressed. Left in the snow these exposed creatures will perish. The despair in the child's cry is the summation of the action as it is in L'Intruse. The meaningless utterance is the climax to a series of cries from nature ; the birds' screams and the rush of wind signify nothing for humanity yet each of these is a cruel pseudo-revelation seized upon by the lost creatures as a sign of salvation. The situation is cruel but the humans caught up in it are equally cruel. Instead of Wordsworth's pantheistic delight in golden daffodils we are presented with the murder of strange sickly flowers by the unintentioned step of a blind man. Each section of Maeterlinck's tableau seems to be in sympathy with the whole - the morbid trees, the wilting flowers, the ailing people - yet each is indifferent, the forest indifferent to man as the blind people are indifferent to the flowers underfoot. Time is passed without purpose

as the sightless wait for a dead man in an environment which, despite the sound of a clock's striking, is timeless :

Une horloge tres lointaine sonne douze coups tres lents.

LA PLUS VIEILLE AVEUGLE	Oh! comme nous sommes loin de l'hospice!
LE PLUS VIEIL AVEUGLE	Il est minuit!
DEUXIÈME AVEUGLE-NÉ	Il est midi! - Quelqu'un le sait-il? - Parlez! 51

As the sightless wait for death their ignorance and their failed attempts to communicate reverberate. The need for truth is seen as a deep human longing, yet the recurrent refrain is not met with explanation; the desire to know where they are remains unfulfilled. Maeterlinck demonstrates the difficulty, the near impossibility, of communication for these people and for mankind in general. When the Premier Aveugle-né gropes about him in his attempts to reach the line of women opposite he stumbles against some rocks and a fallen tree, declaring "Il y a quelque chose entre nous..."⁵² and the Deuxième Aveugle-né warns "Il vaut mieux rester à sa place!"⁵³ The attempt to communicate does not seem worth making in the face of inevitable failure, and this failure is stressed again in the following exchange :

DEUXIÈME AVEUGLE-NÉ	Je crois que je suis près de vous.
TROISIÈME AVEUGLE-NÉ	<u>Ils tâtonnent autour d'eux</u> Nous ne pouvons pas nous toucher!
PREMIER AVEUGLE-NÉ	Cependant, nous ne sommes pas loin l'un de l'autre. 54

When the first blind man perseveres in his attempt he succeeds only in hitting with his stick the man who is deaf as well as blind. Maeterlinck

suggests that even when the attempt is made to penetrate another's consciousness people find it impossible to listen so that the attempt becomes a wounding experience.

The obstacles on all sides of the blind serve to intensify their pitiable condition. Maeterlinck gives his characters poetic chants and desolate laments ; one such example is "J'ai essayé de me lever; il n'y a que des épines autour de moi ; je n'ose plus étendre les mains."⁵⁵ In this hopeless situation some realisation comes to the oldest blind man, who embodies a type of wisdom similar to the grandfather's in L'Intruse :

LE PLUS VIEIL AVEUGLE Nous ne nous sommes
jamais vus les uns les autres. Nous nous interrogeons
et nous nous répondons ; nous vivons ensemble, mais
nous ne savons pas ce que nous sommes! (. . .) Nous
n'avons jamais vu la maison où nous vivons (. . .) Voilà
des années et des années que nous sommes ensemble,
et nous ne nous sommes jamais aperçus! On dirait
que nous sommes toujours seuls! 56

This desolate vignette is corroborated at the end of the play. The "footsteps" could be the intimation of death ; they could bring salvation or damnation ; they might not even exist. The oldest blind woman pleads "Ayez pitié de nous!"⁵⁷ Her only answer is silence and the final sound is that of the child who cries more desperately. We are left with the most abstract and the most animalistic of human utterances. The baby's cry is inseparable from the woman's demand for compassion ; both are self-indulgent cries for an answer to basic needs. We are reminded of the baby's cry of terror in L'Intruse, a cry which speaks of the hardships which life will inevitably bring. There are striking parallels between Maeterlinck's and Beckett's dramatisations of man's essential selfishness. In Waiting for Godot Estragon's cry for compassion is full of self-concern

and, when the blind Pozzo immediately enters shouting for help, a debate must be held between Estragon and Vladimir before they decide to offer assistance. In Breath Beckett uses the self-indulgent cry to indicate death as well as birth, implying that man's selfishness does not alter on the passage through life. In J.W. Mackail's introduction to an English translation of Aglavaine et Sélysette he remarks of Les Aveugles : "It would be but a step further to a drama in which the actors should be not only blind, but dumb."⁵⁸ Beckett proceeded where Maeterlinck halted in this respect, developing the concept in Breath where there are no actors. Maeterlinck's redefinition of drama, his new aesthetic of théâtre statique, is followed by Beckett. The characteristics of this genre, as established by Maeterlinck and continued by Beckett, are the extensive use of silence, the renunciation of intrigue, the simplification of diction, restricted setting with little or no change throughout the play, with repetition of words and events playing a crucial part, the whole being comparable to the painter's canvas in its playing upon one image.

The poetic suggestibility of Les Aveugles is great. Maeterlinck succeeds in presenting the conflict between man and fate in a form which in some ways - the preserved unities, the stichomythic dialogue and use of metaphor - is reminiscent of the Greek drama which he admired. Although the dramatic concentration of L'Intruse is surrendered to a more diffuse structure Les Aveugles is more open to poetic interpretation than the earlier play. Les Aveugles does not only repeat the Nietzschean message of God's death ; it has woven into its fabric Maeterlinck's artistic theory. When the young blind girl unsuccessfully tries to explain her place of origin her words describe Maeterlinck's approach to his play:

"Je ne pourrais le montrer que par signes ; mais nous n'y voyons plus".⁵⁹

His symbolism suggests truths ; he cannot state truths in allegory, as the Everyman author could, because he is uncommitted to dogmatic belief. In his plays, however, Maeterlinck can present the unknown and try to come to terms with it. His harmonious and expansive form is of crucial importance in this procedure. In Les Aveugles the musical structure, the balletic characters and the static visual image bring together the arts of music, dance and painting. The sense of total artistic order is sustained by the use of leitmotif, the balanced characters and the omnipresent dominant figure of the dead priest. The artistic order goes against the play's vision of despair ; in its meaningful structure Maeterlinck establishes the order that he can only hope to be relevant in life.

Les Sept Princesses was published in 1891. The play combines the atmospheres of fairy tale and of sinister foreboding. The fairy tale element is suggested by the marble hall, delicate porcelain vases, white marble steps, and the seven princesses in seven white nightgowns, their heads on seven pillows of pale silk. The sinister aura is created by the pervasive imagery of water and dampness : fog, dark marshy terrain, ponds, chestnuts, pine trees and willows, canal and battleship. The princesses are diseased because they have been denied sun in their land of fog and cloud. The Théâtre Libre had performed in translation Ibsen's Ghosts in May 1890. This, the first of Ibsen's plays to be seen in Paris, had greatly impressed Maeterlinck. We must recall his reference to Ghosts in his preface to the Théâtre volumes, and his estimation of its power as a modern spiritual play. The life-sustaining force of the sun has been replaced by the forces of evil which have sapped the princesses'

vital will. Maeterlinck demonstrates in his play by means of a sailors' shanty his choric structural method. The sailors' far-off, monotonous and mournful chant is heard at regular intervals, approximating to the use of leitmotif in Maeterlinck's other early plays. He stresses the preoccupation with death in Les Sept Princesses by the sailors' despair that they might never return from their journey. The journey by water motif is prevalent in Tennyson and Maeterlinck's play is curiously close in its Arthurian tone to the recurrent mood of the Victorian poet. The resolution of the play anticipates some of Maeterlinck's later symbolist plays. One of the princesses remains in a state of trance; she is ritualistically carried by her sisters onto the highest of the marble steps. The screaming king and queen, cut off from their daughters, knock at all the windows in the room and the curtain descends on the cry of "Couvrez!" Barriers are used effectively by Maeterlinck in his later plays, barriers which prevent healthy and sympathetic characters from reaching their loved ones - and always these trapped people are debilitated and oppressed by fate. The ethereal romantic qualities of Les Sept Princesses render the tableau less successful as an evocation of the unknown than L'Intruse and Les Aveugles. The rhythms of opposites (life and death, action and passivity, water and land, sun and fog) provide a balance; the dance sequence of the sailors and their musical chants contribute an artistic harmony to the play.

The fairy tale legendary strain of Les Sept Princesses was repeated in Pelléas et Mélisande, performed by Lugné-Poe in May 1893. The success of the production led to Lugné-Poe's decision to form a permanent company, the influential Théâtre de l'Œuvre. A bare set, with grey

overhead lighting, Pre-Raphaelite costumes and a gauze curtain separating audience and actors were the components of staging which accentuated the removal from reality of the action. Pelléas et Mélisande appeals almost entirely to the senses. One contemptuous critic recounted, "This drama, my goodness! ... It is the incestuous love of a married woman for her brother-in-law; the outraged husband surprises the guilty ones, kills the one and wounds the other, who dies afterwards."⁶⁰ This summary extracts the melodramatic structure of the play, neglecting the poignant musical beauty which is so impressive. In his analysis Mallarmé recognised and appreciated both qualities, the melodramatic and the musical. He attempted to specify the delight which he derived from Pelléas et Mélisande in performance, finding that in the play's brief tableaux Maeterlinck had represented something essential. He continues: "Il semble que soit jouée une variation supérieure sur l'admirable vieux mélodrame. Silencieusement presque et abstraitement au point que dans cet art, où tout devient musique dans le sens propre, la partie d'un instrument même pensif, violon, nuirait, par inutilité."⁶¹ Mallarmé notes Maeterlinck's use of repetition, the atmosphere which creates a mood of anguish, and the frequent supernatural undercurrents. For Mallarmé Maeterlinck had achieved the symbolist ideal: Pelléas et Mélisande put into practice Mallarmé's own dramatic aesthetic. Mallarmé was interested in popular drama as well as in the formulation of a ritualistic and spiritualised theatrical mode. Maeterlinck combined these interests in Pelléas: "Mallarmé's conception of the old popular melodrama is a striking anticipation of Maeterlinck's theater (sic). If this theater (sic) culminates in a drama of silence or at any rate in an evocation of the interpenetration

of speech and silence, this suggestiveness too is wholly in accord with symbolist poetics."⁶² We must look at Pelléas therefore as a significant symbolist play approved and admired by the high priest of symbolism.

Maeterlinck's play presents the all-engulfing passions of love, hatred and jealousy against a background of archetypal dominant images. Of the latter, water, gold, blindness and hair become the most significant images which retain great suggestibility yet which cannot be paraphrased. The play captures the mystery of existence by this method; at the end, when the doctor tends Mélisande, he murmurs words which convey the human dilemma Maeterlinck has set out to illustrate: "Elle est née sans raison . . . pour mourir; et elle meurt sans raison . . ." ⁶³ The final note struck in the play is of pity for humanity; destined for no reason to be born and to die, Mélisande's helpless child must take her mother's place in a perplexing world. Mélisande herself is likened to a wounded bird and to the world; all three are crippled and denied freedom. From the very beginning we foresee difficulty and hardship as the servants struggle to pull open the extraordinarily heavy castle door. It is stressed also that the servants will never be able to complete their cleaning. The door-keeper introduces the theme of water by telling the servants to pour all the waters of the flood over their objects to be cleaned. In the second scene the water motif is repeated. Mélisande has dropped her crown into a spring in the middle of a forest. It is by the water's edge that Golaud comes across her; she has escaped one horror which she refuses to detail but she unknowingly sets into motion another train of tragic events when she marries Golaud. Her crown seems to suggest the self that Mélisande would drown in order to choose another life; the motif will

recur when she drops her ring into a well to rid herself of her unlucky choice ; finally, her lover will drown in the well taking from her the self that she has willingly chosen. Because the atmosphere surrounding the castle is gloomy and dark Méli^lsande is attracted to the sea. She is associated with a departing ship which, it is hinted, will be wrecked. Pellé^las takes her to the miraculous well, an image which Yeats was to use for its symbolic value with the same fascination as Maeterlinck shows here :

PELLE ^l AS	(. . .) C'est une vieille fontaine abandonnée. Il paraît que c'était une fontaine miraculeuse, - elle ouvrait les yeux des aveugles. - On l'appelle encore la "Fontaine des aveugles".
MELISANDE	Elle n'ouvre plus les yeux?
PELLE ^l AS	Depuis que le roi est presque aveugle lui-même, on n'y vient plus... 64

The regenerative powers of water, and in particular its capacity to give sight to the blind, is a legendary tradition acknowledged in post-Maeterlinckian drama by Synge's The Well of the Saints and Yeats's The Cat and the Moon.⁶⁵

In Pellé^las the irony of the concept is exploited : the old king Arkél is almost blind and Pellé^las will be killed in the waters which are supposed to cure. The fatal attraction of water for Méli^lsande, and her symbolic rejection of Golaud when the water claims first her hair and then her wedding-ring, is sensed by Golaud's horse. Golaud is thrown by the horse at the ^{exactly} same time ^{as} his ring is lost ; the predestined upheaval of their lives is significantly foreshadowed by this device.

The blind Arkél is a typical Maeterlinckian embodiment of wisdom, while Méli^lsande is the typical fragile image of beauty. Méli^lsande's hair is as long as she is tall and in the garden scene her hair inundates Pellé^las

from where she stands at the top of the tower. Pelléas ties the hair to tree branches making her a prisoner so that Golaud discovers the romantic scene. When Yniold discloses the love of Pelléas for Mélisande, Golaud repeats the motifs of lostness and blindness. Maeterlinck seems to be suggesting that humans are lost, blind and in capture, struggling to "see", to find truth and freedom: "Ah! misère de ma vie! ... je suis ici comme un aveugle qui cherche son trésor au fond de l'océan! ... Je suis ici comme un nouveau-né perdu dans la forêt (...)"⁶⁶. In his second analogy Golaud restates the tragedy of Les Aveugles. Golaud is impelled by some strange force to act out the murder of Pelléas; Mélisande is wounded and dies. As well as demonstrating the fated lives of these people Maeterlinck introduces two other tragedies: the three old beggars discovered by Mélisande in a cave are the pitiable products of a famine, and Pelléas's close friend dies. These tragedies are irrelevant to the melodramatic plot structure but they contribute to the whole design in that they broaden the tragic vision to encompass all humanity. The intrigue of Pelléas goes against Maeterlinck's prescription for static drama per se but his symbolist approach nevertheless forces one to judge the play by the perfection of music. Maeterlinck had found the form which best expresses the anguish of the unknown. In Pelléas the controlling forces of love and death manipulate the frail human figures; these forces are suggested by the images of hair, of blindness, of water and of gold.

Arthur Symons's sensitive response to Maeterlinck's powerful portrayal of human tragedy is worth recording:

"PELLÉAS AND MÉLISANDE" is the most beautiful of Maeterlinck's plays, and to say this is to say that it

is the most beautiful contemporary play. Maeterlinck's theatre of marionettes, who are at the same time children and spirits, at once more simple and more abstract than real people, is the reaction of the imagination against the wholly prose theatre of Ibsen, into which life comes nakedly, cruelly, subtly, but without distinction, without poetry. Maeterlinck has invented plays which are pictures, in which the crudity of action is subdued into misty outlines. People with strange names, living in impossible places, where there are only woods and fountains, and towers by the sea-shore, and ancient castles, where there are no towns, and where the common crowd of the world is shut out of sight and hearing, move like quiet ghosts across the stage, mysterious to us and not less mysterious to one another. They are lamenting because they do not know, because they cannot understand, because their own souls are so strange to them, and each other's souls like pitiful enemies, giving deadly wounds unwillingly. They are always in dread, because they know that nothing is certain in the world or in their own hearts, and they know that love most often does the work of hate and that hate is sometimes tenderer than love. In "Pelléas and Mélisande" we have two innocent lovers, to whom love is guilt; we have blind vengeance, aged and helpless wisdom; we have the conflict of passions fighting in the dark, destroying what they desire most in the world. And out of this tragic tangle Maeterlinck has made a play which is too full of beauty to be painful. We feel an exquisite sense of pity, so impersonal as to be almost healing, as if our own sympathy had somehow set right the wrongs of the play. 67

This passage is interesting to examine in view of its critical defence of Maeterlinck against "the wholly prose theatre of Ibsen". The poetic nature of Ibsen's canon, including the middle plays, has come gradually to be recognised in English criticism. For Symons, whose knowledge of the plays was limited to translation, Ibsen seemed only to be concerned with social polemics. When Symons did recognise that in The Lady From The Sea Ibsen was concerned with bringing the supernatural on stage in the form of the Stranger, he found the device crude, commenting: "To use

symbol, and not to use it in the surprising and inevitable way of the poet, is to fall into the dry, impotent sin of allegory."⁶⁸ Pelléas et Mélisande seemed to Symons to be at the opposite extreme from Ibsen in its subtle and suggestive use of symbolism. He appreciated that Maeterlinck was using the stage like a canvas to express his own complex attitude to life; such expression would be reduced and simplified in allegory.

In 1894 Maeterlinck published three plays for marionettes, hence Symons's description above of "Maeterlinck's theatre of marionettes". In 1896 Maeterlinck was to discuss with the designer Charles Doudelet a project to launch a Parisian marionette theatre.⁶⁹ At the close of the 1880's there had been a revival of interest in the stylised drama made possible by the puppet theatre; critics had welcomed enthusiastically the puppet plays performed by the Petit Théâtre de la Galerie Vivienne where adaptations of Cervantes, Aristophanes and Shakespeare, as well as biblical plays, were to be seen.⁷⁰ Maeterlinck's use of marionettes, by distancing his images from the audience and by emphasising the puppet-like nature of man wielded by a cruel world, would help to realise his universal and essential drama. The enthusiasm for marionettes continues in the later Dadaist and Surrealist dramatic traditions as well as in the Absurd. Ionesco has expressed his preference for puppetry which he sees as a method of emphasising grotesque reality.⁷¹ The influential Ubu Roi by Alfred Jarry was first performed in a marionette theatre in 1888, and was subsequently performed in 1896 by the Théâtre de l'Œuvre using masks and puppet-like devices such as a special tone of voice for Pere Ubu. Stylisation of a more esoteric and rhythmic kind was to be developed by Yeats in his Noh adaptations which exploit the use of masks

and tonal diction. Symons attempted to analyse the characteristics of marionettes, pointing out that they are the most reliable of actors and that they universalise characters in the same way as the masks of Greek drama. He reminds the reader that a play by Ibsen, in contrast with the Agamemnon, could not be successfully played by puppets. Marionettes are suited not to the personal and social but to the essential and the poetic.⁷² In Symons's essay on Maeterlinck in the seminal volume The Symbolist Movement in Literature, he appreciates the attraction of Maeterlinck to marionette plays : "Are we not all puppets, in a theatre of marionettes, in which the parts we play, the dresses we wear, the very emotion whose dominance gives its express form to our faces, have all been chosen for us (. . .) And as our parts have been chosen for us, our motions controlled from behind the curtain, so the words we seem to speak are but spoken through us, and we do but utter fragments of some elaborate invention, planned for larger ends than our personal display or convenience, but to which, all the same, we are in a humble degree necessary."⁷³ Symons finds hope in the puppet-like nature of man ; the fact that destiny and fate exist assures him that we are necessary to the universe. Maeterlinck is similarly hopeful that man is essential to the scheme of things but he impresses on his audience through his marionette plays that until our ignorance is replaced by knowledge we can only conceive of the nullity and purposelessness of our being.

The first of the plays for marionettes is similar to Pelleás et Mélisande in its Arthurian tone and in its exploration of love rivalry. Maeterlinck indeed called Alladine et Palomides "une décoction de Pelleás".⁷⁴ Three of the characters' names blend uncomfortably together :

Ablamore the old king, his Greek slave Alladine and his daughter Astolaine are linked with the knight Palomides in a tragic chain of events. As with Pelléas the environment is that of a mysterious castle and its immediate surroundings. In Alladine et Palomides the castle symbolises the puzzling complexity of existence : "Il est si grand", comments Alladine, "et je suis si petite, et je m'y perds encore ... Et puis toutes ces fenêtrés sur la mer ... On ne peut les compter ... Et les corridors qui tournent sans raison; et d'autres qui ne tournent pas et qui se perdent entre les murs ... Et les salles où je n'ose pas entrer ..." ⁷⁵ In the first act we are introduced to the main characters, romantic renditions of the stock types which puppets are best suited to play : the shy, innocent and frightened young girl, whose ingenuousness is enhanced by her pet lamb, the aged king bowed down by his conviction that fate is holding in store for him some disaster, the precariously happy knight poised for fate's attack. The characters are drawn by their destiny, a theme which gathers momentum throughout the play until finally the young lovers are separated. In the fifth act the setting is of a corridor and of closed doors; the dramatic effect of our hearing from behind the closed doors the voices of the separated Alladine and Palomides is potent in its creation of terror and pity. The acts thus tend to the poignant climax where we hear voices but do not see the actors. Our gaze is focused on closed doors, as it is in L'Intruse. Maeterlinck's concern to evoke mystery necessitates the visual absence of the principal victims of fate; their disembodied voices cry pathetically to each other, and the cries become progressively more feeble until the final silence. The action of the play continues beyond this silence, perpetuating the mood of anguish. Maeterlinck repeats the

sequence of L'Intruse, using opened doors as signals of death. The nurse who appears from Palomides's room commands the situation ; Astolaine and Palomides's sisters are drawn into the room as if by a magnet, the door closing behind them. A renewed silence prefaces the opening of the second door; Alladine's nurse discovers an empty corridor and, returning to the room, she leaves the door wide open. The voids created by Maeterlinck's silences here indicate voids of life ; his open doors imply the entrance of death.

The atmosphere of imminent disaster is first conveyed by the old king ; Alladine's tremulous fears build on this foundation so that, by the end of the second act, Alladine's drowned lamb seems symbolic of the precarious existences of the human puppets. Fate decrees that the lamb fall into the moat, exercising its power first of all on smaller, more helpless creatures than man. The motif of a precious object lost in water in this way recurs from Pelléas et Mélisande. There is another echo from an earlier play when Maeterlinck hints that the king was the king of Les Sept Princesses ; he used to have seven daughters, he tells Alladine, but now only Astolaine is left and she too will die some day. The king's madness ensues when he is doubly disappointed : he loses Alladine and his daughter loses Palomides. Imprisoned by Ablamore in the palace's underground network of caverns Alladine and Palomides exchange beautiful lyrical expressions of love. They see strange, wonderful flowers above them in the water and glowing jewels in the roof. When Astolaine and Palomides's sisters arrive to "rescue" the couple from their paradise the refuge is invaded by the harsh light of actuality and the objectifications of their exalted state of mind change into the images of mould and fungus

indicative of decay and dirt. While Alladine and Palomides lie dying the girl murmurs that the light had shown no pity; this is the touching line that it is because for all of Maeterlinck's early fated characters the light has no pity.

The force of love works the tragedy in Alladine et Palomides as in Pelléas et Mélisande. Maeterlinck has demonstrated in Alladine the capricious and malign nature of destiny by relying on symbolic multiplicity of meaning to establish the pattern underlying the lives of his characters. His play corresponds to Eliot's ideal in that it attempts to impose an order on reality and attempts to elicit an order in reality, establishing a particular pattern to imply universal pattern. Yet Maeterlinck's success in this respect is modified because his characters are so far removed from modern actuality that they seem to be part of a vaguely medieval mythology; thus the working out of fate seems contrived by the dramatist for his fictive circumstances bearing little relation to "le tragique quotidien". In Intérieur this falsity is overcome. Maeterlinck reverts to the generalised characters of L'Intruse and Les Aveugles. His scene is not of an ethereal castle : he works with middle-class people, in their garden and their house. He is conscious of a tragedy that will not affect countries and politics but which wreaks havoc on ordinary lives. He dramatises a recurring tragedy of everyday. The stage presentation is masterly. It is a development from Les Sept Princesses in which king and queen watched as their daughters, separated from them, lay deep in a coma. In Intérieur the characters in the garden watch the movements of the family in the house. The family is distanced by this device ; although we do not hear them talk and although all we know of their lives

is conveyed by outsiders, their mime is crucial to our understanding of their tragic circumstances. The windows of the house in the background expose the movements of a family for a double audience - the spectators in the garden as well as the audience of the play. Yeats's Purgatory (first performed in 1938 and published in 1939) uses lighting in a similar way; he too is concerned with a fated family. Maeterlinck dwells on the effects that he hopes his staging will provide :

Il semble que lorsque l'un d'eux se lève, marche ou fait un geste, ses mouvements soient graves, lents, rares, et comme spiritualisés par la distance, la lumière et le voile indécis des fenêtres. 76

The separation of the family from the commentary on their situation is successful in that it visually juxtaposes harsh actuality with false security. Because we are told of their tragedy by others the incubator containing the family appears more threatened and vulnerable : we watch the sealed-off family in growing pity for their isolation, in the knowledge that the grim facts will cause them to relinquish the protected bubble they are seen to occupy. Intérieur is succinct yet visually stimulating in a way which the other early plays are not. The conflict between life and death is represented by the two distinct stage areas. The audience is constantly forced to move its gaze from one area to the other, so that the conflict is felt in the shift, and in the corresponding pull from the other of the two worlds. Finally one world merges with the other and by the end of this short one-act play the audience has sensed the inevitability of the emergence of a new focus, one which visually symbolises the total interaction of life and death.

Intérieur is the most visually successful of the early plays because of the strikingly effective staging. This was recognised by Maeterlinck's contemporaries. A reviewer for La Revue Encyclopédique wrote "L'oeuvre a produit une émotion considérable, le succès a été le plus sincère et le plus vraiment spontané du monde.", while Jules Lemaitre commented on the play's stageworthiness : "Intérieur ... a paru presque aussi saisissant à la scène que dans le livre et ce n'est pas peu dire." 77

The viewpoint of the action is always that of the people in the garden : the old man, the stranger, Marthe, Marie and the crowd ; the members of the family are cited by Maeterlinck in the list of characters as "personnages muets" (dumb characters). This citation emphasises that the family has no control over destiny and in the finale these puppets of fate mime their reactions to the news which we have known almost from the opening of the action. The apprehension is on the part of those who know that death has occurred, those who wait, looking in at the oblivious family whose peace will be shattered. The suggestive forebodings of death exploited by Maeterlinck in L'Intruse are replaced by something even more sinister. We have the presentation of an exceptionally happy and close-knit family group - father, mother, two daughters and child - who must be invaded by unwilling messengers of death. The dilemma discussed by the old man and the stranger is heart-rending : how is it best to break to the family the news of their young daughter's death by drowning? Maeterlinck does not individualise the family ; he stresses that this occurrence is tragic in a way not out of the ordinary ; such events take place all the time, wrecking many families in the process. The audience is forced to come to terms with the situation and must judge

whether correct decisions have been made : for example, whether the old man is wise when he feels that he should not venture alone into the house. In the shadows of huge willow-trees the decision is made. The reiterated motifs of willows and water are constant features of Maeterlinck's tragic pattern which are used to good effect in Intérieur. The messengers of death hide among the trees as if they occupy a natural habitat of darkness, unease, and sadness. The beautiful drowned girl is the catalyst between the two worlds of light and darkness ; we rely on descriptions of her in our effort to judge the difficulty before the old man. It is all the more poignant that the Ophelia-like girl was believed to have been searching for flowers along the river bank; she is in this way associated with natural things both beautiful and ephemeral. The old man reproaches himself for not questioning the girl when he had seen her that morning. He is the sage who grasps the central meaning of the death, who sees beyond its particulars to the universal condition : "Elle était peut-être de celles qui ne veulent rien dire, et chacun porte en soi plus d'une raison de ne plus vivre . . . On ne voit pas dans l'âme comme on voit dans cette chambre."⁷³ The room is life, protected from mystery, seemingly safe but potentially vulnerable; the old man says to his granddaughter : "Regarde, mon enfant, regarde : tu verras quelque chose de la vie . . ." ⁷⁹ Marie's reply emphasises the family's separation from the harsh truth : "Oh! qu'ils semblent tranquilles! On dirait que je les vois en rêve . . ." ⁸⁰ The continuous observation of the family betrays details of behaviour, confident movements and actions, which are alarming only because they are about to be lost. The old man likens the family's happiness to a wounded bird ; Maeterlinck repeats this motif from Pelléas et Mélisande

where it is used to describe *Mélisande*; on both occasions Maeterlinck would appear to be thinking back to Ibsen's The Wild Duck where the wounded duck is symbolic of the human plight, crippled, and fated to die. The old man's wisdom is again apparent in his remark about pity. Compassion is seen to be a personal choice; the garden people are not immediately threatened by death as the house people are but they too are vulnerable and will need pity: "Nous avons pitié d'eux, mon enfant, mais on n'a pas pitié de nous ..." 81

Silence is exploited by Maeterlinck in his attempt to penetrate the unknown. The play is punctuated by silences which occur after remarks about the soul, death and destiny, encouraging the audience to use each silence to achieve spiritual communion. The final moments involve comment on the imminent knowledge of the family, as the garden people watch the old man knock at the door and enter. Now, at last, the family talks but we cannot hear their words, so that we are involved in their mime as the tragedy is unfolded. The mother, Maeterlinck indicates, questions the old man "avec angoisse" (with anguish) and the audience at this point feels an Angst appalling and harrowing. The two worlds merge again when the family rushes out into the garden, then away into the hostile atmosphere of death. After a silence the stranger, who alone remains of the garden people, comments that the child had not been awoken by the commotion. When the stranger exits the curtain falls. We cannot take the stranger to be an allegorised representation of death, yet his mysterious presence is undeniably successful in exploiting the audience's apprehension. An outsider is not trustworthy and this outsider seems to have brought the trouble he has witnessed. His last remark

thus presages fear for the sleeping baby, Maeterlinck's ubiquitous image of innocence, of life, and of doomed potential. The child's oblivion speaks of his unawareness of the menace that will surround him as he grows into adulthood.

Intérieur, in its sentimentalisch quest for harmony, relates forward in a striking way to Pinter's canon. I am not suggesting a Maeterlinckian influence on Pinter, rather noticing the coincidental similarities between the two dramatists' depiction of the sentimentalisch dilemma. Lacking a single attitude to life, Maeterlinck and Pinter depict the lost harmony of modern man in repeated images which acquire symbolic significance. These images provide a continuity from play to play which suggests an attempt to provide structural harmony, a coherence of artistic form in order to attempt to cancel out the chaos of actuality. The image of the room is crucial to both playwrights. Pinter has commented, "I am dealing a great deal of the time with this image of two people in a room. The curtain goes up on the stage, and I see it as a very potent question: what is going to happen (. . .)? Is someone going to open the door and come in?"⁸² Pinter's The Room was premièred in 1960. In 1894 Intérieur had encapsulated the menace which Pinter found so potent in the seemingly secure confines of a room:

L'ÉTRANGER

En ce moment, ils sourient en
silence dans la chambre . . .

LE VIEILLARD

Ils se croient à l'abri . . . Ils ont
fermé les portes ; et les fenêtres ont
des barreaux de fer . . . Ils ont
consolidé les murs de la vieille
maison ; ils ont mis des verrous aux
trois portes de chêne . . . Ils ont
prévu tout ce qu'on peut prévoir (. . .)

Ils croient que rien n'arrivera parce
qu'ils ont fermé la porte et ils ne
savent pas qu'il arrive toujours
quelque chose dans les âmes et que
le monde ne finit pas aux portes des
maisons ... 83

Both Maeterlinck and Pinter have envisaged the threatening situation of the room in two distinct ways. In L'Intruse a family awaits menace, as does Rose in The Room and Stanley in The Birthday Party. In Intérieur we are confronted immediately by the menacers, those who will convey death, as we are in The Dumb Waiter. Both playwrights are concerned with the hostility, danger and unpredictability surrounding the ephemeral security which is found in a room.

In 1902, when Maeterlinck reviewed his early plays, he analysed them in terms which certainly could be used of Pinter's drama :

Le ressort de ces petits drames, c'était l'effroi de l'inconnu qui nous entoure. On y avait foi (...) à des puissances énormes, invisibles et fatales, dont nul ne devinait les attentions, mais que l'âme du drame supposait malveillantes, attentives à toutes nos actions, ennemies du sourire, de la vie, de la paix, de l'amour. 84

Maeterlinck here repeats the preface to the Théâtre volumes ; he continues that the unknown most often took in his plays the form of death and that humans can be considered playthings of vast and indifferent forces. He states "Nous paraissions un moment dans l'espace sans bornes, et n'avons d'autre mission appréciable que la propagation d'une espèce qui elle-même n'a aucune mission certaine, dans l'organisme d'un univers dont l'étendue et la durée échappent à l'imagination la plus puissante et la plus téméraire."⁸⁵ Maeterlinck argues in his essay that man must not

dwell on the terrors of the unknown, but that he should choose a truth for himself. This is the crucial difference between Maeterlinck's apprehension of the human predicament and twentieth-century absurdist consciousness. Maeterlinck appreciates the desolation and ignorance of man, yet he always advocates that one should grasp this ignorance and look beyond it, secure in the knowledge that truth does exist; man and the species to which he belongs seem to our ignorant eyes purposeless but in reality we do fulfil an important position in the universal scheme of things. The modern absurdist denies the existence of God whether he is an Existentialist basing his life on a man-centred philosophy or whether he refuses to see beyond "la nausée" and thus refuses to attempt to create meaning for himself. The philosophy at the core of Ionesco's drama seems on the surface very like Maeterlinck's: "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose ... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless."⁸⁶ However Ionesco would argue that the fear of death and the feeling of superfluity could not be surmounted on any level. The way in which Ionesco does to some extent mitigate these conclusions is that his plays are comic - comic with an underlying tragic sense - and it is this strain in Absurd drama that is not evident in Maeterlinck. However Maeterlinck's drama does share with Ionesco's and Beckett's a fundamental characteristic of the theatre of the Absurd: his plays reflect their tragic content in poetic form. In moving stage images we understand what it is like to apprehend the Absurd: a warm, comfortable room is invaded by danger; a family waits for death; a dozen sightless people wait for someone who is dead. In Maeterlinck's

legendary drama - Pelléas et Mélisande, Alladine et Palomides and La Mort de Tintagiles - the similarity with the Absurd of the twentieth century is not as apparent. It is L'Intruse, Intérieur and Les Aveugles that approach Beckett most closely.

There are many points of similarity between the philosophical attitudes of Maeterlinck and the moderns. In his essay "La Justice" in Le Temple Enseveli Maeterlinck maintains the impossibility of having a single attitude to a situation, a single, sweeping moral statement to cover all circumstances : "c'est une des plus vieilles et des plus vaines habitudes de l'homme que de vouloir enfermer le monde dans un syllogisme. Il est bien périlleux de faire de la logique dans l'inconnu et dans l'inconnaissable".⁸⁷ This concept is fitting from the dramatist-philosopher who contradicted himself in each new book of essays and who was to change also from writing symbolist to realist^{ic} plays. Maeterlinck has no "message" to deliver and like Pinter finds it impossible to "enfermer le monde dans un syllogisme". Pinter's approach is best conveyed in his superb parody of the syllogism hunter whose confidence is undermined in the following way :

GOLDBERG	And you'll find - that what I say is true. Because I believe that the world ... (Vacant) ... Because I believe that the world ... (Desperate) ... BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THE WORLD ... (Lost) ..
----------	---

88

The realm of Maeterlinck's early plays is the unknowable. Symons detested Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession for its relentless syllogistic nature : "Humanity, as Mr. Shaw sees it, moves like clockwork; and must be regulated as a watch is, and praised or blamed simply in proportion to its exactitude in keeping time [...] Mr. Shaw's logic is sterile, because it

is without sense of touch, sense of sight, or sense of hearing ; once set going it is warranted to go straight, and to go through every obstacle." ⁸⁹

Maeterlinck is at the opposite extreme from the Shaw that Symons envisages. Maeterlinck discovers that the self cannot be verified. If one works from this basic premise it is difficult to progress ; to try to identify the nature of other beings and objects becomes impossible :

"Nous ne nous connaissons pas mieux que nous ne connaissons les autres.

Nous ne nous voyons pas, nous ne nous entendons pas et n'écoutons que l'inconnu qui règne en nous et nous mène où il veut." ⁹⁰ Beckett's entire

canon is based on this preoccupation. The Unnamable delves most

intricately into the mystery of the self, and Maeterlinck makes an

observation in L'Autre Monde which is the common subject of Beckett's

works : "Car bien que tout change sans cesse dans notre corps et dans

notre esprit, nous sentons que nous ne pourrons jamais nous débarrasser

de notre moi, si répugnant qu'il nous paraisse." ⁹¹ In Film Beckett uses

this as a structural concept : "Search of non-being in flight from extraneous

perception breaking down in inescapability of self-perception." ⁹² The

nullity that prompts feelings of Angst in both dramatists is forcefully

expressed. Maeterlinck feels that "Le plus décourageant, c'est que

probablement, il n'a rien à savoir, rien à comprendre, ou tout au moins

rien qui ressemble à ce que nous appelons savoir et comprendre ..." ⁹³

Beckett's sense of artistic failure, as a consequence of failure to perceive meaning and direction in existence, is described in dialogue with Georges

Duthuit : "The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with

which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express,

no desire to express, together with the obligation to express." ⁹⁴ The feeling

that life itself is tragic in its meaninglessness is dramatised by both Maeterlinck and Beckett as the common dilemma. Both dramatists have attempted to write the Everyman of modern times in their symbolist portrayals of the human condition.

La Mort de Tintagiles is the last of Maeterlinck's three little plays for marionettes. The title is starkly unambiguous. From the start we know that it will be Ygraine's young brother whom death will take. The jealous and mad queen, the grandmother of Tintagiles and Ygraine, is the agent of fate. She is in a long line of mad Maeterlinckian royalty descended from old King Hjalmar of La Princesse Maleine. Ygraine's opening speech sets the pessimistic tone when she reveals that she has received nothing but anguish in answer to her prayer to God for happiness. Her father has died and two of her brothers have disappeared, leaving her with her sister, Tintagiles and their old master Aglovale. Tintagiles is immediately characterised as a helpless child cast into a world he does not understand ^{and} over which he has no control. From his first words, "Je ne sais pas" ("I do not know"), to his last pathetic cries for his sister he is buffeted by fate. He has come on the queen's orders; neither he nor anyone else is allowed to see the queen and all that he knows of her is Ygraine's description of her sinister tower sanctuary. The description of the tower and of the queen's omnipotence strangely anticipates Kafka's vision of Das Schloß. Maeterlinck uses the tower, as he had used the castle in Alladine et Palomides, to signify the impenetrable mysteries of human existence :

Elle vit là, toute seule dans sa tour; et celles qui la servent ne sortent pas durant le jour (. . .) Ses ordres

s'exécutent sans qu'on sache comment... Elle ne descend jamais; et toutes les portes de la tour sont fermées nuit et jour... Je ne l'ai jamais aperçue; mais d'autres l'ont vue (...). Elle a une puissance que l'on ne comprend pas; et nous vivons ici avec un grand poids sans merci sur notre âme... 95

In Act One the action takes place at the top of a hill near the castle; in Act Two we are led into the castle itself. The strange and evil atmosphere causes Tintagiles to cry for no reason. Because Bellangère has overheard in the servants' gossip that a child is wanted by the queen, Ygraine plans to guard the doors of their apartment. In the third act Tintagiles has assumed the listlessness of a puppet worked by destiny so that Ygraine's comforting words only seem ironical: "Nous allons te défendre et le mal ne pourra pas venir".⁹⁶ Old Aglovale encapsulates the weary atmosphere in his remark: "On a de ces soirs graves où la vie inutile vous remonte à la gorge; et l'on voudrait fermer les yeux".⁹⁷ A noise in the corridor arrests their attention and the noise while they listen seems interminable. A key turns in the lock, ridiculing Ygraine's idea that she has protected Tintagiles merely by locking a door. When Aglovale thrusts his sword into the space created by the opening door the weapon breaks and the noise resounds to sustain the audience's aroused fear. The great efforts of Aglovale, Bellangère and Ygraine cannot prevent the door from opening. Cold shadows penetrate the room; Tintagiles falls from his sister's arms and is engulfed by the darkness at the door. Ygraine follows her brother and is similarly seized by the night. This sequence is profoundly disturbing because Maeterlinck does not reveal the agents of the crime. The scene has been revised to achieve an effect of terror from an earlier version where, in Act Four,

we hear the servants gossip and then see them carry off Tintagiles.⁹⁸ In the revised version the door seems to open by supernatural means, thus creating a powerful feeling of "l'angoisse de l'inintelligible". Act Five of the longer first version now becomes Act Four in which Maeterlinck makes visually compelling the separation of brother and sister. A huge iron door is revealed, from either side of which the children call. Tintagiles has been swallowed up behind it in the castle vaults ; we hear his feeble cries but we can see only Ygraine who knocks frantically at the door. Our agony increases with Ygraine's whose predicament we find terrifying. We focus on the door as we had in L'Intruse and Alladine et Palomides, listening to Tintagiles pleading that he will die unless the door is opened, watching Ygraine fail to open the door. We bear with Ygraine the knowledge that the queen's hand is tightening around Tintagiles' throat; we listen helplessly to the thud as his frail body falls. The play ends with a long speech from Ygraine. She prays to God at first for the return of her little brother and for forgiveness; however, after a long silence, she curses the monster who could kill an innocent child. Her juxtaposition of prayer and blasphemy is very suggestive. She seems to come to the realisation of the cruelty of capricious and malign forces opposed to justice.

In La Mort de Tintagiles ^{it seems that} Maeterlinck strives to include echoes of his former work so that his canon forms a harmonious pattern of situation and symbol. When Ygraine declares "J'ai vécu bien longtemps comme une aveugle dans cette île"⁹⁹ she forcefully evokes the situation of Les Aveugles. If the impenetrable door at the end of the play reminds us of the other inescapable barriers between life and death that Maeterlinck has

given us, so too the tower's sinister shadow, the inescapable island, the profound silences and the fragile protagonists have accumulated meaning because of their reiteration in Maeterlinck's canon. If we are familiar with the earlier plays we gain an insight into the ^{artistic} pattern ^{shaping} the tragedy, a pattern which offers symbols redolent of meaning, which ^{attempts to} demonstrate by the repetition of the same meaningful symbols in each tragic situation a position of ^{ultimate} purposefulness for man. For although man's life is seen to be unremittingly tragic there is still form behind that tragedy; we have understood that form by noticing the repetition of symbolic pattern. Maeterlinck's symbolist form in this way works against the absurdist element in his philosophy. He is constantly forcing us to look beyond the immediate tragic situation to universal pattern. Maeterlinck assured William Archer that La Mort de Tintagiles was written "as an allegory of the death of a child, and that the iron door against which poor Ygraine hurls herself so ineffectually symbolises the portals of the tomb".¹⁰⁰ The term "allegory" is used loosely by Maeterlinck to describe La Mort de Tintagiles; it is clear that the lack of definition, the lack of statement of religious concept, offers a suggestive symbolism and not an allegory of the naïv Everyman type. The play is sentimentalisch; its complexity is rendered in the symbolic form of the naïv artist but it records puzzling mystery. It is indeed straightforward allegory that is desirable for the type of artist who is divided over religious and moral questions; the longing for a system of religious or philosophical truth is paramount and only once such a system is discovered can there follow the ability to use the allegorical mode.

In the preface to the Théâtre volumes Maeterlinck records the

difficulty which he experienced in writing Aglavaine et Sélysette. In this play he tried and failed to deviate from his subject of death. This failure is attributable to the symbolist technique of the play ; although the symbolist form is modified in Aglavaine et Sélysette the subject of death is still linked by Maeterlinck with symbolist expression. He would have to go entirely to realism before renouncing the subject. This ^{analysis} process of association is arrived at as follows. In the earlier plays Maeterlinck's purpose had been to explore mystery in order to understand it. By attempting to express the anguish of the unknown he had arranged artistic patterns among the debris of life as he saw it. He had tried to establish an awareness of spirituality among the audience, communication with whom was fostered on the most profound level : the issue of man's ultimate and inevitable meeting with death is felt with deep emotion by any class of audience, religious or atheist, rich or poor. The symbolist form had enabled Maeterlinck to project the essential subject of any philosophy, and it was to this subject that he naturally returned in a new symbolist play. The symbolic deaths of his earlier tragic characters are associated ^{with} the symbolic patterns and images of the plays ; when these patterns and images recur in Aglavaine et Sélysette so also does the subject of death.

Aglavaine et Sélysette reverts to the five-act form of Pelléas et Mélisande and Alladine et Palomides. Act One seems to herald a melodramatic ménage à trois situation. Aglavaine is to live with her sister-in-law Sélysette and Sélysette's husband Méléandre. Sélysette's childlike incomprehension of Méléandre's discussion of Aglavaine's spirituality, and her immediate jealousy, suggest a new move in Maeterlinck's

drama, an approach more intricately concerned with character and plot. Aglavaine's entrance is made towards the end of the first act, the remainder of which is dominated by Sélysette's ominous description of her lighthouse tower with its large, heavy key, and by Aglavaine's speech on the powers of silence. At this early moment in the action Maeterlinck associates the windswept tower with his tragic protagonist : Sélysette will be as isolated as the tower now that the strangely ethereal Aglavaine has intruded into her life. The destiny that made contact between Aglavaine and Sélysette will sever Sélysette from love and ultimately from life, and that severance will occur from the tower's height. The action develops towards its tragic resolution by means of dialogues between Aglavaine and Méléandre, Aglavaine and Sélysette, and Sélysette and Méléandre. The other characters, Méligrane and Yssaline, are peripheral. The grandmother Méligrane is used to prompt Sélysette into the realisation that the situation can only be resolved if one of the two girls should die or leave. Little Yssaline witnesses Sélysette's fall from the tower. Maeterlinck's main theme is that happiness is dangerous in its provocation of destiny. Symbolic action and use of images reinforce the theme of destiny's hold over the characters. Sélysette ironically saves Aglavaine from drowning ; this action is taken as a gesture of the soul's desire to communicate against the will. Sélysette has a pathetic song to indicate her tragic circumstances - one feels here that Maeterlinck has been influenced by Shakespeare's similar use of songs to presage disaster for his tragic heroines - the refrain of which indicates her close meeting with death :

Et j'ai vu la mort
 (J'entendis son âme)
 Et j'ai vu la mort
 Qui l'attend encore... 101

Sélysette takes to looking out for a strange pale green bird from the tower wall; the bird symbol is reiterated by Maeterlinck as an object of desire which, because of its freedom, mankind cannot attain. It seems to Yssaline that the tower walls open when Sélysette leans over as if to grab the bird. Sélysette maintains to the last that she did not will death, that death instead met her and took her as she fell. It was her destiny to die, and her fate was not brought about by a superficial imposition of the will.

In Aglavaine et Sélysette Maeterlinck attempts to probe into character and motivation in a way that would have been superfluous in the earlier plays. Before Aglavaine Maeterlinck was concerned with man's helplessness in the face of unknown forces. Characters were deliberately not individualised because they represented the universal predicament. When Maeterlinck attempts individualisation in Aglavaine (which was published in 1896) he is unsuccessful. He is still reliant on symbolism in a way incompatible with the realistic development of character, and by the way in which Sélysette dies we are reminded of the earlier childlike protagonists who were gripped by mysterious powers. Sélysette is drawn by her fate in such a way that we reject the ^{proposition that she committed} suicide as an act of her own free will. The tragedy lies not in a choice but in an inexorable beckoning of fate. In the last act we are made conscious of Sélysette's predestined death in such a way that the idea of her tragic renunciation of life is minimized. The focus is on Sélysette's destiny: Aglavaine and

Méléandre are felt to be the agents of fate and the importance of their love relationship is subsumed in the importance of Sélysette's death.

Maeterlinck recognised this as a fault in the play. He was dissatisfied with his portrayal of the spiritual Aglavaine : "Il n'est pas tel que je le désirais, ce pauvre drame, et quand je le revois d'ensemble dans l'esprit, je ne l'aime plus du tout. Il devait être le triomphe et, en somme, la force des choses a voulu qu'il soit presque la défaite d'Aglavaine."¹⁰²

The play has been taken over by Sélysette's tragedy : the force of death could not be easily dismissed.

Maeterlinck's volume of philosophical writing, La Sagesse et La Destinée, acts as a commentary on the later drama. It was published in 1898. Maeterlinck's faith is placed in optimistic humanism; he maintains that man was created for happiness and that, although man lives in misery and injustice, it is not cruel to speak as though that injustice does not exist. Otherwise, Maeterlinck argues, we would never escape from the situation. This argument is a direct contradiction of the mysticism of Le Trésor des humbles; Maeterlinck had stressed in 1896 that one should be made aware of fate, misery and death in order to come to terms with these terrors. In La Sagesse Maeterlinck emphasises the importance of character. Self-knowledge is the quest of the wise man and it is maintained that wisdom can to some extent overcome fatality :

On nous affirme que toutes les grandes tragédies ne nous offrent pas d'autre spectacle que la lutte de l'homme contre la fatalité. Je crois, au contraire, qu'il n'existe pas une seule tragédie où la fatalité règne réellement. J'ai beau les parcourir, je n'en trouve pas une où le héros combatte le destin pur et simple. Au fond, ce n'est jamais le destin, c'est toujours la sagesse qu'il attaque. Il n'y a de fatalité

véritable qu'en certains malheurs extérieurs, tels que les maladies, les accidents, la mort inopinée de personnes aimées, etc., mais il n'existe pas de fatalité intérieure.

103

Maeterlinck's own early plays had shown a very powerful "fatalité intérieure". Now he emphasises that wisdom can rectify any situation apart from that of death ; wisdom can also at times avert external fatality. He even maintains that Hamlet's tragedy would have been averted had Hamlet been wise ; he emphasises that Hamlet cannot overcome destiny because of a fault in himself that makes him conceive of revenge as his duty. This analysis concentrates on the action of Hamlet rather than on the inertia of the subtext which Maeterlinck had formerly admired. Maeterlinck's tenet here is that predestination exists in character so that, in order to avert destiny, one has only to modify one's character. Acknowledgement of the mysteries of life should, he now maintains, be buried beneath an exterior optimism. A crucial indication of Maeterlinck's newfound optimism occurs in his analysis of the biblical reference to the thieves on the cross. Maeterlinck discusses moral salvation in this context :

Est-ce que le bon larron n'a pas été sauvé, non seulement au sens chrétien, mais encore au sens plus parfait de ce mot? Cependant il devait mourir dans l'heure même, mais il mourait éternellement heureux parce qu'il avait été aimé au tout dernier moment; et qu'un être infiniment sage avait su lui montrer que son âme n'était pas inutile, qu'elle avait été bonne elle aussi et n'était pas passée inaperçue sur cette terre...

104

Beckett's attitude to the same reference counteracts that of Maeterlinck. Vladimir probes the concept of salvation in Godot in such a way that the damned thief assumes greater significance. The arbitrariness of the

decision and the discrepancies between the recordings of the event are dwelt upon with dwindling hope. The gap between Maeterlinck and the absurdists widens irretrievably in La Sagesse et La Destinée. Maeterlinck's new determination to find happiness in the details of moral conduct and integrity led him back to society ; , in 1901, La Vie des Abeilles emphasised the order and instinctual knowledge of right conduct which pattern a bee's existence. In the same year the play Ariane et Barbe-bleue paid tribute to the old heroines ; Barbe-bleue's former wives are Ygraine, Bellangère, Mélisande, Alladine and Sélysette.

In 1902 Monna Vanna was played by the Théâtre de l'Œuvre. This three-act play marks a crucial point in Maeterlinck's canon. In the same year he published Le Temple Enseveli in which he comments on the fitting use of the symbol :

Il est temps que les poètes le reconnaissent : le symbole suffit à représenter provisoirement une vérité qu'on ne peut ou qu'on ne veut pas encore regarder ; mais quand vient le moment où l'on veut voir la vérité même, il est bon que le symbole disparaisse. Il faut d'ailleurs, pour qu'un symbole soit digne d'une poésie réellement vivante, qu'il soit au moins aussi grand, aussi beau que la vérité qu'il représente ; il faut aussi qu'il précède une vérité et non pas qu'il la suive.

105

Here Maeterlinck is expounding two viewpoints which seem contradictory. In the first sentence he argues that symbols should only be used in literature when those symbols stand for accepted truth ; he is seemingly renouncing the entire symbolist aesthetic and the Mallarméan doctrine of suggestion. He is accepting that symbols can only be justifiably employed in the allegorical form and that the symbolist form itself does not compensate for the lack of knowledge of truth. He has come to the

realisation that in an age of scepticism and fragmentation symbols cannot represent accepted truth and that therefore the form is redundant. This conclusion is justifiable ; we assume that Maeterlinck had not reached the religious knowledge which he had attempted to reap from a religious literary form, and that he had concluded that dogma must exist before man's metaphysical situation can be represented in symbols. However, in the second sentence of the extract Maeterlinck expounds what seems to be an inherent part of symbolist theory : that the symbol in literature precedes the great truth for which it stands. The confusion is perhaps due to the contradictions at the heart of modern symbolist theory ; the exact conflict is the one that Maeterlinck here expresses : symbols are used to represent essences but, lacking religious faith, the moderns do not know that these essences exist. The practice of modern symbolism therefore depends entirely on the form to suggest essential truth.

Maeterlinck's statement records his failure to derive religious apprehension from artistic form alone. He had failed at this stage in his career to find the post-sentimentalisch form. He had written "drama within the limitations of art", welding form to content, complementing dramatic situation with musicality ; yet he had done so without having a precise and positive philosophy to offer, thus negating the crucial fact about such drama, that it is the work of an artist-philosopher.

A brief resumé of Monna Vanna will demonstrate how radically Maeterlinck's dramatic form had altered. A precise time period and a specific location are given : this is fifteenth-century Pisa. The predicament is made clear at the very beginning with mention of place-names and other details that leave no room for speculation, which render interpretation unnecessary and which are firmly situated on the realistic

plane. Pisa is in a state of siege ; the only hope for freedom rests with Vanna whom the Florentine Prinzivalle has demanded. Because Vanna had met Prinzivalle when they were children she is ^{both} able to preserve her fidelity to her husband and also to save the Pisans from starvation. However Vanna is in love with Prinzivalle ; she is able to spare his life only by lying to Guido. Guido, her husband, is crazed with jealousy and will not accept that Vanna has been faithful. The play discusses questions of morality which are appropriately represented in realistic form, concerning as they must the nature of social man rather than essential man. The "problems" which the audience must tackle are similar to those in contemporary "problem plays" : should a wife remain faithful to her husband? Should she manoeuvre his feelings and lie to him? Like other "problem plays" of the age, Mrs. Warren's Profession and A Doll's House for example, Monna Vanna was notorious for its uprising against traditional morality. In London, Mr. Redford, who had been appointed by Queen Victoria in 1895 as Acting Examiner of Plays, found that the play should be banned. His report reads, "The central idea of Monna Vanna is, in my opinion, essentially sensual and sexual. The Stage Business and situations, necessary to the plot, are grossly immoral, and the thinly veiled indecency appeals to the grosser instincts of the audience. It matters little that Monna Vanna is herself actuated by high and noble motives, and that the audience know that Prinzivalle has not taken advantage of his opportunities; because the matter is openly discussed, AS IF THE IMPROPRIETY HAD TAKEN PLACE, and eventually in disgust at her distrusting and unbelieving husband, she actually pretends that she HAD been outraged, and points to his wound and

her own as having been caused in the struggle between them." ¹⁰⁶ This passage testifies to the startling controversies that Maeterlinck's new play caused; Monna Vanna was seen on the same level as Ghosts which had also been banned in London. Maeterlinck had finally stepped into the ranks of the social dramatist.

Arthur Symons realised that Monna Vanna is "dramatic in the obvious sense of the word"; ¹⁰⁷ Maeterlinck had renounced his experimental théâtre statique as he made plain in the 1904 essay "Le Drame moderne". Maeterlinck notes that a characteristic of modern drama is the lack of action; penetration of the human psyche and a search for new beauty have replaced the traditional element of action. Modern drama lacks metaphysical framework. There exists only a vast unknown *that*, Maeterlinck admits, is very difficult to evoke dramatically. One recourse of modern drama has been to delve deeply into the make-up of the consciousness. Maeterlinck notes that *fewer* conflicts of desires and motives have been discovered the more deeply dramatists have tried to probe the mind. The enlightened consciousness, according to Maeterlinck, reveals only one duty from which there can derive no conflict: the duty that we should love others as ourselves. The drama of psychic exploration must therefore, he estimates, be restricted to tragic cases whose minds are seized with the conflict between desire and duty. There remains a different struggle which modern dramatists should make their concern: the conflict between the duties of charity and justice against human egoism and ignorance. When this clash has been resolved there will exist a new theatre, one of peace and beauty, renouncing tragedy. Maeterlinck is asking for a moral consciousness based on justice and compassion, a

more charitable attitude, a cultivation of the higher human instincts.

This is what modern drama should make its chief raison d'être.

Maeterlinck establishes that drama must involve action and conflict, that it had traditionally done so and that the moderns should continue to find areas of conflict, relevant to the modern age, to substitute for those of ancient drama. The dramatist's occupation is intrinsically different from that of the thinker, the moralist, the historian, the novelist and the lyric poet :

Quoi qu'on fasse, quelque merveille qu'on puisse un jour imaginer, la loi souveraine, l'exigence essentielle du théâtre sera toujours l'action.
 Quand le rideau se lève, le haut désir intellectuel que nous apportons se transforme soudain; et le penseur, le moraliste, le mystique ou le psychologue, qui est en nous, cède la place au spectateur instinctif, à l'homme électrisé négativement par la foule, et qui veut voir quelque chose se passer sur la scène[..]
 Il n'est alors si admirables, si profondes paroles qui bientôt ne nous importunent, si elles ne changent rien à la situation, si elles n'aboutissent à un acte, si elles n'amènent un conflit décisif, si elles ne hâtent une solution définitive. 103

This argument bears no relation to the preface to the Theatre volumes, where Maeterlinck had argued that the dramatist's duty is to explore regions of mystery in the same way as the lyric poet. The resignation to action first and foremost negates the theory expressed in "Le Tragique Quotidien"; by these new requirements for drama all of Maeterlinck's early plays should be classified as lyric poems.

It is Arthur Symons who captures the unease of the new resolution to action as practised in Monna Vanna : "The action moves and moves always in an interesting, even in a telling, way. But at the same time I cannot but feel that something has been lost. The speeches, which were

once so short as to be enigmatical, are now too long, too explanatory ; they are sometimes rhetorical, and have more logic than life. The playwright has gained experience, the thinker has gained wisdom, but the curious artist has lost some of his magic." ¹⁰⁹ The word "logic" is used with the same pejorative connotation as it has in Symons's comment on Mrs. Warren's Profession. Not only had the mystic become a logician but he was soon, like the Ibsen of The Lady From The Sea, to commit "the dry, impotent sin of allegory". Maeterlinck's resolute determination to renounce in his plays the study of death and the wide issues of fate and truth in favour of the exploration of moral problems involved the simultaneous renunciation of the Mallarméan doctrine of symbolism. Once Maeterlinck had formulated his optimistic philosophy, his knowledge that man can better himself and raise his moral consciousness, he could either write realistic "problem plays" or allegorical plays to demonstrate his conviction. Symbolism presupposes a world of essences and at the same time offers infinite possibility of interpretation, thus it is an acceptable form for those playwrights without didactic purpose, whose effort is nevertheless to suggest an archetypal universe beyond the known world. The use of allegory necessitates a pre-known set of values and philosophical tenets to which the drama's personified abstractions and anthropomorphised objects relate. This latter form is accepted in L'Oiseau Bleu.

Maeterlinck's féerie was written in 1905 and was premièred with tremendous success by Stanislavski and the Moscow Art Theatre in 1908. The fairy-play is a genre with specific characteristics : "A hero (or heroine) has to go in search of something or other, and is helped by some

beneficent power, who gives him a talisman to use. He is thwarted by some evil power, who had various subordinates to act as his agents in hindering the search. The hero is always accompanied by a faithful servant of the Sancho Panza type, who provides the comic relief. He invariably wins in the end, being helped out of various difficulties and dangers either by the beneficent power, or by the talisman, or by the faithful servant."¹¹⁰ Maeterlinck uses the genre not to hint or suggest in the manner of symbolism but to propound certain ideas and personal convictions. When Florence G. Fidler "strives to extract every ounce of meaning from the symbolism"¹¹¹ her effort is rewarding precisely because she is not faced with ineffable symbols; she "translates" the images of L'Oiseau Bleu in a way helpful to allegory.

In the féerie the blue bird itself, forever on the point of being captured but forever elusive, allegorises the truth for which man searches, his ignorant nature preventing his perceiving the essence. L'Oiseau Bleu is dynamic; centred on the quest of Mytyl and Tytyl for the blue bird it moves from one elaborate and fantastic setting to the next with the rapidity of a dream sequence. Maeterlinck indeed hints that the children's experience takes place in a dream, yet the poetic removal from actuality is used to clarify rather than render discordant the sequence of scenes. We see that death is more comfortable than life; not only do the dead live on in the memory of the living but they have nothing to fear, neither illness nor anxiety. We are taught to acknowledge that animals are more intuitive than man; we understand that their hostility is controllable. Maeterlinck dramatises his convictions that happiness is ubiquitous, that luxuries are not to be over-indulged in, and that there are

several great joys : being just, being good, thinking, understanding, seeing what is beautiful, loving, offering maternal love and achieving fame. Time is seen to control the unborn children each of whom brings into the world his destiny. One child will devise remedies for prolonging life ; another will invent a wingless flying machine ; a third will discover the moon's treasures ; a fourth will bring pure joy and a fifth will conquer death. Mankind is seen by Maeterlinck to be progressing towards perfect control of its environment.

L'Oiseau Bleu was popular in the extreme. The blue bird became the hallmark of laundries, chocolates, stationery, petrol, handkerchiefs and mouth-organs ; the play precipitated a mode of dress ; the blue bird came close to being accepted as a common noun to mean "happiness"¹¹²; in 1939 Shirley Temple played Mytyl in the Twentieth Century Fox film version. The play established itself in society more fully than any other by Maeterlinck. Stanislavski penetrated the atmosphere of L'Oiseau Bleu in his 1908 speech to the Moscow Art Theatre Company : "The production of The Blue Bird must be made with the purity of fantasy of a ten-year-old child. It must be naive, simple, light, full of the joy of life, cheerful and imaginative like the sleep of a child ; as beautiful as a child's dream and at the same time as majestic as the ideal of a poetic genius and thinker . . . If man were always able to love, to understand, to delight in nature! If he contemplated more often, if he reflected on the mysteries of the world and took thought of the eternal! then perhaps the Blue Bird would be flying freely among us."¹¹³ The play is appealing because of its childlike qualities of naïveté and lack of self-consciousness ; it provides a cheering optimistic humanism : the blue bird may be elusive but it is

there, it exists. Maeterlinck had discovered a post-sentimentalisch allegory. The artist-philosopher of the Middle Ages could use for his universal message the naiv form of allegory, such as the Everyman author employed. The modern artist-philosopher without credo resorts to sentimentalisch symbolism, the form of Maeterlinck's early plays up to and including Aglavaine et Sélysette. The post-sentimentalisch artist-philosopher looks back to allegory for his basic form, but post-sentimentalisch allegory can only involve personal truths until such a time when universal allegory is again possible, a time when there is commonly acknowledged religious truth. This being so, modern allegory is a "dry, impotent sin"; the personal allegory is didactically one-sided without possessing a truthfulness acknowledged by the audience. It does not sum up the thought of an age; it merely records the philosophy of one man. That individual worldview is best recorded in the multifaceted, mysterious symbolism propagated by Mallarmé; paradoxically, once the worldview is formulated its symbolism becomes fixed and pointed to illustrate one perspective. In L'Ciseau Bleu Maeterlinck is verging on such narrowness and in "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir" he achieves the close confines of personal allegory. L'Intruse, Intérieur, Les Aveugles, La Mort de Tintagiles, Alladine et Palomides, Pelleas et Mélisande and Aglavaine et Sélysette are rewarding dramatic works because they suggest cosmic forces in the way of poetry and music while retaining conflict and progression to climax in their situations. Once personal allegory triumphs over symbolism there is deterioration in flat, categorisable images. Personal allegory is not persuasive in the same way as universal allegory yet for each playwright under review we will see that the form provides a ^{temptation} Λ; for once allegory can be used a philosophy has been

formulated.

The later realistic plays of Maeterlinck are irrelevant to this study ; it therefore remains to examine the philosophical speculation which led up to "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir". Maeterlinck's continued preoccupation with death and with the wider issues of his early drama are evident in the 1913 volume, La Mort. In this analysis his attitude is that death is the crucial event in life. Each person should formulate his idea of death, then maintain this conception in his life. Maeterlinck stresses that life often tries to resist death : doctors will neglect the course of euthanasia regardless of the patients' suffering. He discovers a twofold terror ; the idea of a once-loved human body now buried in a grave, in a state of rapid decomposition, is offensive in itself, yet a comparable horror is the vast fear of the unknown beyond death. Because religion gives us no proof or certitude of an after-life we must seek solutions outside its dictates. There are four such solutions that Maeterlinck considers. He dismisses at the outset total annihilation as impossible. His argument here is far from persuasive : if we cannot conceive of nothingness then it does not exist ; he qualifies this statement by adding that if nothingness were possible it could not be terrible because, by definition, a void cannot contain horror. This circuitous point gives way to a discussion of the possibility of survival without consciousness of this life. This second solution Maeterlinck finds pleasant ; we look at death as a form of life which we will only understand by meeting it. The third possibility that Maeterlinck considers involves survival without any kind of consciousness, an entire transformation from the world that we know. The fourth and last possibility is that of survival in the universal

consciousness. It is this last that Maeterlinck accepts. The mind in separation from the body will have no need of memories which identify bodily concerns. The human intellect may perhaps be determining the universal consciousness. This is the final optimistic note in Maeterlinck's bleak summary. Although "nous nous agitions dans l'illusion de voir et de connaître ce qui est strictement indispensable à notre petite vie", "Il ne serait nullement étonnant que la conscience de l'Univers, pour se former, n'eût pas encore rencontré le concours de chances nécessaires, et que la pensée humaine appuyât l'une de ces chances décisives. Il y a là un espoir. Si petit que paraisse l'homme et sa pensée, il a exactement la valeur des plus énormes forces qu'ils puissent imaginer, vu que rien n'est grand ni petit dans ce qui n'a point de mesure [.] Seule la pensée occupe peut-être dans l'infini un espace que les comparaisons ne réduisent pas à rien." 114

In his treatise on death Maeterlinck appears to be comforting himself. He explains at great length that he knows nothing of what will happen after death but that he will nevertheless be hopeful throughout the remainder of his life that he will survive somehow in the universe in some unknown shape. His refusal to consider the possibility of total annihilation points to his need for the reassurance that a pattern links all elements of the universe. He had attempted to create such a pattern in his early symbolist plays. It is to the basic confrontation of man with death that he returns towards the end of his own life in the one-act play "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir". Fifty-two years after the publication of L'Intruse and Les Aveugles Maeterlinck reverts to the situation of Everyman in an allegorical, optimistic play. There are only two characters in this drama, protagonist and antagonist, and the comparison with Everyman is inevitable; for the

first time Maeterlinck writes what can truly be called a modern morality play. "Le Vieux" lies in agony while, at his bedside, "L'Ombre" wrapped in black converses with him. The shadow's identity alters as swiftly as the old man reacts to him. He is addressed as "docteur" at first, then, when he professes his willingness to help the old man to die, so he is called "un assassin". The shadow identifies himself as "votre ami", but the old man knows that friendship is as ephemeral as Everyman discovers through trial and error: "Je n'ai plus d'amis ... Ils sont morts ..." ¹¹⁵ For three years the shadow has been warning the old man but he has refused to listen. When the old man is reminded of this he becomes agitated, crying for "L'Ombre" to go away. At this point the shadow reveals that he is death, specifically, the old man's death. The shadow's obvious vitality prevents the old man from believing such a proposition. The invalid clings to his bed at the suggestion that he is to accompany the shadow to the other world. He is afraid because he has sinned, yet the reassurance ensues :

L'OMBRE	Il n'y a plus de péchés quand on meurt.
LE VIEUX	Que dira Dieu?
L'OMBRE	Ce que tu diras.
LE VIEUX	Il me jugera?...
L'OMBRE	C'est toi qui te jugeras. Tu n'a pas peur de toi? 116

Maeterlinck is using the imagery - of God, of death, of sin, of judgement - that the Everyman author had used, in order to dictate his own philosophy : man's integrity and sense of justice and charity can only be judged by himself. The shadow stresses that he will always be with the old man ; he is thus more helpful a companion than is "Fellowshyp" in Everyman. Maeterlinck depicts death as a coming together of universal forces rather

than as a sundering of life's companionship into isolation. The shadow acts as the well-informed interpreter of the old man's fears and doubts. He affirms that the living know nothing ; the answer to everything is that the old man will become an eternal being. The old man's greatest anxiety is that he will leave everything he knows behind him, and he asks, like Everyman, whether he can take goods with him. He is as uncharitable as Everyman is before Death's warning and Knowledge's revelation ; the old man's concern is for his good fortune on the stock exchange and he cares nothing for those who have lost money. The shadow elaborates the characteristics of death. Each person is visited only by his own death which will then become his life ; the shadow is the dying man's alter-ego. He quells the old man's fears by equating the state of being dead with that of being asleep. Here Maeterlinck is adding a corollary to his accepted solution : if human life is not transformed into the universal consciousness then sleep is no hardship to bear. The old man's next concern is with his body. When he is told that he must be separated from it, he prevaricates as Everyman had done :

LE VIEUX	On ne peut pas attendre un peu?	
L'OMBRE	A quoi bon? Aujourd'hui ou demain,	
	c'est tout comme...	117

Time is irrelevant to death because death fulfils the life span, the time limit of life. A dog appears on the scene and, like the dog in Les Aveugles, it instinctually confirms death's presence by retreating from the room. The old man continues to ask questions which denote his fear of the unknown, hankering after the sensual existence which he will be denied. His questions are met with bland answers : nothing dies in the sense of

being terminated ; animals go where we all go. Death is with us in life. Medicine is denounced as primitive, doctors sharing mankind's general ignorance. Time kills but illness itself does not, the shadow declares. The truth brought close to us by Everyman is repeated by the shadow : "On est toujours seul quand on meurt." ¹¹⁸ The old man will be denied the sight of God because he, like all mankind, is within God. When the old man asks for protection the stage direction notes that he is clinging to death's hand ; ^{while he is} positioned in this way his heart stops beating. The final tableau is hopeful and spectacular :

L'OMBRE (Se lève, rejette son manteau et une forme
d'ange apparaît, aux grandes ailes blanches surmontées
d'une tête esquissée dans la lumière. Elle s'approche du lit)
L'OMBRE Viens! J'étais ta mort et je deviens ta
vie... C'est toi-même que je suis et que
j'emporte... Nous allons vivre ensemble...
Viens, nous sommes immortels!...
(Une seconde d'obscurité, puis la fenêtre vole en éclats.
Enveloppée de ses ailes, l'Ombre et ce qu'elle emporte,
disparaissent dans la lumière.)

119

This ending seems to parallel the ending of Everyman in which an angel descends to claim Everyman's soul. The angel image is used by Maeterlinck to his own purpose ; the man's shadow is now his angel, and the man has joined with his alter-ego to become pure soul. Maeterlinck may or may not have known Everyman (or the Dutch Elckerlijck); there is no record of his attraction to the play but the affinity of mood in "Le Vieux ^{qui ne veut pas Mourir} suggests Maeterlinck's sympathy with the medieval naïv author. Although Maeterlinck ^{portrays} the ignorance of an old man struggling to retain his ephemeral existence, in desperate fear of death, he is concerned to teach that man must hope for immortality. Like the Everyman author Maeterlinck chooses to dramatise the last moments of a life to

convey his philosophy, and his themes and images bear close resemblance to those of the medieval play. He has returned to his early subject but his form has hardened into allegory ; he has renounced pessimism and suggestive symbolism alike ; his new form is post-sentimentalisch.

The theorists of the form under review express interesting opinions about Maeterlinck's work. Shaw's "relations with Maeterlinck were quite friendly and reciprocally appreciative".¹²⁰ They met in March 1895 when Lugné-Poë brought his productions of L'Intruse and Pelleas et Mélisande to the Opera Comique in London. Shaw recorded his very favourable opinion of the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, praising in Pelleas et Mélisande the "vigilant artistic conscience in the diction, the stage action, and the stage picture, producing a true poetic atmosphere" ; he added "I find players speaking with such skill and delicacy that they can deliver M. Maeterlinck's fragile word-music throughout five acts without one harsh or strained note, and with remarkable subtlety and conviction of expression". By inviting Lugné-Poë's company to perform "Mr. Grein could have rendered no better service to English art".¹²¹ It is Lugné-Poë who captures Shaw's imagination, "Man of genius, by the Lord",¹²² rather than Maeterlinck himself, but Shaw very definitely applauds Maeterlinck's musicality and poetry. That he praises Lugné-Poë's rendition of the plays is crucial ; Shaw had seen for himself that the plays are stageworthy and dramatic despite their experimental lyricism.

In Shaw's prefaces Maeterlinck's name is very often coupled with Ibsen's (Lugné-Poë had also brought Rosmersholm and The Master Builder to London) to suggest the avant-garde and frequently to advance arguments about censorship and narrowmindedness. In the preface to Plays Unpleasant Shaw is engaged in a discussion of drama as literature.

He is concerned that all plays should be read as well as viewed in performance and mentions Maeterlinck's drama as a crucial example.¹²³

In the preface to Three Plays for Puritans Shaw praises the avant-garde theatres of his day and scorns the commercial theatres, mentioning Ibsen and Maeterlinck as playwrights of the avant-garde.¹²⁴ Another reference is made in the preface to The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet. Shaw's diatribe here is aimed at the misuse of censorship; he cites Monna Vanna in a list also comprising Hamlet, Oedipus Rex, The Cenci, Mrs. Warren's Profession, Brieux's Maternité and Les Avariés, and Granville-Barker's Waste, all "improper" plays according to social standards because all society knows "is that incest, prostitution, abortion, contagious diseases, and nudity are improper, and that all conversations, or books, or plays in which they are discussed are improper conversations, improper books, improper plays, and should not be allowed".¹²⁵

These slight references are supplemented by another in the text of Man and Superman. Early in Act Two, Octavius is forced into approaching Tanner on the issue of his eligibility for Ann's hand in marriage. In the course of conversation, Tanner introduces a seemingly irrelevant question :

TANNER I have no doubt that I can trust her to you. What worries me is the idea of trusting you to her. Have you read Maeterlinck's book about the bee?

OCTAVIUS (Keeping his temper with difficulty) I am not discussing literature at present.

TANNER Be just a little patient with me. I am not discussing literature : the book about the bee is natural history. It's an awful lesson to mankind. You think that you are Ann's suitor; that you are the pursuer and she the pursued; that it is your part to woo, to persuade, to prevail, to overcome. Fool; it is you who are the pursued, the marked down quarry, the destined prey[. ..]

It is interesting to see what Shaw understands from La Vie des Abeilles because it has been regarded as a Socialist allegory.¹²⁷ Shaw, however, sees in the facts of the bees' existence his theory of the Life Force and it is Tanner who is the dupe. Elsewhere Shaw rejects efficiency as a political end, simultaneously recollecting the "Maximum Efficiency" of the bees in Maeterlinck's study :

The Maximum Efficiency of the Nation is a good phrase for a treatise, but for a political article it is hardly succulent enough [. . .] It may be that the Maximum Efficiency is only to be attained as the bees attain it; and unfortunately Maeterlinck has just described that method with a fullness that is hardly calculated to popularize it.

128

Shaw does not suggest here that Maeterlinck was necessarily insisting on a political allegory ; his interest lies in the fascination of the orderly, mapped-out situation of the hive.

In a letter to Strindberg of March 1910 Shaw acknowledges Maeterlinck's striking "the European imagination". Maeterlinck was in Shaw's opinion an excellent experimental dramatist, to be admired for innovation of poetic technique, but his drama of action came under virulent attack :

I confess I think Monna Vanna a greatly overrated abortion. It seems to me as plain as a pikestaff that he had planned a really interesting play and that Georgette Leblanc insisted on his making it a 'possible' one, so that she might have a Sarah Bernhardt success. The first act is all right : one awaits with great interest the duel of sex in the condottiero's tent. It is clear that the lady is going to get out of the difficulty somehow, like Marina in Pericles or Lady Cecily in Brassbound : otherwise there will be no play. But when nothing more ingenious comes than 'Don't you remember little Tommy?' 'Bless me! It's little Liza! My! Only fancy!' a defrauded public is entitled to its money back; and the business with the cloak becomes a mere indecency to get a vulgar laugh every time she pretends she is going to open it.

130

Shaw condemns Georgette Leblanc for the completed play ; implicitly he is also laughing at Maeterlinck's gullibility. It can be concluded that Shaw was highly conscious of Maeterlinck as a great innovator ; at the beginning of his career Shaw linked him with Ibsen, yet he saw in his plays a falling-off from high dramatic poetry to the mediocrity of Monna Vanna. It is the bee's logic that most appeals to Shaw and it is the order of the hive that impresses him, just as the harmony of Everyman in its explicit didacticism, had impressed him.

Eliot's views on Maeterlinck are equally opinionated. I should first like to show what impressed Eliot in Dante and the medieval sensibility. The ease with which one can react to Dante's verse, with no prior knowledge of the multi-layered "meanings", Eliot attributes to an "objective 'poetic emotion' " culled by the reader because "Dante is, in a sense to be defined [. . .] the most universal of poets in the modern languages"¹³¹. Eliot proceeds to define this sense of universality. Partly it is attributable to the language ; late medieval Italian was very close to medieval Latin which "tended to concentrate on what men of various races and lands could think together [. . .] Dante, none the less an Italian and a patriot, is first a European"¹³². Dante shared a European culture differing in kind from the parochialism of that of one particular modern European country : "Dante is 'easier to read', for a foreigner who does not know Italian very well, for other reasons : but all related to this central reason, that, in Dante's time, Europe, with all its dissensions and dirtiness, was mentally more united than we can now conceive." ¹³³ Dante, because of this union, had considerable advantages ; moreover a related harmony arose out of his literary method : "He not only thought

in a way in which every man of his culture in the whole of Europe then thought, but he employed a method which was common and commonly understood throughout Europe." ¹³⁴ The clarity and simplicity of allegory are advantageous ; the visual images of allegory are made all the more powerful because there is a "meaning" associated with them. Allegory, argues Eliot, is "a mental habit, which when raised to the point of genius can make a great poet as well as a great mystic or saint. And it is the allegory which makes it possible for the reader who is not even a good Italian scholar to enjoy Dante. Speech varies, but our eyes are all the same. And allegory was not a local Italian custom, but a universal European method." ¹³⁵ Eliot is looking back, as he does with his Everyman discussion, to the age of harmony in culture which gave birth to Dante's allegory ; he advances Dante's poetry as a model for all poets because of Dante's clear visual images and direct diction. Eliot greatly admires the age of Dante because it was an age in which it was possible for allegorical literature to flourish : in Europe of the late Middle Ages the "universal" language, and the commonly understood literary method, welded a homogeneity, by virtue of which there could co-exist several precise layers of meaning in a poem. Modern poets, writing in a discordant age, cannot use universal allegory. Eliot puts this simply in "The Metaphysical Poets" :

We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilization as it exists at present, must be difficult. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning.

This statement can be followed up by Eliot's comments in his essay on Baudelaire. Eliot says of him what I have tried to show of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam: "His ennui may of course be explained, as everything can be explained in psychological or pathological terms; but it is also, from the opposite point of view, a true form of acedia, arising from the unsuccessful struggle towards the spiritual life. [..] One might even hazard the conjecture that the care for perfection of form, among some of the romantic poets of the nineteenth century, was an effort to support, or to conceal from view, an inner disorder. Now the true claim of Baudelaire as an artist is not that he found a superficial form, but that he was searching for a form of life."¹³⁷ This crucial observation, maintaining that the emphasis on perfect form arises from a lack of (and need for) form in life, is put in a more general way in "Arnold and Pater": "When religion is in a flourishing state, when the whole mind of society is moderately healthy and in order, there is an easy and natural association between religion and art. Only when religion has been partly retired and confined, when an Arnold can sternly remind us that Culture is wider than Religion, do we get 'religious art' and in due course 'aesthetic religion'."¹³⁸ Eliot emphasises that Pater's view of art in The Renaissance was an exhortation to live in a certain way, a view that "propagated some confusion between life and art which is not wholly irresponsible for some untidy lives".¹³⁹

Eliot's not unsympathetic discussions of the nineties' malaise nevertheless exude a disapproval of any sort of "confusion between life and art". In " 'Rhetoric' and Poetic Drama", Eliot compares Rostand with Maeterlinck, at the expense of the latter. It is apparent that he sees

a confusion in Maeterlinck's work resulting from the overlapping of the dramatic and poetic genres :

It (poetic drama) must take genuine and substantial human emotions, such emotions as observations can confirm, typical emotions, and give them artistic form ; the degree of abstraction is a question for the method of each author. In Shakespeare the form is determined in the unity of the whole, as well as single scenes ; it is something to attain this unity, as Rostand does, in scenes if not the whole play. Not only as a dramatist, but as a poet, he is superior to Maeterlinck, whose drama, in failing to be dramatic, fails also to be poetic. Maeterlinck has a literary perception of the dramatic and a literary perception of the poetic, and he joins the two ; the two are not, as sometimes they are in the work of Rostand, fused. His characters take no conscious delight in their role - they are sentimental. With Rostand the centre of gravity is in the expression of the emotion, not as with Maeterlinck in the emotion which cannot be expressed. Some writers appear to believe that emotions gain in intensity through being inarticulate. Perhaps the emotions are not significant enough to endure full daylight. 140

The last, withering comment evinces exasperation with Maeterlinck's efforts to convey "l'angoisse de l'inintelligible" through the greater intensity of silence and suggestion. Eliot finds no place for inarticulacy in drama, by definition an art which directs speeches to an audience.

The overwhelming sense of mystery which Maeterlinck wishes to suggest cannot on Eliot's terms adequately be shown on stage in an appropriate "objective correlative" ; he feels that the vastness of the emotion cannot find an action "which shall be the formula of that particular emotion". ¹⁴¹

However, Maeterlinck can be said to have discovered the appropriate theatrical form in which to express "l'angoisse de l'inintelligible". By employing the "théâtre statique" theory and offering stage pictures of the wait for terror and death, he rendered the emotions of terror and anguish objective. The concept of "action" is in his early plays irrelevant

because it is the emotions themselves that he wishes to convey. These emotions can only be conveyed in suspension from action, in examples of the "tragique quotidien".

In "Poetry and Drama" Eliot includes a section on plays which are written in prose and called poetic. He notes that Maeterlinck's plays were greatly admired in his youth and that they are now scarcely read.

He continues :

These plays are in a different way (from Synge's) restricted in their subject matter ; and to say that the characterization in them is dim is an understatement. I do not deny that they have some poetic quality. But in order to be poetic in prose, a dramatist has to be so consistently poetic that his scope is very limited. Synge wrote plays about characters whose originals in life talked poetically, so he could make them talk poetry and remain real people. The poetic prose dramatist who has not this advantage, has to be too poetic. The poetic drama in prose is more limited by poetic convention or by our conventions as to what subject matter is poetic, than is the poetic drama in verse. 142

Eliot's specific objection to the plays stems from his a priori disapproval of the mixed genres of poetry and drama ; dramatic poetry is a genre of its own which should obey certain laws : the subject matter should be actively dramatic, with characterisation and climax, while the appropriate verse-form should also be found. Eliot is short-sighted with regard to Maeterlinck. Firstly, Maeterlinck's prose has the characteristics of free verse ; the refrains and leitmotif constructions have the rhythmic patterns of poetry, and Maeterlinck was attempting in his early plays to write a kind of verse. One can therefore deny the premise that Maeterlinck was transcending boundaries between poetry and prose ; the subject matter of his early plays is poetic and poetically expressed, at the opposite extreme from prosaic and didactic drama. Moreover, Eliot overlooks

the fact that Maeterlinck chose to express himself in ways which ignored Aristotelian dramatic conventions because of the specific purpose which lies behind his drama. Maeterlinck, by offering stage images of inarticulacy, and ^{by} depicting struggles with immense unknown forces, hoped to bring his audience closer to the realm of spirituality ; he desired his audience to experience and to come to terms with anguish. This type of religious drama is not concerned with characterisation ; by criticising the characterisation Eliot is choosing to ignore Maeterlinck's general purpose. Eliot cannot judge Maeterlinck's early symbolist plays on their author's own terms because he is sceptical of the theory that attempts to compensate for lack of philosophical definition in aesthetic form. Maeterlinck's struggle to create "drama within the limitations of art" was crippled by his sentimentalisch awareness of division and complexity. His effort to overcome this difficulty, by using the symbolist form, led to Eliot's distaste for a drama over-aesthetic and philosophically vague. Maeterlinck pursued his search for post-sentimentalisch awareness and discovered a personal philosophy which could be expressed in an ^{allegorical} dramatic form. This late allegorical work appeared in a philosophical collection and Eliot did not discover that Maeterlinck was capable of such an approach. Had Eliot read the play it is doubtful whether he would have received it as the modern equivalent of the perfection of Everyman. "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir" is dramatic but it possesses no musicality. In forsaking the complexity of symbolism for the clarity of allegory Maeterlinck also abandoned the aesthetic beauty of his early plays. He had desired an overtly ethereal drama. In 1890 he had considered the elimination of the human actor : "L'Être

humain sera-t-il remplacé par une ombre, un reflet, une projection de formes symboliques ou un être qui aurait les allures de la vie sans avoir la vie?" "Le Vieux¹⁴³ ^{qui ne veut pas Mourir} finally employs an obviously allegorical character ("L'Ombre") which replaces the suggestive lighting, sounds, and mysterious correspondences of the early works. The return to non-verisimilar drama is achieved through allegory which overtly demonstrates a personal philosophy.

The shift from symbolism to allegory is typical of the playwrights under review. Maeterlinck's very successful early symbolist plays rely on their form to suggest religious forces. Dissatisfaction with the lack of positive philosophy conveyed by the symbolist form, by definition involved with multiplicity, led Maeterlinck away from symbolism once he had formulated a philosophical position. His turn to allegory achieved a transcendence of the sentimentalisch dilemma at the cost of loss of subtlety. Once meaning is discovered outside the aesthetic beauty of the symbolist form so the form ceases to be necessary. In the next chapter I shall examine Yeats's approach to the question that now becomes obvious: must post-sentimentalisch drama necessarily exclude the allusiveness, the resonance and the poetry of symbolism?

...oo0oo...

Chapter Four

W. B. Yeats

i Yeats, Maeterlinck and "a more ideal drama"

The similarity of outlook in Yeats and Maeterlinck was not confined to their common preoccupations with the theatre and the occult. In a letter of 1888 to Katharine Tynan Yeats revealed an interest in the conception of metaphysics among birds and insects : "How the robins and sparrows in the virginia creeper are singing away! (...They) are all busy making their nests, carrying away small things from off the balcony and sometimes tugging at a grass blade in the garden underneath. I wonder what religion they have. When I was a child and used to watch the ants running about in Burnham Beeches, I used often to say, 'What religion do the ants have?' They must have one, you know. Yet perhaps not. Perhaps like the Arabs they have not time. Well, they must have some notion of the making of the world." The busy orderliness of the minutiae of the birds' and ants' existence is naturally associated by Yeats with the purposeful nature of a society at one because of a common religion. The comparison with man's "notion of the making of the world" is left to be appropriately inferred by the reader. In a curiously similar way Maeterlinck went to the fascinating intricacies of the behaviour of pigeons, bees, ants and spiders in studies which make continual appraisal, by contrast, of human behaviour. The fundamentally religious disposition of each man led him to perceive a coherence in lower forms of life which he found lacking in modern humanity. The need for such a harmony was

dominant in Yeats and Maeterlinck; both playwrights strove in their symbolic drama to express the relatedness which they felt to be desirable in life.

In an early section of Yeats's autobiography we find a significant and explicit declaration of religious faith :

I am very religious, and deprived by Huxley and Tyndall, whom I detested, of the simple-minded religion of my childhood, I had made a new religion, almost an infallible Church of poetic tradition [. . .] I wished for a world where I could discover this tradition perpetually, and not in pictures and in poems only, but in tiles round the chimney-piece and in the hangings that kept out the draught. I had even created a dogma : 'Because those imaginary people are created out of the deepest instinct of man, to be his measure and his norm, whatever I can imagine those mouths speaking may be the nearest I can go to truth.' When I listened they seemed always to speak of one thing only : they, their loves, every incident of their lives, were steeped in the supernatural. 2

This passage records a progression in the young Yeats : from the unquestioning acceptance in childhood of established religion he discovered the Angst occasioned by knowledge of the evolutionary process ; from the void of this position Yeats built up a new faith, discovering in the coherence of artistic expression the source of all truth. The world of Yeats's vision is close to that which William Morris tried to create by his impact on art and design. Morris was Yeats's "chief of men"³ ; "he more than any man of modern days tried to change the life of his time into the life of his dream"⁴. Yeats wished for a realisation of his own dream of a world of poetic tradition ; he broke with the Socialist League because theirs was a different kind of idealism, political and not religious : "They attacked religion, I said, or some such words, and yet there must

be a change of heart and only religion could make it. What was the use of talking about some new revolution putting all things right, when the change must come, if come it did, with astronomical slowness (. . .)?"⁵

The evolutionary programme which Yeats envisaged was an attempt to achieve for his own country the harmonious state which he called after Dante "Unity of Being". Like Morris, Yeats looked to the naiv medieval world as a model for his new culture : "Morris had never seemed to care greatly for any poet later than Chaucer and though I preferred Shakespeare to Chaucer I begrudged my own preference. Had not Europe shared one mind and heart, until both mind and heart began to break into fragments a little before Shakespeare's birth?"⁶ Yeats's aim to achieve "mythological coherence"⁷ demonstrates his longing for culture to return to the condition of unity that he envisaged as being characteristic of medieval Europe.

Yeats's abhorrence of the naturalistic explanation of the universe led him to seek a new faith ; the supernatural world which he hoped could be made evident through symbolic art might be demonstrated for a wide audience. Both Yeats and Maeterlinck sought religious truth and developed an anti-realistic poetic and symbolic drama. The sympathy of Yeats for Maeterlinck in this respect must be stressed even if we accept that obvious Maeterlinckian influence on Yeats's plays is lacking. The important indirect influence of Maeterlinck helped Yeats by his own admission to embark upon an art opposed to naturalism. In artistic expression naturalism confines itself to the depiction of a world devoid of metaphysics. Yeats on the contrary desired to express a faith in metaphysics, thus he went to symbolism as his mode. News from Paris

gave Yeats reassurance that other artists were thinking on similar lines : "Arthur Symons brought back from Paris stories of Verhaeren and Maeterlinck, and so brought me confirmation, as I thought"⁸. Arthur Symons, the crucial go-between for Yeats and Maeterlinck, was arguably the most important catalyst in Yeats's career. In Yeats's determination to "seek unity as deliberately as it had been sought by theologian, poet, sculptor, architect, from the eleventh to the thirteenth century"⁹ he felt that he could do for Ireland what his fragmented country could not do for itself. Symbolism did not lead to a literature which could overcome Ireland's dissension ; it did lead to Yeats's complex private mythology and, armed with the knowledge of A Vision, Yeats felt protected against "the chaos of the world".¹⁰

In 1899 Arthur Symons dedicated to Yeats his The Symbolist Movement in Literature. By this date the Irish Literary Theatre had come into being. Symons describes Yeats as "the chief representative" of the symbolist movement in the English language, the Irish literary movement being one of the expressions of what Symons calls the "principle" of symbolism. Symons and Yeats shared an aesthetic : "all the while we were working as well as thinking out a philosophy of art ; you, at all events, creating beautiful things, as beautiful, it seems to me, as anything that is being done in our time". Symons makes it clear that mysticism is Yeats's "natural direction" ; he is certain that Yeats will be a sympathetic reader of the volume.¹¹ Yeats was sympathetic but he was also critical. He spent some time in reading the volume thoroughly and in his own analysis of symbolism he tried to reach greater philosophical depth : "My essay on Symbolism has grown to be a rather elaborate thing -

about four times as long as I expected[. .] It is I think good[. .] Now that I have had to read Symons's book very carefully I have found it curiously vague in its philosophy. He has not really thought about it and contradicts himself sometimes in the same sentence, but there is a great deal of really very fine criticism."¹² At the very beginning of "The Symbolism of Poetry" Yeats acknowledges his respect for Symons's "subtle book".¹³ It is worth examining the essay before considering the impact of Maeterlinck's work on Yeats. His first point is that all artists have maintained a critical philosophy of their own art. The aesthetic of the new art, which follows the "externalities" of "the scientific movement" in literature, is that of symbolism. Here Yeats makes his first definition of symbolism as "the element of evocation, of suggestion". Yeats goes on to discuss "the continuous indefinable symbolism which is the substance of all style". In isolation from Yeats's analysis it is difficult to appreciate the assumption that the illustrative lines from Burns are "perfectly symbolical":

The white moon is setting behind the white wave,
And Time is setting with me, O!

Yeats points out that in these lines the "arrangement of colours and sounds and forms" perfectly evokes an emotion of melancholy which cannot be evoked by any other arrangement. By stressing the unchanging value of the emotional evocation Yeats is demonstrating how Burns or any other great poet perfectly captures in his style an emotion; the lines are "perfectly symbolical" because, as a result of the arrangement of "moon and wave and whiteness and setting Time and the last melancholy cry", an

emotion is communicated : feeling is translated into words.

Yeats stresses that symbols which are metaphors "are the most perfect of all, because the most subtle, outside of pure sound". The sentiment here seems particularly Pateresque ; with his statement Yeats seems to be accepting that music is the most perfect of the arts in that it is more subtle than language. At the same time as Yeats echoes Pater he also anticipates Beckett's comment, "My work is a matter of fundamental sounds"¹⁴. Here Beckett seems to be aligning his art with the symbolist aesthetic. This alignment is emphasised when Beckett goes on to say that he cannot "manage"¹⁵ to probe into his own reasons for creating the characters and situation of Endgame. Beckett's art must be interpreted by the audience and each spectator may interpret the "fundamental sounds" in a different way. His art acts in the subtle, indefinable yet very meaningful way of music and of "pure sound".

Yeats's next comment in "The Symbolism of Poetry" helps to elucidate Beckett's work : "All sounds, all colours, all forms, either because of their preordained energies or because of long association, evoke indefinable and yet precise emotions". The particular "musical relation" of sounds, colours and forms evokes an emotion precise but not yielding to precise definition. We feel the emotion but we cannot define it in intellectual terms. Yeats's deep conviction of the tremendously profound function of the poet is beautifully expressed : "Because an emotion does not exist, or does not become perceptible and active among us, till it has found its expression, in colour or in sound or in form, or in all of these, and because no two modulations or arrangements of these evoke the same emotion, poets and painters and musicians, and in a less degree because

their effects are momentary, day and night and cloud and shadow, are continually making and unmaking mankind." Yeats's belief in magic is extended to the magical power of symbolic literature ; the function of the artist is that of enchanter and hypnotist who lures his audience into a new, more meaningful reality : "The purpose of rhythm, it has always seemed to me, is to prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols."

Yeats distinguishes two distinct types of symbol. "Intellectual" symbols "evoke ideas alone, or ideas mingled with emotions; and outside the very definite traditions of mysticism and the less definite criticism of certain modern poets, these alone are called symbols". "Emotional" symbols, such as Burns's lines, are in a separate category. The cross and the crown of thorns are cited as examples of "intellectual" symbols. Although Yeats dismisses "intellectual" symbols as "the playthings of the allegorist or the pedant", symbols which "soon pass away", by the time of A Vision Yeats had come to find that "emotional" symbols alone could not satisfy his need to create a religious art form. The purely "emotional" and metaphorical symbolic arrangement, evocative and indefinable, was supplemented in the later Yeats by "intellectual" symbolism. Yeats eventually found symbols to express the synthesis of "ideas mingled with emotions". This process of development from "emotional" to "intellectual" symbolism can be briefly illustrated with

reference to the three plays which I shall examine in detail. In The Shadowy Waters the sea, voyage, birds and net symbols evoke emotion ; the rose and cross, it is true, evoke certain ideas from Rosicrucianism, but the whole effect is one of hypnotic rhythm produced by "emotional" symbols. The Hour-Glass makes use of "intellectual" symbols : the hour-glass itself, the Angel, and the concepts of Hell, Heaven and Purgatory convey specific ideas ; the play also contains lines which, in the "emotional" way of Burns's lines, are "perfectly symbolical" :

I hear the wind a-blow,
I hear the grass a-grow,
And all that I know, I know. 16

In The Cat and the Moon Yeats uses symbols which combine "intellectual" and "emotional" qualities. The "intellectual" symbols from his system - moon, saint, fool and hunchback - also retain an evocative nature outside ideas. It is this play that achieves the type of "intellectual" symbols which evoke "ideas mingled with emotions".

The distinction between "intellectual" and "emotional" symbols seems not to be followed through when Yeats discovers "intellectual" symbols in Maeterlinck's early plays - Maeterlinck's forests, castles and wells seem to be "emotional" - however the unusual classification is explained by Edward Engelberg who has made a special study of Yeats's aesthetic.¹⁷ Yeats was considering the disadvantages for the artist in our time : modern symbols must be created by intellectual effort. Moreover, as Yeats then thought, the symbols of the moderns depend ultimately on a tradition of ideas existing in the "great memory". When we return to Yeats's essay we find another explanation. Yeats's contrast between

Shakespeare's use of "emotional" symbols and Dante's use of "intellectual" symbols implies that the artist who lacks a religious or philosophical system goes to "emotional" symbols and, conversely, that the artist who does possess such a system will use "intellectual" symbols directly from the religious or philosophical background. Perhaps Yeats meant to imply that Villiers and Maeterlinck were striving towards a religious system in their symbolism; he notes that they have in their work foreshadowed "the new sacred book, of which all the arts, as somebody has said, are beginning to dream". Modern art that is truly religious must involve "intellectual" symbols. In the medieval world the Everyman author had used "emotional" symbols as well as "intellectual" symbols in relation to a religious system, and this solution was to be Yeats's in his own drama.

Yeats's drama is discussed in an enthusiastic essay by Arthur Symons. The essay does not involve an overt comparison with Maeterlinck. When, however, Symons stresses that Yeats's characters "speak to one another not out of the heart or out of the mind, but out of a deeper consciousness than either heart or mind, which is perhaps what we call the soul",¹⁹ he is very likely recalling the words he used to describe one of Maeterlinck's aims: Maeterlinck attempted "to render the soul and the soul's atmosphere".²⁰ Symons found that both dramatists have attempted to express the most profound areas of human experience. We can compare the two following passages: "The silences of these plays are like the pauses in music; we have the consciousness, under all the beauty and clearness and precision of the words we hear, of something unsaid, something which the soul broods over in silence."²¹ and "The secret

of things which is just beyond the most subtle words, the secret of the expressive silences, has always been clearer to Maeterlinck than to most people ; and, in his plays, he has elaborated an art of sensitive, taciturn, and at the same time highly ornamental simplicity, which has come nearer than any other art to being the voice of silence".²² The overriding characteristic of each dramatist is an extraordinarily heightened sense of mysticism. Yeats described himself as a "Churchless mystic"²³ : the title is equally suitable for Maeterlinck. This fundamental kinship becomes apparent when we test Yeats's reaction to Maeterlinck's essays and plays.

Laurence Alma Tadema translated Les Aveugles for the Scott library in 1895. The Sightless immediately captured Yeats's attention, and he wrote to Clivia Shakespear :

I should greatly like to have a talk with you about Maeterlinck. His play about the blind people and the dead priest in the snow is delightful. I feel about his things generally however that they differ from really great work in lacking that ceaseless revery about life which we call wisdom. In all the old dramatists, Greek and English, one feels that they are all the time thinking wonderful, and rather mournful, things about their puppets, and every now and then they utter their thoughts in a sudden line or embody them in some unforeseen action. I said to Verlaine, when I saw him last year, 'Does not Maeterlinck touch the nerves sometimes when he should touch the heart?' 'Ah yes', said Verlaine, 'he is a dear good fellow and my very good friend, but a little bit of a mountebank.' This touching the nerves alone, seems to me to come from the lack of revery. He is however of immense value as a force helping people to understand a more ideal drama.

24

Here Yeats voices the standard criticism of Maeterlinck : behind the characters and situations in the plays there is no wise assessment of life. Maeterlinck would have replied that he wanted to "touch the nerves" of his

audience in order to evoke l'angoisse, a sensation of unease and instability in face of the unknown. In the early plays it was out of the question to "touch the heart" because, at this time, Maeterlinck characterised himself as a quester for wisdom. Yeats's complaint in this direction is similar to Eliot's : the dissatisfaction with Maeterlinck's plays stems from the dissatisfaction with a vague philosophy that embodies contradiction and anomaly. It is amusing to note that Yeats slips in Verlaine's comment in order to strengthen his own opinion. One cannot help feeling that Verlaine was not as good a friend of Maeterlinck as he tried to pretend. It is too glib to call Maeterlinck "a mountebank" when Maeterlinck scrupulously noted each reversal in his philosophy. Yeats's two positive comments are interesting to remember. He admired Les Aveugles which, with its key images of blindness and a saviour, is recalled in The Cat and the Moon. He also appreciated Maeterlinck's value in the propagation of "a more ideal drama" such as Yeats himself was endeavouring to achieve.

Yeats found L'Ciseau Bleu "popular", "meretricious" and "pretentious". Maeterlinck's féerie in performance caused Yeats to laugh at the Belgian playwright's gullibility. The difference between the popular allegory of L'Ciseau Bleu and the symbolism of Les Aveugles can be measured by Yeats's remarks. His reaction to seeing the English translation of L'Ciseau Bleu (The Blue Bird) in performance was direct : "I thought it very bad, but that it might have a popular success in the wake of Peter Pan. There were great things, an excellent cat and dog who quarrelled always and a delightful personification of sugar but my chief impression was of a rather meretricious pantomime. The audience

was delighted for they had expected a masterpiece and boredom. I have not read the play and so do not know if it is as poor as it seemed, a mere libretto for the scene painter with here and there a pretentious piece of traditional poetry. It is probably another of the gasping things Maeterlinck, struggling well beyond his nature, does to please his wife, who was there last night, in a red turban, looking like Messalina. I amused somebody by saying that Maeterlinck was like a little boy who has jumped up behind a taxi cab and can't get off." ²⁵ In his criticism Yeats noticeably holds himself aloof from the rest of the audience, those "delighted" masses who "had expected a masterpiece and boredom". Popular drama does not interest Yeats; he implies that Maeterlinck has subdued his impulse to write symbolist drama in order to become popular as well as "to please his wife". It is plain at any rate which aspect of Maeterlinck's talent Yeats finds preferable.

The assessments provoked by Yeats's reading The Sightless and watching a performance of The Blue Bird were made in letters to friends; they are balanced by the public pronouncements on Maeterlinck in Yeats's two reviews for The Bookman in 1897. Alfred Sutro's translation of Maeterlinck's first volume of essays, The Treasure of the Humble, was announced by Yeats in dramatic terms and in the collection he found a good deal with which he could identify:

We are in the midst of a great revolution of thought, which is touching literature and speculation alike; an insurrection against everything which assumes that the external and material are the only fixed things, the only standards of reality (. . .) this insurrection has come with a generation young enough to have escaped from servitude to the scientific philosophers, and M. Maeterlinck, who took the red bonnet from the hands of Villiers de Lisle Adam (sic),

is among the most inspired of its leaders [...] the wonder of the book is that M. Maeterlinck has dwelled so long with these dim powers, these mysterious principalities, which are the deep below all deeps, that he writes of them, not with the arid vehemence of a combatant or an innovator, but with a beautiful pathos and tenderness [...]. The book lacks the definiteness of the great mystics, but it has countless passages of this curious pathetic beauty, and shows us common arts and things, with the light of the great mystics, and a new light that was not theirs, beating upon them.

26

Yeats's only cavil is with the vagueness of the essays in contrast with "the definiteness of the great mystics" but the point is significant in the light of "the definiteness" of his own mystical work A Vision.²⁷ It is always Maeterlinck's lack of definite philosophical statement that troubles Yeats. In his review Yeats quotes approvingly from Sutro's translation of the essays "L'Étoile" and "Le Réveil de l'âme" passages which convey Maeterlinck's ideas about history and destiny. Yeats, trying to establish a new spiritual epoch in Ireland, immediately recognised the parallel between his own rebellion against the prose drama that flourished on the Dublin stage at the end of the nineteenth century and Maeterlinck's "insurrection" in Paris against naturalism. Yeats saw Maeterlinck as an ally in a revolution. The change would come through literary effort such as his own and Maeterlinck's, bringing about a spiritual age, an awareness of "the soul". In "The Celtic Element in Literature" Yeats linked the symbolist movement with the Irish cultural revival :

The reaction against the rationalism of the eighteenth century has mingled with a reaction against the materialism of the nineteenth century, and the symbolical movement, which has come to perfection in Germany in Wagner, in

England in the Pre-Raphaelites, in France in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Mallarmé, and in Belgium in Maeterlinck, and has stirred the imagination of Ibsen and D'Annunzio, is certainly the only movement that is saying new things. The arts by brooding upon their own intensity have become religious, and are seeking, as I think Verhaeren has said, to create a sacred book. They must, as religious thought has always done, utter themselves through legends (. . .) the Irish legends move among known woods and seas, and have so much of a new beauty that they may well give the opening century its most memorable symbols. 28

Envisaging political cohesion as a result of literary endeavour, Yeats planned a theatrical renaissance, Lady Gregory made available the Irish myths and Douglas Hyde founded the Gaelic League. The complex re-awakening of the Arts in Ireland was seen by Yeats as a religious campaign: "We who care deeply about the arts find ourselves the priesthood of an almost forgotten faith, and we must, I think, if we would win the people again, take upon ourselves the method and the fervour of a priesthood (. . .) We must baptize as well as preach."²⁹ Yeats's intention was to re-create in Ireland a cultural era when the arts could be inseparable from religion. In his essay "Ireland and the Arts" Yeats proposes that those artists committed to a religion should write about their faith. The committed artists would then reach people with the same faith, creating a profound reaction to their literature. Moreover, Yeats continues, those who write without a decided background should exploit Irish myth and legend, making these their surrogate faith, thus tying art once more with religion. Yeats's sympathy with Maeterlinck's account of the new spiritual epoch and with his "more ideal drama" can be understood in the light of these aims.

In Yeats's dramatic theory we can find certain passages inspired by

Maeterlinck. Yeats agrees with Maeterlinck that intense feeling is inexpressible in the language of prose realism : "Educated and well-bred people do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves, and they have no artistic and charming language except light persiflage and no powerful language at all, and when they are deeply moved they look silently into the fireplace."³⁰ This image of people who sit by the fireplace, who are incapable of uttering a word in their great distress, is in a way comparable with Maeterlinck's picture of the tragic representative of everyday, the old man who waits in his armchair for the destiny that he has been allotted. But Yeats draws his conclusions very differently. He is convinced that modern educated people cannot be represented in tragic drama because of their inarticulacy. The solution is that there must be "an old wives' tale"³¹ in drama, an extravagant digression from reality such as one discovers in the tales of the folk. The essential mythic quality that Yeats desires is comparable with that achieved by Maeterlinck's legendary drama. However, whereas Maeterlinck is non-specific in his depiction of place and characters, Yeats's effort is towards dramatising the Irish myths. Both Yeats and Maeterlinck endeavoured to create what Yeats called "emotion of multitude", the empathy of an audience with a representative and mythic action. Yeats acknowledged that he had learnt how to achieve such an effect from Ibsen and Maeterlinck :

I have been wondering why I dislike the clear and logical construction which seems necessary if one is to succeed on the modern stage [. . .] this construction, which all the world has learnt from France, has everything of high literature except the emotion of multitude. The Greek drama has got the emotion of multitude from its chorus, which called up famous sorrows, even all the gods and all heroes, to witness, as it were, some well-ordered fable,

some action separated but for this from all but itself (. . .)
 The Shakespearian drama gets the emotion of multitude
 out of the sub-plot which copies the main plot, much as
 a shadow upon the wall copies one's body in the firelight (. . .)
 and very commonly the sub-plot is the main plot working
 itself out in more ordinary men and women, and so
 doubly calling up before us the image of multitude. Ibsen
 and Maeterlinck have, on the other hand, created a new
 form, for they get multitude from the wild duck in the
 attic, or from the crown at the bottom of the fountain,
 vague symbols that set the mind wandering from idea to
 idea, emotion to emotion. Indeed all the great masters
 have understood that there cannot be great art without the
 little limited life of the fable, which is always better the
 simpler it is, and the rich, far-wandering, many-imagined
 life of the half-seen world beyond it. 32

The "clear and logical construction" of the "well-made" play is rejected by Yeats because of its one-dimensional look at a particular situation with no wide application beyond its rigid confines. In this type of play there is nothing to suggest that the situation is relevant to the human condition in general. Because of this narrowness, an audience will take in the play objectively and there will be no identification or involvement with a profound truth. In Athenian drama and in Shakespeare's great tragedies the emphasis is the opposite: here are actions which the audience will recognise as timeless with reference to all humanity. The reaction of the audience to the constructions which emphasise multitude - the chorus in Greek drama and the sub-plot in Shakespeare - is "this could include me" and a common emotion is generated. A similar type of recognition is at work, Yeats suggests, in The Wild Duck and Pelléas et Mélisande, in which plays symbolic technique conveys the enigmatic quality and mystery of existence. "Emotion of multitude" is carried in symbols which retain suggestiveness while seeming to offer explanation. When Mélisande drops her crown a whole chain of tragedy is set in motion, thus the crown accrues a meaningfulness related to the mystery of life and

destiny. The Wild Duck uses its central symbol as departure point of theme and crux of the entire play, yet that symbol resists final analysis ; at the same time as the wild duck takes on a metaphysical quality, it becomes expressive of man's plight, not merely of Hedvig's or of old Ekdal's, or of any other character's in the play. Yeats is struggling in his own plays for a similar irreducible power.

In Yeats's 1897 review for The Bookman of Sutro's translation of Aglavaine et Sélysette he repeats the criticism that he had made in his personal correspondence : "the serious fault of his (Maeterlinck's) best plays, even of 'Les Aveugles' and 'L'Intruse', is that they have not the crowning glory of great plays, that continual revery about destiny that is, as it were, the perfect raiment of beautiful emotions".³³ Yeats discusses the characters of Aglavaine et Sélysette in the light of this : "Méleander and Aglavaine, his most prominent persons, continually say things, which they would say differently or not at all, if their maker were only thinking of them as persons in the play".³⁴ Yeats's opinion that Maeterlinck is not thinking of his stage personages as characters in their own right must be endorsed, for Aglavaine and Méléandre (Meleander in the English) continually voice Maeterlinck's own philosophical ideas in an un-muted way. As we have seen, Maeterlinck realised that the play's success is only partial. The move towards individualisation in Méléandre and Aglavaine is stilted, thwarted by Maeterlinck's tendency to utter philosophical speeches through them : they seem to be mouth-pieces alone. He balanced this propensity in his conception of Sélysette, Mélégrane and Yssalene. These last three characters seem to be moved by destiny and the working out of the fatalistic action is achieved at the cost of realistic

characterisation. Yeats recognises this uneasy balance, noting that Maeterlinck handles more successfully the characters propelled by fate : "M. Maeterlinck cannot speak through their lips, but must let them speak as their destinies would have them speak".³⁵ Yeats's main point is that the three most successful characters "speak more movingly than the persons of 'Les Aveugles' or 'L'Intruse', for though still hardly more than shadows and cries, they have each, as the persons in Shakespeare have, their portion of wisdom, while all they say is beautiful with the pathos of their little interests and their extreme weakness".³⁶ Maeterlinck, in Yeats's eyes, had progressed towards the wisdom which Yeats had found lacking in L'Intruse and Les Aveugles because "he has found a philosophy in his search for the quintessence, the philosophy of his beautiful 'Trésor des Humbles', and he would have his persons speak out of its wisdom".³⁷ Aglavaine et Sélysette is awkward because Maeterlinck had not discovered how to handle the philosophical element in digestible form. The opinions expressed by Yeats in this review are of considerable interest with regard to his own philosophical position.

Yeats's drama was based on undeviating purposefulness : he was determined to bring about a spiritual culture. He wrote : "All our art is but the putting our faith and the evidence of our faith into words or forms and our faith is in ecstasy".³⁸ The ordering of faith in art was essential for Yeats ; he wrote to his father : "Much of your thought resembles mine in An Alphabet (the first title of Per Amica Silentia Lunae) but mine is part of a religious system more or less logically worked out, a system which will I hope interest you as a form of poetry. I find the setting it all in order has helped my verse, has given me a new

framework and new patterns. One goes on year after year gradually getting the disorder of one's mind in order and this is the real impulse to create. Till one has expressed a thing it is like an untidy, unswept, undusted corner of a room. When it is expressed one feels cleaner, and more elegant, as it were, but less profound so I suppose something is lost in expression."³⁹ This statement follows from the early determination of Yeats to found a Church of poetic tradition. A Vision was later to fulfil the functions that Yeats mentions : it brought order to his thought and it ordered his subsequent artistic creation. Yeats felt it vital to his art that he should have a particular "wisdom" to impart, a system of reference to which he could allude and from which he could take images. Yeats was very conscious of the neoplatonic role of the poet as seer, envisaging himself as a shaman equipped with powers to transcend the human condition. That he saw as his function the communication of divine revelation is made clear in the following passage from a letter to Clivia Shakespear : "I have really finished A Vision (. . .) I write very much for young men between twenty and thirty, as at that age, and younger, I wanted to feel that any poet I cared for - Shelley let us say - saw more than he told of, had in some sense seen into the mystery. I read more into certain poems than they contained, to satisfy my interest. The young men I write for may not read my Vision - they may care too much for poetry - but they will be pleased that it exists. Even my simplest poems will be the better for it (. . .) I have constructed a myth, but then one can believe in a myth - one only assents to philosophy." ⁴⁰

The difference between "belief" and "assent" is important here. Myth is different in kind from philosophy : one either accepts a philosophy as

truth or one does not. Myth cannot be so readily dismissed because it does not set out to be a logical explanation of events ; rather, myth employs symbols which suggest explanation but which are finally inexplicable. Jung's perceptive comments may usefully be invoked at this point :

Has it not yet been observed that all religious statements contain logical contradictions and assertions that are impossible in principle, that this is in fact the very essence of religious assertion? As witness to this we have Tertullian's avowal : "And the Son of God is dead, which is worthy of belief because it is absurd. And when buried He rose again, which is certain because it is impossible." [.] Oddly enough the paradox is one of our most valued spiritual possessions, while uniformity of meaning is a sign of weakness. Hence a religion becomes inwardly impoverished when it loses or reduces its paradoxes ; but their multiplication enriches because only the paradox comes anywhere near to comprehending the fulness of life. Non-ambiguity and non-contradiction are one-sided and thus unsuited to express the incomprehensible. 41

Yeats's art is dedicated to the pursuit of the paradox, ambiguity and suggestiveness of religious statement as Jung defines it.

I shall concentrate on three plays to demonstrate the development of Yeats's symbolic drama. The Shadowy Waters is an early play ; Yeats records that in its writing he was influenced by French symbolism. The Hour-Class is a morality play which is based to some extent on Everyman. In The Cat and the Moon, a Noh-influenced play which anticipates Waiting for Godot, Yeats achieves a form combining song, dance, and an action that can be interpreted on a number of levels. This play satisfies the requirements of "drama within the limitations of art" : form is welded harmoniously with content, the symbols are highly resonant

and Yeats's personal myth is crucial to the full understanding of the action. The great success of the play is that Yeats has achieved a form flexible enough to accommodate an action which is related to the system but which is neither contrived nor restrictively allegorical. Maeterlinck, in "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir", had finally reached a philosophical position that his play demonstrates but the result is flat and undramatic. Yeats succeeds in this respect where Maeterlinck fails. In a final section I shall examine the reactions of Shaw and Eliot to Yeats.

ii "The Shadowy Waters"

In "The Tragic Generation" Yeats recorded the debt which he owed to Arthur Symons's translations of Mallarmé and Verlaine. He acknowledges that those translations from Mallarmé "may have given elaborate form (. . .) to The Shadowy Waters".⁴² When Yeats was introduced to modern French poetry by Symons he had read Axel "or was still reading it, so slowly and with so much difficulty, that certain passages had an exaggerated importance, while all remained so obscure that I could without much effort imagine that here at last was the Sacred Book I longed for".⁴³ Yeats's interpreters have for a long time tried to establish the French derivation of The Shadowy Waters. The critical controversy has the following history. In 1931 Edmund Wilson traced Yeats's relation to the French Symbolist milieu in Axel's Castle. Although Wilson dismisses Yeatsian drama - "Yeats's plays have little dramatic importance because Yeats himself has little sense of drama" -

he does mention that Yeats "has produced a theatre somewhat similar to Maeterlinck's. The productions of a greater poet, equipped with a richer and more solid mythology, these plays do, however, take place in the same sort of twilight world as Maeterlinck's - a world in which the characters are less often dramatic personalities than disembodied broodings and longings."⁴⁴ In 1943 C.M. Bowra was unequivocal: "The most popular manifestation of Symbolism was the dramatic art of Maeterlinck, in which the characters have no personality but are symbols of the poet's dreams. It is from this tradition that Yeats's drama arose."⁴⁵ He specified the important position of The Shadowy Waters as "the crown of the poetry which Yeats wrote under the example of Mallarmé as Symons explained it to him. In it the method of Hérodiade is carried to a highly personal conclusion, hardly in authentic drama but at least in dramatic lyric according to Symbolist rules." Bowra goes on to compare the play with Axel's full discussion of "the issues of life and death", where "everything is raised to the same pitch of rhetoric". "Yeats's style", he adds, "is not rhetoric but it is rhetorical."⁴⁶ The assumptions of Edmund Wilson and C.M. Bowra were questioned by William York Tindall in 1945. Although Axel was a prominent influence, he argues, Yeats "was a symbolist poet long before he had heard of the French".⁴⁷ Yeats's occult studies, his reading of Swedenborg and Boehme (the mystics whom Maeterlinck also revered), his intimate knowledge of Blake, Shelley and Rossetti: from these Yeats developed his symbolism. Robert C'Driscoll has recently taken this line in his study for the Dolmen Press: "To assume that Yeats acquired his knowledge of symbolism from Arthur Symons and the French symbolistes is no longer possible."⁴⁸

It is true to say that Yeats's faith in symbolism fitted in admirably with what he knew of the French symbolists, and it is also certain that Yeats's play was to some extent influenced by Axël. In Harry Goldgar's 1950 article for Revue de Littérature Comparée⁴⁹ there is a detailed study of the points of connection between Axël and The Shadowy Waters. A convincing parallel is drawn between the plays : the use of Rosicrucian symbols, the inexorable destiny to which the lovers are drawn, the lyrical love scenes and idealistic visions, Dectora's re-enactment of Sara's abrupt change from menacing hostility to passionate love, and the similarity of the dénouements indicate the influence on Yeats. Yeats's faith in magic had made him particularly open to Axël. The epilogue to Per Amica Silentia Lunae stresses how congenial Yeats found the Paris of the eighteen-nineties : "When I went for the first or second time Mallarmé had just written : 'All our age is full of the trembling of the veil of the Temple.' One met everywhere young men of letters who talked of magic (. . .) Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, the haughtiest of men, had but lately died. I had read his Axël slowly and laboriously as one reads a sacred book - my French was very bad - and had applauded it upon the stage."⁵⁰ Two years before the 1894 visit to Paris, Yeats had written of his study of magic : "It is surely absurd to hold me 'weak' or otherwise because I chose to persist in a study which I decided deliberately four or five years ago to make, next to my poetry, the most important pursuit of my life (. . .) If I had not made magic my constant study I could not have written a single word of my Blake book, nor would The Countess Kathleen have ever come to exist. The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write. It holds to

my work the same relation that the philosophy of Godwin held to the work of Shelley and I have always considered myself a voice of what I believe to be a greater renaissance - the revolt of the soul against the intellect - now beginning in the world."⁵¹ In 1892 Yeats was attempting to create a mythological system to which his work could relate. Four years before Maeterlinck wrote Le Trésor des humbles, and five years before Yeats reviewed Sutro's translation, Yeats comments on "the revolt of the soul against the intellect", anticipating Maeterlinck's similar remarks in "Le Réveil de l'âme".

The Shadowy Waters is a product of Yeats's faith in magic. In 1901 Yeats offered a definition of magic which stressed the central importance of symbols. We recall while reading it Maeterlinck's great interest in the occult (Le Grand Secret is a history of the occult) and in mysticism, and his belief in the communion of souls which he outlines in his essay "Silence". Yeats asserts his belief :

I believe in the practice and philosophy of what we have agreed to call magic, in what I must call the evocation of spirits, though I do not know what they are, in the power of creating magical illusions, in the visions of truth in the depths of the mind when the eyes are closed; and I believe in three doctrines, which have, as I think, been handed down from early times, and been the foundations of nearly all magical practices. These doctrines are :-

- (1) That the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
- (2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
- (3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols.

52

Yeats's conception of a "great mind" is curiously similar to Jung's

definition of the collective unconscious :

A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the personal unconscious. But this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the collective unconscious. I have chosen the term "collective" because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us. ⁵³

According to Jung, the repetition of archetypal symbols in dream and literature and myth establishes the existence of a collective unconscious; he finds that the most common symbol for the unconscious is water. In the course of Yeats's essay on magic, he equates magicians and artists in their use of symbols, "the greatest of all powers".⁵⁴ In The Shadowy Waters Yeats attempts to recreate a pattern from Anima Mundi ; by the use of archetypal symbols, in particular the symbolic sea, by the use of Irish heroic characters and by reference to Axél.

In the long process of revision lasting almost thirty years - from conception in 1883 to the final published version of 1911 - we find Yeats attempting to erase from his text the poetic vagueness and lack of dramatic qualities which he had deplored in Maeterlinck's early plays. Michael Sidnell, George Mayhew and David Clark have investigated the long evolution of The Shadowy Waters through the manuscripts and published versions, providing an invaluable guide to the changing ideas behind the play.⁵⁵ They note that influence from Axél does not occur before the 1906 published version.⁵⁶ The text on which I shall concentrate is the final version

published in Collected Plays. This 1911 text is based on the acting version of 1907 with a few minor cuts.⁵⁷ In November 1906 Yeats tried to clarify his procedure over the years and he took the opportunity to offer advice to his audience :

I began "The Shadowy Waters" when I was a boy, and when I published a version of it six or seven years ago, the plot had been so often re-arranged and was so overgrown with symbolical ideas that the poem was obscure and vague. It found its way on to the stage more or less by accident, for our people had taken it as an exercise on the speaking of verse, and it pleased a few friends, though it must have bewildered and bored the greater portion of the audience. The present version is practically a new poem, and is, I believe, sufficiently simple, appealing to no knowledge more esoteric than is necessary for the understanding of any of the more characteristic love poems of Shelley or of Petrarch. If the audience will understand it as a fairy-tale, and not look too anxiously for a meaning, all will be well. 58

Yeats was finally presenting his play as a beautiful tapestry of symbols which should not be penetrated for meaning. He had commented that "My Shadowy Waters is magical and mystical beyond anything I have done (. . .) I wish to make it a kind of grave ecstasy."⁵⁹ The play was "wild"⁶⁰ and involved "the whole story of the relation of man and woman in symbol".⁶¹ These early remarks suggest a play entirely removed from actuality, and the 1900 version was later criticised by Yeats as "remote", "impersonal", "more aritual than a human story" and "deliberately without human characters".⁶² Yeats appreciated the need for revision when he had seen the play in performance in July 1905 at an international Theosophical Congress in London. Maeterlinck was in the audience on this occasion.⁶³ Yeats's play would surely have impressed him, although we have no record of his reaction, as an example of legendary drama

comparable with his Pelléas et Mélisande. In the subsequent revision, however, Yeats tried to rid his play of its Maeterlinckian qualities.

"Needless symbols" were removed ; the characters were made to "answer each other".⁶⁴ Yeats maintained that he had learnt what is dramatic, that poetry without drama is not interesting on-stage, and in later plays he would strive for simultaneous poetic and dramatic qualities. To Arthur Symons he wrote :

I have learned a great deal about poetry generally in the process (of revision), and one thing I am now quite sure of is that all the finest poetry comes logically out of the fundamental action, and that the error of late periods like this is to believe that some things are inherently poetical, and to try and pull them on to the scene at every moment. It is just these seeming inherently poetical things that wear out. My Shadowy Waters was full of them, and the fundamental thinking was nothing, and that gave the whole poem an impression of weakness. There was no internal life pressing for expression through the characters. 65

Yeats had learnt from Symons's essay on Wagner that it could be excusable to leave some unanalysable emotional passages :

A certain passage had always seemed wrong to me, and after I had rewritten it several times it was still wrong. I then came on that paragraph where Wagner insists that a play must not appeal to the intelligence, but by being, if I remember rightly, a piece of self consistent life directly to the emotions. It was just one of those passages which seemed to have no very precise meaning till one brings actual experience to their understanding. Your essay is a substitute for more volumes than anything of the kind I have seen. 66

We can conclude from this that Yeats turned to Symons's essay with a certain relief. The recalcitrant passage could remain in its intellectual confusion. The final text of The Shadowy Waters is still confused.

A summary of the circumstances of the dramatic action was made by Yeats in 1906 and it is rewarding to examine these comments :

Once upon a time, when herons built their nests in old men's beards, Forgael, a Sea-King of ancient Ireland, was promised by certain human-headed birds love of a supernatural intensity and happiness. These birds were the souls of the dead, and he followed them over seas towards the sunset, where their final rest is. By means of a magic harp, he could call them about him when he would and listen to their speech. His friend Aibric, and the sailors of his ship, thought him mad, or that this mysterious happiness could come after death only, and that he and they were being lured to destruction. Presently they captured a ship, and found a beautiful woman upon it, and Forgael subdued her and his own rebellious sailors by the sound of his harp. The sailors fled upon the other ship, and Forgael and the woman drifted on alone following the birds, awaiting death and what comes after, or some mysterious transformation of the flesh, an embodiment of every lover's dream.

67

Yeats stresses the fairy-tale nature of the action with his opening line.

The quest is the staple of the féerie as Florence Fidler defines the genre in relation to L'Oiseau Bleu.⁶⁸ The quest for immortal love will involve the ecstasy which Yeats had wanted for the atmosphere of his play, and this framework seems appropriate for the expression of the relation of man and woman. We can understand from the summary alone that the protagonist is the type of magician-artist that Yeats sought to be. Forgael's magic harp is inseparable from him and with it he exercises control over the other characters. Yeats's aim seems to be to demonstrate the immense power of symbolic art - embodied on stage in the harp - and to show how such art can affect the rest of mankind who are not artists. The ending of the play, as Yeats summarises it, is ambiguous. Forgael and the woman either await death or "an embodiment of every lover's dream".

For an interpretation we must look closely at the play itself.

While the realistic stage scenery suggests a ship, Yeats specifies that "the sea or sky" beyond "is represented by a semicircular cloth of which nothing can be seen except a dark abyss".⁶⁹ Immediately we associate the voyage with the journey through life. The cosmic elements, envisaged as "a dark abyss", are unknown and mysterious. Several of Yeats's commentators note that the sea is a frequent image retaining the same meaning throughout the canon.⁷⁰ They point out Yeats's assertion that "Some neo-platonist, I forget who, describes the sea as a symbol of the drifting indefinite bitterness of life, and I believe there is like symbolism intended in the many Irish voyages to the islands of enchantment, or that there was, at any rate, in the mythology out of which these stories have been shaped." In his essay "Anima Mundi" Yeats pictures the "great mind" as a sea; this metaphor corresponds with Jung's discovery that the sea is a frequent symbol of the collective unconscious: "Our daily thought was certainly but the line of foam at the shallow edge of a vast luminous sea; Henry More's Anima Mundi, Wordsworth's 'immortal sea which brought us hither', and near whose edge the children sport, and in that sea there were some who swam or sailed, explorers who perhaps knew all its shores."⁷¹ The Shadowy Waters can be understood in the light of this statement and Yeats's note above about the meaning of the sea. Each character in the play has his or her personal mind and memory and they all voyage in life on the surface of the great mind. Forgael is responsible for the others' journey on his ship; the sailors point out their unease and convey their restlessness from the start. Forgael is the only one who longs to explore the great mind - until he ensnares Dectora - and the others retreat to the shore.

The down-to-earth qualities of the sailors are reflected in their longing for alcohol and sex. Yeats has finally made his sailors more realistic ; the Gaelic speech rhythms are reminiscent of those of Synge's characters, and the use of irony is a feature of Synge's style that Yeats captures : "It is a hard thing, age to be coming on me, and I not to get the chance of doing a robbery that would enable me to live quiet and honest to the end of my lifetime." Forgael is asleep at the opening of the play and when we hear him calling out he seems to occupy a strange dream world more profound than that of everyday reality. When the sailors recollect the appearance of the birds it is significant that these extraordinary creatures came at full moon in order to prophesy Forgael's eternal happiness. When Yeats later formulated his lunar system the fifteenth phase of full moon "is a phase of complete beauty",⁷² a supernatural and ideal region of existence unknown in terms of human life. It is therefore entirely appropriate that supernatural manifestations should occur at full moon ; the happiness with which the creatures lure Forgael is that of the ideal region of the fifteenth phase. The birds are the souls of the dead, Yeats tells us ; they suggest the freedom and spiritual power not accorded to mankind.

The sailors' desire to murder Forgael is thwarted by Aibric and the king awakens. He immediately refers to the birds, his "only pilots". Aibric opposes Forgael's vision of immortal love by pleading :

Turn the ship about,
Sail home again, be some fair woman's friend ;
Be satisfied to live like other men,
And drive impossible dreams away. The world
Has beautiful women to please every man.

Forgael introduces the idea that love in this world means deceit and a brief period of longing ; physical love, posing as "the giver of all p̄eace", is only a taste of the longed-for ecstasy. Aibric counters Forgael's bleak words. Seeking to console Forgael, he urges that perfect love is only the unattainable dream of youth. Forgael re-asserts that "What the world's million lips are thirsting for / Must be substantial somewhere." His kingly pride leads him to declare "I only of all living men shall find it." Forgael's next and very important speech involves Rosicrucian symbolism. Yeats introduces such images as rose⁷³ and cross in order to express the conviction that, except in moments of visionary revelation, universal truth can only be made clear to men by image and analogy. At the end of the speech, which is worth quoting in entirety, Forgael talks of "the abyss", the image which Yeats has established in his stage direction for the sea and sky, and which can be interpreted as a representation of the mysterious forces which control life. The sea of Anima Mundi, the sea on which Forgael voyages, will be penetrated by him :

I can see nothing plain ; all's mystery.
 Yet sometimes there's a torch inside my head
 That makes all clear, but when the light is gone
 I have but images, analogies,
 The mystic bread, the sacramental wine,
 The red rose where the two shafts of the cross,
 Body and soul, waking and sleep, death, life,
 Whatever meaning ancient allegorists
 Have settled on, are mixed into one joy.
 For what's the rose but that ? miraculous cries,
 Old stories about mystic marriages,
 Impossible truths ? But when the torch is lit
 All that is impossible is certain,
 I plunge in the abyss.

The "impossible truths" of all religions and myths ever known to man are

evidence of one permanent truth : of this Forgael is convinced when revelation comes to him. Immortal love is possible in a "mystic marriage".

Forgael's first glimpse of Dectora follows his vision of the birds circling over the masthead. He cannot understand their presence and does not immediately recognise Dectora as his partner in ideal love. He comes to the realisation that Dectora has been sent for him and warns her that the harp will be his means of keeping her. After Dectora's threatened suicide and the sailors' determined effort to murder Forgael, the enchanted harp achieves the sailors' submissive trance and Dectora's spellbound attention to the king. Yet the birds arrest Forgael, seeming to reproach him ; he admits his deception. Dectora remains ensnared. Although she half-remembers that her husband had been killed by the sailors she insists that she will now devote herself to Forgael. Forgael's moment of revelation has passed and he realises that he has "nothing for your eyes / But desolate waters and a battered ship". The birds cross the moon, the stage darkens ominously and, although Forgael is fearful, it is his and Dectora's destiny to follow them. The couple reject the jewels and spices offered by Aibric, just as Sara and Axél had relinquished the treasure, yet their rejection of Aibric's world is not understood as a decision of positive value : "He knows that he is taking you to death ; / He cannot contradict me." Aibric's words are corroborated when Forgael urges Dectora to return with the others. Her refusal heralds the ecstatic speeches which end the play. The dénouement echoes Axél. The beautiful images of Dectora's speech culminate in the lines adapted from Sara's : "Bend lower, that I may cover you with my hair, / For we will gaze upon this world no longer." While the harp "begins to burn as with fire", Forgael

gathers Dectora's hair about him and asserts that they "grow immortal". The harp has taken on a life of its own ; the magic immortality of art seems to be in this way attributed to the lovers. The harp's light is a revelation of the mystic marriage : "When the torch is lit / All that is impossible is certain, / I plunge into the abyss".

The intellectual confusion of The Shadowy Waters has been noted by Leonard E. Nathan. Although Nathan analyses the 1900 text, his criticism remains relevant to the 1911 version : he finds that Yeats has not stated the nature of the supernatural and that the play's consequent ambiguity can be understood only as a result of Yeats's own equivocal attitude.⁷⁴ This must remain as the fundamental critical question about the play. Michael Sidnell, George Mayhew and David Clark draw attention to Denis Donoghue's point that "if through a rational or insinivtive distrust of transcendentalism one sides with Aibric more than with Forgael (and this is a reasonable attitude), if one resists the Yeats-Forgael rhetoric, the play crumbles".⁷⁵ In the 1911 version Aibric's opposition to Forgael's arguments is accentuated by Forgael's own remorse at his spellbinding of Dectora. Moreover, certain lines that Yeats had once envisaged as the crux of the play had been cut. If Yeats had retained the "single idea" conceived of in the following lines his play would have been a celebration of the emergence into true reality made possible by the cessation of life on earth :

When the world ends
The mind is made unchanging for it finds
Miracle, ecstasy, the impossible joy,
The flagstone under all, the fire of fires,
The root of the world.

Death would have been taken in context as an entrance into a state of ecstasy for the hero and the mystic bride : had the lines been retained Aibric's arguments would have been rendered insignificant. Nathan argues that the death of the lovers would have established their triumph, as he believes that the suicide of Axël and Sara does in Axël.⁷⁷ However we have seen that the double suicide of Villiers' lovers is as ambiguous as the sailing off into the unknown of Yeats's. In Yeats's programme note for the Abbey Theatre performance of July 1905, he made the following interpretation :

The main story expresses the desire for a perfect and eternal union that comes to all lovers, the desire of Love to 'drown in its own shadow'. But it has also other meanings. Forgael seeks death ; Dectora has always sought life ; and in some way the uniting of her vivid force with his abyss - seeking desire for the waters of Death makes a perfect humanity. Of course, in another sense, these two are simply man and woman, the reason and the will, as Swedenborg puts it.

The second flaming up of the harp may mean the coming of a more supernatural passion, when Dectora accepts the death-desiring destiny. Yet in one sense, and precisely because she accepts it, this destiny is not death ; for she, the living will, accompanies Forgael, the mind, through the gates of the unknown world. Perhaps it is a mystical interpretation of the resurrection of the body.

78

The annotation makes clear what the play does not readily yield. The union of the forces of life and death establishes resurrection for life-loving Dectora and death-seeking Forgael. We are led back to Axël, in particular to Maître Janus's prognostication concerning the new sign that would be born out of the coming together of Axël and Sara. Together the opposites have great strength and, in their unity, can make a perfect whole.

The second common criticism of the play is that it is undramatic.

Yeats's dissatisfaction with the original lyricism is apparent in his revision. In the final version the "action" of the sailors capturing the ship takes place off-stage. The confrontations of Aibric with Forgael, and of Dectora with Forgael, form the progression of the play. The speeches of the lovers act as verbal explorations of ecstatic experience. Yeats does not permit himself to dramatise the ultimate ecstasy that his characters strive for because he is uncertain of its nature: the nature of immortal ecstasy remains mysterious because it is not an experience that mortals can comprehend or describe, being by definition beyond our knowledge. Yeats eventually realised that his subject was more suitable for a poem; the editors of the manuscripts note, "The split into twin versions ("Acting Version" and "Dramatic Poem") marked the end of Yeats's attempt to bring all the poetry of The Shadowy Waters onto the stage. Retrospectively and uselessly one might wish that the split had come earlier and that the 'dramatic poem' of 1900 or even earlier had not suffered all the violence of the attempts to make it 'theatrical'." By 1911, Yeats had radically altered his original conception; the struggle between mythological gods that he had begun with is obscured beyond recognition. Aibric opposes Forgael so vehemently that we might accept his viewpoint over Forgael's; the sailors drop their Irish rhythms and they are extraneously over-characterised; the only way to penetrate the myth behind the play is to follow the revisions as the editors of the manuscripts have done.

In The Shadowy Waters Yeats had achieved poetic beauty but he had not matched this with the action and he had not presented a clear philosophical formulation. It is only when we read Yeats's programme note that the

main impact of the play is clarified. The coming together of Forgael and Dectora signifies a perfect harmony of opposites ; we should associate the symbols of rose and cross with the couple. The confusion results from a division in Yeats himself. He was not yet sure of his mythological system and, as a result, the ambiguity is there as it is in Axél, the sentimentalisch play that Yeats to some extent, and to the detriment of his own play, emulated.⁸⁰

Whereas Maeterlinck had obviously seen his own work in the light of Browning's theory of drama, Yeats at the end of his career found himself defining his plays in opposition to Browning. This definition is a key to Yeats's dissatisfaction with The Shadowy Waters :

Browning said that he could not write a successful play because interested not in character in action but in action in character. I had begun to get rid of everything that is not, whether in lyric or dramatic poetry, in some sense character in action ; a pause in the midst of action perhaps, but action always its end and theme. 'Write for the ear'; I thought, so that you may be instantly understood as when actor or folk singer stands before an audience. I delight in active men, taking the same delight in soldier and craftsman ; I would have poetry turn its back upon all that modish curiosity, psychology - the poetic theme has always been present. I recall an Indian tale : certain men said to the greatest of the sages, 'Who are your Masters?' And he replied, 'The wind and the harlot, the virgin and the child, the lion and the eagle'.⁸¹

In 1937 we find Yeats emphasising the importance of the spoken word in performance. He is not concerned with psychological drama which probes into motives for and convictions about a particular event, burying the event under a weight of discussion. Instead Yeats concentrates on action, hoping for recognition of the unanalysable mystery of his poetic vocabulary, the connotations and associations of which provide the profundity

of meaning behind the action. Behind every action he discovers a poetic theme, so that his plays endeavour to combine a subtext of depth by means of poetry with a dramatic surface text. The wisest of men, he recounts, can only explain his wisdom in words which suggest untranslatable mystery : "The wind and the harlot, the virgin and the child, the lion and the eagle." Yeats refuses to isolate from the action the subtext created by suggestive words. He is thus returning to Greek and Shakespearean drama in his conception, whereas Maeterlinck had conceived of a poetic drama which could isolate the subtext from action or plot in the Aristotelian sense. Yeats's anxiety to stress the importance of action led him, in On The Boiler, to picture Hamlet as "a mediaeval man of action", whereas the young Maeterlinck had admired Hamlet because of his passivity, his refusal to act. Yeats concentrates on the action in Hamlet as a type of folk material :

But thought is not more important than action ; master-pieces, whether of the stage or study, excel in their action, their visibility ; who can forget Odysseus, Don Quixote, Hamlet, Lear, Faust, all figures in a peep-show, and we are not coherent to ourselves through thought but because our visible image changes slowly. English producers slur over that scene where Hamlet changes the letters and sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (sic) to their death, because they define him through his thought and think that scene but old folk material incompatible with Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'. Yet no imaginative man has ever complained, and Shakespeare when he made Hamlet kill the father of Fortinbras in single combat showed that he meant it. Hamlet's hesitations are hesitations of thought, and are concerned with certain persons on whom his attention is fixed ; outside that he is a mediaeval man of action. 82

When Yeats refers to Maeterlinck in his early essays, his praise is always mitigated by his perception of a lack of energy in the plays. He

attributes this to the city dwellers for whom Maeterlinck was writing :

"Is it the mob that has robbed these angelic persons (Ibsen and Maeterlinck) of the energy of their souls? Will not our next art be rather of the country, of great open spaces, of the soul rejoicing in itself?"⁸³

Villiers de l'Isle-Adam is associated by Yeats with the energy which is lost in Maeterlinck : "Count Villiers de l'Isle-Adam swept together, by what seemed a sudden energy, words behind which glimmered a spiritual and passionate mood (...) while Maeterlinck has (...) set before us faint souls, naked and pathetic shadows already half vapour and sighing to one another upon the border of the last abyss."⁸⁴ Maeterlinck's characters seem to Yeats to be pale reflections of Villiers'. The essential intensity of "character in action" has been erased by Villiers' disciple. This is a view which can be endorsed : Maeterlinck's greatest influence was Villiers, but he took from him a mood rather than a form. Maeterlinck took the subtext of Angst from Axël and rejected the wordy style of the romantic melodrama. Yeats would like to combine both the greater intensification of poetry in Maeterlinck and the action in Villiers. Yeats defines action as an energy :

What attracts me to drama is that it is, in the most obvious way, what all the arts are upon a last analysis. A farce and a tragedy are alike in this, that they are a moment of intense life. An action is taken out of all other actions ; it is reduced to its simplest form, or at any rate to as simple a form as it can be brought to without our losing the sense of its place in the world. The characters that are involved in it are freed from everything that is not a part of that action ; and whether it is, as in the less important kinds of drama, a mere bodily activity, a hairbreadth escape or the like, or as it is in the more important kinds, an activity of the souls of the characters, it is an energy, an eddy of life purified from everything but itself. The dramatist must picture life in action, with an unpreoccupied mind, as the musician pictures it in sound and the sculptor in form.

Here Yeats is defending autotelic drama, untrammelled by political or social or any other propagandistic purpose ; yet, even as Yeats uses Maeterlinck's dramatic theory, his vocabulary stresses "intensity", "activity", and "eddy", the pulsating rhythm which is found in Axël.

When Yeats attempts to interpret Maeterlinck's theory we find that he attributes to Maeterlinck his own emphasis on the importance of action. In his essay on Robert Bridges' The Return of Ulysses, Yeats quotes from Sutro's translation of Le Trésor des Humbles the passage in which Maeterlinck stresses that the true artist no longer chooses subjects remote from everyday tragedy ; subjects such as murder and the psychology of victory are exceptional actions. Yeats reads Maeterlinck as follows : "I do not understand him to mean that our dramas should have no victories or murders, for he quotes for our example plays that have both, but only that their victories and murders shall not be to excite our nerves, but to illustrate the reveries of a wisdom which shall be as much a part of the daily life of the wise as a face or hands at rest. And certainly the greater plays of the past ages have been built after such a fashion."⁸⁶ Maeterlinck certainly talks of plays that contain victories and murders - Othello, Hamlet, the Aeschylean and Sophoclean tragedies - and he does talk of them as containing the essence of everyday tragedy. But he concludes from this that the subtext could be isolated from the action to bring us closer to the actuality of everyday tragedy with no impingement of extraordinary plot. Yeats uses Maeterlinck's essay in support of his demand for the active illustration of "the reveries of a wisdom which shall be as much a part of the daily life of the wise as a face or hands at rest". In The Hour-Glass Yeats attempts to illustrate the end of the life of a "wise man" to whom true wisdom comes only on the

point of death ; he depicts the daily life of a Fool whose reveries are wise.

iii "The Hour-Glass"

On March 18 1903 Yeats wrote : "I had a play performed in Dublin last week, a morality play. It was played with simplicity and beauty. It was a great success."⁸⁷ The first draft of The Hour-Glass was written in 1902, the year in which Poel's production of Everyman went to Dublin. Yeats does not record his debt to Everyman⁸⁸ but there is evidence that he was familiar with The Elizabethan Stage Society's production. In Samhain : 1904 under the title of "The Dramatic Movement", Yeats complains of the restrictions imposed on the newly formed Abbey Theatre Company, and it is in this context that he mentions Everyman's performance in Dublin "some years ago" :

Our patent is not so wide as we had hoped for, for we had hoped to have a patent as little restricted as that of the Gaiety or the Theatre Royal. We were, however, vigorously opposed by these theatres and by the Queen's Theatre, and the Solicitor-General, to meet them half-way, has restricted our patent to plays written by Irishmen or on Irish subjects or to foreign masterpieces, provided these masterpieces are not English. This has been done to make our competition against the existing theatres as unimportant as possible. It does not directly interfere with the work of our society to any serious extent, but it would have indirectly helped our work had such bodies as the Elizabethan Stage Society, which brought Everyman to Dublin some years ago, been able to hire the theatre from Miss Horniman, when it is not wanted by us, and to perform there without the limitations imposed by a special licence. 89

Later on in his essay, Yeats places Everyman as "fine drama" : "Though the commercial theatre of America is as unashamedly commercial as the

English, there is a far larger audience interested in fine drama than here (. .)
Everyman has been far more of a success in America than anywhere
 else." ⁹⁰

Yeats's contemporaries bracketed The Hour-Glass with Everyman,
 thus strongly suggesting the influential nature of the medieval play.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was inimical to both plays : "I could not sit out
 the Irish play, to which I went in the afternoon. The first piece was a
 terrible infliction, called 'The Hour-Glass' by Yeats - a stupid imitation
 of that dull old morality, 'Everyman', which bored me so much last

year." ⁹¹ W.G. Fay, on the contrary, esteemed both plays very highly :

"In the Lenten season of 1903, a close time for all Irish theatres in those
 days, Yeats wrote his only morality play, calling it The Hour-Glass, so
 that the players might have something to offer their audiences in the holy
 season. It is the finest of all morality plays, with the possible exception

of Everyman." ⁹² Gordon Craig also responded to the play with unmitigated

enthusiasm. Craig had felt Everyman to be very powerful despite his ⁹³

dislike of religious plays : his reaction had been to the directness and
 simplicity of the morality form. Similarly, he saw great potential in

the simplicity of The Hour-Glass. ⁹⁴

The original version of The Hour-Glass was in prose. Yeats was
 occupied in turning the play into verse from 1911 to 1914. In the

Collected Plays we have the 1922 verse revision. Yeats was never ⁹⁵

satisfied with the play and he dropped the sub-title of the first published
 version : "A Morality". When Yeats drafted the play he emphasised in

the title the two main characters : The Fool and The Wise Man. The

title he chose to substitute stresses instead the main theme : time passing

as life dwindles, eventually to meet death. The theme is that of Everyman, of Dr. Faustus and other versions of the Faust myth, of Maeterlinck's Les Aveugles, L'Intruse, Intérieur and "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir", and of Beckett's Waiting for Godot. It is salvation that is at issue.

From the beginning a contrast is set up in The Hour-Glass between dream and reality, the world of the personal unconscious and the actuality of daily existence.⁹⁶ The Fourth Pupil announces that he has had a dream which will provide the topic for the imminent lesson with the Wise Man. The dream was a vision and the pupil is prompted by it to question the Wise Man concerning his scepticism. When Teigue the Fool comes in he is concentrating only on his financial straits, but he soon proves himself to be a visionary. Indeed, one way of looking at the play is to see Teigue as the Wise Man's alter-ego, or anti-self, the dreamer as opposed to the rationalist, the subconscious mind in opposition to the conscious faculties - or, as Yeats might call him, the Mask of the Wise Man. In Yeats's "Journal" he records a conviction at the heart of The Hour-Glass, a conviction which is fundamental to an understanding of all of Yeats's work :

I think all happiness depends on having the energy to assume the mask of some other self, that all joyous or creative life is a rebirth as something not oneself, something created in a moment and perpetually renewed in playing a game like that of a child where one loses the infinite pain of self-realization, a grotesque or solemn painted face put on that one may hide from the terrors of judgement, an imaginative Saturnalia that makes one forget reality. 97

This conviction is expanded in the 1917 essay "Anima Hominis". The idea

of happiness envisaged in flight from the self and the finding of an anti-self foreshadows Beckett's obsession with man's inability to escape from self-perception. Beckett perpetually sees the tragic side of self-realisation, whereas Yeats's effort is often to define the ecstasy of the reaching of the anti-self. But even Beckett's characters are conscious of a time when self met anti-self in happiness : "Back to back like in the good old days!"⁹⁸

The artist, in Yeats's definition, finds his antithetical self in his art ; he is trying to discover the reality which comes to him in ecstatic revelation :

We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry. [. . .] The other self, the anti-self or the antithetical self, as one may choose to name it, comes but to those who are no longer deceived, whose passion is reality. [. . .] for the awakening, for the vision, for the revelation of reality, tradition offers us a different word - ecstasy.⁹⁹

Yeats looks back on the time when he was first impressed by the "element of imitation in style and in life". The thought assumed central importance for Yeats and he claims that his writing became allegorical as a result :

I could not write the play I had planned, for all became allegorical, and though I tore up hundreds of pages in my endeavour to escape from allegory, my imagination became sterile for nearly five years and I only escaped at last when I had mocked in a comedy my own thought. I was always thinking of the element of imitation in style and in life, and of the life beyond heroic imitation. I find in an old diary [. . .] 'If we cannot imagine ourselves as different from what we are, and try to assume that second self, we cannot impose a discipline upon ourselves though we may accept one from others. Active virtue, as distinguished from the passive acceptance of a code, is therefore theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask.'

The Hour-Glass in its allegorical, Everyman-like mode, surely belongs to the period when Yeats first formulated these ideas, and his reworking of it, which tries to disguise the allegory, would seem to confirm this. The notion of two opposed types of reality is seen in the First Pupil's choice of lesson : " 'There are two living countries, one visible and one invisible, and when it is summer there, it is winter here, and when it is November with us, it is lambing-time there'. " ¹⁰¹ The Wise Man insists that craziness has befallen the pupil, and the pupil himself agrees that the choice was "folly"; so Yeats subtly directs our attention to the Fool. The First Pupil finds a sentence beneath the quotation about the two countries which again links the lesson topic with the Fool : "a beggar wrote it upon the walls of Babylon". When Teigue is duly asked his opinion of such a puzzling statement, he treats it as a generally accepted fact that "everybody in the world knows". The Wise Man immediately allows his atheism to speak for him : that a spiritual kingdom will be revealed when we die, is a "monkish" and a "mischievous" idea. But the idea nags at him because, like the Fourth Pupil, he has dreamt. Indeed, he has dreamt twice. The substance of his dream, and his anxiety concerning it, are put into verse. A Dionysian frenzy seems to be overtaking him, however much he struggles against it. The images of disorder (of laughter, screaming and dancing) are joined by the image of victimisation as the Wise Man pictures the third intrusion of the unwelcome subject as the swoop of a hawk onto the trembling bird that is himself. Wisdom and folly are contrasted in the next lines, yet their limits are blurred - the question becomes "what is wisdom?" :

WISE MAN What do you want? What can it matter
to you whether the words I am reading
are wisdom or sheer folly?

FOOL Such a great, wise teacher will not refuse
a penny to a fool.

WISE MAN Seeing that everybody is a fool when he is
asleep and dreaming, why do you call me
wise?

In this other reality which operates when consciousness is obliterated everyone is equal in his exposure to dream and the uncontrollable forces of Anima Mundi.

In Yeats's essay "Anima Mundi" he relates how he has always tried to submerge his mind into the general mind. He has done this in various ways : through evocation of symbols before sleep to induce visions, by visiting mediums and by the study of magic. He outlines his belief in a common memory passed on from one generation to another, and in a common mind which can be contacted by the study of a subject which has been similarly studied by other individual minds in the past, minds which are still effective in the common mind. In the second half of the essay Yeats makes clear the relation of The Hour-Glass to his belief in Anima Mundi. Each man has an antithetical "Daimon" which transforms that man into its own form. Yeats maintains that "There are two realities, the terrestrial and the condition of fire". In a footnote Yeats adds :
"When writing this essay I did not see how complete must be the antithesis between man and Daimon. The repose of man is the choice of the Daimon, and the repose of the Daimon the choice of man ; and what I have called man's terrestrial state the Daimon's condition of fire. I might have seen this, as it all follows from the words written by the beggar in 'The Hour-Glass' upon the walls of Babylon."¹⁰² The footnote was written in 1924, seven

years after the essay itself. The idea of the importance of opposites had been with him a long time, originating partly from his study of Blake ; one must remember in reading The Hour-Glass Yeats's description of the movement of the gyres : "Here the thought of Heraclitus dominates all : 'Dying each other's life, living each other's death'." ¹⁰³ Yeats wrote of The Heraclitian conflict as his "personal philosophy" in contrast to the "public philosophy" of A Vision : "To me all things are made of the conflict of two states of consciousness, being or persons which die each other's life, live each other's death. That is true of life and death themselves." ¹⁰⁴

The Hour-Glass dramatises this conflict between two opposed realities. The atheism of the Wise Man is juxtaposed time and again with the Fool's vision of a fantastic reality. The Fool's vision is encapsulated in the story of his morning task, which is to cut the nets spread out over the hills so that the angels need not be ensnared. His is an imaginative vision, and one very obvious pair of opposites in the play is that of logic and imagination :

FOOL	I have seen plenty of angels.
WISE MAN	There's nothing but what men can see when they are awake. Nothing, nothing.

Yet the Angel becomes a reality for the Wise Man and is recognised as a figure from his dreams as a child. So dream becomes reality ; the hour-glass is turned when it becomes known that the Angel, like Death in Everyman, is a messenger. :

ANGEL	I am the messenger.
WISE MAN	What message could you bring to one like me?
ANGEL (<u>turning the hour-glass</u>)	That you will die when the last grain of sand has fallen through this glass.

Like Everyman, the Wise Man prevaricates, protesting that he has both family and pupils dependent on him. Ironically, he must die because he has been so convincing in his atheism that no one has passed through the doors of Heaven since he has been teaching. The Wise Man has denied both Heaven and Purgatory so he will be damned, to wander forever in a ghastly hiatus. The Wise Man's appeal makes him very sympathetic. How can the Angel, who lives in the reality which only appears to men "in the uncertainty of dizzy dreams", understand scepticism? The other messengers who have come to the Wise Man - "parting, sickness and death, / The rotting of the grass, tempest, and drouth" were certainly cause for loss of faith. The Angel's answer is that the soul is a reality apart from such horrors. The Wise Man pleads for time to undo his actions. He is granted a certain reprieve : before the sand runs through the hour-glass he must find one believer. He has now upon him the weight of time which the Angel thankfully leaves behind. His search is in vain because his pupils have accepted that intellectual reasoning is the only road to truth. When the Wise Man states that he has seen an angel there is a controversy about the reality of his vision. The Third Pupil feels that the Angel must have appeared in a dream, yet this is refuted by the Wise Man. The First Pupil analyses this refutation : he himself may be dreaming now for all he knows and the Wise Man wants to show his Pupils that there is "no certain proof / Of anything in the world". The Second Pupil argues that the proof is that they share a world, whereas the dreamer is in his own world, experiencing an individual vision. The Third Pupil finds it likely that, because Teigue has seen angels, there is every reason to suppose that the Wise Man may have seen one as well, if he

says he has. The First Pupil, however, maintains that both could still be dreamers unless proof were had that the angels were alike - and the Third Pupil notes that angels need not be alike - so the whole idea of verification falls through.¹⁰⁵ The Wise Man is at a nadir of desperation as he echoes King Lear : "I have no reason left. All dark, all dark! "

The Wise Man's search closely resembles Everyman's search for a companion in death. His hopes are aroused by false hints and mockery. The Fourth Pupil has no faith despite such hints ; he is certain that there is no God and no immortality, "and they that said it / Made a fantastic tale from a starved dream / To plague our hearts." The Wise Man drives out the Pupils in a rage, suddenly noticing "the giddy glass". Bridget, his wife, is no more faithful than are the Pupils. The Wise Man panics. He cannot leave the glass, yet he feels that he is on the brink of revelation, and that he must convey this revelation to his Pupils. The truth is simple, he knows that. His own children know by rote the lesson that "there is nothing we cannot see, nothing we cannot touch". The momentum increases while the sand runs out. The Wise Man dares not look at the position of sand in the glass ; he is anticipating "the Fiend's nail" on his face. He babbles about devils dragging away his soul, echoing Marlowe's lines :

The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd. ¹⁰⁶

Indeed, from the Angel's entrance, the play expands Faustus's last speech. The hour before death has come, and well may the Wise Man cry with Faustus : "O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!"¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, the Fool

is mocking the crucial passage of time by blowing on a dandelion to find out the hour. The Wise Man cannot escape : he has tried to negate time by covering the hour-glass, a pathetic indication of his plight. Teigue will not admit that he believes in God. The Wise Man finally sees the truth in a climactic vision :

We perish into God and sink away
Into reality - the rest's a dream.

Although he dies uncertain of his salvation, his last speech is full of a calm resignation :

May God's will prevail on the instant,
Although His will be my eternal pain.
I have no question:
It is enough, I know what fixed the station
Of star and cloud.
And knowing all, I cry
That whatso God has willed
On the instant be fulfilled,
Though that be my damnation.
The stream of the world has changed its course,
And with the stream my thoughts have run
Into some cloudy thunderous spring
That is its mountain source -
Aye, to some frenzy of the mind,
For all that we have done's undone,
Our speculation but as the wind. (He dies.

The Fool now identifies himself with the Wise Man : "You and I, we are the two fools, we know everything, but we will not speak." The Angel comes on-stage; standing in silence, the messenger from the supernatural listens while the Fool comments on the white butterfly which issues from the Wise Man's mouth. The butterfly, the Wise Man's soul, is placed by the Fool in the Angel's golden casket. The ending seems ambiguous for it is only the Fool, and not the Angel, who states explicitly that the casket

will be opened in the Garden of Paradise. In order to judge the validity of the statement we must be alert to Yeats's stress on the visionary powers of the Fool, whose final rhyme sums up the philosophy of the play :

I hear the wind a-blow,
I hear the grass a-grow,
And all that I know, I know.
But I will not speak, I will run away.

The ultimate truth is as simple and as full of mystery as nature ; it is inexplicable but it can be adumbrated in images of wind and grass. Yeats leads us full circle to the greatest of sages whose masters were "the wind and the harlot, the virgin and the child, the lion and the eagle"¹⁰⁸. We must assume that the soul of the Wise Man has been saved but the nature of salvation is unknown and cannot be conveyed in words.

In 1922, when Yeats published both versions of The Hour-Glass in Plays In Prose and Verse, it was only the prose version that carried the sub-title "A Morality". From Yeats's note it is obvious that he had revised in order to depart from the Everyman type of allegory. He had made the play more subjective :

The early version of the Play, which was only too effective, converting a music-hall singer and sending him to Mass for six weeks, made me ashamed, but I did not know till very lately how to remedy it. I had made my Wise Man humble himself to the Fool and receive salvation as a reward, but now I have given it a new end which is closer to my own thought as well as more effective theatrically. The Fool too, when it is now played at the Abbey Theatre, wears a mask designed by Mr. Gordon Craig which makes him seem less a human being than a principle of the mind. ¹⁰⁹

Yeats's effort has been put towards phasing out direct allegory, in order to incorporate the suggestive mystery of symbolism. His mystic apprehension

of reality is better conveyed in symbols which emanate rhythms of possible meaning, negating nothing but not once categorically defining truths and solutions. The Wise Man dies in faith as Everyman had done, but the difference lies in the way each hero is brought to that faith. Everyman is taught to obey a set of doctrines ; once he assumes faith in those doctrines and can follow their rigidity, his salvation is assured. The Wise Man reaches an ecstasy of insight peculiar to himself, retaining at the moment of death an inner peace because of that purely subjective glimpse of truth. Salvation in Yeats's terms becomes resolution of struggle and a pure faith in something ultimately unknown.

It is important to indicate at this stage Yeats's understanding of the differences between symbolism and allegory. A good starting-point is to perceive the affinity which Yeats found with William Blake. This is very clear in "William Blake and the Imagination" :

He announced the religion of art (. .) He had learned from Jacob Boehme and from old alchemist writers that imagination was the first emanation of divinity (. .) He cried again and again that everything that lives is holy (. .) He was a symbolist who had to invent his symbols (. .) He was a man crying out for a mythology, and trying to make one because he could not find one to his hand. Had he been a Catholic of Dante's time he would have been well content with Mary and the angels (. .) 110

Yeats is implicitly writing of himself : his attempt to make a Church of artistic tradition and his creation of a mythological system bring him very close to the Blake of his analysis. Had Yeats lived in Dante's age of unified faith he would eagerly have used the symbols of that faith in his art. In a second essay on Blake, Yeats lauds the poet as "the first

writer of modern times to preach the indissoluble marriage of all great art with symbol".¹¹¹ Yeats continues by noting that Blake defined symbolism as "vision"; the use of symbols makes revelation of the eternal, whereas allegory is an "amusement", being one of many ways of expressing a familiar principle or thing. Yeats clearly agrees with the following distinction :

True art is expressive and symbolic, and makes every form, every sound, every colour, every gesture, a signature of some unanalysable imaginative essence. False art is not expressive, but mimetic, not from experience but from observation (. . .) 112

The key word here is "unanalysable": the symbol embodies supreme truth but cannot be explained in intellectual terms. Representational art, springing from objective observation, becomes in these terms "bad" art in that it is materialistic (in the sense of the opposite of mystic) and therefore pagan, reaching no truth beyond that of objective actuality.

In the essay "Symbolism in Painting" Yeats again stresses the need for unanalysable form. He chooses two paintings which seem to him to define the respective qualities of symbolism and of allegory. The difference between Michelangelo's Moses and Tintoretto's Origin of the Milky Way is that :

A hundred generations might write out what seemed the meaning of the one, and they would write different meanings, for no symbol tells all its meaning to any generation; but when you have said, 'That woman there is Juno, and the milk out of her breast is making the Milky Way', you have told the meaning of the other, and the fine painting, which has added so much irrelevant beauty, has not told it better. 113

Whereas symbolism involves instinctive understanding, allegory necessitates prior knowledge for its comprehension. Symbolism perfectly embodies something nebulous, an emotion, while allegory expresses something that could be said in a number of ways. In allegory it is the content, rather than the way in which that content is expressed, that is crucial. Symbolic art has the function of a talisman which portrays "a part of the Divine Essence"¹¹⁴ because it is in a particular magical form. The poet who uses symbolism is a magician who sets his audience meditating on the essence by offering them the talisman. Symbols are discovered by those who think about perfection, those religious and visionary, "monks and nuns, and medicine-men and opium-eaters".¹¹⁵ The modern artists who have used symbols have accepted, Yeats writes, all types of symbolism, thus differing from religious artists such as Giotto and his disciples. Here Yeats groups together Wagner, Keats, Blake, Calvert, Rossetti, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Beardsley, Ricketts, Shannon, Whistler, Maeterlinck and Verlaine. However, he goes on to make a distinction between Keats and Calvert on the one hand, and Blake and Wagner on the other. The former are "fragmentary" symbolists because their symbols are not set in a certain order, a system. Yeats insists however that "There is indeed a systematic mystic in every poet or painter who, like Rossetti, delights in a traditional symbolism, or, like Wagner, delights in a personal symbolism".¹¹⁶ Yeats was to show that he was a "systematic mystic" in The Cat and the Moon, a play which "delights in a personal symbolism".

In The Hour-Glass Yeats tried and failed to adapt the morality form to his own purpose. He was dependent on traditional Christian

symbolism - Angel, Hell, Paradise, Purgatory, God and the devil - to convey a personal philosophy concerning the "two living countries, one visible and one invisible". The result is that the play appears to involve a vague and unrealised Christian allegory : it is not finally clear that the Wise Man has achieved salvation in a Christian sense. The main strength of the morality form is its clarity and directness of expression. In the ending of The Hour-Glass Yeats strives for a delicate poetic suggestiveness which is foreign to that clear directness and serves to contribute an obscurity, an "ambiguity" which is the main characteristic of modern poetry. When Yeats developed a personal symbolism to provide a systematic background then he could also introduce a rich, talismanic quality in his plays. The Hour-Glass uneasily combines Christian symbols and personal philosophy ; Yeats had understood the need for system but he had introduced a confusion by relying on Christian systematic symbolism. In The Cat and the Moon Yeats introduces a personal systematic symbolism so that a harmony is achieved on this level ; he also strives for a suggestiveness outside the interpretation of the personal symbols.

iv "The Cat and the Moon"

The Cat and the Moon, written in 1917 and published in 1924, is a succinct model for the talismanic art which Yeats had envisaged at the turn of the century. In an essay of 1913, Yeats had referred to "those wanderers who still stitch into their carpets among the Mongolian plains religious symbols so old they have not even a meaning"¹¹⁷ ; in the note to the

first edition of The Cat and the Moon, the image of the carpet is repeated to similar effect :

I have amused myself by imagining incidents and metaphors that are related to certain beliefs of mine as are the patterns upon a Persian carpet to some ancient faith or philosophy. 118

Like the Mongolian wanderers Yeats has stitched into his work symbols which now have a buried significance :

It has pleased me to think that the half of me that feels can sometimes forget all that belongs to the more intellectual half but a few images. The night's dream takes up and plays in the same forgetful fashion with our waking thoughts. Minnaloushe and the Moon were perhaps - it all grows faint to me - an exposition of man's relation to what I have called the Antithetical Tincture (. . .) I have altogether forgotten whether other parts of the fable have, as is very likely, a precise meaning, and that is natural, for I generally forget in contemplating my copy of an old Persian carpet that its winding and wandering vine had once that philosophical meaning, which (. . .) was part of the religion of Zoroaster. 119

The Persian carpet can be appreciated simply for its intricacy of pattern and beautiful interweavings of colour ; the thought behind each thread will come to the surface only if it is consciously extracted by means of intellectual investigation - however, the fact that the thought exists lends resonance to the beauty of the pattern. Yeats has forgotten the original story about Saint Colman's Well, he has left the play unfinished and the personal philosophy must also lie dormant, yet by means of these hidden depths he has aligned his play with the "Divine Essence", imbuing the atmosphere with religious mystery. In a later introduction, Yeats describes how his chosen symbols had been discovered by him, in a medieval

Irish sermon and in a Buddhist Sutra, to have the same connotations as he had earlier suggested them to have in the play.¹²⁰ Anima Mundi had offered Yeats the symbols of blind man and lame man quite independently of intellectual research into a tradition which suggested that it was appropriate for the blind man to represent the body, and the lame man, the soul. Yeats is working, he tells us, "among dreams and proverbs", he "might discover what had been and might be again an abstract idea" but "no abstract idea must be present".¹²¹ One cannot, therefore, reduce the play, shrinking it into an allegory with one clearly stated meaning. Like Yeats's example of symbolic painting by Michelangelo, a hundred generations might write out the meaning of The Cat and the Moon and, at the end of it, one would have a hundred different meanings, each with its peculiar validity. It is not Yeats's task to impose meaning on the play; he is the mediator between the spiritual consciousness of Anima Mundi and the audience who will interpret the action:

The spectator should come away thinking the meaning as much his own manufacture as that of the blind man and the lame man had seemed mine. 122

This overt invitation to the spectator should leave him in no doubt that he is on equal footing with the playwright, who merely transmits images derived from a higher reality. Yeats has met the limits of his art with this invitation.

Before we are able to make a close examination of The Cat and the Moon it is necessary to appreciate why Yeats came to renounce the theatre which he had inaugurated in the voice of Irish nationalism. In 1919 Yeats published in the Irish Statesman a formal declaration. This explained his

antipathy to the plays which young Irish playwrights were proposing for the Abbey, and it detailed his intention to form a theatre with the characteristics of a secret society. "A People's Theatre" is in the form of a letter to Lady Gregory. Yeats concedes that they have been successful in their aim to make a people's theatre ; however, there are certain essential things which such a theatre cannot do. Commercial theatre, he finds, has taught false values, encouraging the audience to look up to the wealthy as an elite and proposing that the poor are to be ridiculed. When a working-class audience goes to the Abbey it sees ordinary working-class people on⁻stage, certainly exaggerated, but never ridiculed because of their situation in society. The Abbey is a people's theatre in that its plays share the qualities of the "popular imagination", those qualities of romance and the capacity for adventure of the people's class. Yeats has rejected all second-hand writing and accepted for the Abbey plays with fresh perception. The actors have played a life very much like their own. Yeats sums up the success of the Abbey :

We have been the first to create a true 'People's Theatre', and we have succeeded because it is not an exploitation of local colour, or of a limited form of drama possessing a temporary novelty, but the first doing of something for which the world is ripe, something that will be done all over the world and done more and more perfectly : the making articulate of all the dumb classes each with its own knowledge of the world, its own dignity, but all objective with the objectivity of the office and the workshop, of the newspaper and the street, of mechanism and of politics.

Yet we did not set out to create this sort of theatre, and its success has been to me a discouragement and a defeat. 123

Yeats goes on to talk of Dante in what seems at first to be a long digression. It is plain that he is implicitly describing his own tendencies :

His study was unity of being, the subordination of all parts to the whole as in a perfectly proportioned human body - his own definition of beauty - and not, as with those I have described, the unity of things in the world; and like all subjectives he shrank, because of what he was, because of what others were, from contact with many men. Had he written plays he would have written from his own thought and passion, observing little and using little, if at all, the conversation of his time - and whether he wrote in verse or in prose his style would have been distant, musical, metaphorical, moulded by antiquity. 124.

Yeats looks back on the age of Dante and of subjective art as the apogee of culture. Subjective art can only exist, Yeats argues, if there is a sharing of traditional knowledge, which can only be acquired in leisure. When life changed very gradually, old stories were repeated so often that everyone came to share symbols and allusions. Shakespeare was more objective than Dante, but still almost totally engaged in subjective art. And Yeats had aimed at creating a subjective tradition in the Irish theatre in an attempt to return to the milieu of Dante :

You and I and Synge, not understanding the clock, set out to bring again the theatre of Shakespeare or rather perhaps of Sophocles. I had told you how at Young Ireland Societies and the like, young men when I was twenty had read papers to one another about Irish legend and history, and you yourself soon discovered the Gaelic league (. . .) We thought we could bring the old folk-life to Dublin, patriotic feeling to aid us (. . .) but the modern world is more powerful than any propaganda or even than any special circumstance, and our success has been that we have made a Theatre of the head, and persuaded Dublin playgoers to think about their own trade or profession or class and their life within it, so long as the stage curtain is up, in relation to Ireland as a whole. 125

Instead of absorbing Irish myth until it became part of their consciousness, the spectators had learnt to use their intelligence and relate to Ireland on an intellectual, rather than an emotional, level.

Yeats places Synge and Lady Gregory in the objective phases of his lunar system, but he feels that they nevertheless retain so much of the subjective that their plays will never be entirely popular, or, if they are, they will be misunderstood as farces. He is bitter about his own achievement at the Abbey. He is listened to as a founder of the theatre, and a few individuals appreciate his drama, but any young Irish playwright, who puts on[^]stage a realistic modern play, is applauded rapturously. Yeats's initial aims of remoteness, spirituality and idealism¹²⁶ would never be achieved at the Abbey with its newly awakened social and political awareness. The refinement that Yeats desired for his audience would have to be sought among a select, contemplative coterie :

I want to create for myself an unpopular theatre and an audience like a secret society where admission is by favour and never to many. [. . .] I want so much - an audience of fifty, a room worthy of it (some great dining-room or drawing-room), half a dozen young men and women who can dance and speak verse or play drum and flute and zither [. . .] In most towns one can find fifty people for whom one need not build all on observation and sympathy, because they read poetry for their pleasure and understand the traditional language of passion. I desire a mysterious art, always reminding and half-reminding those who understand it of dearly loved things, doing its work by suggestion, not by direct statement, a complexity of rhythm, colour, gesture, not space-pervading like the intellect, but a memory and a prophecy : a mode of drama Shelley and Keats could have used without ceasing to be themselves, and for which even Blake in the mood of The Book of Thel might not have been too obscure. Instead of advertisements in the Press I need a hostess [. . .] I want to make [. . .] a feeling of exclusiveness, a bond among chosen spirits, a mystery almost for leisured and lettered people. [. . .] I seek, not a theatre but the theatre's anti-self [. . .] 127

Yeats is seeking to create a tiny nucleus of society which will retain the

unity of culture of the Middle Ages. Disappointed in his grandiose desire to restore all Ireland to such unity, he is determined to succeed among a chosen few. The popular theatre he finds valuable nevertheless, if it will keep to its task of forthrightness, if it will reject sentimentality for clear vision. He sees Maeterlinck as an unpopular dramatist whose art has been prostituted to a popular audience. Yeats is openly dedicating himself to an elitist activity, exposing himself to hostility, and from Yeats's position Maeterlinck seems immoral: "The rhetoric of D'Annunzio, the melodrama and spectacle of the later Maeterlinck, are the insincerities of subjectives, who being very able men have learned to hold an audience that is not their natural audience. To be intelligible they are compelled to harden, to externalise and deform." ¹²⁸

In his peroration, Yeats hints rather coyly at the forthcoming edition of A Vision: "A certain friend of mine has written (. . .) a couple of intricate poems called The Phases of the Moon and The Double Vision respectively".¹²⁹ His design for the future of lyrical drama is related to his general theory of history. He talks of the need "to prepare a stage for the whole wealth of modern lyricism, for an art that is close to pure music, for those energies that would free the arts from imitation, that would ally acting to decoration and to the dance".¹³⁰ Yeats found the form which would most readily combine poetry, music and dance in the Japanese Noh drama. He adapted the Noh to his own requirements; The Cat and the Moon combines the characteristics of a Japanese kyogen with the Irish folklore tradition, esoteric symbolism and Yeatsian philosophy, becoming "an art that is close to pure music". In "Certain Noble Plays of Japan" Yeats records his introduction to Japanese plays

"translated by Ernest Fenollosa and finished by Ezra Pound" and his subsequent invention of "a form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or Press to pay its way - an aristocratic form".¹³¹ He announces that no scenery is necessary because three musicians describe the setting ; a dance is the climax of this simplified and compressed form. Yeats stresses the need for intimacy between actors and audience ; the action must be close enough for our appreciation of the importance of voice and expressive movement. The lighting should be that most fitting to a studio or drawing-room : weird "effects" are detrimental and artificial, serving to distance the audience from the play. Because of the familiar surroundings, the plays make an immediate impact, their "verse, ritual, music and dance" all the more estranged because so obviously among the everyday objects of the audience's knowledge. The audience penetrate "a deep of the mind" by means of an action which seems separate from the known world, but which, because it is taking place in the world of everyday, will be understood as a deep and religious part of life. "Movements of the body copied from the marionette shows of the fourteenth century" and masks are important factors in establishing the anti-realistic ritual. A sculpted mask depicting an unchanging mood allows the audience to concentrate on the poetry with no distraction caused by facial expression. The mask was congenial to Yeats because of his mask philosophy ; John Rees Moore comments "The mask is both an end and a means. As the expression of a great life attitude it urges a man on to remake himself in order to be worthy of it ; as the image of a certain philosophy of life it serves to link nature and super-nature, the visible and the invisible. And this was what Yeats intended his art to do."¹³² The ambiguity of the

masked actor, his character established by a sculptor, his own personality beneath the artistic mould of another's, is a very good image for the relationship of life to art, life striving for the fixity of art. The image is crucial for Yeats.

In his adaptation of Eastern drama Yeats hoped to found "a true theatre of beauty". He felt that he could achieve this objective by retreating from the popular stage and encouraging private performance for cultivated spectators. He stresses the elitism inherent in the Noh tradition: Noh means "accomplishment", and it is "that of a few cultivated people who understand the literary and mythological allusions and the ancient lyrics quoted in speech or chorus, their discipline, a part of their breeding". Yeats finds very important the fact that "the interest is not in the human form but in the rhythm to which it moves". The Noh was attractive to Yeats primarily because of its strange, powerful effort to convey the permanence behind experience. We are reminded of Yeats's earlier emphasis on the purpose of rhythm "to prolong the moment of contemplation [...] to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols"¹³³. The theory that he had expounded in "The Symbolism of Poetry" was put to practical use in a form that is described by Yeats as a perfect vehicle for that theory. It was the similarity of Eastern tradition to modern Western culture that intrigued Yeats. In the emotions displayed by the Zen Buddhist drama Yeats recognised the emotions expressed by the Irish folk. Moreover, the modern Western preoccupation in literature with correspondence and analogy would have been understood by those who had formulated the Noh: "when I remember

that curious game which the Japanese called, with a confusion of the senses that had seemed typical of our own age, 'listening to incense', I knew that some among them would have understood the prose of Walter Pater, the painting of Puvis de Chavannes, the poetry of Mallarmé and Verlaine". The "curious game" is reminiscent of des Esseintes' experiments in À Rebours; the hero of Huysmans' novel possesses a collection of liqueur casks which he calls his mouth organ; each liqueur seems to him to correspond to the sound of a musical instrument.

Baudelaire's famous sonnet, "Correspondances", published in Les Fleurs du mal in 1857, had exemplified a similar belief in synesthesia. Quite apart from the analogies which Yeats discovered in this way, it was the potential resonance afforded by the use of a medieval Japanese dramatic form that delighted him. If the analogies were not to be adduced straight-away Yeats would soon establish them by his coupling of East and West, Japanese religious drama and Irish myth, to introduce a new richness for his plays. Hiro Ishibashi has shown¹³⁴ that Yeats fully adapted the form to his own needs. Yeats ignored the ideal of beauty inherent in the Noh tradition and he failed to concentrate (as a Noh play does) on one central figure. Hiro Ishibashi points out that Yeats was mistaken in assuming that the idealised movements of Noh performers are in imitation of puppets. Yeats's interest in puppets was no doubt in the intrinsic symbolic possibilities, as Maeterlinck's interest was. The dichotomy between art and life which can be expressed by the use of masks can also be suggested when actors imitate puppets, copies of people artistically created from wood and string. Hiro Ishibashi concludes that it is doubtful whether the Noh form can be successfully adapted

to Western use. Yeats's great achievement was that he combined simplicity, intensity and rhythm in a form which includes music, dance and poetry to suggest religious harmony.

The Cat and the Moon is a "kyogen", a brief farcical interlude intended to provide relief between two intense Noh plays. Yeats envisaged it as "a relaxation of attention between, let us say 'The Hawk's Well' and 'The Dreaming of the Bones' ".¹³⁵ The two deformed beggars are protagonists whose contrast to the aristocratic characters of the Plays for Dancers is marked. Their journey to the well of Saint Colman, from whom they seek salvation. When the holy man's spirit is conjured up, one beggar finds physical wholeness while the other appears to have achieved spiritual, as well as physical, salvation. The farcical action lies in the duping of the Blind Beggar, whose eyes are opened literally to his companion's roguery, and in the subsequent retaliation: "I was saying to myself, I have a long arm and a strong arm and a very weighty arm, and when I get my own two eyes I shall know where to hit (. . .) and how to hit and who to hit. (. . .) Where'll I hit him, for the love of God, where'll I hit him?"¹³⁶ A second comic strain in the play is satirical; Yeats introduces a reference to the opposed characteristics of his co-writers at the Abbey, Edward Martyn and George Moore.¹³⁷ Yeats also took advantage of a local tradition attached to the well near his home in Galway. He introduced into the basis for his whole play realistic detail such as his first audience could immediately recognise. The Gaelic League had organised a procession to the well in the early years of the century (Yeats was writing in 1934 of an event of "some thirty years ago"),¹³⁸ offerings were made and cures effected. Attached to the well is

a tradition "that centuries ago a blind man and a lame man dreamed that somewhere in Ireland a well would cure them and set out to find it, the lame man on the blind man's back"¹³⁷. It is likely that Yeats first heard of the miraculous well of Saint Colman from Lady Gregory. In the note to her Colman and Guaire, Lady Gregory re-tells the legend of Saint Colman's birth. King Guaire of Connacht, alarmed that Rhinagh's son might prove to be more powerful than his own son, tried to drown the pregnant woman. She survived and, at the same time, a blind man had a dream that, if he bathed in the water of a certain well by an ash tree, he would recover his sight. A lame man had a similar dream and, hoping to be cured of his lameness, he travelled with the blind man to the ash tree. There was no well by the ash tree, but they discovered a baby in a bunch of rushes: "And they took him up and they said, 'If we had water we would baptize him.' And with that they pulled up a root of the rushes, and a well sprang up and they baptized him; and that well is there to this day. And the water in springing up splashed upon them, and the lame (sic) was cured of his lameness, and the blind man got his sight. And many that would have their blindness cured go and sleep beside that well".¹⁴⁰

Although The Cat and the Moon was so firmly rooted in Irish tradition, Yeats felt that he could detect in the final version "an odour, a breath, that suggests to me Indian or Japanese poems and legends".¹⁴¹ Yeats's intention had been to make his theme mythological and indefinite, realising that his generation of Irish dramatists "had been interested mainly in something in Irish life so old that one can no longer say this is Europe, that is Asia".¹⁴² Yeats was certain that the younger generation of

writers would take up this tendency to amalgamate East and West :

"for the other day when I read that strange 'Waste Land' by Mr. T.C. (sic) Eliot I thought of your work and of Synge's ; and he is American born, and Englishman bred, and writes but of his own mind".¹⁴³ Yeats's singling out of The Waste Land, allusive but non-paraphrasable, with Buddhist and Western suggestion, is convincing in the light of his own play : The Cat and the Moon shares these elements although Yeats is finally writing "but of his own mind". Because Yeats was determined that an audience should recognise that philosophical thought is embodied in the play he "wrote a little poem where a cat is disturbed by the moon, and in the changing pupils of its eyes seems to repeat the movement of the moon's changes, and allowed myself as I wrote to think of the cat as the normal man and of the moon as the opposite he seeks perpetually, or as having any meaning I have conferred upon the moon elsewhere".¹⁴⁴ The philosophical poem, based on the content of A Vision, contributes the "odour, a breath" of Eastern literature. A brief summary of Yeats's lunar system will be helpful here.

In the introduction to A Vision Yeats expresses the anxiety that his most faithful readers "will be repelled by what must seem an arbitrary, harsh, difficult symbolism".¹⁴⁵ He reminds us that "such has almost always accompanied expression that unites the sleeping and waking mind".¹⁴⁶ In A Vision Yeats has shown us a traditional way of ordering experience ; "those hard symbolic bones under the skin"¹⁴⁷ provide a foundation for his art. Yeats tells us in the introduction to The Cat and the Moon that he "saw in the changes of the moon all the cycles".¹⁴⁸ In "The Tragic Generation" he quotes the lyric from The Cat and the Moon, associating the play with

his hopes for Unity of Culture : "the dream of my early manhood, that a modern nation can return to Unity of Culture, is false ; though it may be we can achieve it for some small circle of men and women, and there leave it till the moon bring round its century".¹⁴⁹ The historical cycle will once more bring about the unity in art that Yeats had tried to achieve in Ireland : the play is a parable in some way connected with this thought. In A Vision Yeats symbolises the cyclic nature of history by two interacting cones, one possessing subjective qualities and the other, objective qualities ; the cones interact in opposing gyres, one cone increasing, the other diminishing, in congruence. The Great Wheel is a geometrical symbol divided on the basis of the twenty-eight lunar phases, representing every cyclic process : the life of man, the history of the world and man's reincarnations. The moon in Yeats's play represents the controlling cyclic pattern which dominates existence. Phase 15, symbolised by the full moon which spins "like a top" in the play, is that of Unity of Being, a perfect supernatural condition.

Although there are no specific connections made within the action to suggest that the musicians' song is in symbolic relation with the beggars and their meeting with the saint, it is readily perceived that there are points of contact. Minnaloushe wants to escape the moon but he cannot because in a curious way he is dependent on it. In the same way, one beggar is dependent on the other, yet each is resentful of the necessary symbiosis. The blind and lame men are physical and spiritual antitheses as are the animalistic black cat and the bright sacred moon. The combined characteristics of the beggars are those which make "a whole man", one providing the other's need. The beggars are at the same time

harmoniously complementary and discordantly opposed. This can be accentuated in a production if the actors are different physical types (one tall, one short), and if one beggar wears the trousers that match the other's jacket, in the way that Samuel Beckett's production of Warten auf Godot was costumed, to similar effect, at the Royal Court Theatre in April 1976. The cat's creeping and dancing movements associate him with the Lame Beggar whose dance is the climax of the play. Moreover, when Minnaloushe's eyes are said to change we recall the Blind Beggar's recovery of sight. Minnaloushe has also the qualities of loneliness, importance and wisdom which are attributes of the saint. The grass habitat of the cat is that of the grasshopper; when the saint makes an analogy between his own weight and that of a grasshopper, the echo fixes itself in the memory and another association is established. The cat is the colour of the Lame Beggar's stolen sheepskin. Minnaloushe sums up in his qualities the characteristics of the beggars, the saint, and the prop which is the basis for the farcical action.

In performance the play has much to offer an audience unaware of its references to A Vision, but it is also rewarding to pursue those references and to appreciate the play's intellectual complexity. Yeats took pride in the fact that "no audience could know its (the play's) dark, mythical secrets"¹⁵⁰; these F.A.C. Wilson has attempted to penetrate.¹⁵¹ Wilson argues that the play dramatises the development of a historical cycle. The beggars' journey to the well indicates history's movement towards Unity of Being. The achievement of Unity of Being is indicated by the Lame Man's climactic dance, but the final stanza of the musician's song hints that Unity of Being is lost as soon as won, for the gyre continues

to move and will enter a new phase. Culture will accordingly decline from the climax. According to Wilson's interpretation of a note in which Yeats indicated that the play is unfinished, Yeats was aware that he needed to add to the action and dialogue in order to accentuate the imminent disintegration.

In one complete historical cycle Yeats finds two sub-cycles, so that, when the whole cycle is in its fifteenth phase, the first sub-cycle is in its final phase. I tentatively offer the view that Yeats's three characters are the types of the final three phases of the twenty-eight incarnations, this helping to emphasise that the last phases of a sub-cycle are inextricably bound with the climax of a complete cycle, and suggesting the principle of disintegration that will ensue. The Lame Beggar corresponds to the type of the twenty-sixth incarnation, the hunchback; the saint is the type of phase twenty-seven; the Blind Beggar is the Fool of phase twenty-eight. Yeats's "kyogen" is a play richly allegorical in its relation to the system, richly symbolic for the outsider who knows nothing of the system. I shall analyse the play first of all in relation to the descriptions which Yeats has in A Vision of the final phases of the Great Wheel.

That Yeats included the types of the final three phases in his play contributed an Asian atmosphere: "in Asia it might not be difficult to discover examples at least of Phases 26, 27 and 28, final phases of a cycle".¹⁵² The beggars are mythic Irish characters, Noh symbols representing the journey through life and examples of characters which clarify certain descriptions in Yeats's system. The first stanza of the lyric is sung by the First Musician, introducing the cat and moon symbols and

preparing us for a dramatisation of Yeats's lunar system. When the beggars enter their dependence on each other is immediately obvious : the blind man carries the lame. Their grotesque masks indicate their base characters ; however the two are not equal in their ugliness : the Blind Beggar is instantly more sympathetic in his capacity as "legs" for his dependent friend. F.A.C. Wilson notes that the counting of paces suggests the passage of years ; at nine years over the thousand the historical pattern is late in changing for, after the millennium, objectivity is due to re-assert its dominance over subjectivity, history has advanced over a thousand years from the old crossroads of objectivity and subjectivity to the new, and, at the old conjunction, subjectivity had become superior. The holy well approached by the beggars suggests a way into the supernatural perfection of Unity of Being; the ash tree beside it is reminiscent of a mythological tree of life connecting heaven with earth.

The Lame Beggar is soon characterised as the "flighty" one of the two, the cerebral dreamer in contrast with his practical friend; "It's too much talk you have", criticises the Blind Beggar. The Lame Beggar is fractious and impatient; he denounces all beggars as lazy, a fault which is blatant in himself. These two companions are parasites on society and on each other. When they reach Saint Colman's well, the Blind Beggar has doubts about the whole project; "I begin to have it in my mind that I am a great fool". The remark leads us to A Vision; in the account of the incarnation of the last phase we are told that the Fool "grows malignant [. . .] out of jealousy of all that can act with

intelligence and effect".¹⁵³ With the Blind Beggar's constant harping on his friend's "flightiness" and his determination to ask for his sight to be restored, he certainly seems jealous of his intellectual partner's prowess. He has the malignant quality of the Fool; it is habitual for him to strike his companion with his stick: "you won't take a blow at me at all?" asks the Lame Beggar before voicing his opinion that the Blind Beggar is not foolish because he is necessary to the Lame Beggar's survival. Yeats characterises the Fool's "true business" as a striving "to become his own opposite".¹⁵⁴ The Blind Beggar's need to regain his sight and to become a "whole man" is a measure of this yearning. Yeats continues by saying of the Fool that "at his best he would know all wisdom if he could know anything".¹⁵⁵ The Blind Beggar has notions which exactly illustrate this facet of the Fool. He hints that he is secretly more knowledgeable than the Lame Beggar, that his is a spiritual, rather than a physical, perception:

Wise though you are and flighty though you are, and
 you throwing eyes to the right of you and eyes to the
 left of you, there's many a thing you don't know about
 the heart of man. (p.464)

I say it as a blind man, I say it because since I went
 blind in the tenth year of my age, I have been hearing
 and remembering the knowledges of the world. (p.465)

If you were a blind man you wouldn't say a foolish
 thing the like of that. (p.465)

I, being blind, give it out to all the world that [. . .] (p.466)

However, when it is time to answer the saint, the Blind Beggar instantly chooses to be cured rather than blessed, demonstrating his incapacity to "see" further than the limits of the physical senses. When his vision has been granted to him, he says of the scattered hairpins, buttons, beads,

candles, and pages torn from books, all of which are left by the well as offering^s, that they are a "blessed sight", appreciating what can only be a very untidy and spoilt landscape. Moreover, he cannot see the saint although he soon detects the stolen sheepskin on his companion's back. After the beating-dance, the Blind Beggar goes off, presumably considering himself a "whole man".

The Lame Beggar, meanwhile, has chosen to be blessed. His salvation seems both incongruous and ironical: the man is criminal, lazy, deceitful and parasitic, and his careful consideration of the rewards of salvation (his name will go down in the book) illustrates his calculating nature. Yeats is obviously not conforming to a Christian moral code. Perhaps Yeats is hinting that "salvation" is a choice which each individual must decide for himself, irrespective of "earning" such a state by means of orthodoxy. The Lame Beggar is in some respects like the archetype of the twenty-sixth phase:

He commits crimes, not because he wants to (. . .)
 but because he wants to feel certain that he can (. . .)
 At Phase 26 has come a subconscious exhaustion of
 the moral life, whether in belief or in conduct (. . .)
 there may be hatred of solitude, perpetual forced
 bonhomie (. . .) 156

The Lame Beggar has entered into his symbiotic relationship with the Blind Beggar out of necessity: he could not move around without someone to carry him, and the relationship is one of mutual convenience because of the other's deformity. It seems almost as though he lies to himself about robbing the sheep because he has forgotten that the Blind Beggar will see the colour of it once his eyes are opened. Perhaps he has stolen

it to prove to himself that he can still be independently assertive, as a gesture against his painful situation. His dependence on his companion is reluctant ; he himself admits "if I want a goose, or a chicken, or a cabbage, I must have your two legs under me".

The saint calls himself "lonely". He is a strange mixture of East and West : his cure and blessing are effected "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit", but later he asks the Lame Beggar to bless the road in a pagan bowing ritual. He seems rather self-centred, placing uppermost in importance his needs for a permanent friendship ; he finds himself enacting a priestly duty out of self-love and makes bribes in an effort to win friendship. The saint achieves a certain integration with the Lame Beggar by the end of the play, for the implication is that, only with the saint on his back, can the beggar achieve miraculous cure. We can partially link this character with the archetype of the Saint in

A Vision :

(The Saint) has a secret that makes him better than other men (. . .) His joy is to be nothing, to do nothing, to think nothing ; but to permit the total life, expressed in its humanity, to flow in upon him and to express itself through his acts and thoughts. (. . .) he no longer even possesses his own body (. . .) 157

This description could well be explicit in production if the saint, as seems likely, is not visually present on the beggar's back. The part of the saint is played by the First Musician ; the audience, not being blessed, sees with the eyes of the cured Blind Beggar : the saint in the ash tree is invisible. It is only the Lame Beggar who can see the Holy Man.

Yeats, by representing the types of the last three phases of his system, and by demonstrating the cyclic historical progress in the action and lyric, has juxtaposed the end of the first sub-cycle in one cycle of history with the apogee of the whole historical cycle. The "arbitrary, harsh, difficult symbolism" of A Vision was necessary for Yeats but, as we have seen, he desired the individual members of his audience to interpret the play in the way that they find most persuasive. I suggest that one interpretation is inherent in the idea of the book of the blessed. The concept of the book of account had appeared in Everyman, acting as an objectification of Everyman's life. The value of the book in Yeats's play is similar. Yeats makes it plain that friendship, even of forty years standing, is not to be trusted as a way to immortality; the Holy Man is seen by the Lame Beggar to laugh at the couple struggling along in their state of interdependence. Another attempt to reach a form of permanence is to submerge ephemeral life in the pattern of art.¹⁵⁸ The artist's creation then becomes more meaningful to him than the transient forms of everyday: "It would be a grand thing to have my two legs under me, but I have it in my mind that it would be a grander thing to have my name in that book."¹⁵⁹ The Lame Beggar is in one sense the artist who rejects mundane actuality. This is represented in the action as he sheds the earthy Blind Beggar. The Lame Beggar then assumes the burden of religion as the driving force behind his art; this is represented by the saint's announcement that he is on the man's back. F.A.C. Wilson notes that, at the time of a nation's Unity of Being, "the choice before the artist (. . .) is between integration into the community and momentary sanctity, and his decision is conditioned by his essential spirituality:

Lame Man turns from his companion to take the Saint on his back, and the artist and the mystic are for the moment one."¹⁶⁰ Similarly, Yeats had rejected the objective realism of the Abbey Theatre for the esotericism of his dance plays. The Lame Beggar's emancipation is marked by a dance - and this is important when we remember Arthur Symons's description of the perfection of dance as the essential symbolist form. The Lame Beggar's dance could represent the artist's joy in the discovery of symbolic art. When the musician sings the final stanza of the lyric, which completes the play, we understand the theme of change : corresponding to the "new phase" taken by the "sacred moon overhead" the "dance turn" of the second stanza will be new, and anti-realistic drama will inevitably give way to a form of objective, popular drama.

It is valuable to compare The Cat and the Moon with Everyman. Although Yeats shaped his play with images from a religio-mythological system and had this in common with the Everyman author, his allegory cannot be understood by the general audience without knowledge of A Vision, a highly contrived and personal work. Yeats has told us that he regarded his "circuits of sun and moon [...] as stylistic arrangements of experience".¹⁶¹ The "arrangements" in The Cat and the Moon were necessary for his own satisfaction as an artist, but "no audience could discover" the "dark mythical secrets" and they must think the meaning their "own manufacture".¹⁶² The success of the play lies in the fact that this is possible. Yeats involves in the play a symbolic force that can be interpreted by an audience ignorant of A Vision. The personal allegory is enriched by images such as the interdependent couple and by themes such as that of salvation which lend themselves to multiplicity. Yeats

had devised ^a satisfactory post-sentimentalisch form. Instead of resorting solely to personal allegory once he had formulated his system, Yeats does not restrict the range of possible interpretation. Moreover, a select audience, with knowledge of A Vision, would respond to Yeats's allegory. Yeats, as we have seen, felt that he could try to emulate Unity of Being only among an elitist audience. He could try to create for a few people a cultural condition within which artists might express the religious thought of their time. He made of his art an intricate mythical pattern embodying truths for his audience but teaching no answers :

When I try to put all into a phrase I say, 'Man can embody truth but he cannot know it.'

163

v Yeats in relation to Shaw and Eliot

A mutual bond existed between Yeats and Shaw :

I am fighting [. . .] for what I have been fighting all my life, it is our Irish fight though it has nothing to do with this or that country. Bernard Shaw fights with the same object. [. . .] I said when I started my movement in my 25th or 26th year 'I am going to stiffen the backbone.' Bernard Shaw may have said the same in his youth [. . .] 164

The fight was one of purposefulness. In their plays Yeats and Shaw fought in different ways - one in symbolic verse drama, one in political prose drama - but they fought for a better understanding of the human condition. The Yeatsian system and the Shavian Creative Evolution are comparable in that they directed Yeats's and Shaw's most serious work. The two Irishmen were artist-philosophers of a dedicated kind.

When Yeats first met Shaw, at one of William Morris's Socialist League debates in 1888, he was impressed by Shaw's wit but suspected him of being shallow.¹⁶⁵ Six years later he joined with Shaw in "the first contest between the old commercial school of theatrical folk and the new artistic school",¹⁶⁶ when his The Land of Heart's Desire was the curtain-raiser to Shaw's Arms and the Man at the Avenue Theatre. In 1932, Yeats nominated Shaw as President of the Irish Academy of Letters. Yeats's reaction to Arms and the Man is recorded in "The Tragic Generation" :

For the first few minutes Arms and the Man is crude melodrama and then just when the audience are thinking how crude it is, it turns into excellent farce. (. . .) I listened to Arms and the Man with admiration and hatred. It seemed to me inorganic, logical straightness and not the crooked road of life, yet I stood aghast before its energy (. . .) Presently I had a nightmare that I was haunted by a sewing-machine, that clicked and shone, but the incredible thing was that the machine smiled, smiled perpetually. Yet I delighted in Shaw, the formidable man. He could hit my enemies and the enemies of all I loved, as I could never hit, as no living author that was dear to me could ever hit. 167

Yeats felt for Shaw a mixture of sympathy and antipathy. He admired Shaw for his relentless purposefulness and frankness, yet he hated the syllogistic nature of an art which cut across any semblance of the meanderings of life. The image of the sewing-machine is very telling : here is the modern, scientific play, a comedy which travels in a straight line from A to B, taking in no diversions en route. In contrast, Yeats likened his own art to an Oriental carpet with mysterious patterns of meaning. Nevertheless, Yeats recognised that Shaw was a great playwright with vast resources of power and energy. He acknowledged that

Shaw put to use his energy with a unique forcefulness. In a letter he records that he had once come out on top in a debate with Shaw, yet Yeats hints that Shaw was in poor form, implying that he revered Shaw's ability in argument and discussion.¹⁶⁸ And, although Yeats found John Bull's Other Island "fundamentally ugly and shapeless",¹⁶⁹ he was moved by Caesar and Cleopatra. It is this latter verdict on Shaw that exudes admiration, and that reveals Yeats's real criticism of Shaw the man :

Did you see Bernard Shaw's letter in The Times a couple of days ago - logical, audacious and convincing, a really wonderful letter, at once violent and persuasive. He knew his opponent's case as well as his own, and that is just what men of his kind usually do not know. I saw Caesar and Cleopatra with Forbes - Robertson in it twice this week and have been really delighted and what I never thought (to) be with work of his, moved. There is vulgarity, plenty of it, but such gay heroic delight in the serviceable man. Ah if he had but style, distinction, and was not such a barbarian of the barricades. 170

Yeats again praises Shaw's capacity to argue, but he dislikes Shaw's lack of "distinction". We may infer that Yeats felt that he himself had "style, distinction"; his aristocratic and poetic drama was at odds with Shaw's pragmatism. The tension between great admiration for Shaw's power in argument and resentment that Shaw should waste his talent is a major part of Yeats's criticism.

Yeats reacted very strongly to the "Don Juan in Hell" scene in Man and Superman. He deplored its "inorganic" nature; there seemed to him to be no "dramatic life" in it. Yeats found that Shaw was not writing with the actors in mind :

I have nearly as strong objections (as to Salomé) to the Hell act out of Shaw's play, though different ones. That too has no real dramatic life. To do anything you must have a group of players who will stick to you and learn the business of simplicity (. . .) and you must write and choose such plays as will display them at their best, never on any excuse of expediency or convenience putting upon the stage inorganic work which means boredom for them and therefore bad work for (sic) them and boredom for all.

171

Yeats was impressed by what he considered to be the undramatic qualities of the lengthy philosophical speeches rather than by their content. He does not comment on the theory of Creative Evolution, although years later he perceived that Shaw needed a religion or a substitute for religion : "he is haunted by the mystery he flouts. He is an atheist who trembles in the haunted corridor." ¹⁷² When Yeats placed Shaw in the twenty-first phase of the system ¹⁷³ it was his energy that he stressed once more.

Shaw, for his part, dismissed Yeats's experiments with speech tones as irrelevant and foolish ; we can detect in his comments to Florence Farr on this aspect of Yeats's poetic inclination a distrust of Yeats's concentration on form rather than content : "it is an Irish defect to lose grip and interest by neglecting the words and thinking only of the music (. . .) Yeats is heaping fresh artificialities and irrelevances and distractions and impertinences on you instead of sternly nailing you to the simple point of conveying the meaning and feeling of the author." ¹⁷⁴ Yeats had, in Shaw's eyes, the "Irish defect" to which he refers, and generally he felt that Yeats was "not a man of this world". This adverse criticism of Yeats emerges in a letter to Sean O'Casey, following the rejection of The Silver Tassie. In 1928 Yeats refused to stage O'Casey's new experimental play. Shaw could not agree with Yeats's grounds for criticism and he wrote in the letter to O'Casey : "Yeats himself, with

all his extraordinary cleverness and subtlety, which comes out just when you give him up as a hopeless fool and (in this case) deserts him when you expect him to be equal to the occasion, is not a man of this world ; and when you hurl an enormous smashing chunk of it at him he dodges it".¹⁷⁵ Shaw implies that Yeats could not face the "almost unbearable realism"¹⁷⁶ (Shaw's own consideration) of C'Casey's play, and he is astonished at Yeats's surprising unpredictability. That Yeats was embarrassed by Shaw's defence of C'Casey is made obvious in a letter from Charlotte Shaw to Eileen C'Casey dated 8 July 1923 : "He (Yeats) never mentioned The Silver Tassie. It was I who insisted upon talking about it - and he was rather self conscious and reluctant!"¹⁷⁷

On the personal level Shaw and Yeats seem to have been amicable despite their differences. In the preface to John Bull's Other Island Yeats is treated with gentle irony : "Mr. Yeats got rather more than he bargained for" when Shaw offered his play in answer to Yeats's request for "a patriotic contribution to the repertory of the Irish Literary Theatre".¹⁷⁸ The irony is continued : there was no need to "tax the special resources of the Irish Literary Theatre for its production". In the preface to The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet Shaw acknowledges the "inspiring courage" of Yeats and Lady Gregory in front of a potentially riotous audience at Shaw's play ; moreover they took the censored play to London "and performed it under the Lord Chamberlain's nose, through the instrumentality of the Stage Society".¹⁷⁹

Yeats and Shaw had in common the need to develop a positive explanation of the world ; in each case a system was developed, acting as a background for the plays. For Shaw as for Yeats the essence of his

most serious drama is the working out in dramatic terms of the nature of man's position in a purposeful "arrangement of experience" :

To me the sole hope of human salvation lies in teaching Man to regard himself as an experiment in the realization of God, to regard his hands as God's hand, his brain as God's brain, his purpose as God's purpose. (. . .) You will find it all in Man and Superman, as you will find it all behind Blanco Posnet. Take it out of my play, and the play becomes nothing but the old cry of despair - Shakespear's 'As flies to wanton boys so we are to the gods : they kill us for their sport' (King Lear) - the most frightful blasphemy ever uttered, and the one from which it is my mission to deliver the world. 180

In this passage Shaw replies vigorously to the expressed conviction that censorship is necessary in The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet. He again defines himself, and his plays, against Shakespeare and his : the positively religious and beneficial against what he finds to be the pessimistic and sour. It is the positive and religious attitude that is common to Shaw and Yeats. Yeats was an "artist-philosopher" defined against the "mere artist" that Shaw discovered in Shakespeare. Yeats wrote as Shaw did, not to record the chaos of the world,¹⁸¹ but to order the disorderliness of reality.

T.S.Eliot conveys his scepticism of manufactured systems of thought when he writes of Blake :

We have the same respect for Blake's philosophy (. . .) that we have for an ingenious piece of home-made furniture : we admire the man who has put it together out of the odds and ends about the house. (. . .) What his genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own, and concentrated his attention upon the problems of the poet. 182

He could easily be writing of Yeats and, in After Strange Gods, he demonstrates that Yeats also "sadly lacked" a tradition : "The rationalistic background, the Pre-Raphaelite imagery, the interest in the occult, the equally early interest in Irish nationalism, the association with minor poets in London and Paris, make a curious mixture. Mr. Yeats was in search of a tradition, a little too consciously perhaps - like all of us." ¹⁸³ Here Eliot couples himself with Yeats, but he is ultimately against the "supernatural world" that Yeats chose, "the wrong supernatural world" .:

It was not a world of spiritual significance, not a world of real Good and Evil, of holiness or sin, but a highly sophisticated lower mythology summoned, like a physician, to supply the fading pulse of poetry with some transient stimulant so that the dying patient may utter his last words. In its extreme self-consciousness it approaches the mythology of D.H. Lawrence on its more decadent side.

184

In the year following the publication of After Strange Gods, Eliot declared in "Religion and Literature" that "literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint." ¹⁸⁵ It was from such a standpoint that Yeats's drama was discussed in Eliot's 1940 lecture on Yeats.

In his lecture Eliot is preoccupied with the "continual development" of the poet. He comments on The Shadowy Waters as one of the most perfect Pre-Raphaelite expressions, yet its vagueness and confusion come in for criticism. Once Yeats had begun to write the ^{Few} Plays for Dancers Eliot felt that he had mastered Irish legend ; he had achieved a universal drama that at the same time used specifically Irish material. ¹⁸⁶

This is a view that can be endorsed by close examination of the individual Noh-based plays, as I have tried to show in the section on The Cat and the Moon. Purgatory is praised for its succinctness and for its "masterly exposition of the emotions of an old man".¹⁸⁷ The subject of Purgatory is intricately involved with a crucial part of the system, "the dreaming back", and as such Eliot refuses to accept the play: "I cannot accept a purgatory in which there is no hint, or at least no emphasis upon Purgation".¹⁸⁸ Eliot goes on to look in detail at Yeats's development as a verse dramatist. He begins by saying that Yeats is a lyrical dramatist whose dramatic form underwent a long process of evolution. Eliot outlines the disadvantages for Yeats at the beginning of his career: for a dramatist who uses blank verse there is always the oppressive reminiscence of Shakespeare; the association of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries clings uncomfortably and modern speech rhythms cannot be caught. Eliot notes Yeats's successful use of lyrical interlude, his expunging of poetic irrelevances and the practical extinction of blank verse metre by the time of Purgatory. The following quotation refers us back to Eliot's approval of the welding of dramatic content and poetic form in Everyman, and it is this criterion that he finds Yeats worked towards in his plays:

The course of improvement is towards a greater and greater starkness. The beautiful line for its own sake is a luxury dangerous even for the poet who has made himself a virtuoso of the technique of the theatre. What is necessary is a beauty which shall not be in the line or the isolable passage, but woven into the dramatic texture itself; so that you can hardly say whether the lines give grandeur to the drama, or whether it is the drama which turns the words into poetry.

Eliot implies that Yeats came close to achieving this unanalysable beauty of dramatic texture. Yeats's difficulties were gradually overcome : he had started to write verse drama when prose plays "seemed triumphant" and now we understand that Yeats's "imperfect early attempts" are "probably more permanent literature"¹⁹⁰ than Shaw's plays.

Eliot exalts Yeats's position in regard to the Irish theatre, claiming that Yeats wrote "for the people", concerning himself "with fundamental situations".¹⁹¹ He chooses not to mention Yeats's criticism of the "People's Theatre" which he had created, and Yeats's placing his "fundamental situations" in private drawing-rooms. Eliot, however, does maintain that Yeats clung to "the right view" between "Art for Art's sake" and the use of art for social purposes.¹⁹² Only in the last paragraph of the lecture does Eliot hint at his antipathy to Yeats's "strange Gods" : "I do not dissimulate the fact that there are aspects of Yeats's thought and feeling which to myself are unsympathetic. I say this only to indicate the limits which I have set to my criticism."¹⁹³ And, in 1951, Eliot wrote of Yeats that, in Purgatory, he "solved his problem of speech in verse, and laid all his successors under obligation to him".¹⁹⁴

Yeats's great achievement was that once he had formulated a personal systematic symbolism he did not limit his plays to the expression of the system. Yeats's late symbolic drama maintains a richness of texture in spite of the use of the system. He did not rely on the morality form to convey a direct expression of his philosophy, as Maeterlinck did in "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir" : Yeats had already experimented with the morality form and had discovered that its clear forcefulness was not suited to express the subtlety and poetic nuance that his artistic

disposition led him to. Yeats's mystic apprehension of reality found its appropriate artistic expression in unanalysable symbolism. His progression towards a successfully dramatic and poetically subtle symbolic play has been demonstrated with reference to The Shadowy Waters, The Hour-Glass and The Cat and the Moon. The Shadowy Waters in its final form is static and intellectually confused. The "emotional" symbols evoke the mood of ecstasy that Yeats was striving for but we are not shown the fate of the lovers and we do not appreciate the nature of their supernatural propulsion. Yeats relied on the symbols to provide an emotion of fulfilment that is not made clear in the action. In The Hour-Glass Yeats appropriated the morality form and he used Christian systematic symbols. His mystic vision of the "two living countries", an unsystematic philosophy, could not be satisfactorily expressed in a play that, because of its morality form, seems to be moving towards a clear expression of faith : The Hour-Glass, because of its Christian symbols, appears to be progressing towards a Christian resolution. In The Cat and the Moon Yeats created a post-sentimentalisch symbolic form : the play expresses a harmonious philosophy in systematic symbols. However, the expression of personal philosophy is not overt and allegorical : it is embodied in the order of the play as a whole. The spectator is encouraged to derive his own meaning from the play ; the symbolic characters (Blind Beggar, Lame Beggar and saint) and the symbolic setting (the well and the ash tree) and the action's progress towards a choice of physical or spiritual salvation, are sufficiently resonant for this to be possible. The lyric indicates the personal philosophy and the spectator is left to find the associations between the lyric and the action. The form is inseparable

from the content, the audience recognising in the progress towards the dance climax the progress towards climactic spiritual salvation. The musician's song and the Lame Beggar's return to limping indicate for the audience a regression from the climactic condition of salvation. The play reveals an order in life at the same time as it imposes an artistic harmony on life. Yeats had fulfilled Shaw's and Eliot's requirements for "drama within the limitations of art" : The Cat and the Moon is an optimistic philosophical play which offers infinite interpretation because of its symbolic resonance. It combines the qualities of drama and music: the straightforward progression of the action, with its comic and localised nature, is merged with a spiritual suggestiveness which implies a universal order.

Yeats's triumph was that he found comfort in his achievement as playwright :

I have had greater luck than any other modern English-speaking dramatist ; I have aimed at tragic ecstasy and here and there in my own ^{work} and in the work of my friends I have seen it greatly played. What does it matter that it belongs to a dead art and to a time when a man spoke out of an experience and a culture that were not of his time alone, but held his time, as it were, at arm's length that he might be a spectator of the ages. I am haunted by certain moments[...]. These things will, it may be, haunt me on my death-bed ; what matter if the people prefer another art, I have had my fill. 195

And Yeats fulfilled his role as seer :

[...] I want to make my readers understand that explanations of the world lie one inside another, each complete in itself, like those perforated Chinese ivory balls.(...) Nature or reality as known to poets and tramps has no moment, no impression, no perception like another, everything is unique and nothing unique is measurable.(...) Man has made mathematics, but God reality. 196

257

"Drama within the limitations of art":

A Study of Some Plays by Maeterlinck, Yeats, Beckett, and Pinter.

by Susan Gay Painter

Royal Holloway College.

VOLUME 2

XTR
Mae. B.
143,809
Sept. 78

Submitted to the University of London
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Contents : Volume 2

	<u>page</u>	
Chapter Five : Samuel Beckett	3	
i "After us the Savage God"	3	
ii "A form that accommodates the mess"	8	
iii "Waiting for Godot"	32	
iv Beckett and Maeterlinck	51	
v Beckett and Yeats	58	
vi Beckett and dramatic tradition	64	
vii Beckett's late plays for the stage	78	
viii Conclusion	95	
Chapter Six : Harold Pinter's "No Man's Land"	98	
Conclusion	125	
Notes	127	
Bibliography	176	

Chapter Five

Samuel Beckett

i "After us the Savage God"¹

Yeats's² horror of the imminent disintegration of values in the modern world was expressed in "The Second Coming". In the poem the birth of a new god is envisaged, a 'rough beast' appropriate to the twentieth-century milieu of war and cruelty :

Things fall apart ; the centre cannot hold ;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. 2

A new type of art will be born with the 'rough beast' ; Yeats draws attention to this in The Trembling of the Veil when he refers to 'the Savage God'³. The reference is particularly associated with Alfred Jarry's Ubu Roi, the first performance of which Yeats attended at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre on December 10 1896 :

The audience shake their fists at one another, and the Rhymer whispers to me, 'There are often duels after these performances', and he explains to me what is happening on the stage. The players are supposed to be dolls, toys, marionettes, and now they are all hopping like wooden frogs, and I can see for myself that the chief personage, who is some kind of King, carries for sceptre a brush of the kind that we use to clean a closet. Feeling bound to support the most spirited party, we have shouted for the play, but that night at the Hôtel Corneille I am very sad, for comedy, objectivity, has displayed its growing power once more. I say : 'After Stéphane Mallarmé, after Paul Verlaine, after Gustave Moreau, after Puvis de Chavannes, after our own verse, after all our subtle colour and nervous rhythm, after the faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is possible? After us the Savage God.'

Yeats comments here on what he finds to be the inevitable outcome of the sensitive symbolist art of his generation. The progress of art involves a cyclic series of contrary impulses, the objective emphasis following the highest development of the subjective : the new drama will stress comedy and cruelty ; it will show man as anti-heroic and bestial. Ubu Roi's parody of Shakespearean tragic drama, its brutal and antipathetic protagonist, and its undeviating attack on language, offered Yeats an insight into what was to come.

Arthur Symons called Jarry's play "the first Symbolist farce"⁵ ; he understood Jarry to be "a sort of comic antithesis to Maeterlinck"⁶. By setting his play in Poland, a country which had been unplaced on the map of Europe for a century, Jarry implicitly drew attention to the universality of the action. Various anti-realistic devices were deployed : masked actors performed in marionette costumes ; cardboard horses' heads hung from the actors' necks served to indicate the equestrian scenes ; scene changes were represented by placards ; there were simultaneous interior and exterior settings ; fairground music was played throughout. Jarry was determined to show to his audience the ignoble basis of man. It is important to understand that Lugné-Poe had originally intended to rehearse the play as a tragedy⁷ ; Jarry's commentary on man's greed, cowardice and sadism is a tragic realisation of the base instincts of universal man. Arthur Symons was extremely perceptive when he observed that "the artificial, when it has gone the full circle, comes back to the primitive"⁸. The refinement of Mallarmé and Maeterlinck had been exhausted ; man's "element of cruelty"⁹ would now be examined. Symons concluded :

Ubu Roi is the brutality out of which we have achieved civilisation, and those painted, massacring puppets the destroying elements which are as old as the world, and which we can never chase out of the system of natural things. 10

In 1927 Antonin Artaud and Roger Vitrac founded the Théâtre Alfred Jarry, paying homage to the man whose precocious play is a landmark in modern drama. The principle of "la cruauté", crucial to Artaud's theory, was recognised by Arthur Symons as a part of Jarry's art which mirrors the brutality "which we can never chase out of the system of natural things". This criticism must be acknowledged as a penetrating contemporary assessment of Jarry's aims.

In Samuel Beckett's canon the concept of a "Savage God" is a recurring theme. His account of God's workings in Watt presupposes the existence of a "rough beast" as horrific as Yeats had prophesied :

Birds of every kind abounded, and these it was our delight to pursue, with stones and clods of earth. Robins, in particular, thanks to their confidingness, we destroyed in great numbers. And larks' nests, laden with eggs still warm from the mother's breast, we ground into fragments, under our feet, with peculiar satisfaction, at the appropriate season, of the year.

But our particular friends were the rats, that dwelt by the stream. They were long and black. We brought them such titbits from our ordinary as rinds of cheese, and morsels of gristle, and we brought them also birds' eggs, and frogs, and fledgelings. Sensible of these attentions, they would come flocking round us at our approach, with every sign of confidence and affection, and glide up our trouser-legs, and hang upon our breasts. And then we would sit down in the midst of them, and give them to eat, out of our hands, of a nice fat frog, or a baby thrush. Or seizing suddenly a plump young rat, resting in our bosom after its repast, we would feed it to its mother, or its father, or its brother, or its sister, or to some less fortunate relative.

It was on these occasions, we agreed, after an exchange of views, that we came nearest to God. 11

The extraordinary impact of this passage on the reader depends on Beckett's exquisite judgement of detail. The scene is set in an idyllic garden atmosphere ; with the first statement about the birds it seems very likely that there will follow a Romantic description of the human affinity with nature. The irony is reinforced by minute details. The particularisation of robins helps the reader to see the picture of carnage with greater clarity. The tender implications of "eggs still warm from the mother's breast" in this context ; the befriending of vermin ; the feeding of vermin with birds ; the repellent image of rats "gliding" and "hanging" on the narrator and his friend ; the horror of the inter-family savagery ; and the final climax, so carefully calculated : these details leave the reader with the final word to which everything has contributed - "God". John Chalker has noted the alienating effects of the Biblical echoes in the language, "the absurdly anthropocentric systematising of the family relationships" and "the cool theological nihilism of the final comment", resulting in the reader's judgement on the narrator.¹² The question that is left is whether Beckett himself is impressed by such a definition of a malignant deity. There is certainly little to suggest that the Dantesque world of Beckett's plays will ever progress to the Paradiso. As Richard N. Coe has commented in this context : for Beckett's people, "A God who could create a world of suffering, absurdity and death, and yet still give man an inherent notion of beauty, happiness and significance can only be a Being so cruel and so utterly cynical as to pass all human understanding."¹³

A brief examination of some of the references to God in the plays will be helpful at this point. In Waiting for Godot Lucky's knowledge is of

a God "with white beard" who exists "outside time without extension".¹⁴
 This conventional picture of a wise man in a timeless, spaceless situation is qualified abruptly. God "from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown".¹⁵ God has three "divine" characteristics. He is insensible to suffering and, by implication, cannot be sympathetic to the needs of suffering mankind. He has no capacity for terror and therefore cannot be terrified into rectifying his mistakes. Finally, he has lost his capacity to speak, so that he cannot answer prayers. There are exceptions to the rule that he loves us dearly : God seems to be capable of persecution. Lucky proceeds to indicate that God suffers with those in Hell. The portrait is now complete : an indifferent God, who appears to be part devil, behaves erratically "for reasons unknown". A demonstration of God's aphasia occurs later on in the play when Estragon's call for pity is left unanswered.¹⁶ In Endgame the implication is that God has not yet been created. Hamm interrupts Clov's attempt to kill a rat by suggesting that they pray to God. The discouraging result leads Hamm to expostulate : "The bastard! He doesn't exist! " ; Clov's comment seems to imply that the saviour might come into existence : "Not yet."¹⁷ For the present however God's name can be linked only ironically with Clov's dream of order :

HAMM (exasperated).

What in God's name do
 you think you are doing?

CLOV (straightening up).

I'm doing my best to create
 a little order.

HAMM

Drop it!

18

The disorder of the world created by God is stressed by Nagg's story of

the tailor.¹⁹ The perfectionist spends a long time over making a pair of trousers fit correctly but God brought into being in a mere six days an imperfect world.

Winnie, in Happy Days, manages paradoxically to bear her hellish situation by referring to the heavenliness of the light which constantly blazes down on her. At times she forgets to camouflage her predicament, for example when she contradicts herself: "holy light (.) blaze of hellish light".²⁰ She tries to accept that God is merciful; when she is wiping the handle of her toothbrush she breaks down: "Many mercies - (wiping) - great mercies - (stops wiping, fixed lost gaze, brokenly) - prayers perhaps not for naught - (pause, do.) - first thing - (pause, do.) - last thing - ".²¹ She can never be sure of God's true nature.

The vision in Play is of a Purgatory which is said to be better than life: W2 tells us that she prefers "this to...the other thing. Definitely. There are endurable moments."²² By implication the "hellish half-light"²³ is easier to live with than the life that God had given the three people previously; in the former existence it seems that there were no endurable moments. In Not I Mouth had been brought up to believe "in a merciful... (brief laugh)...God...(good laugh)".²⁴ The laughter alienates us from the proposition that God can be merciful.

With Beckett's plays we meet the doubts and anxieties of an age which appears to indicate the full emergence from Bethlehem of the Savage God.

ii "A form that accommodates the mess"

Whereas Yeats's system was necessary as a defence against the chaos

9

of the world, Beckett strives for an art which is as devoid of system as life itself: "I'm not interested in any system. I can't see any trace of any system anywhere."²⁵ His concern is to find a form that will "admit" the chaos of actuality without reflecting the amorphousness of life; it "will be of such a type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say that the chaos is really something else. The form and the chaos remain separate. The latter is not reduced to the former. That is why the form itself becomes a preoccupation, because it exists as a problem separate from the material it accommodates. To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now."²⁶ While the form should not metamorphose the "mess" into a semblance of order, it should nevertheless be organised and carefully shaped. In Beckett's stage plays the form is always highly stylised and precise, yet within the symmetry the subject is the "mess" of being. The symmetry should stand in isolation from the lack of symmetry in life. Beckett has said: "In my work there is consternation behind the form, not in the form."²⁷ The aesthetic appears to negate Eliot's proposition that "It is a function of all art to give us some perception of an order in life, by imposing an order upon it [...] it is ultimately the function of art, in imposing a credible order upon ordinary reality, and thereby eliciting some perception of an order in reality, to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness, and reconciliation".²⁸ However, because Beckett's drama is "within the limitations of art", because it is anti-realistic, musical and symmetrical, the form often seems to provide a consoling semblance of order to oppose the "chaos". The ritualistic balletic form is best suited to convey metaphysical order; the tensions in Beckett's drama are very often associated with the ironic juxtaposition

of the use of such a form to "accommodate" the non-systematic nature of the world.

Beckett's 1949 "Dialogue" with Georges Duthuit on the Dutch painter Bram van Velde centres on the predicament of the modern artist. In Beckett's opinion, Bram van Velde was the first modern painter to accept that he could not express his subject with accuracy; the relation between "representer and representee" involves an "acute and increasing anxiety (. . .) as though shadowed more and more darkly by a sense of invalidity, of inadequacy, of existence at the expense of all that it excludes, all that it blinds to".²⁹ Van Velde is "the first to submit wholly to the incoercible absence of relation (. . .) the first to admit that to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail".³⁰ Beckett maintains that in the absence of adequate terms to express both the self and also the object there can be no expression. The artist is nevertheless obliged to express. We can assume by implication that Beckett's art is seen by him to be intricately involved with the inexpressible. In "Poetry and Drama" Eliot postulates an ideal for poetic drama; he asks for an expression of the "fringe of indefinite extent" that lies "beyond the nameable".³¹ In Beckett's drama we find a preoccupation with "the unnameable"; he is fully aware as Eliot was that the ideal expression of the mystery of being is unattainable, yet he grapples with the subject in the face of this knowledge.

Beckett finds startling new images for the divisions which he perceives at the heart of life. With each stage play it seems that the ultimate form has been found through which the complexity of existence can be conveyed. The canon resembles a series of concentric circles, diminishing in size while their centre point remains constant, the last play concentrating

the expression of Angst in the first. Two men wait for a third who does not arrive ; a bare room shelters two dustbins which contain the legless parents of a blind man who, unable to stand, is waited on by a younger man who is unable to sit ; an old man plays a tape, listening to his former selves, and he records his present self on a new tape ; a woman is buried up to above her waist in a mound of scorched grass - and then she is buried up to her neck ; three faces, peeping over grey urns, are goaded by a light into telling and re-telling the story of their relationship ; a light gradually increases to reveal a stage scattered with rubbish, then it decreases to its original faintness, while the sound of breathing accompanies its crescendo and decrescendo ; three women ritualistically come and go from a lit-up area and reveal their lives ; a disembodied mouth speaks of shame and guilt, of her life, to a compassionate auditor ; the white face of an old man hovers about ten feet above stage level listening to three voices in his mind ; a woman paces to and fro revolving in her mind the story of her relationship with her mother. In these ways Beckett tries to give form to the inexpressible : his drama is mystical in that its subjects are the mysteries of life. Man's relationship with the unknown, the interaction of mind and body, the exploration of the concept of "identity", what it is like to live and to die : these are the issues with which he deals in the anti-realistic form best suited to discussion of the metaphysical questions.

The formal patterns of the plays approach the purity of music. John Fletcher states that "Beckett has been described as a 'competent amateur musician'. He writes his recent plays like scores, with words instead of notes ; all his working life he has been fascinated by the abstract

purity of music. He would no doubt endorse Pater's judgement : 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music'. "³² Pater's expansion of his tenet concerns the "constant effort of art to obliterate" ³³ the distinction between form and content ; in Beckett's analysis of James Joyce's Work in Progress (Finnegans Wake to be) he poured scorn on those who were not appreciative of Joyce's efforts to achieve the condition of music :

Here is direct expression - pages and pages of it. And if you don't understand it, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is because you are too decadent to receive it. You are not satisfied unless form is so strictly divorced from content that you can comprehend the one almost without bothering to read the other. (. . .) Here form is content, content is form. (. . .) His writing is not about something ; it is that something itself. 34

In his plays Beckett achieves such "direct expression" ; for each play he provides a form combining visual images which directly convey his subjects, a poetic and rhythmic use of words and silences, and a use of movement, mime, lighting and darkness. Form and subject are difficult to separate in his works : one may cite Play here where the light is a character in the play, an "inquisitor" as well as a necessary piece of stage equipment which reveals to the audience the three characters on-stage. Beckett has used the musical term da capo to describe the repetition of the text in Play ³⁵ and it is obvious that he looks upon Play as a work which closely approximates to music. Krapp's Last Tape has been used as the basis of an opera by Marcel Mihalovici ; he records that Beckett has "an astonishing musical intuition". ³⁶ Beckett's admiration for the musical qualities in literature is expressed again in his study of Proust where he tells us that Proust "makes no attempt to dissociate form

from content. The one is a concretion of the other, the revelation of a world."³⁷ The concluding section of Proust concerns the significance of music in Proust's work. According to Beckett, Proust was influenced by Schopenhauer's separation of music from the other arts : "music is the Idea itself, unaware of the world of phenomena, existing ideally outside the universe, apprehended not in Space but in Time only, and consequently untouched by the teleological hypothesis".³⁸ Beckett expands this statement about the essential nature of music and the ideal region it occupies with reference to "the intimate and ineffable nature of an art that is perfectly intelligible and perfectly inexplicable".³⁹ Beckett's entire canon strives to include these tensions of intelligibility and non-paraphrasability. In Chapter Four I have noted Beckett's affinity with Yeats regarding these issues, and I have cited in particular Beckett's association of his work with music in his correspondence with Alan Schneider : "My work is a matter of fundamental sounds (. . .) made as fully as possible, and I accept responsibility for nothing else."⁴⁰ Beckett offers no exegesis of his art : he makes his point through those images which are the substance and form of the plays. Words and Music, a play for radio, depicts the rivalry in expression between words and music. It is Music that successfully embodies spirituality ; Words tries to verbalise Music's expression of religious experience :

Then down a little way
 Through the trash
 Towards where
 All dark no begging
 No giving no words
 No sense no need
 Through the scum
 Down a little way
 To whence one glimpse
 Of that wellhead.

Words seems to acknowledge that Music has succeeded where he, Words, has failed ; his deep sigh at the end of the play suggests that words can only at times approximate to music. Beckett's plays are attempts to rival music - not only in words, but in stage images and effects.

There is a progression in Beckett's stage plays from the (albeit minimal) depiction of an exterior landscape to an inner mindscape of voices. The reduction in scope reflects an attempt to reach a concentrated expression of the essence of life, to give an even more succinct form to the "mess". Very often Beckett sees life as a series of antitheses and he depicts the equilibrium of all things. More recently he has tended to greater pessimism and formalism. Waiting for Godot stresses stasis and balance ; there is a continual motion backwards and forwards without progression. Beckett explains : "I take no sides. I am interested in the shape of ideas. There is a wonderful sentence in Augustine : 'Do not despair ; one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume ; one of the thieves was damned.' That sentence has a wonderful shape. It is the shape that matters."⁴² Here are two sentences from Augustine that are referred to as one ; we may conjecture that the punctuation involved has been erroneously transcribed by Alan Schneider. Beckett attempts to dissociate himself from the ideological content of Augustine's words : "It is the shape that matters." The formalist critical approach may be a hint for those critics who would analyse Beckett's art from a philosophical viewpoint. Beckett is again making clear his position : the desirable approximation of words to music entails the use of a form that is content, a content that is form. In Beckett's struggle to "accommodate the mess"

he stresses the importance of form "to give confusion shape".⁴³ The implication is that philosophical and religious ideas are "shapes" that mould confusion in an artistic way ; they can at best be "stylistic arrangements of experience"⁴⁴ - to use Yeats's comment with regard to his belief in the system he had expounded in A Vision. Beckett's reluctance to accept responsibility for the philosophical content of his works can be illustrated by glancing at the notes for Film. Structure and "shape" are separated from ideas, and the overriding importance of "shape" is stressed :

Esse est percipi

All extraneous perception suppressed, animal, human, divine, self-perception maintains in being.

Search of non-being in flight from extraneous perception breaking down in inescapability of self-perception.

No truth value attaches to above, regarded as of merely structural and dramatic convenience. 45

Beckett implies that Bishop Berkeley's philosophy is not central to his own thought : the dictum "Esse est percipi" was chosen for its dramatic and structural possibilities. Critics have presumed to differ, exploring the implications of "Esse est percipi" throughout the canon. We are reminded by this paradox of Beckett's protest : "My work is a matter of fundamental sounds (no joke intended) made as fully as possible, and I accept responsibility for nothing else. If people want to have headaches among the overtones, let them. And provide their own aspirin."⁴⁶ Beckett will not accept responsibility for the ideas that other people extract from the plays ; he claims to be responsible merely for the "shape" of the works. His "I take no sides." refers to this reluctance to account for his

own position ; he styles himself as failing to be "master" of his "material".⁴⁷
 The position he adopts is one of the artist who cannot express because he is conscious of his inadequacies : the artist can shape but he cannot offer opinion or idea. Paradoxically, when Beckett is at his most formalist - in Breath - the form seems to embrace a very narrow idea : when Beckett is at his best - in Waiting for Godot - the form incorporates numerous ideas and attitudes.

There are no sides taken in Godot and its "shape" is significantly that of equilibrium. The form contributes to our understanding of the play as a whole but Beckett effaces his own definitions because of the balance that the form involves. When this balance is lacking Beckett appears to "take sides". In Godot the possibility of salvation for Vladimir and Estragon is shared with the possibility of damnation ; the balance in the form follows through the shape of Augustine's idea. Act One ends with the characters' will to move thwarted by their passivity and Act Two concludes on a similar picture of stasis. The inseparable partners will continue to wait because they cannot move forward without moving back. In Endgame the final tableau is similarly of motionlessness. Clov does not advance or retreat : the endgame has finished in stalemate. It is the complementary relationship of Hamm and Clov that keeps them together throughout : "Gone from me you'd be dead." states Hamm, and Clov replies : "And vice versa."⁴⁸ Although pap, Turkish Delight, tides, navigators, rugs, pain-killers and coffins are no more, the end does not seem to close in entirety. There is a small boy outside : we do not see Clov armed with the gaff to kill the "potential procreator" as he had earlier intended.⁴⁹

Krapp's Last Tape explores the changing self by means of the compelling image of an old man listening to his recorded voice on a tape. At sixty-nine he hears his thirty-nine year old self; the self of thirty years back talks of another self of twenty-seven or twenty-nine. We observe three stages in Krapp's life. The new Krapp always passes judgement on the old Krapp: "Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp!"⁵⁰ says the thirty-nine year old; "Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago, hard to believe I was ever as bad as that."⁵¹ says the sixty-nine year old. The old man does not bother to listen to the thirty-nine year old's great spiritual vision; what fascinates him is the beautiful and idyllic description of a scene of sensuality: "I lay down across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side."⁵² At the end of the play Krapp does seem to want his "best years" back, as the thirty-nine year old had not: "the fire" of the spiritual vision had not been memorable or significant in Krapp's life after all. Beckett has preserved in this play a fine sense of the antitheses in life. We look on Krapp with pity; he has surrendered something vital and lives in the past. He does not experience the mystical involuntary recollection that Proust describes, insisting instead: "Be again, be again. (Pause.) All that old misery. (Pause.) Once wasn't enough for you. (Pause.) Lie down across her."⁵³ The enforced memory is reminiscent of the passage in Proust where Beckett describes the Proustian idea of voluntary memory which "is of no value as an instrument of evocation, and provides an image as far removed from the real as the myth of our imagination or the caricature furnished by direct perception."⁵⁴ Krapp's life has been

dominated by the voluntary memory which the tapes afford him. We learn by his experience that life has riches which should not be rejected.

In Happy Days Beckett again describes an equilibrium as the texture of life. The unflagging optimism with which Winnie greets her predicament could be taken as affirmative. If we take this line we see the ending as Winnie's victory : her role is literally to "win" over the situation. But we could also maintain that Winnie consistently refuses to face up to the truth : her optimism is a form of weakness, a negative approach to the business of assessing the world. The ambiguity forces the audience into appreciating that there are two ways to look at life, one optimistic and one pessimistic : Beckett takes no sides.

In Play a "unique inquisitor" in the shape of a spot light probes out words from three victims who long for darkness. The entire verbal outpouring is repeated. According to Beckett's direction it may be exactly repeated or else be repeated with variation. The third re-play is indicated by the repetition of the opening section ; the curtain thus falls on the suggestion that the inquisition will continue to recur ad infinitum, the three characters living through their interwoven story again and again. If the light is less strong with each repeat one has the impression that darkness will be reached at the end of the narrowing gyre. The half-light may be replaced with the craved-for darkness : "On the other hand things may disimprove, there is that danger."⁵⁵ In Beckett's letter to George Devine concerning the production of Play by the National Theatre Company in 1964 he described the method used in the Paris production of staging the repeat. This involved an expression of "a slight weakening, both of question and of response, by means of less and

perhaps slower light and correspondingly less volume and speed of voice".⁵⁶ The impression would be of a "falling off [...] with suggestion of conceivable dark and silence in the end, or of an indefinite approximating towards it"; this "would be reinforced if we obtained also, in the repeat, a quality of hesitancy, of both question and answer, perhaps not so much in a slowing down of actual débit as in a less confident movement of spot from one face to another and less immediate reaction of the voices".⁵⁷ In the text however, Beckett does not enforce his own (and essentially optimistic) view ; it is left for a director to interpret the play.

We find in Breath no scope for ambiguity. In a few seconds life is presented to us as blank and worthless. The move towards a more wholly formalistic approach is seen also in Come and Go. Three spinsters come and go from a lit-up stage area in a ritualistic movement which re-asserts the fundamental shape of Beckett's earlier plays : the "shape" is of the stasis of existence, a flurry of non-progressive movement. In Not I the shape of equilibrium is lost : the startling outpouring of words re-asserts the concept of discontinuity of the personality that Krapp's Last Tape dramatises but, unlike the earlier play, the vision seems to reveal unmitigated despair. There is no rewarding moment that Mouth can recall. That Time's three voices affirm between them the happiness and despair inherent in life while Footfalls portrays a bleak situation relieved by compassion. It seems that Beckett's further concentration of life with each play has led him sometimes to a renunciation of the possibility of hope. This subject will be examined in a later section.

The progression in Beckett's novels, as he has commented, is one

of stylistic and grammatical reduction : "At the end of my work there's nothing but dust - the nameable. In the last book - 'L'Innomable' - there's complete disintegration. No 'I', no 'have', no 'being'. No nominative, no accusative, no verb. There's no way to go on."⁵⁸ But like the Unnamable himself Beckett has gone on. In the plays a new form of expression was found but within this form a new reduction and disintegration occur.⁵⁹ The very short late plays attempt to visualise the talking mind ; external irrelevances depart : first of all bodies become extraneous (in Happy Days we have almost reached this point and in Flax we arrive at it), then faces become extraneous and within the interior monologue grammar breaks down (in Not I) ; we do not need to see lips moving in That Time to recognise that the voices we hear belong to the face that we see ; in Footfalls a woman turns over a story in her mind and, as Martin Esslin has observed, the action seems to represent the turmoil of the mind. Beckett has remarked that his writing gets more and more difficult and "the area of possibilities gets smaller and smaller".⁶⁰ He has said that he is "working with impotence, ignorance"⁶¹ and that he cannot regard expression as an achievement ; as we have seen earlier, Beckett feels that his work can never adequately describe the core of his subject. His subject is described as follows : "My little exploration is that whole zone of being that has always been set aside by artists as something unuseable - as something by definition incompatible with art."⁶² Beckett's "little exploration" is that of people "spiritually precarious" : "My people seem to be falling to bits."⁶³ He strives to penetrate the minds of "his" people, but the position of the contemporary artist is re-stated as one of failure : "I think anyone nowadays, who pays

the slightest attention to his own experience finds it the experience of a non-knower, a non-can-er (somebody who cannot). The other type of artist - the Apollonian - is absolutely foreign to me." ⁶⁴ The Nietzschean reference is clear. Joyce is defined in opposition to Beckett and is therefore an Apollonian artist: "The more Joyce knew the more he could. He's tending toward omniscience and omnipotence as an artist." ⁶⁵ He was a "can-er", somebody who can, in opposition to Beckett the Dionysian. Arthur C. Danto writes that for Nietzsche "reality is formless and Dionysian, and the problem for him was whether one could significantly achieve a Dionysian language with which to express Dionysiac thought". ⁶⁶ Nietzsche's position was by inference similar to Beckett's and his Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik (1872) should be examined briefly here. Nietzsche distinguished between Apollonian and Dionysian art as follows. Apollonian art may be compared with dreams and Dionysian art with intoxication and ecstasy. The dreamer produces images which gratify the emotional requirements of the individual and, in this way, Apollonian art seeks to order the real world. The drunkard seeks to forget himself until the boundaries between self and other things are blurred and, in this way, Dionysian art is ecstatic and universal. Apollonian art shapes, gives form and clarity to images, and is most clearly exemplified in painting and sculpture, which for Nietzsche in 1872 were still the most mimetic of the arts. Dionysian art breaks forms down and is most clearly exemplified in lyric poetry and music. There are Apollonian and Dionysian elements in each of the arts. Apollonian culture at its most powerful effects naiv art. Here Nietzsche refers directly to Schiller's distinction between naiv and sentimentalisch, ⁶⁷ and

he takes over Schiller's example of Homer as a naïv artist. Hamlet is his example of the Dionysian man; ⁶⁸ Hamlet sees into the essence of things but he does not act : to act is ridiculous in the face of the absurdity of existence. Actuality is loathed by the Dionysian and his state of mind is reflected in his non-action. The Dionysian man can thus be equated with the sentimentalisch man who, conscious of his divided self, hesitates to act, and who perceives a vast discrepancy between the bleakness of actuality and the harmony of the ideal. In his art the Dionysian transforms his perception of the absurdity of existence into representations with which it is possible to come to terms with life, in particular with "representations of the sublime as the artistic subjugation of the awful, and the comic as the artistic delivery from the nausea of the absurd". ⁶⁹ Such is Beckett's art. ⁷⁰ In the plays Beckett does not order life : he records chaos in tragi-comedy. He contributes dissonance by a critical examination within the plays of the play as a literary form.

Alain Robbe-Grillet has commented of Vladimir and Estragon's function :

We suddenly realize, as we look at them, the main function of theatre, which is to show what the fact of being there consists in. For this is what we have never seen on the stage before, or not with the same clarity, not with so few concessions and so much force. A character in a play usually does no more than play a part, as all those about us do who are trying to shirk their own existence. But in Beckett's play it is as if the two tramps were on the stage without a part to play. ⁷¹

Vladimir and Estragon seem to be free to invent actions without the restrictions of plot. They wait and fill in their time while waiting; the

audience is forced to see them as actors with a conscious sense of their appearance on stage. An early instance of the characteristic stage-consciousness occurs when Estragon surveys the auditorium, remarks "Inspiring prospects" and then ironically turns to Vladimir to say "let's go."⁷² Estragon would prefer to be in the auditorium; perhaps he wants to watch rather than to be watched. What the couple did yesterday was to appear as actors on a stage before an audience: the same as they do today and will do tomorrow. As Hugh Kenner puts it: "the audience of the non-play is reminded that others the previous night sat in these seats witnessing the identical futility (.) and that others in turn will sit there watching on successive nights for an indeterminate period".⁷³ For a time Vladimir and Estragon become spectators when a new set of actors appear on-stage. Pozzo prepares for his speech with a good deal of throat-clearing and good use of his vaporizer; after his oration about the night he must be reassured, like all entertainers, that he has entertained well. Vladimir and Estragon have a "little canter" about the entertainment; they look at the play from the audience's point of view:

VLADIMIR	Charming evening we're having.
ESTRAGON	Unforgettable.
VLADIMIR	And it's not over.
ESTRAGON	Apparently not.
VLADIMIR	It's only beginning.
ESTRAGON	It's awful.
VLADIMIR	Worse than the pantomime.
ESTRAGON	The circus.
VLADIMIR	The music-hall.
ESTRAGON	The circus.

74

In a similar way it is often remarked that nothing is happening, that the experience is insignificant and so on. The point is that the action we as

audience and they as actors are waiting for has not happened ; we are all waiting for Godot. Hugh Kenner points out that "The French text manages an inclusiveness denied to English idiom : 'Pourquoi?' 'On attend Godot.' Not 'nous' but 'on' : Didi, Gogo and audience alike." ⁷⁵ The passive action of waiting is presented so that we appreciate the insignificance of the pastime : the future is always significant and the present never is.

When Vladimir and Estragon decide to entertain themselves one method they choose is to "play at Pozzo and Lucky", the entertainers they have recently witnessed.⁷⁶ This is Vladimir's idea and he takes it seriously. We see him imitating Lucky bowed down with the weight of the bags ; Estragon, however, takes the acting half-heartedly and, with neither the spirit nor ferocity of Pozzo, can manage only to sound like a mother scolding a child in his "curse" : 'Naughty!' " When Vladimir admonishes : 'Stronger!' " Estragon very surprisingly reveals his knowledge of the dictionary, using long latinate words that Pozzo would not think of (Pozzo's favourite curses are monosyllabic : 'Pig!' " and 'Hog!'). Vladimir moves in and out of his part, first acting, then commenting on his inadequacy, then instructing Estragon. He becomes absorbed in the illusion and we see him finally in three roles : he acts Pozzo instructing Lucky to dance, then he attempts to act Lucky dancing, stopping to comment on his poor performance. Vladimir has taken on both parts and he is so thoroughly immersed in performing that he misses Estragon's exit. When Estragon returns he is terrified because "they" are coming - presumably the "they" who beat him up each night - and the stage becomes a trap, a hell with no escape. Estragon will not contemplate

moving off-stage in the direction of the auditorium, reacting with horror when Vladimir suggests it. A little while later Vladimir and Estragon turn simultaneously from their look out posts ; when their words collide there is an elaborate ceremony of politeness, overacted by both the friends. This leads into a spell where they try to outdo each other in words : they have become artists to be criticised :

VLADIMIR	Ceremonious ape!	
ESTRAGON	Punctilious pig!	
VLADIMIR	Finish your phrase, I tell you!	
ESTRAGON	Finish your own!	77

Finally, in this sequence of acting and overacting, there is a bout of flyting. In Beckett's rehearsals for the 1975 Schiller Theater production he indicated the "step-by-step approach"⁷⁸ whereby with each sentence Vladimir and Estragon should approach by one step ; this is particularly effective in the flyting sequence, where the "step-by-step approach" clearly demonstrates that the partners are pugilists in a battle of words. One word follows from the first in an associational way until Vladimir is vanquished and turns away with the word "Crritic!" reverberating in his ears. The final most potent abuse for the artist is thus indicated. The "making up" game is played as a ritual, the partners again approaching each other with a step for each word, vying to outdo each other in exaggerated affection. After they have done their exercises and imitated the tree there is another diversion : Pozzo and Lucky enter for the second time. The entrance is seen to be a relief from boredom, the boredom that the audience too should intensely feel, almost as a tangible part of the couple's lives. Vladimir reminds us that the play is rhythmically structured by means of occurring and recurring motifs : "I begin to weary

of this motif.⁷⁹ Vladimir reminds us also that the day "is very near the end of its repertory"⁸⁰; the stage metaphor seems to encourage the audience : the bad entertainment will soon be over. When Vladimir describes his surroundings, he sounds like a member of the audience attempting to define the set after the performance : "It's indescribable. It's like nothing. There's nothing. There's a tree."⁸¹ He also seems to summarise the action of Pozzo and Lucky in Act One, not only for Pozzo's benefit, but for the audience's : "You were bringing him to the fair to sell him. You spoke to us. He danced. He thought. You had your sight."⁸² Near the end Vladimir is painfully conscious of the audience : "At me too someone is looking"⁸³; they will look until the end of the run.

The element of stage-consciousness is as intense in Endgame.⁸⁴ Hamm's name is of a particular type of actor ; he is very much aware of his part : "I'm warming up for my last soliloquy."⁸⁵ Hamm promises to give Nagg a sugar-plum "after the audition",⁸⁶ and the only thing that keeps Clov with Hamm is "the dialogue".⁸⁷ One of Hamm's "fantasies" is that he is "being watched",⁸⁸ and the audience confirms the actuality of this. When Hamm asks a rhetorical question he is very angry because Clov misunderstands him ; this is not part of the dialogue but "An aside, ape! Did you never hear an aside before?"⁸⁹ When Clov sees something startling outside their domain, Hamm objects "More complications!" He comments "Not an underplot, I trust."⁹⁰ Clov takes over from Hamm the references to stage conventions : "This is what we call making an exit."⁹¹ This could be understood as a signal that Clov has gained the upper hand ; he has appropriated Hamm's language.

Visual allusions to stage conventions are made in Endgame and in

92

Waiting for Godot. As several critics have noted, when at the very beginning of Endgame Hamm removes his handkerchief from his face and folds it, and when at the end he ritualistically unfolds it, Beckett seems to be parodying the Noh and Yeatsian convention of folding and unfolding the cloth to indicate the beginning and the end of a performance. Beckett indicates the Laurel and Hardy derivation of Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky with their bowler hats, while in Krapp's Last Tape he gives his character short trousers, huge white boots, a banana-skin tripping sequence, a white face and a purple nose to indicate his clown ancestry. The relation of life to the stage is not an overt subject in Krapp's Last Tape. The subject is there for us to find : Krapp has played many parts and this is his last tape and implicitly his last part. In Happy Days Winnie is aware of playing a part ; in her little-interrupted monologue she refers to herself objectively. She instructs herself : "Begin, Winnie."¹³ She seems to act her optimistic role, trying always to suppress her realisation of the full horror of her situation. Like Krapp, her life is sustained by memories. Winnie acknowledges her audience as Vladimir and Hamm do : "Strange feeling that someone is looking at me. I am clear, then dim, then gone, then dim again, then clear again, and so on, back and forth, in and out of someone's eye."¹⁴ In her anecdote about the gaping couple, a Mr. Shower or a Mr. Cooker and his girlfriend or wife, she encapsulates the wrong reaction of the audience to the play :

What's she doing? he says - What's the idea? he says - stuck up to her diddies in the bleeding ground - coarse fellow - What does it mean? he says - What's it meant to mean? - and so on - lot more stuff like that - usual drivel (. . .) Why doesn't he dig her out? he says - referring to you, my dear - What good is she to him like that? - What good is he to her like that? - and so on - usual tosh (. . .)

It does not "mean" anything that Winnie is stuck in the ground ; the allegorical correspondence of her situation with that of life's drawing to a close is not the best way of looking at the play. We should accept Winnie's painful situation as a given factor and try to examine how she copes with it. Winnie acknowledges that she cannot talk in a vacuum ; she is directing her words to Willie and to the audience of the play. Like Hamm she is composing a story and imagining the acting-out of another existence. Like Hamm she resurrects a Yeatsian stage convention : "I call to the eye of the mind".⁹⁶ By the end of the play Winnie has acted her part : she has had her say.

In a traditional play a character may be focused on with a spot light because he has an important speech to deliver ; in Play the speeches follow the provocation of light. Play is divided into two sections by the chorus roughly two-thirds through the action. Francis Warner has observed that Play is "almost exactly" in its structure like the Noh : 'a structure built on an opening lyric, followed by a stretch of narrative to a brief midway lyric, in its turn followed again by narrative, the whole rounded at the end by a lyric that bears some relation to the opening and central ones'.⁹⁷ The first section of narrative concerns the relationship of the three people, one man and two women, in the urns. Their situation is that of an "eternal triangle" ; they are labelled M, W1 and W2, and are representative of all the lovers who find themselves in such a situation. W1 was living with M ; she suspected infidelity, confronted W2 with screams and threats, and put a detective onto M. M confessed in the end, having paid off the detective to silence him. W1 forgave M. In a second confrontation with W2 she gloated over her. Finally M disappeared ; W2 burned all his things and W1 discovered W2's house bolted and barred.

M's whereabouts remained mysterious. All this we must piece together for ourselves, and the comedy lies in the language in which the sordid tale is told. The melodrama of W1 as reported by M and W2 - "Give up that whore, she said, or I'll cut your throat"⁹⁸ - is contrasted with the strange mixture of vocabulary and phrasing that marks W2's snobbery. W2 takes care over her terms, sounding very much as though she is giving evidence in a law court, but she incorporates W1's phrases in very funny indirect reportage: "Fearing she was about to offer me violence I rang for Erskine and had her shown out. Her parting words, as he could testify (. . .) were to the effect that she would settle my hash. I confess this did alarm me a little, at the time."⁹⁹ In the first section of Play we are shown in fragmented and disorderly reportage the makings of a farce; after a blackout of five seconds, a chorus of the three voices and a second blackout of five seconds, the mood changes. The second half comprises a discussion of the present situation, of the light and the persecution. Each is oblivious to the fact that the other two are in the same situation. W2 commands the light: "Go away and start poking and pecking at someone else."¹⁰⁰ W1 is vehement: "Get off me!"¹⁰¹ They wonder what it is they ought to be doing to be rewarded with darkness and silence; W1 speculates: "Penitence, yes, at a pinch, atonement, one was resigned, but no, that does not seem to be the point either."¹⁰² In Beckett's letter to George Devine he discusses the role of the light. He postulates a "less confident movement" of the light in the repeated play: "The inquirer (light) begins to emerge as no less a victim of his inquiry than they and as needing to be free, within narrow limits, literally to act the part, i. e. to vary if only slightly his speeds and intensities."¹⁰³ Beckett

stresses here that freedom is necessary in acting ; the light does not enjoy carrying out the task any more than the three recipients of the inquiry enjoy the process. However, despite the purgatorial situation, M, W1 and W2 find the present better than their tangled past. Their lives were "just play"¹⁰⁴ with the unreality of the stage ; in their present existence they play to an audience only when the light picks them out.

Breath echoes Play's "hellish half-light". The metaphor is extended : if life is a play then it is played on a stage littered with rubbish. In Come and Go Vi, Flo, and Ru enter and leave a pool of light, the stage where secrets are told, and they act out their fantasy together in the dim light. In Not I the woman who is Mouth consistently regards herself in the third person ; "she" is an object who acts her part, questioning it all the time. Ruby Cohn has noted that the Mouth and Auditor relate¹⁰⁵ to each other like actor and audience. The Auditor's feeling of "helpless compassion"¹⁰⁶ is very much like the audience's own. In That Time the Listener takes the part of audience for his own three voices which come to him like actors' voices. In Footfalls May seems to hear her mother's voice in her mind and she acts as audience to it.

Beckett's insistence on stage-consciousness effects a disturbed audience reaction. The audience of Endgame, for example, is embarrassed when Clov talks about his exit and when Hamm mentions his soliloquy. The embarrassment is a reaction to the breaking of the illusion that these "characters" are actors existing outside the action of Endgame that they are temporarily involved in. When Winnie in Happy Days recalls people gaping at her, when she senses that even now she is being observed, she is sensing the audience that is vital to her : outside the perception of an

audience Winnie would cease to exist. The actress playing Winnie's part discards the role when the play is over. Beckett is attempting to point to the elusive nature of identity ; if esse est percipi, then the stage is the best place to explore the repercussions of that philosophy : the metaphor is ready-made in the actor-audience relationship. When plots, underplots, asides and soliloquies are pointed out we are not merely being told that life is like the theatre, that we all play roles and adopt new roles for different situations : we are provoked into a close examination of the basis for theatrical performance and we are urged to criticise drama as a literary form.

If character is to be equated with identity, and if like Mouth we cannot say 'I', then how can character be represented on stage? The discontinuity of personality would seem to preclude such notions as 'character development'. Beckett exploits the fundamental theatrical experience : his people act others' parts ; they watch performances ; they reveal their longing to be able to circumscribe themselves when they tell stories about lives that are very similar to their own, or when, like Krapp, they try to re-play their past. The self-consciousness of Beckett's people expresses the unfathomable nature of human experience: human identity is unnameable but mankind insists on trying to place itself in a neatly worked-out plot. The need to say 'I' and the impossibility of saying 'I' are expressed directly in the stage-life metaphor that Beckett exploits.¹⁰⁷

Beckett explained the balletic nature of Godot to his Schiller Theater actors. The falls in Godot must not be done realistically : "When all four of them are lying on the ground, that cannot be handled naturalistically.

That has got to be done artificially, balletically. Otherwise everything becomes an imitation, an imitation of reality." The fall sequence is "a game, everything is a game. [.] It is a game in order to survive." 108

It must be made obvious that the actors are not imitating reality. The rhythmic and stylised nature of Beckett's drama can best be elaborated by a detailed analysis of one play : Waiting for Godot.

ii 'Waiting for Godot'

In the eighth text of the "Texts for Nothing" the narrator dwells on insignia which could be Beckett's own :

I can also just discern, with a final effort of will, a bowler hat which seems to my sorrow a sardonic synthesis of all those that never fitted me and, at the other extremity, similarly suspicious, a complete pair of brown boots lacerated and gaping. These insignia, if I may so describe them, advance in concert [.]

109

This grotesque picture of the vacant space between hat and boots is a fitting representation of Beckett's art as a dramatist : he pinpoints the absence of the most important part of the picture (here, the walking human body) by describing the exaggerated presence of the remaining details ; in this process he shifts the importance from the absent content to the present structure. The minimal leftovers that replace the central picture are comic because they are elevated beyond their normal place as useful, protective clothing, to assume instead hyperbolic importance as the only focal points in the total vision. What was central to man's conception of his being has now become the periphery, and that periphery must edge its way into the centre. So in Waiting for Godot Godot is at

the centre of the play's meaning, yet he does not materialize to resolve the issues that arise concerning his coming ; the peripheral events push their way into focus and receive our full concentration.

The technique of stressing vacancy has provided critics with a considerable amount of material for speculation ; allusion to Christianity pervades the play and this has been in particular a springboard for interpretation. However, Beckett uses Christian references in a way that Yeats would have understood as a "stylistic arrangement of experience" ¹⁰ ; he has told Colin Duckworth that "Christianity is a mythology with which I am perfectly familiar, so I naturally use it." ¹¹ Vladimir questions the notion of salvation and damnation with specific reference to the Gospels. Estragon has compared himself with Christ all his life. The tree sometimes appears to resemble a crucifix especially in the scene where Estragon imitates it with arms outstretched like Christ on the cross. References to hell and heaven occur regularly. The first syllable of Godot's name provokes inquiry. But Vladimir and Estragon's saviour does not arrive. A messenger is sent each day to say that Godot will surely arrive tomorrow. The play is not a didactic Christian allegory like Everyman. The Christian symbols, because of their long association with optimistic conviction about the redemption of man, retain meaningfulness, and provide a mythological background to a play that tries to express the nature of being. In 1956 Beckett told Alec Reid that "the great success of Waiting for Godot had arisen from a misunderstanding : critics and public alike were busy interpreting in allegorical or symbolic terms a play which strove at all cost to avoid definition" ¹². This statement aligns Beckett's play with the non-paraphrasable and the elusive ; it is a

descendant of the type of mystical drama propagated over half a century earlier by Maeterlinck and taken up by Yeats through the medium of Arthur Symons. The elusive, indefinable nature of life had been intimated by Maeterlinck in Les Aveugles, which poses the same questions as Beckett's play, offers very similar images, uses a comparable poetic rhythmic structure, and ultimately gives no conclusions, in the way of Waiting for Godot. Yeats's play The Cat and the Moon roughens Maeterlinck's delicate nuances of tone, re-asserts the theme of blindness and relates man's predicament to cosmic issues. Yeats had, moreover, prefaced his play with the warning that "no abstract idea must be present. The spectator should come away thinking the meaning as much his own manufacture as that of the blind man and the lame man had seemed mine." ¹¹³

Waiting for Godot continues the Franco-Irish tradition.

Godot eludes definition because of its essentially static situation. As Eva Metman has pointed out, ¹¹⁴ it is the Boy's visit that prevents a forward move on the part of Vladimir and Estragon. The couple have been and will be waiting for Godot. Beckett offers us the situation twice ¹¹⁵ for this sense of harrowing open-ended repetition; we see a today and a tomorrow, a yesterday and a today, which typify an infinite number. The play stresses the cycle of waiting: the acts end on the same note of stasis, and eventual progress is not suggested. Death is seen to be a possible alleviation of the otherwise interminable situation. In the past Vladimir and Estragon had the opportunity to jump from the top of the Eiffel Tower; now that they have degenerated from their former "presentable" state, "they" would not let them up the Tower. ¹¹⁶ The tree offers them a suicidal weapon. The bough would not take the weight of

them both and thus the proposition of hanging themselves is rejected early on in the play. When Estragon suggests it again at the end his belt fails the test : it is not strong enough and "tomorrow" a "good bit of rope" will be needed (p. 94). Estragon's identification with Christ is inspired by the envy of a quick crucifixion (p. 52). In the past Estragon had tried to drown himself in the Rhone, but Vladimir had saved him (p. 53). Estragon even advances the question of murder as an alternative solution : "The best thing would be to kill me" (p. 62). This is never seriously taken up. There is a great deal of compassion in the relationship of Vladimir and Estragon ; particular instances that exemplify this occur when Vladimir tenderly sings Estragon to sleep and when he comforts Estragon after a nightmare. In Beckett's 1975 Schiller Theater production, played at the Royal Court Theatre in April 1976, business was introduced to accentuate the compassionate nature of the friends. When Estragon fell asleep we saw Vladimir cover him with his own jacket ; Vladimir mimed how cold he was without the jacket ; when he moved towards Estragon we expected to see him take it back - but he placed it more securely around Estragon. Estragon ponders at one point, "I wonder if we wouldn't have been better off alone, each one for himself." (p. 53) ; the verdict is "nothing is certain" and, despite the fact that they will never progress together because one always holds the other back from going, we are forced to agree with the conclusion. Nothing is certain : time ruthlessly changes our lives as it changes Pozzo's and Lucky's, cutting off their sense of sight and speech.

Estragon's constant yearning for sleep and death can be connected with the ^{concept of} accidia or acedia, the "sin of sloth" of the medieval universe.

The remedies suggested in treatises which flourished from 1200 to 1450, in an attempt to reform the masses, tally with Vladimir's efforts at passing the time : meditation on scriptural verses and the contemplation of salvation are the most obvious examples.¹¹⁷ Sleep suggests lack of awareness of man's purpose - in this case the keeping of the appointment with God - and Estragon has constantly to be reminded of the purpose in their lives. Axël's concept of leaving life to the servants blossoms once more in Estragon. In his study of the medieval iconography of the sin of sloth, Siegfried Wenzel notes that the diseased foot is a favourite allegorical image to designate a man afflicted with the sin : "The connection of acedia with the feet is quite widespread and occurs in different forms. Primarily, spiritual languor is aptly visualized in slow physical movement. Thus, Dante has acedia punished by an incessant running on the fourth cornice of the Purgatorio (. . .) Secondly, acedia is usually linked to the wounds Christ suffered in His feet (. . .)".¹¹⁸

Perhaps Beckett's giving Estragon troublesome feet was intentionally linked with the sloth from which he suffers. Beckett's own passivity earned him the nickname of "Oblomov"¹¹⁹ and in Words and Music the theme of sloth is elaborated : "Sloth is of all the passions the most powerful passion and indeed no passion is more powerful than the passion of sloth, this is the mode in which the mind is most affected (. . .)".¹²⁰ Dante's character Belacqua fascinated Beckett and was the hero of his early stories.¹²¹ Belacqua is an accidiosus from the fourth Canto of the Purgatorio. He must pass a lifetime in the Antepurgatory because the sin of sloth caused him to delay repentance until the last moment. Sloth is now his natural condition for the length of his lifespan and he sits in

foetal-like posture when Dante sees him. In Murphy the protagonist's sloth allows his mind to be "most affected" (so Words has described the result of sloth); the third zone of darkness which is reached after the "Belacqua bliss" of the second is seen to be an ideal, a paradisaical condition.¹²² When we return to Godot after examining these other references it seems as though Estragon's desire to sleep should not be thwarted by Vladimir: Estragon's mind is certainly affected for he often dreams. The climactic moment with regard to the sleep imagery comes immediately before the Boy's second entrance. Vladimir is uncertain whether his true existence is the world of unconsciousness or the experience he undergoes while he is awake. He wonders whether his own faith in Godot is a state of spiritual sleep. Thus the conscious world is suggested to be one of unreality and the unconscious world of sleep to be one of truth. While Vladimir believes in waiting for Godot his whole waking existence is like sleeping and Pozzo's pessimistic vision of man's purposelessness may be true after all: 'Astride of a grave and a difficult birth. Down in the hole, lingeringly, the grave-digger puts on the forceps. We have time to grow old. The air is full of our cries.' (pp. 90-91).

At all levels of interpretation, Beckett is playing with opposites. He flees from statements by presenting a "constant quantity" of laughter and tears. Life is presented as a series of antitheses; solutions are never made because there is always an opposite point of view and Beckett directs us to it. We can illustrate this by an analysis of the tree image. The tree springs into life in Act Two: a hopeful signal seems to be intended. The tree is contemplated as a suicidal weapon: the hope is cancelled out. Nature's cycle will in any case inevitably come around,

life will become death, fertility will lead to barrenness, and so on, ad infinitum. Infinite juxtaposition of opposites and infinite cycles : these are the essence of Godot. The tree is an archetypal symbol of suffering which Beckett uses for its relevance to the 'shape' of life. The symbol of the cross in Christianity also depicts the fundamental opposing states of life and death. When Beckett was asked by Tom Driver if his plays deal with those facets of experience that are the concern of religion, he replied : "Yes, for they deal with distress."¹²³ The image of the tree is crucial here. Jung has attempted to define the redemptive nature of the state of suffering. He uses the leitmotif of Beckett's play in his statement :

We rightly associate the idea of suffering with a state in which the opposites violently collide with one another, and we hesitate to describe such a painful experience as being "redeemed". Yet it cannot be denied that the great symbol of the Christian faith, the Cross, upon which hangs the suffering figure of the Redeemer, has been emphatically held up before the eyes of Christians for nearly two thousand years. This picture is completed by the two thieves, one of whom goes down to hell, the other into paradise. One could hardly imagine a better representation of the 'oppositeness' of the central Christian symbol. Why this inevitable product of Christian psychology should signify redemption is difficult to see, except that the conscious recognition of the opposites, painful though it may be at the moment, does bring with it a definite feeling of deliverance.

124

This "feeling of deliverance" which Jung finds in the "recognition of the opposites" determines the hopeful nature of Waiting for Godot in spite of its depiction of suffering humanity. Beckett sees the human condition as a dramatic conflict between salvation and damnation with no resolution. The conflict best lends itself to dramatic expression, rather than to prose

or verse expression, because it is on stage that the conflict can become embodied in pairs of opposites. Beckett explains the human conflict like this :

If life and death did not both present themselves to us, there would be no inscrutability. If there were only darkness, all would be clear. It is because there is not only darkness but also light that our situation becomes inexplicable. (. . .) The keyword in my plays is "perhaps". ¹²⁵

The dichotomies of Beckett's plays illustrate the "perhaps" quality of life and nowhere is the illustration so clear as in Waiting for Godot.

The opposites are night and day, Pozzo and Lucky, Vladimir and Estragon, the Boy and his brother, the tree's opposed states of fertility and sterility, the boots and the hats, thinking and dancing, the rational and the bestial, the fear of and the hope for Godot's coming, blindness and sight, speech and dumbness.

The balletic quality and musicality of Godot result from the juxtaposition of recurrent rhythmic patterns. Beckett has drawn attention to these structural leitmotifs. The shape of Godot is all-important. Beckett has tried "To give confusion shape (. . .) a shape through repetition, repetition of themes. Not only themes in the script, but also themes of the body. When at the beginning Estragon is asleep leaning on the stone, that is a theme that repeats itself a few times. There are fixed points of waiting, where everything stands completely still, where silence threatens to swallow everything up. Then the action starts again." ¹²⁶ As we have seen, Beckett has stressed that falls in the play must be balletic "otherwise everything becomes an imitation, an imitation of reality". ¹²⁷

The repeated themes of Estragon's feet, Vladimir's hat, bones, the impulse

to suicide, the choice of the statements about the destinies of the thieves, the lost paradise, the purgatorial present, yesterday, tomorrow, the tree, dreams, waiting for Godot, sleep, sight, acting: these appear and disappear like the subjects and satellite themes of a symphony. Speech patterns also occur and recur rhythmically. The stichomythic dialogue of Vladimir and Estragon is one such speech pattern. I use as the definition of stichomythia the following: "Line by line conversation between two characters in the Greek drama. It occurs in argumentative passages and is characterised by contrasted statements, repetition of the opponent's words, and angry retort (. . .) It is occasionally referred to as 'cut and parry' or 'cut and thrust' dialogue."¹²³ This rhetorical device offers the two companions great possibilities for quarrelling in their "little canters"; they use stichomythic exchange in reference to the tree (p. 14), to Godot's vacillation (p. 18), to the muck (p. 21), to Lucky's sore (p. 25), to the evening's entertainment (pp. 34-35), to thinking (pp. 64-65), when they "abuse" each other (p. 75), and when they argue over the nature and purpose of their exercises (p. 76). The device is the main idiomatic feature in their dialogue. A deviation from the argumentative "cut and thrust" dialogue occurs in the ethereal passage about the dead voices (pp. 62-63). This section is not characterised by angry retorts although it might seem at first reading that Vladimir and Estragon are arguing about the noise that the voices make: "Like leaves", says Estragon; "Like sand" says Vladimir. In Beckett's Schiller Theater production the passage was supremely poetic, speaking of the mysteries of the self and the necessity to talk so that the "dead voices" of thought are not heard.

A form of exaggerated lyricism and self-consciousness is exploited by Pozzo. Beckett uses this to bathetic effect so that, after the first pretentious outpouring on "the tears of the world" (p. 33), with its lame tailing off, we expect Pozzo's speech on "the night" to end anticlimactically, and it does : "That's how it is on this bitch of an earth." (p. 38). Pozzo demands and receives applause for his declamations. His natural tone is dominant as he orders Lucky to fetch and carry for him : he is abrupt, hard, self-centred and lordly. He comments on his health and his own situation for the most part, although he has absorbed a number of sententiae (presumably from Lucky's store of knowledge in his better days). He makes one wrong mythological reference.¹²⁹ At the end of Act One Beckett has attuned our ears to Pozzo's blend of sentimentality and egocentricity, and particularly to his forcefulness, mitigated as this is by the loss of his possessions. When Pozzo makes his entrance in Act Two, his idiom has drastically altered, calling attention to his predicament. He asks questions : he shouts for help and for pity. Apart from the bribery - "I'll pay you!" (p. 80) and the quotations "One hundred francs!" (p. 80) and "Two hundred!" (p. 81) - Pozzo's first true utterance is a simple statement : "I am blind." (p. 84). In his treatment of Lucky, however, Pozzo remembers to be characteristically harsh (p. 87). He reveals his fury on the subject of time and, before he exits, he is almost his old self.

Vladimir and Estragon are individualised by their respective speech patterns. Estragon was a poet in the past. He remembers the Bible for its pictures alone, indicating his response to visual images rather than to ideas. He occasionally offers acute observation : "There's no

lack of void." (p.66). He dreams and wants to tell stories, in a manner indicative of his artistic nature. He half recalls the title of a volume of Yeats's poetry : "The wind in the reeds" (p.19) and he quotes from Shelley's "To the Moon" : "Pale for weariness [. . .] Of climbing heaven and gazing on the likes of us." (p.52). These lines of course parody the original : "Art thou pale for weariness / Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth".¹³⁰ Estragon, as a poet, knows that the worst abuse is "Crritic!" (p.75). He is interested in the aesthetic rather than the rational : he would prefer Lucky to dance. He is highly temperamental, as we see with his sudden fury about the "muckheap" of existence (p.61), while his assertion that "We all are born mad. Some remain so." (p.80) catches his own insecurity and irrationality. Vladimir's recurrent speech patterns reflect his rational outlook. Didi's nature involves curiosity to such a degree that questions continually spring to his lips. He is a philosopher whose greatest need is for an answer to questions about the nature of being. When he questions his philosophy of waiting for Godot he becomes distraught and his speech pattern changes : he makes statements in conversation with the Boy instead of asking questions. Vladimir frequently uses his knowledge of the Gospels to try to pinpoint his own situation. He criticises Pozzo's relationship with Lucky but he can fathom neither himself nor his relationship with Gogo. Vladimir's rational nature is most clearly revealed in his debate about whether he should or should not help Pozzo ; his logical conclusion is that a diversion should not be wasted. He learns about life from Pozzo and repeats Pozzo's knowledge (pp.90-91) yet, by the end of the play, he has returned to his original position of thinking that he will be saved if Godot comes. Thus, despite

his reasoning faculties, he is no closer to understanding his situation than is Estragon.

Lucky's monologue contains rhythms which bind it together. There are three parts to his monologue¹³¹: the first section concerns the indifference of heaven; the second section concerns man who is shrinking and dwindling; the third section is about the "earth abode of stones". The phrase "for reasons unknown" and the punctuating "I resume" recur to rhythmic effect and, within each section, there are recurrent images: for example, of God, man, stones and skull. The final lines amalgamate the main themes of the entire monologue, with their reference to God's beard and his plunging into flames, the stones of the earth, the blue of heaven and the reference to sport; the section brilliantly indicates in its total grammatical disintegration the degeneration of intelligence in Lucky - and his near madness in his struggle to verbalise his muddled thought:

simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in
 spite of the tennis on on the beard the flames the tears
 the stones so blue so calm alas alas on on the skull
 the skull the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of
 the tennis the labours abandoned left unfinished graver
 still abode of stones in a word I resume alas alas
 abandoned unfinished the skull the skull in Connemara
 in spite of the tennis the skull alas the stones Cunard
 (mêlée, final vociferations) tennis.:.the stones...so
 calm...Cunard...unfinished... (pp.44-45).

The complexity of Lucky's unfinished speech is balanced by the simplicity of the Boy's sentences. The Boy is humble: his honesty and lack of guile are pointed to in this way. Such qualities are important in the go-between who gives Vladimir and Estragon proof of Godot's existence. I have noted his speech rhythm last of all and briefly because of his brief

appearance - but to Vladimir and Estragon his speech is crucial. From the Boy they learn how Godot behaves and what he does and they learn it in plain language.

Waiting for Godot is a sentimentalisch play that examines the complex awareness of twentieth-century man. The entire play is preoccupied with the subject that Schiller stated as the sentimentalisch artist's main concern : the discrepancy between the real and the ideal. Actuality for Vladimir and Estragon is very harrowing and, as we have seen, suicide seems a choice worth making. If Godot were to arrive the waiting would be over and their ideal would be met. The ideal is in the future ; there seems to have been an ideal past as well : Estragon mentions "the good old days ' (p.74). It is interesting to compare Everyman as our example of a naiv play with Waiting for Godot. The comparison will show how the allegory of the medieval play offers definition and statement that Beckett's play avoids. Beckett repeats the focal themes and images of Everyman without committing himself to a viewpoint. I should stress that I am not describing Everyman as an influence on Beckett : there is no evidence that he has read the medieval play although critics have linked the morality with Waiting for Godot.¹³²

The author of Everyman and Samuel Beckett dwell on the tragicomic condition of humanity in an attempt to assess that condition. There are two messengers in Everyman and one (the Boy) in Waiting for Godot. In the prologue to Everyman the audience is told the moral of the play : if they "take good heed to the endynge"¹³³ and therefore they are careful not to sin, then their souls will not be damned. In contradistinction to Waiting for Godot there is a very clear message from the playwright. The message

is there to bring the audience to attention. In Waiting for Godot we are never ordered to change our lives because of the play : the action exists on its own without comment from the playwright and we make of its symbolism what we will. In Everyman the character who controls the action, God, appears straightaway ; in Beckett's play the character who controls the action, Godot, never arrives. God's decision to send out his messenger Death is made in the consciousness of a formal campaign to educate Everyman concerning his soul's journey. Godot's decision to send the Boy to Vladimir and Estragon, as far as we can tell, is made with the intention of procrastinating the day of reckoning. Everyman, like Estragon, has forgotten his purpose in life. He has neglected to think of death, a subject that comes very readily to Beckett's characters. It is Everyman, not the unifying omnipotent figure in the play, who tries procrastination as the way out of his dilemma. He is told categorically by Death that there is no prevention of his situation. To every question he receives a specific answer. In Waiting for Godot Vladimir asks Estragon searching questions about death and the consequences of death, but he is met with down-to-earth remarks that do not help him to resolve the turmoil in his mind : "People are bloody ignorant apes." (p.13). When Everyman is referred to Knowledge by Good Deeds he is told exactly how to go about achieving salvation. As a consequence, Everyman's soul is finally taken by the Angel to reside in Heaven. Moral instruction is delivered again at the end of the play, by the Doctor.

The disintegration of Everyman's known world is shown to be the direct result of Death's summoning ; in Waiting for Godot deterioration comes to pass with the inevitable passage of time. Everyman is represented

from the start as a dual being, with a transitory body and an immortal soul ; although Gogo and Didi are "all mankind" (p.79) it is never clear whether they possess immortal souls, and it seems more likely that they should be taken as one being comprising physical (Gogo) and rational (Didi) faculties. Everyman has sinned in his exclusive concentration on the vanity of life, but he can nevertheless be saved. Didi and Gogo talk of repentance, but repentance suggests to Estragon a more obvious sin than the sin of accidia (for Everyman has been an accidiosus, slothful in God's service) :

VLADIMIR	Suppose we repented.	
ESTRAGON	Repented what?	
VLADIMIR	Oh... <u>(He reflects.)</u> We wouldn't have	
	to go into the details.	
ESTRAGON	Our being born?	(p.11).

Vladimir finds this amusing, but it is one of Beckett's reiterated themes. In Proust Beckett implies that life is necessarily tragic, involving "the expiation of original sin[. . .]the sin of having been born"¹³⁴. In his essay on Joyce Beckett describes Joyce's purgatorial worldview. He compares Joyce's Purgatory with Dante's and here also it would seem is the contrast between the Everyman author's worldview and Beckett's own. In Dante, there is a conical Purgatory : this shape implies that there is an end to the cone and that an ideal region will be reached in ascent from actuality. In Joyce there is a spherical Purgatory excluding culmination ; no ascent is involved and no ideal region can be reached : "In the one movement is unidirectional, and a step forward represents a net advance : in the other movement is non-directional - or multi-directional, and a step forward is, by definition, a step back."¹³⁵ The latter "movement" sounds very much like

the "movement" of Godot where there is no progression ; the former "movement" is like that in Everyman which progresses towards Heaven. Beckett continues by stating that "Sin is an impediment to movement up the cone, and a condition of movement round the sphere"¹³⁶. Everyman repents before he can ascend to Heaven ; by scourging himself he is saved "from Purgatory, that sharpe fyre"¹³⁷. Vladimir and Estragon do not know how to repent or of what sin they are guilty ; they move around the sphere, however, knowing that they are, in some way, sinful. Joyce's work is purgatorial in "the absolute absence of the Absolute"¹³⁸. This absence is felt potently in Godot. Beckett continues :

Hell is the static lifelessness of unrelieved viciousness. Paradise the static lifelessness of unrelieved immaculation. Purgatory a flood of movement and vitality released by the conjunction of these two elements. There is a continuous purgatorial process at work, in the sense that the vicious circle of humanity is being achieved, and this achievement depends on the recurrent predomination of one of two broad qualities. No resistance, no eruption, and it is only in Hell and Paradise that there are no eruptions, that there can be none, need be none. On this earth that is Purgatory, Vice and Virtue - which you may take to mean any pair of large contrary human factors - must in turn be purged down to spirits of rebelliousness. Then the dominant crust of the Vicious or Virtuous sets, resistance is provided, the explosion duly takes place and the machine proceeds. And no more than this ; neither prize nor penalty ; simply a series of stimulants to enable the kitten to catch its tail. And the partially purgatorial agent? The partially purged. 139

The Purgatory that is earth in Waiting for Godot involves the "large contrary human factors" that Beckett describes ; "the series of stimulants to enable the kitten to catch its tail" is captured in the play by the conflict of opposites within a cyclical structure. In this Purgatory the sin of birth becomes in the one born the guilt to bear throughout a lifetime of purgatorial conflict. Estragon constantly tries to revert to the prenatal

condition : "He resumes his foetal posture, his head between his knees."

(p.70). The comfort of wearing a hat in the Beckett universe is sometimes related to the comfort of the caul : "Murphy never wore a hat, the memories it awoke of the caul were too poignant, especially when he had to take it off."¹⁴⁰ Perhaps when Vladimir changes his hat for Lucky's he toys with the idea that, now he is in possession of a different "caul", his own birth had not occurred. The subject of the sin of birth is one of Beckett's main concerns ; Brian Finney recalls that Beckett's "opening remark to John Gruen in 1970 was : 'The major sin is the sin of being born.' He went on to claim that he has a clear memory of his own foetal existence, one of agony and darkness."¹⁴¹

In Beckett's study of Joyce he distinguishes between Joyce's "direct expression" (which is similar to Beckett's own method) and allegory, the Everyman author's method. Allegory is a very difficult artistic exercise, implying "a threefold intellectual operation : the construction of a message of general significance, the preparation of a fabulous form, and an exercise of considerable technical difficulty in uniting the two, an operation totally beyond the reach of the primitive mind".¹⁴² Whereas the Everyman author works intellectually at making a general statement, Beckett seems to offer a direct apprehension of being without offering the threefold intellectual process. The Everyman author believes that man can be redeemed from original sin by Christianity and he records this truth in an allegory which explains how the process works. Beckett can only record how it feels to be alive in a purgatorial world and he can offer no solutions. Nevertheless, the two playwrights record similar preoccupations, the basic preoccupations with which man always has and always will have to

contend : the nature of death, friendship, time and God. Beckett uses the images of the tree and blindness as the Everyman author does, but Beckett depicts these visually on stage while the Everyman author uses verbal images of hanging (on the cross) and man's blindness until, at the end, Everyman has a crucifix as a prop, bidding his friends : "Now set eche of you on this rodde your honde".¹⁴³ God in Everyman sends Death to open the people's eyes ; Pozzo in Godot receives insight for his loss of physical vision : once he is blind his illusions are shattered about time and the nature of life. There is a continual contrast in Godot between Vladimir the intellectual and Estragon's physicality ; man's dual nature is pointed out in Everyman with great subtlety : "I heled theyr fete / with thornes hurt was my heed" says God.¹⁴⁴ The theme of the thieves on the cross is present in both plays : "I hanged bytwene two theues, it can not be denyed", stresses God.¹⁴⁵ The transitoriness of time is announced at the beginning of Everyman as the theme ; the ambiguity of time is a central theme in Godot :

VLADIMIR	That passed the time.
ESTRAGON	It would have passed in any case. (p.48).

Although both plays are primarily concerned with man's relation to the cosmos, there is in each a measure of social criticism. Pozzo's tyranny is evidently to be seen as despicable, and we share the reaction of Didi and Gogo to it. In Everyman the sinful priests are made public. In both plays a dance is significant : the metaphorical dance of death in Everyman is balanced by Lucky's hideous dance which could be similarly interpreted. Knowledge is represented by one character^{both} in Everyman and in Godot (where

Lucky's garbled thought seems to pour scorn on man's attempts to acquire knowledge).

That the images and themes of Everyman are repeated in Godot demonstrates their archetypal qualities. Concerned with man's relation to the cosmos, Beckett chose the symbols of the naiv Everyman as redolent of meaning. He uses these in a non-didactic framework and very often to opposite effect : the absence of Godot and of meaning are stressed, but the symbols contribute a hopefulness because in a past age of unified faith they have been associated by "all mankind" with religious optimism. Waiting for Godot is a play of opposites, of hope and of absence of hope. It retains in its form the meaningfulness that Everyman demonstrates in its religious and didactic subject matter. The shape of Waiting for Godot is all important : drama within the limitations of art has, in Beckett's canon, become increasingly dependent on form alone to create an aura of harmony that defies the dissonant oppositions of Beckett's subject. The complex awareness of the sentimentalisch playwright is examined in a form which offers a shape "to accommodate the mess". The lack of system in Beckett's worldview does not preclude the use of an extremely symmetrical form that defies reality : on the contrary, the lack of system would seem to necessitate such an antirealistic, balletic form. The post-sentimentalisch outlook which was uneasily reached in Maeterlinck and triumphantly arrived at by Yeats can never be approached by Beckett. Complexity is what he sees and what he "accommodates", yet his accommodation of complexity in a form that is within the limitations of art gives shape to confusion.

iv Beckett and Maeterlinck

Beckett has declared his interest in Maeterlinck's drama and particularly in Les Aveugles. John Filling states that "Beckett has spoken very highly of Les Aveugles",¹⁴⁶ and he elaborates : "Beckett confirmed his interest in Maeterlinck, and his affection for Les Aveugles, in a conversation with me, in London, January 11th. 1973".¹⁴⁷ Waiting for Godot is in many respects very close to Les Aveugles and Beckett's canon can be seen as a descendant of the French symbolist tradition.¹⁴⁸

There is a fundamental affinity between the two playwrights, a philosophical understanding, which one can detect from the similarity of Godot and Les Aveugles and which one can confirm by comparing various statements of philosophical convictions expressed by Maeterlinck and Beckett. Les Aveugles and Godot share a rhythmic, lyrical structure, the subject of a forlorn hope of waiting for a saviour, and characters who are blind. In Beckett the forest is reduced to one tree, but his characters are, like those of Les Aveugles, lost "in the midst of nothingness" (p. 81). The symmetry in Les Aveugles, with the six blind men and six blind women, is re-asserted in Godot with the pairs of characters. Whereas Maeterlinck indicates the universality of his characters by allotting them numbers and not names, Beckett does so by choosing international names : Pozzo (Italian), Lucky (English), Vladimir (Russian) and Estragon (French). The sightless men and women waiting for the priest, examining in meticulous detail their situation, reminiscing about the past, mistaking the rustle of dead leaves for the hope of salvation, and barely communicating, are the representatives of "all mankind" that Vladimir and Estragon are. Both playwrights choose a cosmic setting, to indicate the vast issues that comprise their subject. Maeterlinck chooses to depict the two halves of

humanity as man and woman ; Beckett finds the dual nature of humanity best expressible in pairs of characters which symbolise on one level the interdependent nature of body and mind. The death of the priest in Les Aveugles is stressed as an arbitrary death ; there is no reason in it as there is no reason in Pozzo's loss of sight and Lucky's loss of speech. In Les Aveugles a dog is of more use than human beings in discovering the truth ; we are left with the pathos of the desperate wailing of a baby, the sound which for Beckett indicates the most heinous sin.

Whole stretches of the dialogue in Waiting for Godot seem to parallel passages of Les Aveugles. The opening lines of Les Aveugles are typical of Estragon's comments : the first blind man asks whether "he" is coming ; the second blind man is indignant because the first has disturbed his sleep. The theme of the compulsion to talk occurs in both plays : in Les Aveugles the third blind man states that he feels frightened when he is not talking and in Godot Estragon states that they talk so that they do not think (p. 62). The cry for pity at the end of Les Aveugles foreshadows Estragon's cry to God for pity (p. 77). In Act Two of Waiting for Godot, when a physically blind man is on stage, Beckett's use of dialogue is very Maeterlinckian. The characteristic philosophical questioning - Estragon's "What'll we do, what'll we do!" (p. 84) - Pozzo's queries about the time and about who his rescuers are : these are familiar from Maeterlinck. One passage in particular carries the lyrical despair of Les Aveugles :

ESTRAGON	What do we do now?	
VLADIMIR	Perhaps I could crawl to him.	
ESTRAGON	Don't leave me!	
VLADIMIR	Or I could call to him.	(p. 83).

The passage in Les Aveugles where the blind people attempt to crawl towards or call out to one other is close to this ; hindered by the thorns about them they cannot reach one another, thus cannot communicate with one another, as Didi and Gogo cannot with Pozzo. One of the sightless in Maeterlinck is also dumb ; in Pozzo and Lucky, the character is split into the pair of blighted humans. The notion that Pozzo will have gained mystical powers because of his blindness is ridiculed, yet Pozzo does gain insight and in this way he is comparable with the blind grandfather in L'Intruse.

I have noted in Chapter Three that Maeterlinck's philosophical works contain several propositions with which Beckett is sympathetic. The rapport between the two dramatists in this respect should be elaborated here. When Maeterlinck asserts that "Le véritable état de l'homme c'est d'être mort."¹⁴⁹ he comes close to Beckett's own awareness of mortality. I have previously quoted Maeterlinck's statement that there is probably nothing to know or to understand. He nevertheless attempts to articulate the nothingness of life, and he records, as Beckett does, that he fails in this expression : "Ce que je disais, je croyais que c'était la vérité, ou du moins ma dernière vérité. Mais elle me semblait moins vraie après l'avoir dite ; en la disant j'en avais tué la moitié."¹⁵⁰ The inexpressible and the unnameable preoccupy both dramatists ; a sense of inadequacy results from the attempt to express the unnameable. Personal obsessions are seen to be similar in Maeterlinck and Beckett. Maeterlinck's conception of the agony of birth is parallel to Beckett's ; he firmly declares "Si j'avais à recommencer ma vie, je m'arrangerais pour ne pas naître."¹⁵¹ Birth is equated with death time after time in both men's writings ; when

se taisant, disent les mystiques." ¹⁵⁷ In Play silence is longed for and in many of Beckett's prose works the state of silence is imagined as a relief from the continual voices in the mind. For Maeterlinck, as for Beckett, life is a process of waiting: "A partir de l'enfance, les hommes passent leur vie à attendre on ne sait quoi qui, à leur gré, tarde trop à venir. Ils pressent les heures comme on les presse avant le premier rendez-vous d'un grand amour. Ce n'est qu'au dernier moment qu'ils s'aperçoivent que l'on ne sait quoi, le n'importe quoi tant désiré, n'est autre chose que la mort. Les uns l'attendent en ne faisant rien, les autres en ayant l'air de faire quelque chose, et ce sont les moins malheureux. Mais le fond de leur vie est le même." ¹⁵⁸

Beckett and Maeterlinck's greatest affinity remains in their attitude to the terrifying concept of nothingness. Maeterlinck finds only one prayer worthy of man: "c'est la recherche, l'étude passionnée de l'inconnu". ¹⁵⁹ Beckett's work is such a "prayer", a penetration of the unknown. His awareness that he will fail and that he is left with the near impossible task of describing a void is understood by Maeterlinck: "Vous ne pouvez imaginer Rien, qu'à condition de ne rien imaginer. Et ne rien imaginer, c'est ne plus imaginer. Tout ce que vous pourrez vous représenter sera du blanc, du noir, du vide, du transparent, mais sera toujours quelque chose." ¹⁶⁰ Nothing can best be described in silence - a paradoxical situation for an artist. Maeterlinck asks: "Finirons - nous par comprendre que nous ne comprenons rien, que nous ne comprendrons jamais rien et que c'est tout ce que nous pouvons comprendre?" ¹⁶¹ Beckett would no doubt reply with a sombre affirmative.

Because of the fundamental kinship between Maeterlinck and Beckett

in all these related issues, it is clear that their plays' similarity could have arisen naturally, without actual influence on Beckett by Maeterlinck. Beckett's word that he is deeply interested in Maeterlinck corroborates that it is justifiable to link their names. The philosophical issues that absorb them find their natural expression in certain symbols and themes that speak of the mystery of existence and that attempt to assess the metaphysical nature of man. Eugène Ionesco has said of Endgame and implicitly of Beckett's entire canon that it is "plus près des lamentations de Job, des tragédies de Sophocle ou de Shakespeare que du théâtre de pacotille dit engagé ou dit du boulevard".¹⁶² The images of man's tragic life, whether ultimate redemption is postulated or whether it is unknown, remain constant. Job curses his existence in an utterance that comes from the heart : "Why died I not from the womb?" (Job, 3-11). His physical loathsomeness is stressed in vivid images : "My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust" (Job, 7-5). Why is Job being tried? The question constantly torments him and he concludes : "I should have been carried from the womb to the grave." (Job, 10-19). Beckett's and Maeterlinck's main concerns are present here : their subject is the suffering of man. Suffering is seen in images of conflict, of opposites, of hopes that are raised only to be dashed again. In Les Aveugles hope is engendered by the sounds of nature ; in Waiting for Godot hope is engendered by Pozzo's coming when, for a while, the two companions take Pozzo for Godot. One of Beckett's characters expresses his suffering in a powerful way :

But whom can I have offended so grievously, to be punished in this inexplicable way, all is inexplicable,

space and time, false and inexplicable, suffering and tears, and even the old convulsive cry, It's not me, it can't be me (. . .) ah if no were content to cut yes's throat and never cut its own. 163

Both Beckett and Maeterlinck record the ambiguity of the "yes" and the "no".

Maeterlinck's description of the tragique quotidien, registered by the old man as he gazes into the fire, seems extraordinarily prophetic in the light of Beckett's later plays. In particular, Krapp's Last Tape captures the essence of Maeterlinck's early prescription for static drama. Maeterlinck had directed his attack against the "well-made play"; he had considered irrelevant to the everyday tragedy the violence, conspiracies and murders of such plays. In Krapp's Last Tape the monologue of an old man is the play; through the monologue we learn about the everyday tragedy of the protagonist, his past life, his unseized opportunities and his present condition. Pauses punctuate the speech of Krapp and his old self; the movement in the play concerns Krapp's shuffling away from and back to his table. At the end Krapp is "motionless, staring before him. The tape runs on in silence."¹⁶⁴ This is the climax: no violence or murder or intrigue is necessary to explain to us that this is an everyday tragedy. The tapes allow Beckett to introduce interaction of character; Krapp and his old selves are the characters - and the old selves are shed like Krapp's banana skins.

Beckett diverges from Maeterlinck in that he envisages man's incongruity as both tragic and comic. In an early piece of criticism about Sean O'Casey's work Beckett writes: "he discerns the principle of disintegration in even the most complacent solidities, and activates it to their explosion.

This is the energy of his theatre, the triumph of the principle of knockabout in all situation, in all its elements and on all its planes, from the furniture to the higher centres. If 'Juno and the Paycock', as seems likely, is his best work so far, it is because it communicates most fully this dramatic delirium, mind and world come asunder in irreparable dissociation - 'chassis' ¹⁶⁵. Beckett's sense of "chassis" is expressed in the early plays in tragicomedy, while Maeterlinck's early plays strive to be unremittingly tragic. Beckett's Irish heritage can be seen in his tragicomic view of the world.

v Beckett and Yeats

Beckett has stated his preference among the Irish dramatists. In a letter to Cyril Cusack he made the following estimation :

I wouldn't suggest that G.B.S. is not a great play-wright, whatever that is when it's at home. What I would do is give the whole unupsettable apple-cart for a sup of the Hawk's Well, or the Saints', or a whiff of Juno, to go no further. ¹⁶⁶

The drama of Yeats, Synge and O'Casey is in Beckett's opinion worth more than the entire Shavian output. While he was at Trinity College, Beckett was a regular visitor to the Abbey Theatre. He saw there several of Yeats's plays and remembers in particular Yeats's two versions of Sophocles; he saw most of Synge's plays as well as Sean O'Casey's trilogy : The Shadow of a Gunman, Juno and the Paycock and The Plough and the Stars. ¹⁶⁷ Beckett may also have written a review of one of Yeats's late plays. ¹⁶⁸

The question of Yeatsian influence on Beckett is arousing interest among scholars. ¹⁶⁹ In certain respects Yeats and Beckett may be compared

as philosophers. Each sees life as a series of oppositions within cycles. Each sees life as purgatorial. However, Beckett finds it impossible to systematise his view of the world and he is, in this radical way, very much Yeats's opposite. Yeats was able to formulate a post-sentimentalisch outlook ; he expressed his system in symbolic plays. Beckett records in direct expression "how it is" to live with a complex attitude to life. Nevertheless we can detect in the repeated action of Play the motion of a gyre spinning around and becoming faster and faster in its approach to the ideal region of darkness and silence. This pertains only if we read Beckett's letter to George Devine and accept his staging method. If we do accept this we understand that the play is philosophically Yeatsian ; we may also note, as Francis Warner has done, that Play is structured on Noh principles.¹⁷⁰

In terms of stage presentation there are certain similarities between Yeats and Beckett. Yeats's Craig-influenced bare settings contain visual images of great force. The images are not representational ; they are suggestive and symbolic, on the lines of the blue cloth to represent a well, a drawing on a screen to represent a tree. Beckett's visual images are more searing in their impact : the mouth in Not I for example, is an arresting visual focus to which Auditor and audience alike must attend for the whole play. Beckett does not make use of masks and he specifies this in the stage directions for Play. He is thus conscious that he is working within a tradition where masks are an important dramatic feature. Sometimes Beckett's characters are like marionettes ; in Waiting for Godot Vladimir and Estragon are seemingly tied to Godot and they show this by remaining motionless, "arms dangling, heads sunk, sagging at the knees"

(p.19) ; this direction can be compared with Yeats's in At the Hawk's Well, where he writes that the movements of all the actors should be like marionettes.¹⁷¹ Katherine Worth has pointed out that the stylised movements in Beckett's plays could have been derived from Yeatsian Noh-influenced stylisation.¹⁷² In her excellent article she notes other points of contact in staging : the similar use of light in Purgatory and Play and the patterned screens in Yeats's plays which anticipate the backcloth in Happy Days. Music and dance create a feeling of jaggedness in Godot which is closer perhaps to the Hyōgen than the Noh. The stage-consciousness which I have analysed in Beckett's plays is a feature of the later Yeats plays. We may compare with the device in Beckett the Old Man who acts as a prologue to the action of The Death of Cuchulain and the Old Man of Purgatory who talks of a 'symbolical' motif. Yeats thus discusses within certain of his plays the play form ; he implicitly derides the "slice of life" play while Beckett does so openly.

Both Ruby Cohn and Katharine Worth note that Winnie in Happy Days quotes from At the Hawk's Well ; they go on to develop the relationship between the two plays.¹⁷³ The plays' similarity is worth expanding. I see Happy Days as a parody of Yeats's play. Yeats "calls to the eye of the mind" a mountainous region near the sea. The atmosphere of stagnation, withering and heaviness is established from the beginning: "A well long choked up and dry",¹⁷⁴ which anticipates Winnie's mound, is the focal point ; withered leaves are gathered in the well ; the guardian of the well is exhausted, her eyes heavy with fatigue ; an old man, doubled with age, climbs up a mountain. This vignette points forward to Willie's struggle to crawl up the mound towards Winnie. The Old Man's address to the

guardian of the well resembles Winnie's to Willie : "Why don't you speak to me? (. . .) You have not one word, / While yesterday you spoke three times." ¹⁷⁵ Cuchulain's search for immortality from the well waters is diverted by the hawk guardian, while the Old Man's search is thwarted by sleep. When he was young the Old Man had "waited the miraculous flood" ; he had "waited / While the years passed and withered me away". ¹⁷⁶ This is close to Winnie's situation ; however Winnie is resigned to her lot in the "hellish sun". ¹⁷⁷ The end-song of Yeats's play ¹⁷⁸ deals with the "familiar memories" and "hateful eyes", the "desolate places" and the desirability of mortality which are all features of Happy Days. Yeats stresses the dangers of aspiring to immortality ; the First Musician prays : "O God, protect me / From a horrible deathless body". ¹⁷⁹ Winnie in Happy Days is such a "deathless body", waiting for "the happy day to come when flesh melts at so many degrees". ¹⁸⁰ We do not see Winnie melt or burn ; we see her sinking deeper into the earth. The insinuation is that she will continue to tell stories and to "hear cries" ¹⁸¹ after her total burial, that mortality and silence are the desirable states that will never arrive.

In Waiting for Godot Estragon explains a mysterious sound as "The wind in the reeds." (p.19). The title of a volume of Yeats's poems is very similar : "The Wind Among the Reeds" (1899). We cannot pin very much on this although Estragon's interest in poetry would seem to suggest that he is half recollecting the Yeatsian title. The similarities between The Cat and the Moon and Waiting for Godot are close enough to merit comparison. The two plays have often been related by critics ; ¹⁸² they are complementary and antithetical, like their protagonists. I should like to

expand this view of the plays. The miracles depicted in Yeats's play are mocked by the anti-miracles of Beckett's : in The Cat and the Moon the Lame Beggar regains use of his legs and the Blind Beggar's sight is restored ; in Godot Pozzo loses his sight and Lucky loses his voice. In Yeats's play the goal is reached : the Holy Man is met with and the choices are offered so that the beggars are free to change their crippled states to achieve either a physical or a spiritual renewal of existence. In Beckett's play Godot does not arrive and the physically debilitated partners persist in their uncomfortable state. Yeats's active optimism has withered into Beckett's scepticism.

The interdependence of the couple in The Cat and the Moon is repeated in Godot, so that Vladimir and Estragon could be described in Yeatsian terms as the self and the anti-self. In Beckett Unity of Being seems unattainable in the present ; the couple dream of a past and a future that has held or could hold such unity. In both plays a tree is crucial, perhaps derived from the Noh symbol of eternity but more obviously serving for a Western audience as a symbol for the cross, and hence for the judgement of salvation or damnation. The ash tree in Yeats's play is the saint's home but the tree in Godot serves no purpose : "Decidedly this tree will not have been of the slightest use to us." (p. 74). Both plays are ultimately concerned with the hope of salvation. The two companions in Yeats's play achieve healthy separation after the deception of the Lame Beggar has been revealed, and after the ritual beating. Their friendship has been as self-destructive as Vladimir's and Estragon's, but they are released from the relationship. Beckett's couple, on the contrary, do not acquire the awareness to lead them to the positive action necessary to

develop independently. The implication in Yeats is that the two friends need the external presence of the saint to prompt the dissolution of their partnership. This external presence is lacking in Waiting for Godot and thus the partnership is maintained. The low mound in Godot could be a dried-up version of Saint Colman's Well : the curative waters do not exist in Beckett's play.

It has often been noted that the circularity of Vladimir's dog song reflects the circular action of Waiting for Godot. Both the song and the action have the potential to proceed ad infinitum. The cruelty of the cook, the cowardice of the dogs (whose job, as they see it, is to dig the tomb rather than rescue their fellow creature), the preoccupation with hunger and death : all these themes reflect the play's concerns. The song is almost a parody of the formal song about the cat in The Cat and the Moon. It is a unifying feature of the play. Lucky's dance is the ugly residue of the formal Noh dance. The Lame Beggar in Yeats dances in ecstasy ; Lucky's dance is to order, the pathetic shufflings of a slave. The movement from Yeats to Beckett is one from affirmation to scepticism, from order to disjunctive disorder. For Arthur Symons and for Yeats the dance excelled music as the most perfect of the arts. Beckett derides such a conception :

FOZZO

He used to dance the farandole, the
fling, the brawl, the jig, the fandango,
and even the hornpipe. He capered.
For joy. Now that's the best he can
do. Do you know what he calls it?

ESTRAGON

The Scapegoat's Agony.

VLADIMIR

The Hard Stool.

FOZZO

The Net. He thinks he's entangled in a net.
(squirming like an aesthete). There's
something about it...

VLADIMIR

(p.40)

Vladimir's "aesthetic" squirm seems to mock the pretensions of symbolist art. For Maeterlinck, Symons and Yeats, symbolism had provided a positive mode of attempting to penetrate the unknown; for Beckett, symbolism expresses the Angst of attempting to formulate the unnameable.

vi Beckett and dramatic tradition

An important source of resonance in Beckett's plays derives from their echoes of Greek drama and Shakespeare; we can also link his work with the theory of Antonin Artaud. It is valuable to examine this source of literary richness in the plays.

In Waiting for Godot Lucky is to some extent the Chorus of Aristophanic dramatic convention. In the constant references to Lucky as 'pig' and 'hog' he could be seen as the remnants of an Aristophanic animalistic chorus, as in The Frogs, The Wasps and The Birds. The Aristophanic Chorus usually performs dances and songs. Lucky corresponds with this convention by dancing 'the Net'; he does not sing, but Pozzo offers to order him to sing at the audience's request. In the Choric action known as the parabasis the Chorus 'abandons its assumed character, and addresses the audience directly, speaking as the mouthpiece of the author'.¹⁸³ In a similar way, Lucky abandons his piglike facade and addresses the audience directly as a thinker.

The tragic Greek drama can also very interestingly be seen in conjunction with Waiting for Godot. We know that Beckett saw Yeats's two versions of Sophocles at the Abbey Theatre.¹⁸⁴ The name 'Cedipus' means 'swollen foot'; Estragon's constant complaints about this ailment link him with the Cedipus myth. Estragon's fear that he has sinned by

being born links him with Oedipus : it was prophesied before Oedipus's birth that he was to sin by killing his father and marrying his mother. Lucky could perhaps represent a mock Teiresias ; if we see him as the complementary half of Pozzo's character, then in Act Two the picture of a blind seer is complete. Lucky's prophecy about man's shrinking and wasting is voiced by Pozzo in Act Two ; the blind man has a capacity for insight. The dramatic tradition of this metaphor of blindness is twice brought to our attention. Gogo receives the news of Pozzo's blindness by musing, "Perhaps he can see into the future." (p.84). When Vladimir persists in questioning Pozzo about the time when he lost his sight, Beckett again refers to the reputed visionary capacity of the blind :

POZZO (violently). Don't question me! The blind have
no notion of time. The things of
time are hidden from them too.
VLADIMIR Well just fancy that! I could have
sworn it was just the opposite. (p.86)

The mocking nature of this reference is apparent. However, Pozzo does assess the nature of time ; he has come to a realisation about 'the things of time' and his opinion takes possession of Vladimir. In Oedipus Rex the entire action tends to the revelation of Oedipus's sin. The messenger furthers the process of revelation ; he is the shepherd to whom one of Laius' men entrusted Oedipus on the mountainside. Beckett also creates a messenger who is a shepherd, but the Boy does not advance the situation of Gogo and Didi : rather he halts it. Oedipus's determination is to know the secret of his identity ; all that Beckett's couple can glean about their identity is that they are men. Oedipus's revelation is followed by the Chorus's comment which contains much of the feeling behind Waiting

for Godot :

All the generations of mortal man add up to nothing!
 Show me the man whose happiness was anything more than illusion
 Followed by disillusion. 185

The tragedy occurs off-stage in Oedipus Rex as Pozzo's blindness and Lucky's loss of speech do in Waiting for Godot. When the blind Oedipus enters the reaction is of dread and horror ; Beckett seems to parody Sophocles when Estragon and Vladimir greet with passivity the news of Pozzo's blindness. In the use of Sophocles Beckett has adapted the Greek myth for the circumstances of the second half of the twentieth century, a time when nothing can be seen as solely tragic or completely comic.

The Hamlet -like passivity of many of Beckett's characters leads us to Shakespeare. Hamlet takes on the tragic hero's name and the ultimate issue with which Hamlet attempts to come to terms is the crux of Beckett's enquiry :

[...] It goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory ; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appears no other thing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble is reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? 186

Man's dual nature preoccupies Beckett. Jan Kott has investigated some of the Shakespearean echoes in Beckett's canon. He has linked the circus-like stage business of King Lear with the pantomime elements in Waiting for Godot ; Lucky and Pozzo are, according to Kott, successors

of Edgar and Gloucester : "'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind. ' ; Lear cries about his boots in Act Four, anticipating Estragon's obsession ; when Vladimir maintains that "Thinking is not the worst." (p. 64) he echoes Edgar's "the worst is not / So long as we can say 'This is the worst'." ¹⁸⁷

King Lear can indeed be seen as capturing the human predicament at the heart of Beckett's plays. In Act Three, scene four, when Lear confronts "Poor Tom", he considers man's position in the cosmos ; as he does so he tears away his "sophisticated" (that is, "adulterated") clothes, the trappings of society. This speech prepares us for Beckett's plays which tear away the social preoccupations of man to reveal 'the thing itself' ; as we watch Godot we tell ourselves 'unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art'. ¹⁸⁸ As I have noted earlier, Beckett's preoccupation with man's dual nature leads him to dwell on the unpleasant elements of physicality ; the stress on smells and ailments, defecation and disease, appears to stem from the fear of man's animality and inevitable death. Leading from this, it is interesting that Lear refuses to allow Gloucester to kiss his hand because "it smells of mortality". ¹⁸⁹ The purgatorial condition of existence is demonstrated in Godot by the opposites to which mankind is subjected ; Lear's madness stems from his insight into man's dual nature : for a while he has experienced mental purgatory, and, when he recovers consciousness in Cordelia's presence, his startlingly visual image describes the purgatorial state : "I am bound / Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears / Do scald like molten lead". ¹⁹⁰ The purgatorial existence finds expression in Breath ; in its thirty-five second duration, Beckett

gives us the opposites of sound and silence, of maximum light and of minimum light, of inspiration and of expiration. The common denominator of these opposites is the stage of rubbish. It seems particularly appropriate to return to Shakespeare's great tragedy for the genesis of this tiny sketch, in the light of Lear's "preaching" :

We came crying hither :
 Thou know'st the first time that we smell the air
 We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.
 * * *
 When we are born, we cry that we are come
 To this great stage of fools. 191

Cordelia is called a "poor fool" in Lear's last speech ; this could be interpreted as a direct allusion to the "stage of fools", because her death is the ultimate expression of absurdism in Shakespeare. Lear calls himself "the natural fool of Fortune".¹⁹² Fortune in this context is perhaps related to the King's Fool, the implication being that Fortune hires the fools of mankind as a rich man might hire a jester for his amusement. As we have seen, Beckett offers us the proposition that Vladimir and Estragon are the hired puppets for Godot's amusement : Estragon asks if they are tied to Godot immediately after the stage direction which has equated them with puppets : "They remain motionless, arms dangling, heads sunk, sagging at the knees." (p.19). Gloucester's penetration of truth comes once he is physically blind, as Pozzo's does ; he recognises this :

I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen,
 Our means secure us, and our mere defects
 Prove our commodities. 193

His insight is as pessimistic as Pozzo's :

As flies to wanton boys, are we to th'Gods ;
They kill us for their sport. 174

This frightening vision can be identified with the savage God in Beckett, the God who does not feel for us or answer our prayers, the God of Watt who is connected with vermin and cruelty. In Beckett's canon as a whole, however, as in Shakespeare's, pessimism is countered with hope ; man in Beckett is tragically divided between the "noble in reason" and the "quintessence of dust" as he is in Shakespeare.

The establishment of the link between Beckett, Artaud and the Surrealists¹⁹⁵ adds to the conviction that we must not "compartmentalise" Beckett as the inaugurator of a totally new type of drama. The connections with tradition are there ; although this is the final one that I shall examine scholars will no doubt trace others.

From 1929 to 1950 Beckett made contributions to the magazine transition. The prewar Editor Eugène Jolas prefaced his "International Workshop for Orphic Creation" with an attempt to explain its aims. He did so with specific reference to the healing force of the subconscious mind, establishing the surrealist stance of the new transition. He found the chief characteristic of the "epoch of transition" to be "the crisis of man". Writing in 1932, he demanded "a revolution of the soul". He proposed on behalf of transition "the revision of all values that no longer answer our deepest needs", a defence of "the hallucinative forces" and the establishment of "a mantic laboratory" to examine the "irrational forces" dominating "the new personality". He stated that transition has "little

faith in Reason or Science as ultimate methods" ; moreover transition, "in a spirit of integral pessimism", proposed to "combat all rationalist dogmas that stand in the way of a metaphysical universe", and encouraged "all attempts towards a subliminal ethos through mediumistic experiments in life and language".¹⁹⁶ The same edition of transition contains a short story by Beckett,¹⁹⁷ evidently considered by Jolas to be sufficiently surrealist to be included in a journal with such aims. The story is an extract from Dream of Fair to Middling Women, involving the Belacqua hero.

Another piece by Beckett, which is more interesting, is included in transition 21. A manifesto "Poetry Is Vertical"¹⁹⁸ is signed by Beckett and eight others, including Georges Pelorson who collaborated with Beckett in writing Le Kid in 1931, and Thomas McGreevy, who was a contributor with Beckett to Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress. It can be assumed that, in 1932, Beckett was in total agreement with the manifesto. For its epigraph the manifesto takes a quotation from Léon Paul Fargue : "On a été trop horizontal, j'ai envie d'être vertical." The tone is passionate, verging on the hysterical. It proclaims "the autonomy of the poetic vision, the hegemony of the inner life over the outer life" ; it is against "the hypnosis of positivism", "the pragmatic conception of progress", and "the renewal of the classical ideal". It elevates the "orphyic forces", "the ecstatic revelation", "the a-logical movement of the psyche" and "the organic rhythm of the vision". The "I" is regarded by the manifesto as a transcendental force, and the manifesto assumes that it can be realised as such by the use of revolutionary language :

The transcendental 'I' with its multiple stratifications reaching back millions of years is related to the entire history of mankind, past and present, and is brought to the surface with the hallucinatory irruption of images in the dream, the daydream, the mystic-gnostic trance, and even the psychiatric condition.

The final disintegration of the 'I' in the creative act is made possible by the use of a language which is a mantic instrument, and which does not hesitate to adopt a revolutionary attitude toward word and syntax, going even so far as to invent a hermetic language, if necessary. Poetry builds a nexus between the 'I' and the 'you' by leading the emotions of the sunken, telluric depths upward toward the illumination of a collective reality and a totalistic universe.

The synthesis of a new collectivism is made possible by a community of spirits who aim at the construction of a new mythological reality.

The emphasis here is on the preservation of mystic experience against pragmatism, and on the goal of harmony to be achieved by mythological poetry. The repetition of vocabulary relating to alchemy and magic - "orphic forces", "mystic-gnostic trance", "mantic", and "hermetic" - is reminiscent of the theoretical writings of Antonin Artaud, whose connection with the Surrealist movement had been severed six years earlier, in 1926, and whose work was to retain an individual frenzy. The poets who signed the manifesto find the creative mode in revelation, in irrational, psychological depths ; they seek to discover an "emotion of multitude" - Yeats's term seems particularly appropriate here - by means of special vocabulary and rejection of orthodox syntax ; they aim to relate man to man by an examination of the significant symbols which emerge and recur in dream and trance. An examination of the inner life of the psyche is considered to be the proper business of the creative artist.

A further connection between Beckett and the Surrealists was established in 1932, when Beckett translated pieces by André Breton and Paul

Eluard for the Surrealist number of This Quarter, and when he published with others translations of Paul Eluard's Selected Poems. Years later Beckett also translated Apollinaire's "Zone".¹⁹⁹ The most important line of influence from the Surrealists to Beckett, with regard to drama, is seen in the works of Antonin Artaud. Artaud's 1935 production of The Cenci was assisted by Roger Blin, both in a directorial and an acting capacity. Roger Blin was the first director of En attendant Godot at the Théâtre de Babylone in 1953 ; he himself took the part of Pozzo. With Artaud emerged an enthusiasm for the portrayal of what Yeats had called "the Savage God". Yeats's comment came after his viewing Ubu Roi ; Artaud's admiration for Jarry caused him in 1927 to found with Roger Vitrac the Théâtre Alfred Jarry. Artaud also recorded his great respect for Maeterlinck. He indicated what he considered to be the extraordinary relevance of Maeterlinck's work to the present day and this is worth quoting at some length :

Maeterlinck utilise certains procédés de pensée dont on ne remarque pas assez l'actualité. Une certaine façon d'unir - en vertu de quelles mystérieuses analogies - une sensation et un objet, et de les mettre sur le même plan mental, en évitant la métaphore, se retrouve au fond du principe de la poésie archi-actuelle. (. . .) Son théâtre est bientôt tout un monde où les personnages traditionnels du théâtre reparaissent, évoqués par le dedans. La fatalité inconsciente du drame antique devient chez Maeterlinck la raison d'être de l'action. Les personnages sont des marionnettes agitées par le destin. (. . .) Le drame est la forme la plus haute de l'esprit. Il est dans la nature des choses profondes de se heurter, de se combiner, de se déduire. L'action est le principe même de la vie. Maeterlinck a été tenté de donner la vie à des formes, à des états de la pensée pure. Pelléas, Tintagiles, Mélisande sont comme les figures visibles de tels spécieux sentiments. Une philosophie se dégage de ces rencontres à laquelle Maeterlinck essaiera plus tard de donner un verbe, une forme dans la théorie centrale du tragique quotidien. Ici le destin

déchaîne ses caprices ; ici le rythme est rarefié, spirituel, nous sommes à la source même de la tempête, aux cercles immobiles comme la vie.

Maeterlinck a introduit le premier dans la littérature la richesse multiple de la subconscience. Les images de ses poèmes s'organisent suivant un principe qui n'est pas celui de la conscience normale. (...) Maeterlinck est apparu dans la littérature au moment qu'il devait venir. Symboliste il l'était par nature, par définition. Ses poèmes, ses essais, son théâtre, sont comme les états, les figures diverses d'une identique pensée. 200

Artaud here associates Maeterlinck with the avant-garde of 1923. He observes the puppet-like characters and records the mysticism of Maeterlinck's plays. Artaud especially admires the fact that Maeterlinck attempted to dramatise certain feelings, thoughts and states of mind. The immobility of Maeterlinck's plays is remarked on, as well as the way in which Maeterlinck records within such stasis the conflict at the heart of life. Artaud connects Maeterlinck with the Surrealists by designating him the first to record in literature the images of the subconscious mind. Finally, he admires Maeterlinck for the undeviating pattern of thought in his poems, his plays and his essays. We have seen that Maeterlinck's pattern of thought changed as he discarded certain "truths" and accepted others. The statement is more appropriately applicable to Beckett whose plays and poems all concern the suffering of man.

It is important that Artaud recognised Maeterlinck's significance as a pioneer in drama. Because of Beckett's affinity with Maeterlinck it is especially relevant to discuss Artaud's dramatic theory. The essays in Le Théâtre et son double collectively defy prose realism in drama.

Artaud calls for a theatre like the plague, which is "la révélation, la mise en avant, la poussée vers l'extérieur d'un fond de cruauté latente par lequel

se localisent sur un individu ou sur un peuple toutes les possibilités perverses de l'esprit"²⁰¹. This type of drama will release truths and, in the way of myths, these essential truths will involve savagery and torture. The mood of cruelty is often found in Beckett's plays. He pictures individual cruelty, for example each time Pozzo pulls on Lucky's rope, which is paradigmatic of a much vaster cruelty, of a cruel God who feeds beautiful birds to rats. When Lucky kicks Estragon, Beckett localises an all-pervasive cruelty, the agent of which refuses to put an end to the suffering of man. Beckett's plays scourge illusions and effect purification in the most drastic way.

Artaud asks : "si dans ce monde qui glisse, qui se suicide sans s'en apercevoir, il se trouvera un noyau d'hommes capables d'imposer cette notion supérieure du théâtre, qui nous rendra à tous l'équivalent naturel et magique des dogmes auxquels nous ne croyons plus"²⁰². Beckett's drama is essential ; defying dogmatic pronouncement it nevertheless provides an equivalent cosmic context for man. He is striving for a type of drama that forces us to look at man's suffering and to question man's nature in the way that religion does. Artaud stresses "cette grande peur métaphysique qui est à la base de tout le théâtre ancien"²⁰³. Oriental theatre is held up as an ideal for which Western drama should strive ; it is a type of drama that has retained its metaphysical context :

Dans le théâtre Oriental à tendances métaphysiques opposé au théâtre Occidental à tendances psychologiques, tout cet amas compact de gestes, de signes, d'attitudes, de sonorités, qui constitue le langage de la réalisation et de la scène, ce langage qui développe toutes ses conséquences physiques et poétiques sur tous les plans de la conscience et dans tous les sens, entraîne nécessairement la pensée à prendre des attitudes profondes qui sont ce que l'on pourrait appeler de la métaphysique en activité.

The religious and ritualistic aspects of Oriental drama, the gestures and stylised movements, the sound and signs, form a language of their own which stimulates profound thought in the audience, achieving an "active metaphysics". Yeats had found the language of movement, the music and the symbolic effects of Japanese Noh drama to have this significance ; Beckett's drama is similarly symbolic and stylised, achieving an awareness in the audience of profound subjects through a concrete stage language. Artaud's appeal for a return to traditional drama, metaphysical, ritualistic and symbolic, has been met by Beckett. Visual images in Beckett's plays trigger off audience reaction by means of association and response ; for example, the response to the urns in Play could be "Urns - funeral urns - death - these three characters are dead" ; the immediate response is then followed up by actual verbal indications that the three characters are in a type of Purgatory. Sometimes language is used as incantation : Lucky's speech transmits the emotion and despair of a man struggling to frame the world in adequate words ; it succeeds because of the grammatical disintegration and incoherence ; we do not need to comprehend all its themes, when we hear it for the first time in the theatre, to understand and sympathise with Lucky's predicament. Similarly, in Not I Mouth's monologue is received on an emotional, rather than an intellectual, level. Beckett is reported as saying to Jessica Tandy : "I am not unduly concerned with intelligibility. I hope the piece may work on the nerves of the audience, not its intellect."²⁰⁵

Beckett believes that words cannot be divorced from movements that naturally go with them : the stylisation that this involves gives a ritualistic quality to his plays. Charles Marowitz records that Beckett's

interest "is not so much in mime but in the stratum of movement which underlies the written word".²⁰⁶ For each word that Beckett writes he envisages a particular movement or lack of movement that should accompany that word, and he is concerned to make the audience aware of the association between words and movements ; he told Charles Marowitz that "Producers don't seem to have any sense of form in movement. The kind of form one finds in music, for instance, where themes keep recurring. When in a text, actions are repeated, they ought to be made unusual the first time, so that when they happen again - in exactly the same way - an audience will recognise them from before."²⁰⁷ Artaud singled out for attention the movements of the star dancer of the Balinese plays which he very much admired ; a balletic production of Waiting for Godot could emphasise Vladimir's gestures in a similar way : "le geste du danseur central qui se touche toujours le même point de la tête comme s'il voulait repérer la place et la vie d'on ne sait quel oeil central quel oeuf intellectuel, est hautement significatif".²⁰⁵ Artaud's theory in this respect is fulfilled in Beckett's plays where drama is restored to its original metaphysical purpose, and dialogue is supplemented by stylised gesture and movement.

Beckett's interest in stylised movement has led him to write two mime-plays. The Act(s) Without Words are lacking in the richness that words provide in most of Beckett's other plays. It is the particular combination of words with movement that is characteristic of Beckett's genius. Nevertheless, the mime-plays fulfil Artaud's desire for a metaphysical drama. Beckett pictures man in relation to the cosmos in both cases. Act Without Words 1 is for one player. He is flung into the "dazzling light"²⁰⁹ of the desert and proceeds to settle down by a palm tree

which descends from the flies. When a whistle summons him, he moves towards the sound only to be flung back. He learns not to obey the call. Objects descend from the flies to tantalise him. One of these is a carafe of water, obviously desirable in the heat of the desert, and it is suspended above his reach. The rope and cubes which he is offered do not allow him to reach the carafe, which is again pulled up into the flies. When the carafe descends for the second time he ignores it. Beckett uses visual images that are vaguely biblical: the desert and the palm tree. The player seems by the end to have combatted all his urges to explore the objects offered to him, and he resigns himself to contemplation rather than investigation. In Act Without Words II, for two players, Beckett depicts life in bare essentials. We see A and B goaded in turn from their sacks into action. A and B are opposites: A is untidy while B is meticulous; A swallows pills and eats with disgust while B eats with vigour. When A and B re-enter their sacks the goad returns and A recommences his routine. The mime is a representation of the cyclic process of life as Godot is; it represents the interaction of characters as Godot does. The mime is a schematic rendering of Godot and as such its limitations are only too obvious.

In Waiting for Godot the clown-like routines and music-hall patter, the mass entertainment features of the play, correspond to Artaud's demand for total theatre: "Pratiquement, nous voulons ressusciter une idée du spectacle total, où le théâtre saura reprendre au cinéma, au music-hall, au cirque, et à la vie même, ce qui de tout temps lui a appartenu."²¹⁰ This is perhaps Beckett's major contribution towards fulfilling Artaud's theory. Ionesco and Genet have done much more that is in line

with Artaud : both, with their use of fantasy ; Ionesco, with his stage images and lighting effects ; Genet with his masks, mirrors and stilts, can be more readily associated with Artaud's theory than can Beckett. Nevertheless, Beckett has created a metaphysical theatre ; he has depicted the cruelty of a world which offers both hope and despair ; he has restored to the theatre the importance of lighting (especially in the later plays), movement, gesture, and ritual ; he has amalgamated mass entertainment with a highly intellectual matrix of reference and word-play. In his late plays he concentrates his technique and his vision of the world in sparse brief texts which should be examined in detail.

vii Beckett's late plays for the stage

Beckett's late stage plays attempt with greater intensity than the earlier drama to probe into the disturbing questions that are part of the human condition : what is identity? how impossible is it to reach the true self and say "I"? why does the mind continually pore over memories? I shall consider how successful the late plays are dramatically in conveying to their audience the Angst of the attempt to face the unknowable and name the unnameable.

Breath exemplifies what Martin Dodsworth has called "the continual temptation for Beckett of falling back on the schematic and dogmatic"²¹¹. The thirty second sketch has lost the "perhaps" quality of the early plays. There are no actors and no use of language ; the breathing is mechanically reproduced from the same recording for each performance of a production. Beckett has taken from the concept of a play its essence : the skill of actors or actresses or one actor or actress to hold an audience. Beckett

has called Breath "a farce in five acts".²¹² In this "farce" words are omitted and cries suffice to indicate human contact with the world. There is no mime to replace the expression that language provides in the early plays. The exactly symmetrical cries of birth and death, the increase of light and breath, and the decrease of light and breath, put form to the chaos of life represented by the miscellaneous rubbish which we see on-stage. The most terrifying facet of this sketch is that darkness does not ever come ; the craved-for darkness of Play is non-existent. In Breath Beckett has achieved a slight play which does not justify his talents ; my attitude here should be elaborated at some length.

The symbolism of Waiting for Godot and Endgame is subtle and suggestive : we do not immediately see that Vladimir and Estragon could be "interpreted" as mind and body, or that Hamm and Clov are related like "hammer" and "nail". The tree in Godot could be a cross or the tree of life or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil : the implications do not cancel each other out and they are left for the spectator to choose between or to reject at will. The boy who appears outside the window in Endgame could be a saviour of some kind, but it is open for the audience to infer from the situation a feeling of hope. When Beckett's symbolism becomes personal allegory, losing its ambiguity and resonance, the result is flat, one-dimensional drama. In order to be dramatically successful, théâtre statique must involve multiplicity by means of highly-charged suggestive situation, language and silence. The genre does not justify its potential when poetic exploration of the mysteries of life and death is rejected for a didactic statement of one person's (the playwright's) expression of his own answers to these profound issues. The nature of symbolism,

which is non-didactic and seeks to express man's relation to the cosmos in a form that evokes, rather than states, meaning, is congenial to modern audiences with diverse attitudes to the human situation. The playwrights under review retain an allegorical disposition which sometimes appears forcefully in plays which preach "how it is". Yeats succeeded in combining allegory and symbolism: in The Cat and the Moon the personal allegory does not preclude the use of suggestive symbols. Beckett is at his worst when allegory is forced upon his audience. We can usefully compare Breath with Happy Days in this respect. In Happy Days the mound of scorched grass which is slowly sucking down Winnie could be interpreted as an image for the sands of time that overtake humanity. Each "happy day" brings Winnie closer to being completely swallowed up by her earth-grave, just as each new day brings us closer to the same inevitable fate. She is representative of humanity confronted by death. Winnie's refrain: "'Tis only human." overtly points to her universal significance. However, we respond emotionally rather than intellectually to the earth image; we concentrate on Winnie's attempt to tackle her situation because she is characterised as an individual with her own particular foibles and weaknesses, and it is obvious that the core of the play's concern rests with Winnie's attitude to her fate rather than the fate itself. We accept the mound, and Winnie's burial in it, as a "given" suggestive visual image that enhances Winnie's representative nature; we then search beyond this aspect of the play for significant ideas. This approach is impossible in Breath where we are offered an allegorical form that must be interpreted intellectually because there are no ideas or characterisation or nuances of language outside the very simple schematic presentation of

the human condition. Beckett seems to be stating that the despair conveyed by the on-stage rubbish and the half-light are "how it is" for everyman. He has not returned to such dogmatism. In the most recent stage plays we are offered individual characters who attempt to come to terms with their lives ; at the same time the Mouth, the Listener and May are to some extent representative of all human lives and we recognise that they share the human condition that we must all face. Birth and death are facts ; the rubbish that Breath depicts in between these poles leaves us with a bitterness disappointing from a playwright who has brilliantly captured the humour and ambiguity of life in the richness of Waiting for Godot.

Come and Go was written in 1965, the year before Breath,²¹³ and it is about three minutes long in performance. Beckett has supplied a scheme of the positions of the three women and of their hands, details of lighting, costume, the seat on which they sit, their exits and diction. The playing area is softly lit and the rest of the stage is "as dark as possible".²¹⁴ The lighting suggests the darkness of the area outside our knowledge, outside the play of "come and go" that is the women's lives. The full-length coats and the large-brimmed hats obscure the women's bodies and heads ; they indicate the sameness of the women and perhaps their frigidity, their reluctance to emerge from the all-enveloping shells that seem to protect them. The shell-clothes also indicate the world of dreams that Vi, Ru and Flo live in ; there are no rings on their hands but Flo's last line is "I can feel the rings"²¹⁵ : they are cloaked in dreams from head to foot. The three women seem to be sitting on nothing ; the seat should be bench-like, and just long enough for them : "As little visible as possible. It

should not be clear what they are sitting on."²¹⁶ The characters should not be seen to go off stage : they disappear into the darkness surrounding the playing area. Their voices are low and colourless apart from the three climactic moments when revelations are made and reacted to. The three women sit in erect posture and there is silence at the start of the "dramaticule". We see three shadowy figures, their ages undeterminable. There are thirteen silences altogether in the tiny play ; the second line is Ru's "Let us not speak."²¹⁷ Words are not used when all three women are together : an unknown barrier precludes any utterance. Vi twice attempts - at beginning and end - to start a conversation by questioning the other two : "When did we three last meet?" , "May we not speak of the old days?" , "Of what came after?" ; she is unsuccessful. Communication between the three women is possible only when they hold hands ; the sense of touch fosters a kind of security and illusion : "I can feel the rings," says Flo. In the symmetrical sequences when revelations occur, one woman exits while another discloses something about the one gone. The one who listens is "appalled" ; perhaps the fact that the three "Ohs" are specified as very different in sound suggests that the three secrets are very different. The audience must guess at the disclosures. When each woman is asked what she thinks of the one who has gone she reveals her ignorance in a way that tells us that outward appearances are deceptive : "I see little change." declares Ru about Vi ; "She seems much the same." says Vi about Flo ; "One sees little in this light." says Flo dismissively about Ru. Beckett accentuates this feeling of sameness by the soft lighting and by the unfathomable appearance of each woman. One could make the interpretation that each of the women is suffering from an incurable disease of which she

is ignorant ; it is for each ²¹⁸spectator to decide the three tragedies. The number three is suggestive ; one woman is always left out when she has gone : two people talk together more readily than three. The three women, as Ruby Cohn points out, suggest the three witches from Macbeth, the three little girls from school, the three sisters from Chekhov, the three daughters of Lear, the three ²¹⁹fates ; Beckett finds it interesting to work with a trio in a ritualistic pattern of light and dark, silence and words : Play also combines these elements. The concentration of life's elements into such a pattern is well thought out in Come and Go. We are reminded that as we come and go into and out of life others reveal our disasters and share our fantasies ; we live in ignorance of our true nature. At the end, when the three women clasp hands, they are for the first and only time at one : they communicate. The form of the play is balletic : three pas de deux are enacted when on three separate occasions one of the women goes to the darkness. The mysterious ritual manages to convey the chaos outside the rigid form : there is a "mess" in the background of Come and Go which we must intuitively pick up for ourselves. Beckett's "dramatic" is compassionate and mathematically precise. The succinctness is masterful ; the past is outlined for us and the future speaks in the appalled "Ohs" that we hear. Three tragic lives come and go.

Not I was conceived in the following way : "Beckett was in Tunisia in 1970 sitting in a cafe when he noticed a mysterious figure completely hidden in the folds of a djellaba and standing against the background of a wall. Beckett began to wonder what that patient figure could be waiting for : what subterranean voices were going through its mind? Only later did he learn that the previously unidentifiable figure was in fact distinctly

feminine, an Arab woman waiting for her child to come home from school."²²⁰

The Auditor in the play is derived from the figure, "sex undeterminable",²²¹ covered from head to foot in a black djellaba, standing on an invisible podium about four feet high, so that he or she seems to be suspended on nothing, looking diagonally across the stage at Mouth. He or she is faintly lit : we can just make out his or her shadowy form. Mouth's lips are lit (we cannot see her head or body) and her voice talks unintelligibly until the curtain rises. Mouth launches into the text. The audience must be scrupulous in its division of the senses ; the eyes want to look at Mouth but they must observe the four movements of the auditor ; the ears must be keenly directed at the words issuing from the mouth. Because the audience feels this dichotomy tearing them apart, the dichotomy of mind and body represented in front of them is made all the more acute. The elusive nature of the self - as the human being stares at its body and analyses with its mind - is brought home in a devastating image. "I think therefore I am" suddenly takes on meaning as it is visualised in front of us. A second realisation about the spectacle comes later, possibly on reflection after the curtain falls. Beckett is dramatising the relationship between playwright and audience.²²² The words come tripping out in disorganized syntax, incoherently, trying to express a revelation. The auditor makes four gestures of "helpless compassion" (p.11). This is one possible reaction of the audience to Not I, that of helpless compassion for the woman's situation. The mouth sometimes appears like a sup^Purating wound, sometimes like an anus discharging excrement. It does not belong to its body ; it is diseased. One April morning words come to a woman of seventy. Previously her voice had scarcely operated : "just the birth cry to get her going ... breathing ... then no more till this" (p.7) apart

from the urge to utter words once or twice a year. The urges necessitate a run to the lavatory where she pours out her torrent in a mad rush. The attacks are associated with shame, the shame of a child who cannot get to the lavatory in time, but beyond this because even in the lavatory the shame persists. There are hints that these attacks are purges bestowed by God. With the recognition of these hints one realises how closely Beckett's canon is welded together so that each part is indicative of the whole, and the whole indicative of Beckett's sense of being. His previous descriptions of the purgatorial punishment are echoed here. Words seem, as in Play, the punishment for sin. If Mouth can find the right words she will be purged. The Mouth's diarrhoea dribbles out uncontrollably. She was born prematurely "out ... into this world" (p.1). The gravest sin according to Beckett, the sin of birth, is enacted once again. Parents are unknown to her so she is spared love (the sin which might lead to life, therefore the second most grave). Wandering about in a field, almost seventy years later, in the spring, something of moment occurs for the first time. When the mouth tries to describe her experience she cannot address herself in the first-person: "she found herself in the - ... what? ... who? ... no! ... she! ..." (p.2). Here, where Beckett makes his subject, his persistent subject, explicit, the auditor performs his compassionate gesture. This "vehement refusal to relinquish third person" (p.11) occurs five times in the account. The attack is described as a darkness and an insentience. Her first thought was that she was receiving punishment from God. But she was not suffering, so she dismissed the idea. She feels that she should writhe but her body will not obey. She describes her body in Cartesian terms as a machine: "more likely the

machine ... so disconnected ... never got the message" (p.4). She could not scream for help (but she does now, alarmingly). The buzzing in her head turns into words. She had survived, shopping for example, without speech; now a voice seemingly disconnected from her starts to sound. She feels her lips move - the voice is hers! She recollects the past, remembers the day she cried, describes the April scene, a beam goading her to speak all the time. In court she could not speak, yet now she cannot stop. Her prayer for the words to stop is unheard.

One could interpret the action of Not I as taking place after death in a purgatory which makes the body insentient and the mind hyperactive. I am reminded of the passage in Play where W1 declares "it must be something I have to say"; she adds "How the mind works still!"²²³ Mouth's mind is working at a very fast rate; our compassion for her is elevated to that for the human condition as a whole, as we quest to name the unnameable, to put words to the unknowable. Mouth returns in our nightmares, dancing frantically in her frenzied pouring forth. The image is terrifyingly memorable; the one visual image of That Time is almost - but not quite - as powerful. If a painting by Caravaggio inspired the image of the mouth in Not I²²⁴ then perhaps Edvard Munch's Ibsen in the Grand Café inspired the image of the Listener's "old white face, long flaring white hair as if seen from above outspread". Beckett combines a single image - as in a painting - with three voices which describe vividly poetic scenes. Our eyes are arrested by the face which floats in darkness about ten feet above stage level. The face appears to be magnified because the contrast between its whiteness and the surrounding darkness is so great. There are occasional facial movements: the audience must attend

very closely to detect these. The eyes are open at the beginning ; Beckett indicates in the text where the eyes shut. There are three periods of silence, each lasting ten seconds. The Listener's eyes always open in a silence. At the end of the play, in the third silence, the Listener achieves a toothless smile. The details of movement are almost imperceptible ; That Time requires a small theatre. Yet it is true to say that without the image of face, if the play were broadcast on the radio, for example, its impact would not be nearly as great. For it seems to be Beckett's intention to split our senses of sight and hearing, so that we understand with a physical apprehension the Listener's situation. We listen with the Listener to three voices that are his own ; they are not issuing from him : they come from both sides of the stage and above. This effect suggests that the Listener cannot reconcile himself to the fact that these voices belong to him. In the silences the Listener's breathing monopolises our ears : his mind is blank and all he can hear is his breathing. Beckett forces us to appreciate the Listener's position ; we are audience, as he is, to three voices. The voices "modulate back and forth without any break in general flow except where silence indicated".²²⁵ The difficulty that this continuity involves for the audience is recognised by Beckett. In a note he indicates that "the switch from one to another must be clearly faintly perceptible. If threefold source and context prove insufficient to produce this effect it should be assisted mechanically (e.g. threefold pitch)." (p. 8). In the 1976 première at the Royal Court Theatre it was difficult to distinguish three voices ; two were clearly distinguished, while the third became merged with the second. It is imperative to read the play in order to appreciate the delicate poetic echoes that indicate both the *differences*

between the voices and the similar tones that tell us that these voices all issue from one mind. That Time is closer to lyric poetry than any other of Beckett's stage plays.

The three interspersed monologues evoke scenes from the past in detailed vignettes. The monologues are unpunctuated so that the words flow uninterrupted from one voice to the next without the barrier of sentences. The voices say "you" of themselves ; that is, the Listener says "you" instead of "I" : the voices are his three different selves. Colour, weather and the seasons are important to all three voices. Voice A remembers a grey day when "you" had returned to the place where, as a child, "you" had hidden in a ruin. The Listener's eyes close as this is recalled. A's first section ends "when was that" (p.9). C picks up the "when", but he talks of an occasion when "you" sheltered from the rain in the winter ; it was cold and "you" shivered and dripped on a marble seat in the Portrait Gallery. He also ends on the words "when was that" (p.9), echoing A in what gradually becomes ^a poetic refrain. B continues ; he describes a summer love scene, "on the stone together in the sun" (p.9) on a bright tranquil day. His colour is yellow, the colour of the wheat on that idyllic occasion. A's colour is grey and his mood contrasts with B's. A follows with the continuing recollection of "that time you went back that last time" (p.10) ; his words "was your mother ah for God's sake all gone long ago" (p.10) are repeated by C ; C's recollection of "not a sound to be heard" is taken up by B ; "no sound not a word" (p.10). So the patterning is established : there is an intricate overlapping of certain details but the three stories - of going back, of sheltering, and of the lovers - remain separate. The ^{image of the} couple "still on the stone" (p.10) of B is

echoed in A's ^{image of the} child "all day long on a stone among the nettles with your picture-book" (p.10), and the stone becomes the "slab" (p.11) in C. The leitmotifs are rapidly followed up.

The revelations that come to the voices are those that have been understood by many of Beckett's characters. C talks of "crawling about year after year sunk in your life long mess muttering to yourself" (p.11) reminding us of Estragon's fury about the "muckheap" of existence, and the How It Is protagonist. A elaborates the concept of "talking to yourself"; as a child of ten or eleven "you" held "out loud imaginary conversations" (p.11). Now the Listener hears voices in his mind jostling to tell stories in a way not very different; B hints that his idyllic scene is fictional, which seems to corroborate this: "just one of those things you kept making up to keep the void out just another of those old tales to keep the void from pouring in on top of you the shroud" (p.11). The realisation quells all the voices for ten seconds and the Listener's eyes open. After the silence C returns to the central question of the mouth in Not I and the Listener's eyes close: "could you ever say I to yourself in your life" (p.11). C maintains that there are no turning-points in life after the ejection from the womb: "the first and last that time curled up worm in slime when they lugged you out and wiped you off and straightened you up" (p.12). When C remembers "that time when "you" were in the Portrait Gallery "alone with the portraits of the dead black with dirt and antiquity", he indicates the questionable nature of the idea that one can capture a person's identity in his portrait; the image accentuates C's preoccupation with the nature of being, "not knowing who you were from Adam", not knowing "whose skull you were clapped up in" (p.12). "They" at the Portrait Gallery "put you out in the

rain at closing-time ' : C's desolation is complete ; 'you' are treated as an object. A's scene becomes similarly desolate when he describes how 'you' went to the closed down and dilapidated station, and then sat on a step waiting to board the night ferry. C adds a detail to his story : 'you' were wearing 'the old green holeproof coat your father left you' (p.14) ; A picks this up : 'in the old green greatcoat' (p.14) and later echoes C (p.16) : 'the old green greatcoat your father left you'. The third silence occurs after A's words 'where none ever came' (p.14). For the third time the Listener's eyes are open ; with B's voice the eyes close once more. B insists that his scene is fictional ; it disappears in a cinematic sequence : 'nothing stirring only the water and the sun going down till it went down and you vanished all vanished' (p.14). The stories are changing now as more recollections come into play ; C remembers the times in the Public Library and the Post Office (p.14). B recollects 'that time alone on your back in the sand' ; this could have been an earlier or a later time than the love scene. A talks about 'making yourself all up again for the millionth time' (p.15). This is what the Listener is doing : he is telling stories through three voices in his mind as if to ensure that he has an identity. He seems to be doing this unconsciously : he merely listens to the voices that talk to him. A remembers how 'you' were gaped at by the passers by as 'you' sat 'drooling away out loud' (p.15) ; 'your' thoughts became uncontrollable ; 'you' were a 'scandal huddled there in the sun where it had no warrant' (p.15). C also dwells on the fact that 'you' had 'no warrant' in the public place, 'to say nothing of the loathsome appearance' that 'you' had (p.15). The eyes looking over and through 'you' were like 'so much thin

air ' (p.15). B follows this image of air with his account of "the glider passing over ' (p.15). B's last speech is despairing : "you tried and couldn't by the window in the dark" (p.16). What "you" could not do was keep out the shroud : gave up for good and let it in and nothing the worse a great shroud billowing in all over you on top of you" (p.16). With all the stories that "you" made up "you" could not keep out death. Beckett implies that we continually and uselessly try to weave stories about our lives in order to forget that we have to die ; he implies also that there will be no change when death does come. A's one thought is to get away from the place 'you' had visited. C remembers "that time" the Library refuge was full of dust ; 'you" heard the dust "speak". The revelation was "something like that come and gone come and gone no one come and gone in no time gone in no time" (p.16). After a silence, the play ends with the Listener's smile. That Time ends on a revelation.

In That Time Beckett has created a beautiful tapestry of interwoven poetic images ; the repeating patterns of phrases and words connect three voices that issue from the same mind. The tapestry only becomes clear when we study the text : in performance we react as to a stream of irrational recollections. This is in no way a limitation. We must accept that there are two separate experiences involved. In the study we intellectualise what we receive emotionally on stage. When we watch the play we experience what the Listener is experiencing : the voices of memory punctuate his mind in an almost unbroken stream of words. Only at the end does he seem to understand the voice of C as being his own. The final revelation is a moment of deep satisfaction for the Listener, and it records a turning-point in his life. Although C earlier maintains

that there are no turning-points after the emergence from the womb, he finally contradicts himself. His revelation of coming and going "in no time", of being "no one", is the revelation that Beckett makes throughout his drama. One comes and goes, lacking in identity, in a flash of time between womb and tomb. The revelation is satisfying to the Listener: he has realised the status of man and perhaps now he can continue to progress from there. The smile is affirmative, a hopeful ending for a delicately lyrical play.

Footfalls was first performed in a triple bill with That Time and Play at the Royal Court Theatre in the 1976 Beckett birthday season. Beckett returns to exploring the situation of a woman; for the first time since Come and Go we see an entire human being moving on stage. May moves frequently, agitatedly, pacing seven steps forward and seven steps backward on a strip downstage that is just long enough to accommodate her pacing. Her steps are rhythmic, a balletic "come and go". We are forced to concentrate on her feet, for there the light is strongest, while it is less strong on her body and dims further on her head. May's hair is dishevelled and grey; a trailing grey wrap hides her feet; she is indeed the "faint tangle of pale grey tatters"²²⁶ that she describes. A "faint single chime" heralds the four sections of the play. The chime calls into play the lighting; successive chimes are a little fainter and the lighting is correspondingly a little more subdued. In the first section we hear May conversing with her mother. We do not see the mother: we hear her voice from the darkness upstage. Her relationship with May is compassionate: she hears her daughter's cry and responds to it although she has been in deep sleep. She asks when her daughter will try herself to sleep.

May asks whether her invalid mother requires something : an injection, a bedpan, and so on. Her mother would like them all but she declares that "it is too soon" (p.10). They talk about their age. It emerges that May's mother conceived late in life ; for this she feels guilty and asks forgiveness. Perhaps we are to infer that May is retarded ; it is more likely that Beckett is repeating his admonition that birth is sinful : May's tragic existence is a meaningless come and go that could have been averted. There is very little hope in this play. May is in her forties ; she asks : 'So little?' (p.10) as if to hasten her end. Her mother asks "Will you never have done ... revolving it all?" (p.10). May is 'revolving' in her 'poor mind' the mysterious "it all" ; her body follows the revolutions of her mind. After a period of darkness a chime opens a new section of the play. We hear the mother's voice saying 'My voice is in her mind.' (p.11). She adds 'She fancies she is alone.' May and her mother are inseparable ; the mother's voice lingers in May's mind, despite May's desire to be alone. The mother comments on May's life. May has never left the house since she was a girl. The floor used to be carpeted but, when May asked to be able to hear her footsteps, the carpet was removed. The pacing action is not enough for May : she must hear her footfalls in order to convince herself that she exists. May still sleeps in snatches and still speaks. The mother ends her monologue and the second section by describing how May "Tries to tell how it was. (Pause.) It all. (Fause.) It all." The words "It all." conclude the second section as they do the first. In the third section we hear May trying to tell "It all." She begins as if she were telling a story : "Sequel." (p.12). She calls herself "she" like Mouth of Not I. May slipped "out at nightfall and into the little church"

(p.12). She often paced up and down but sometimes she was still "as one frozen by some shudder of the mind" (p.12). The poetic core of this section describes a vision in the church : "Faint, though by no means invisible, in a certain light (. . .) Watch it pass - (pause) - watch her pass before the candelabrum, how its flames, their light . . . like moon through passing rack." (p.12). And so we watch May pass up the stage until she starts to tell a new story that is seemingly about herself under a different name, an anagram of her own. This story is narrated as if for a book : "the reader will remember" she says (p.12). The mother figure is Mrs. Winter. Perhaps May chooses this name in opposition to her own : winter against spring. The daughter is Amy. Mrs. Winter breaks down at supper one autumn Sunday evening. She has seen something "strange" at Evensong. This "strange" thing was perhaps May herself pacing up and down in the church. But Amy says that she was not there ; Mrs. Winter argues that she heard Amy respond : "Amen" (p.13). She asks "Will you never have done . . . revolving it all? (. . .) It all." These are the final words of the play. After a darkness, a faint chime precedes a faint light. There is no trace of May ; the light is held for fifteen seconds. Are we to infer that she no longer exists? The absence is terrifying.

Martin Esslin's interpretation of the names in Footfalls is convincing. Amy's argument is that "I" was not in the church ; her name "might refer to the question Am I? And Amy's answer to her mother might simply indicate that there might have been someone there, but Not I. And if the name Amy might be so interpreted, might not the name May (its anagram) not (sic) also be seen as the subjective incarnation of the verb 'to be',

indicating potentially (sic) or possibility of being?"²²⁷ But as Martin Esslin goes on to say, the immediate reaction of the audience is to a visual image, to poetic and musical rhythms : we do not stop to analyse an impression which is emotional rather than intellectual. In the rehearsals for Footfalls Beckett stressed that the play must be performed musically.²²⁸ And this was the impression that one was left with. My personal reaction was one of intense fear and compassion ; the isolation and greyness of the woman pacing up and down, the dimming lights and chimes and the voice in her mind, produced a chilling vision of the coming and going of human existence. Footfalls is Beckett's most recent stage play. It attempts to embody the unnameable mystery of life and it succeeds on a profound and moving level.

viii Conclusion

I have concentrated on Beckett's stage plays in order to compare Beckett with the other dramatists under review. In the stage plays Beckett expresses the relationship of man to the cosmos, recording a vision of life that is concerned with irreconcilable opposites : in light and darkness, coming and going, the human condition is presented as unfathomable and mysterious. Beckett is philosophical in that he contemplates man's essential nature ; he does not provide answers to philosophical questions. When he comes close to rendering human existence as meaningless, in Breath, we realise how Shaw might have criticised Beckett's drama. It seemed to Shaw that the despair in Shakespearean tragedy negates the beauty of the poetry ; the artist-philosopher, according to Shaw, discovers a purpose in life and expresses that purpose in his art.

Beckett's expression of the 'perhaps' quality of life, the doubts that are aroused by the presence of opposites on a purgatorial earth, does not involve a gleam of hope without a negating flicker of despair, and sometimes the plays sacrifice hope to despair. And yet it is likely that Shaw would have appreciated the poetry and musicality of the plays, as he appreciated these qualities in Maeterlinck's drama. The optimism of the Everyman author can never be Beckett's; a post-sentimentalisch outlook cannot be formulated without a perception of universal system. Nevertheless, although the philosophy of Everyman cannot be emulated by Beckett, the ritualistic and rhythmic symbolic form which is the aesthetic counterpart to that philosophy can be and is employed. For the dramatists under review, the highly concentrated, ritualistic and poetic form is crucial in the face of a confusion of religious and ethical thought. The fact that Beckett's plays adopt such a form in order to present on-stage the profound issues of human enquiry renders his drama metaphysical in a way that the prose drama committed to verisimilitude precludes. Like Maeterlinck, Beckett rejects the elements of drama that are irrelevant to his subject of the essential nature of man; plot and character development become minimal, being subordinate to symbolic spectacle and poetic effects of language that 'give confusion shape'.²²⁹ The chaos of actuality is not reflected in the symmetrical form of Beckett's plays; we sense that "there is consternation behind the form, not in the form".²³⁰ The form does not and cannot impose order on the world or elicit pattern in the world; in Eliot's terms Beckett has failed. And yet when we criticise the plays for their stimulating value as drama, as I

have tried to show, only Breath can truly be said to fail. We must remember that Eliot appreciated that his ideal for the religious function of poetic drama is unattainable ; he nevertheless urged that dramatists should strive towards the poetic expression of the unnameable regions of human experience. Beckett's plays challenge the anarchy of actuality ; they cannot change or order actuality.

....oo0oo....

Chapter Six

Harold Pinter's "No Man's Land"

In No Man's Land Pinter expresses a deep concern with his own art, and his preoccupation with the question of how to write threatens to overwhelm the action. We are presented with four characters - Hirst, Spooner, Foster and Briggs - who are made to discuss art on their author's behalf. Spooner announces the recurring authorial concern : "All we have left is the English language. Can it be salvaged? That is my question." (p.18). Pinter on his own behalf has spoken eloquently on the subject :

I have mixed feelings about words myself. Moving among them, sorting them out, watching them appear on the page, from this I derive a considerable pleasure. But at the same time I have another strong feeling about words which amounts to nothing less than nausea. Such a weight of words confronts us, day in day out, words spoken in a context such as this, words written by me and by others, the bulk of it a stale dead terminology ; ideas endlessly repeated and permuted, become platitudinous, trite, meaningless. Given this nausea, it's very easy to be overcome by it and step back into paralysis.[...] But if it is possible to confront this nausea, to follow it to its hilt and move through it, then it is possible to say that something has occurred, that something has even been achieved. |

In No Man's Land Pinter moves among words with inventiveness and sensitivity, making a positive achievement of the kind he describes. Character traits are conveyed through Pinter's delicate control of the words spoken and of the silences observed. The treatment of Spooner's words and silences is worth analysing in this context. His initial expansiveness is quelled by Hirst's hint that other people share the house, his long oratorical paragraphs giving way to short hesitant responses. Spooner's normal conversation is highly mannered, the most casual events being described

in mandarin prose : "I'd meandered over to Hampstead Heath, a captive to memories of a more than usually pronounced grisliness, and found myself, not much to my surprise, ordering a pint at the bar of Jack Straw's Castle." (p.24). Spooner keeps trying to impress Hirst with rhetorical flourishes, but his high talk cannot be sustained and unguarded phrases lead to comic bathos, as in the continued narration of the event at Jack Straw's Castle (p.24) : "This achieved, and having negotiated a path through a particularly repellant lick-spittling herd of literati, I stumbled, unseeing, with my pint, to his bald, tanned, unmoving table. How bald he was." On occasion Spooner sets out on a philosophical excursion with comic solemnity. In his "memory of the bucolic life", for example, he works himself up to a peroration where the "ubi sunt" complaint is bathetically reduced from the traditional universal utterance to an unconvincing regret for afternoons spent having tea on a lawn in some fanciful setting representative of idyllic English life :

SPOONER	When we had our cottage . . . when we had our cottage . . . we gave our visitors tea, on the lawn.
HIRST	I did the same.
SPOONER	On the lawn?
HIRST	I did the same.
SPOONER	You had a cottage?
HIRST	Tea on the lawn.
SPOONER	What happened to them? What happened to our cottages? What happened to our lawns?

(pp.28-9)

Although Sir John Gielgud partly modelled his Spooner on some features of W.H. Auden's dress and mannerisms, when the character raises the tone of his dialogue above the reach of prose he expresses himself in verse which is directly derived from T.S. Eliot. On four occasions the

phrase "I have known this before" introduces a banal sub-Prufrockian couplet.² In Act One, having swallowed glasses of vodka chased by glasses of whisky, Hirst reveals his falling sickness and crawls out of the room. Spooner aspires to deep reflection and utters his doggerel : "I have known this before. The exit through the door, by way of belly and floor." (p.34).

Pinter has created an unusually successful comic character : through the elaborate prose rhythms which are constantly undercut by the intrusive unconsidered phrase, through the unconvincing elegiac philosophy, and through the clumsy derivative verse, Spooner is established as a memorable stage clown who is not simply plagiarised from Prufrock but who is a variation on the same theme. Pinter, like Eliot, is offering creative parody rather than uncreative pastiche. Spooner's excessive concern for the English language makes him a parody of the artist and of the Professor ; even in moments of heated accusation he can find time to comment on his opponent's use of words : "A metaphor. Things are looking up." (p.32).

The clever comic effects which are achieved by shifts of tone have always been part of Pinter's style. This is typified in the early exchange between Spooner and Hirst, in which Spooner starts a conversation on the dangers of prowling about Hampstead Heath :

SPOONER	A pitfall and snare, if ever there was one. But of course I observe a good deal, on my peeps through twigs. A wit once entitled me a betwixt twig peeper. A most clumsy construction, I thought.
HIRST	Infelicitous.
SPOONER	My Christ you're right. (p.18)

Hirst's not juste to describe the "clumsy construction", a word long and latinate, is met with an enthusiastic response appropriate to Spooner's life

as a bartender in a Chalk Farm pub, but destructive of the image of the poet and Hampstead intellectual which he tries to project in more controlled moments. The interchange of Spooner and Foster operates similarly in its comic tonal disjunction. Foster has described an event which happened when he was "out East". A tramp had rejected the alms offered by Foster and the coin had been flung back only to disappear before Foster had recovered it. The challenge is given to Spooner to make something of the story, and we have this dialogue :

SPOONER	He was a con artist.
FOSTER	Do you think so?
SPOONER	You would be wise to grant the event no integrity whatsoever.
FOSTER	You don't subscribe to the mystery of the Orient?
SPOONER	A typical Eastern contrick.
FOSTER	Double Dutch, you mean?
SPOONER	Certainly. (pp.42-3)

The slang of "con artist" is supplemented by Spooner's pedantic advice about the dubious "integrity" of the event. We have been led into the climactic use of this device where the cliché "the mystery of the Orient" is undercut by Spooner's confident assessment, "A typical Eastern contrick". Pinter then extends his device by shifting from "Eastern" to "Dutch", revealing how the earnestness of Foster in his attempt to understand Spooner only adds to the range of geographical reference.

Pinter's distinctive use of language to achieve such effects is a hallmark of his canon. The complex intricately ironical tone depends upon the bringing together of bizarrely contrasting frames of mind each expressed neatly through an exploitation of cliché. Pinter's strength is that, although he is reworking materials already worked by Eliot and Kafka and Pirandello

and Beckett, he has introduced a new ingredient with original and wholly unexpected effects. To the deeply serious comedy which explores the implications of an "inexplicable" world and the discontinuity of the personality he adds the brittle aggression of East London banter. The effect is successfully "metaphysical" in that the opposing elements being yoked violently together work well in harness : "The mystery of the Orient" is equated with "A typical Eastern contrick", and the play's serious exploration of the largest mysteries is in the same curious way authenticated by the sense of blunt London actuality. This process is given broad farcical expression in Briggs's ridiculously detailed account of how he directed Foster to Bolsover Street. There are some essential ingredients in this speech. Bolsover Street is actually there and Pinter is building his comic nightmare on a firm basis of familiar London topography. The subject of the elaborate joke is exactly the subject at the serious core of the play : "I told him I knew one or two people who'd been wandering up and down Bolsover street for years. They'd wasted their bloody youth there. The people who live there, their faces are grey, they're in a state of despair, but nobody pays any attention, you see. All people are worried about is their illgotten gains. I wrote to The Times about it. Life At A Dead End, I called it. Went for nothing." (p.62). The large theme of the play is similarly rooted in the reality of London. This is explicit in the references to Jack Straw's Castle, Hampstead Heath, Chalk Farm, the Post Office Tower and Bolsover Street itself ; but even the title of the play, which might seem uncharacteristically abstract in Pinter's canon, turns out to be another specific reference to local geography. Pinter's preoccupation with words and their limitations probably makes him, as it

undoubtedly has made Beckett, an habitual thumber of dictionaries.

At an early stage in the process of writing this play he must have turned to the following entry in the N.E.D. or the Shorter Oxford Dictionary :

No man's land : a piece of waste, or unowned, land; in early use as the name of a plot of ground, lying outside the north wall of London, and used as a place of execution.

It is in this precise part of London that Spooner the poet and Hirst the man of letters confront each other. In 1967 Pinter spoke of "the question of dominance and subservience, which is possibly a repeated theme in my plays"⁴; No Man's Land takes up the theme. Spooner is a visitor in the other's territory. The contrast between the two men is stressed visually by the way in which Spooner's shabbiness is offset by the neatness and precision of Hirst's clothes. Spooner's desire to ingratiate is revealed in his over-polite responses. Hirst says very little in the first half of Act One but Pinter indicates his dominance through this reluctance to speak, whereas Spooner's lengthy speeches exude lack of confidence. The situation is reminiscent of Strindberg's play The Stronger. Spooner describes himself when he expatiates upon those "who appear to be strong, whose idea of what strength consists of is persuasive, but who inhabit the idea and not the fact. What they possess is not strength but expertise. They have nurtured and maintain what is in fact a calculated posture." (p.16). It is quite clear that Hirst's room seems to promise Spooner a necessary refuge, yet he asserts that security is only to be found for him in the indifference of others. Pinter defines security in terms of having a room of one's own, because people "are scared of what is outside the room. Outside the room is a world bearing upon them, which is frightening ... we

are all in this, all in a room, and outside is a world ... which is most inexplicable and frightening, curious and alarming"⁵. Most of Pinter's plays deal with this idea of the room as refuge from hostile and unknown forces ; Maeterlinck's Intérieur and L'Intruse are based on the same principle, with the powerful and unwelcome intruder in each case representing death. For Pinter too the mysterious nature of existence is an intrinsic subject. Although Pinter is by no means exclusively concerned with the primary Maeterlinckian areas of exploration - man's irrational interior forces and the external forces beyond human control - a sense of unlocalised vertiginous anxiety pervades the plays. In Chapter Three I have cited Goldberg's futile attempt to sum up the world in a sentence ; the feeling of Angst beneath Goldberg's failed pronouncement on the human condition is conveyed by the characters in No Man's Land. Hirst's commentary on the fate of lost tennis balls may be compared with Briggs's Bolsover Street speech as a metaphorical elaboration about the despair, emptiness and decay present in life :

Do you ever examine the gullies of the English countryside?
Under the twigs, under the dead leaves, you'll find tennis
balls, blackened. Girls threw them for their dogs, or
children, for each other, they rolled into the gully. They
are lost there, given up for dead, centuries old. (p.81)

Foster's anecdote about the man with two umbrellas in the Australian desert operates similarly. He did not ask the man "what he was up to" because he realised that "he would only confuse me" (p.53). Pinter's work is comparable with the anecdote and Foster's decision : if we ask too many questions about the plays' and the world's non sequiturs we will not be enlightened.

Pinter has acknowledged allegiance with Beckett : "Beckett is a writer whom I admire very much and have admired for a number of years. If Beckett's influence shows in my work that's all right with me. You don't write in a vacuum ; you're bound to absorb and digest other writing; and I admire Beckett's work so much that something of its texture might appear in my own."⁶ Pinter's reluctance to commit himself - "something" of the "texture" of Beckett's work "might appear" in Pinter's own - should act as a warning to those critics who unreservedly classify Pinter's work as derivative. Katharine J. Worth has written on Pinter's "realism"⁷; by associating his drama with that of Ibsen and Noel Coward she has balanced critical appreciations of Pinter as an Absurd dramatist.⁸ My own concern is with the Pinter of No Man's Land, the Pinter who appears to be voicing an opinion on the dilemma of the modern artist. It is necessary in this connection to expound in more detail the affinity between Beckett and Pinter. It must nevertheless be stressed that I am not suggesting that Beckett is the only influence on, or inspiration for, Pinter's drama.

Pinter has called Beckett "the best prose writer living"⁹; in a tribute to Beckett he explains why he appreciates Beckett's art :

The further he goes the more good it does me. I don't want philosophies, tracks, dogmas, creeds, way outs, truths, answers, nothing from the bargain basement. He is the most courageous, remorseless writer going and the more he grinds my nose in the shit the more I am grateful to him (. . .) I'll buy his goods, hook, line and sinker, because he leaves no stone unturned and no maggot lonely. He brings forth a body of beauty. His work is beautiful. 10

Pinter adds "he seems to me far and away the finest writer writing". He admires Beckett precisely because Beckett does not offer the solutions

that Goldberg tries to formulate. Beckett writes as he sees the world and he sees it as a place of suffering. When Pinter opened the Samuel Beckett Exhibition at the Reading University Library, on 19th May 1971, he welcomed the opportunity "to pay tribute, from a very personal point of view, to the greatest writer of our time".¹¹ On 24th April 1976, for the National Theatre tribute to Beckett on his seventieth birthday, Pinter read passages from the trilogy Molloy, Malone Dies, and The Unnamable. His exceptionally moving reading and his choice of texts¹² suggests that Pinter deeply admires Beckett's artistic rendering of the suffering that he discovers in the world.

The National Theatre reading led up to the final sequence of crescendo in The Unnamable. Pinter started with an extract from Molloy. Molloy journeys very slowly through the forest; his only possible way of moving is to crawl. When he finally emerges from the forest he finds himself in a ditch. The passage ends: "I longed to go back into the forest. Oh not a real longing. Molloy could stay, where he happened to be."¹³ The contradictory emotions which Molloy suffers, and his final resignation to whatever chance might bring him, point forward to Pinter's concern with the difficulty of making positive statements on behalf of his characters and his uncertainty about their motivation. One may compare Hirst's and Molloy's stasis: for Molloy the ditch is degrading and then welcoming and for Hirst the room is both a torment and a refuge. Molloy cannot summon the energy to retreat into the forest and Hirst is too comfortable to leave the no man's land that he reluctantly occupies. In Pinter's extract from Malone Dies Malone declares that life and death are the primary subjects and that "nothing was ever about anything else". He continues: "But what

it is all about exactly I could no more say, at the present moment, then (sic) take up my bed and walk. It's vague, life and death. I must have had my little private idea on the subject when I began, otherwise I would not have begun, I would have held my peace".¹⁴ The simultaneous impossibility of and necessity for having an opinion about life and death intrigues Pinter as it does Beckett. Goldberg's attempt to be articulate about the subject is ridiculed yet the desire for such knowledge is omnipresent ; it is impossible to describe the details of universal purpose yet the attraction to the subject is irresistible. The paradox is just as Molloy states it : at the same time it is the only subject of a serious writer and the unknown factors are too many to allow any conclusions to be substantiated.

Pinter chose to read three passages from The Unnamable. The first short extract reflects an author's task when he starts to compose a piece of fiction. The subject of every writer will come from himself : his characters are compounded from his imagination and his experience. Occasionally the author will reject characters as unnecessary elaborations of facets of himself and he will write straightforwardly of his sense of being. This is what the Unnamable does. In No Man's Land Pinter chooses to create characters that appear to be independent of him to a great extent. However, more than others in the canon, the characters in No Man's Land reflect their creator's interest in the nature of the artist. They are not as independent as they first seem and I shall return to this point in my analysis. In the second of Pinter's chosen passages from The Unnamable the value of words is questioned. The Unnamable feels that he is something essential that cannot be communicated in words, "a wordless thing in an empty place".¹⁵ Beckett's certainty that words can never penetrate the

essence of things may be compared with Pinter's similar scepticism. In Pinter's and in Beckett's drama silence is often more telling than is the utterance of words. The final sequence from The Unnamable, the last text which Pinter chose for his audience at the National Theatre, expands this theme. The Unnamable cannot stop telling stories but "the words fail"¹⁶. He must carry on telling stories and uttering words because "they're all I have"¹⁷. He ends: "where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on"¹⁸. He will carry on talking but for the time being he is silent: words have abandoned him. The fear of silence and the knowledge that silence is a state "that I should never have left, that I may never find again" are inextricably and paradoxically bound. The words will continue: the final "I'll go on" is simultaneously affirmative and negative in view of the Janus-like nature of silence.

In No Man's Land the verbose Spooner traps himself in walls of words, using them recklessly to define his character and being. At the end Spooner is equated with an imprisoned fly and it becomes apparent that he has wandered into a spider's web. Very early on in the action, however, he self-consciously points out that he is "a free man" (p.21). This concept is laughable to Hirst whose situation is frozen forever in the role which he must at one stage in his life have chosen. Spooner covets Hirst's position, seeing in the ownership of a room an identity such as he, for all his blustering self-definition, cannot lay claim to. In the battle for dominance Hirst has the decisive advantage. His sardonic and elliptical comments augur failure for Spooner - he announces (p.20) that he expects Spooner "to go very much further" (presumably to self-destruction), he has two mugs

on his shelf denoting the presence of battle aides, he supplies answers to questions offered by Spooner as rhetorical, and he sits while Spooner remains standing. Spooner finally decides to introduce himself as "a staunch friend of the arts, particularly the art of poetry, and a guide to the young" (p.27). The description he offers of his poetry evenings makes them sound more like homosexual than artistic gatherings - however, the speech ends with a flourish: "What quarrel can be found with what is, au fond, a gesture towards the sustenance and preservation of art, and through art to virtue?" (p.28). Hirst mechanically repeats Spooner's last four words and drinks to Spooner's health. Pinter has stressed the important content of his play. The word "virtue", with its implications of life-giving nourishment, of moral excellence and resurrection, of human potential for goodness, is carefully loaded with layers of meaning. Spooner's use of language is calculated. If he hopes to salvage English from its staleness, then he must exploit words to the full. "Virtue", one remembers, also means "manliness", and since Spooner has just described a deviant sexual meeting, he may be trying to conventionalise his moral activity (the preservation of art) in terms which are opposed to those which describe homosexuality. This metaphor of homosexuality is at work throughout. When, after a good deal of subservience and flattery, Spooner is goaded into truthtelling, he characterises Hirst in terms of the same opposition: "I would say, albeit on a brief acquaintance, that you lack the essential quality of manliness [...] so you won't, I hope, object if I take out my prayer beads and my prayer mat and salute what I take to be your impotence?" (p.33). Hirst is the embodiment of impotent art. He answers "No" to Spooner's provocative statement that his (Hirst's) wife

has abandoned him, pauses, and makes the first statement of the play's major theme : "No man's land ... does not move ... or change ... or grow old ... remains ... forever ... icy ... silent." (p.34). His impotence is accentuated in his staggering movements which result in two falls onto the floor followed by the undignified crawling "through the door, by way of belly and floor" (p.34).

Spooner has seemingly won the first battle-skirmish and we see him surveying the room - which, for the time being, is in his control. Foster's unexpected entry threatens Spooner's security, especially when the younger man introduces himself as Hirst's son. This relationship seems unlikely, yet it is irrelevant to speculate on its "truth" ; the point is that Foster now represents for Spooner another power on Hirst's side. When Briggs enters almost straightaway, his menacing knowledge of Spooner - and he knows him not as a poet but as a barman in the pub in Chalk Farm - musters even more force for Hirst. Spooner has claimed to be a friend of Hirst and ironically the word "friend" is used as a threatening weapon : "He's everybody's bloody friend. How many friends have you got altogether, Mr. Friend?" (p.38). Foster's next challenge is to ask Spooner whether he has ever been to Siam. When Spooner replies that he has "been to Amsterdam" (p.39) we suspect that the town has come into his mind because of the rhyme, an association of sounds ; the choice of Amsterdam then has to be defended and an anecdote is offered which allegorises a familiar tenet of symbolist art. When Spooner was in Amsterdam, spending his time outside a café by a canal, he "decided to paint a picture - of the canal, the waiter, the child, the fisherman, the lovers, the fish, and in background, in shadow, the man at the other table, and to call it

The Whistler. The Whistler. If you had seen the picture, and the title, would the title have baffled you?" (p. 39). The belief in the unlimited suggestibility of the symbol may be set by the side of Spooner's account of his poor attempt to achieve such suggestibility. We are led back to Yeats's note on The Cat and the Moon :

I have amused myself by imagining incidents and metaphors that are related to certain beliefs of mine as are the patterns upon a Persian carpet to some ancient faith or philosophy. It has pleased me to think that the half of me that feels can sometimes forget all that belongs to the more intellectual half but a few images. (...) I have altogether forgotten whether other parts of the fable have, as is very likely, a precise meaning, and that is natural, for I generally forget in conteraplating my copy of an old Persian carpet that its winding and wandering vine had once that philosophical meaning (...)

Yeats finds positive value, as Mallarmé and Maeterlinck had found before him, in the art which does not name, which does not define, which does not convey a philosophy directly, but which contains in its mysterious symbols a truth inexpressible in any other form. In Spooner's reformulation of this theory, he reduces it to the meretricious level of a policy whereby the artist sets out deliberately to baffle his public. In fact Spooner did not ever paint the picture so that all that remains of his art is a baffling title. It is possible that Pinter could be recollecting "Mr. Whistler's 'Ten O'Clock' " and the succinct dogmatic pronouncement : "So Art is limited to the infinite, and beginning there cannot progress." ²⁰ And if he is drawing our attention to Whistler's lecture it would appear that the joke of Spooner's unpainted painting rests upon Pinter's realisation of an impulse with very serious implications for his own art and for the line of artists that he, by acknowledging his admiration for Beckett,

associates with. At the beginning of the tradition of symbolism Mallarmé set the example with the minimalism of his verse ; Whistler's most famous paintings seemed to his more orthodox contemporaries not to be painted at all and with Beckett the tendency is for the play to be dependent on form so that occasionally, as in Breath, multiplicity and resonance are avoided and replaced by a schematic rendering of a one-sided view of life. Like the best jokes in Pinter, that of Spooner's comic painting has very sombre undertones.

Spooner's innumerable plagiarisms of Eliot's verse confirm the dictionary suggestion that we should relate No Man's Land to The Waste Land, and other early works by Eliot are also brought to mind. Hirst's recollection of the delights of sleeping in late afternoon "After tea and toast" is reminiscent of the tea and toast ritual in "Prufrock",²¹ suggestive in both contexts of a meaningless but religiously observed ceremony to compensate for purposelessness and to overcome boredom. Hirst has been disturbed by a dream of death by water, hinting at Mme. Sosostri's counsel.²² Spooner associates himself with the drowned man, placing his position in relation to Hirst as one of victim. Pinter takes us referentially to Sweeney Agonistes with Hirst's "Can you imagine waking up, finding no-one here, just furniture, staring at you? Most unpleasant. I've known that condition, I've been through that period - cheers - I came round to human beings in the end." (p.44). Eliot's early fragment involves a situation in which Sweeney and the other characters are drinking themselves out of a feeling of Angst :

Birth, and copulation, and death.

That's all the facts when you come to brass tacks. 23

The chorus at the end of Eliot's play describes the situation which Hirst had known before he "came round to human beings" :

When you're alone in the middle of the night and
 you wake in a sweat and a hell of a fright
 When you're alone in the middle of the bed and
 you wake like someone hit you in the head
 You've had a cream of a nightmare dream and
 you've got the hoo-ha's coming to you. 24

Hirst's particular "hoo-ha's" do not stop in the company of others, however, and disjointed fragments surface in his mind to be voiced in compelling images of nullity : "There's a gap in me. I can't fill it. There's a flood running through me. I can't plug it." (p.46). His disorder is the occasion of an outburst of rivalry between Spooner and Foster, then between Foster and Briggs, revealing discontent and insecurity as the dominant traits of each character. Foster shuts out the bad feeling by a simple expedient : "Listen. You know what it's like when you're in a room with the light on and then suddenly the light goes out? I'll show you. It's like this." (p.53). The act ends in a blackout, the coup de théâtre exploited in The Birthday Party and The Caretaker to generate suspense.

Spooner opens Act Two with one of his sub-Eliotesque comments : "I have known this before. Morning. A locked door. A house of silence and strangers." (p.59). Those members of the audience who are very familiar with Pinter's work will find themselves being reminded of the earlier plays. "I have known this before" seems to be Pinter's self-conscious reintroduction of the old themes and the established techniques. One specific reference is when Briggs answers the telephone, listens, replies "Yes, sir" to an order and leaves the room. Spooner's reaction, "I have known this before. The voice unheard. A listener. The command

from an upper floor" (p. 68), seems to refer to The Dumb Waiter in which the commands for food come down to Gus and Ben, the employed assassins. The identities of Gus and Ben were never confirmed and Pinter's main theme has always been the impossibility of establishing any important "truth"; significant experience is irreducibly complex and eludes definition. In a programme note near the beginning of his career, Pinter expressed this conviction :

The desire for verification is understandable but cannot always be satisfied. There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. The thing is not necessarily either true or false ; it can be both true and false. The assumption that to verify what has happened and what is happening presents few problems I take to be inaccurate. A character on the stage who can present no convincing argument or information as to his past experience, his present behaviour or his aspirations, nor give a comprehensive analysis of his motives is a legitimate and as worthy of attention as one who, alarmingly, can do all these things. The more acute the experience the less articulate its expression. 25

In the second act Hirst chooses to greet Spooner as "Charles" and Briggs as "Denson". Spooner is addressed as an old friend from Oxford days. The stories of Oxford are taken up and elaborated on by Spooner so that the audience is presented with a situation for which there are alternative and equally likely explanations : Spooner could be subserviently denying his actual identity in order to sustain Hirst's delusion ; Spooner could be the Charles Wetherby Hirst hails him as ; both men could be playing the game where one person starts a story and the other follows it up, consciously acting parts like the menservants in Pirandello's Henry IV. The technique causes vertigo in the audience, who are suddenly aware that

there are no facts or identities to latch onto. After the long exchange between Hirst and Spooner - Charles Wetherby, Hirst bursts out with "Who are you? What are you doing in my house?" (p.78). Spooner has accused him of having scandalous affairs, both heterosexual and homosexual, but the final outrage that unnerves Hirst is the slander that he could never master terza rima. It is the renewed implication that Hirst is artistically impotent that engenders his anger. Hirst would like men to be as fixed as images in photographs: "In my day nobody changed. A man was. Only religion could alter him, and that at least was a glorious misery." (p.78). With his "Who are you?" we recollect Len's speech in The Dwarfs:

The point is, who are you? Not why or how, not even what (. . .) It's no use saying you know who you are just because you tell me you can fit your particular key into a particular slot, which will only receive your particular key because that's not foolproof and certainly not conclusive (. . .) What you are, or appear to be to me, or appear to be to you, changes so quickly, so horrifyingly (. . .) You have no number. (. . .) 26

The presentation of "character" in Pinter's drama meets the philosophical proposition which has been formulated by Sartre: characters are free. In Sartre they learn to use their freedom by creating essences, by exercising choice; in Pinter, characters yearn for fixed essence as for a lost birthright.

In No Man's Land Pinter looks at the fight to establish identity, and specifically to establish the identity of the artist. The combined forces of Foster and Briggs are against Spooner at the close. When Foster is threatened he argues that his identity has been nourished in Hirst's employment: "A famous writer wanted me. He wanted me to be his

secretary, his chauffeur, his housekeeper, his amanuensis." (p.86). Hirst has created Foster's identity as the employee of a renowned man. Spooner pleads with Hirst, as Davies had pleaded in The Caretaker, to be allowed to achieve similar security: "Let me live with you and be your secretary." (p.88). Hirst responds immediately by refusing to reply: "Is there a big fly in here? I hear buzzing." Pinter has given us an example of the evasion of communication which he considers the norm: "I think that we communicate only too well, in our silence, in what is unsaid, and that what takes place is continual evasion, desperate rearguard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves."²⁷ This theme is central to Pinter's work and he elaborates it:

There are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is employed. This speech is speaking of a language locked beneath it. That is its continual reference. The speech we hear is an indication of that we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smoke-screen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with an echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness. 28

Spooner's long listing of his credentials employs both types of silence. In the "torrent of language" he utters he is covering himself after the exposure which was too direct, "Let me live with you". In his silences the measure of his desperation can be found as he searches for words which when they come serve only to humiliate him even further. Spooner offers Hirst an opportunity to give a public reading of his poems in perfect conditions, but Hirst wants to change the subject. Hirst is in the no man's land of the artist who refuses to compromise his ossified

views ; the ice and the silence will remain forever.

The final tableau of figures on-stage offers little hope. The lights fade slowly while Hirst drinks to Spooner's assessment of his situation. But not only have we glimpsed Hirst's desolate condition, we have been subjected to a deep penetration of the "no man's land" which Pinter's world is. The sexual and artistic rivalry in the characters' complex relationships creates an atmosphere of hostility. Hirst's financial strength would seem to give him the controlling hand, but in his self-centredness he dwells on his own sterile security. Hirst's final condition is regarded ambivalently : he makes a dreaded but necessary escape from reality by changing the subject for the last time. The achieved condition - the fixity of the artistic image as represented by the photographs in Hirst's album - is free of the agonising ambiguities and confusions that the personality is heir to, but the preservation and the silence are ice-cold. Hirst joins what Briggs has called "the blank dead" (p.79). He has escaped from the chaos of actuality to the changeless world of his own fiction and on behalf of his author he has come to realise the restrictiveness which art's consoling form imposes.

It is possible to see Pinter's four characters as stages in one man's life, Hirst representing Pinter's present role as the established artist from whom the public expects new works in his familiar, inimitable style, within which there can be no progression. Pinter's career is apparently in stalemate. He has already expressed the whole range of his experience and there seems to be no alternative to reference back to his own work, the main danger being that his writing will dwindle into self-parody. This has always been a dilemma for the Romantic artist. The demand is for

work which is always new and yet always deeply personal. The achievement of the artist is dependent upon the resources of the man and those resources - even in the man of widest scope - must be limited. When he was a twenty year-old undergraduate, Gerard Manley Hopkins became painfully aware of this truth which had revealed itself with regard to Tennyson and which was later to trouble him so much in his own writing. He had been reading the Enoch Arden volume and found that its beauties, though admirable and beyond the achievement of any other poet, had lost the original freshness Tennyson's admirers had come to expect from him :

I think one had got into the way of thinking, or had not got out of the way of thinking, that Tennyson was always new, touching, beyond other poets, not pressed with human ailments, never using Parnassian. So at least I used to think. Now one sees he uses Parnassian ; he is, one must see it, what we used to call Tennysonian. 29

"Parnassian" is Hopkins's very useful term for that stage in the artist's career when he is no longer exploring his medium but is occupying territory which he has already claimed and cultivated. "Parnassian" can be written only by poets, "but is not in the highest sense poetry. It does not require the mood of mind in which the poetry of inspiration is written (. . .) Great men, poets I mean, have each their own dialect as it were of Parnassian, formed generally as they go on writing, and at last, - that is the point to be marked, - they can see things in this Parnassian way and describe them in this Parnassian tongue, without further effort of inspiration." ³⁰

It is for this reason that Pinter so violently dislikes the term found so convenient by critics, journalists, directors and actors. "Pinteresque"

is useful shorthand for others, but for Pinter it connotes artistic stagnation : "that word Pinteresque (. .) I think it's a great burden for me to carry (. .) Something people don't realize is the great boredom one has with oneself, and just to see those words come down again on paper, I think oh Christ, everything I do seems to be predictable, unsatisfactory, and hopeless." 31

In No Man's Land the characters are hemmed in by a room. In Act One it is evening and the curtains are closed ; in Act Two Hirst demands that the curtains be closed because it is distasteful for him to glance out. The characters seem to be operating within a mind, as if Pinter is surveying his career and musing aloud through the four men. The resemblance with Endgame is pronounced. The master-servant (or father-son) reliance is similar and the terminal feeling expressed through the chess metaphor in Endgame recurs in No Man's Land as the final battle-skirmish in a war. Theoretically, Foster has triumphed over Spooner, who has tried to usurp his position, but we do not see Spooner leave the stage. His rejection has occurred almost unnoticed in oblique talk about changing the subject. At the end he turns into a mouthpiece for Hirst and for Pinter : "You are in no man's land. Which never moves, which never changes, which never grows older, but which remains forever, icy and silent." (p. 95). Our attempt to continue to see Spooner as a personality breaks down. In his final utterance he becomes Pinter's *raisonneur*. However ambiguous Spooner's motives have been and however problematic our grasp of his "character", his identity, mannerisms and desires are more convincingly realised than those of the other three.

At the end of the play Pinter manipulates Spooner in a way foreign to his own early work. In the 1960's he could justifiably describe his approach to character portrayal in these terms : "I merely write and characters create themselves. I don't arbitrarily impose a characterisation upon someone, and say you're going to be like this to prove a point that I'm going to make"³²; "Characters always grow out of all proportion to your original conception of them, and if they don't the play is a bad one."³³ Pinter's art seeks to rely upon this extreme degree of character independence. There is a firm conviction that the expression of a personal point of view will vitiate his attempt to catch the intricate reality of experience. In this conflict Pinter confronts a permanent and insoluble problem for the artist who wants to achieve the clarity and coherence of art without surrendering the complexity and confusion of actuality. For the author of Everyman allegory seemed the appropriate form and he could exploit it with neither self-consciousness nor reservation : he would not have seen the purpose in creating a character who could not be used to prove a point that he as dramatist was determined to make. The consolation and reassurance communicated by the form of Everyman and so admired by twentieth-century playwrights derives from the firmness of conviction that the Everyman dramatist started with. Spooner's personality is violated by Pinter so that he may complete the author's pattern of thought, so that he may prove the point that Pinter was determined to make :

SPOONER

You are in no man's land. Which never moves, which never changes, which never grows older, but which remains forever, icy and silent.

Silence

HIRST I'll drink to that.

He drinks. (p. 95)

In Pinter's play this manipulation is awkward because there is no "truth" to which we can relate the important statement about "no man's land". We may conclude that, because of the emphasis on the statement, the play contains a meaning clear to Pinter alone. And we may then decide that No Man's Land carries reference to the predicament of the modern artist. It must be stressed that this is merely one way of analysing the very complex play that No Man's Land is.

Schiller made the naiv and sentimentalisch distinction in terms of the broad development of human history and Pinter, reviewing the first ten years of his writing career, saw it as being marked by the same distinction : "When I wrote the first three plays in 1957 I wrote them from the point of view of writing them ; the whole world of putting on plays was quite remote - I knew they could never be done in the Reps I was acting in, and the West End and London were somewhere on the other side of the moon. So I wrote these plays completely unselfconsciously. There's no question that over the years it's become more difficult to preserve the kind of freedom that's essential to writing". ³⁴ No Man's Land was written with the foreknowledge that it would be performed by the National Theatre Company and immediately draw the attention of the theatrical world. This degree of public acclaim obviously has something of the danger for Pinter that the laureateship had for Wordsworth and Tennyson :

Given characters who possess a momentum of their own, my job is not to impose on them, not to subject them to a false articulation, by which I mean forcing a character to speak where he could not speak, making him speak in a way he could not speak, making him speak of what he could never speak. The relationship between author and characters should be a highly respectful one, both ways. And if it's possible to talk of gaining a kind of freedom from writing, it doesn't come by leading one's characters into fixed and calculated postures, but by allowing them to carry their own can, by giving them a legitimate elbow room. This can be extremely painful. It's much easier, much less pain, not to let them live. 35

Spoooner's last speech in No Man's Land is the clearest example of Pinter's "Parnassian". His posture is "fixed and calculated" and he has lost the respect of his author who has found it "much easier, much less pain" not to allow him to continue to live. Pinter has emphasised his commitment to the crucial importance of form: "I pay a meticulous attention to the shape of things, from the shape of a sentence to the overall structure of the play. This shaping, to put it mildly, is of the first importance." 36

Pinter's imposition of shape on his plays indicates that, like the other dramatists whose works have been discussed, he sees the artist's task as that of giving form to actuality; the hope seems to be that the symmetry of the artistic form will stand in defiance of what Beckett has called "the mess". But if we compare The Caretaker with No Man's Land the change in the "shaping" is apparent: the first play - written without inhibiting self-consciousness - preserves the freshness of spontaneity, and an authenticating lack of imposed shape; the later play has intellectual pattern forced upon it, and Pinter uses Spoooner with a lack of respect for his independent character. Aston and Mick refuse to act out the murder that Pinter expected of them, but when Spoooner repeats almost word for word Hirst's Act One definition of "no man's land" he is being forced to

make his author's point. The action has approached what Arthur Symons called "the dry, impotent sin of allegory": what is being allegorised is not a universal truth equivalent to medieval Catholicism but merely the author's individual dilemma as an artist.

No Man's Land embraces an uneasy mixture of realistic and formal anti-realistic qualities. Spooner is an outstandingly successful realistic character until he is overtly used as an authorial surrogate. It seems to me that Pinter has written his latest play with the preconceived intention of conforming to an underlying pattern of ideas. My interpretation is offered tentatively and I am not suggesting that it is the only way of understanding the play. Hirst and Spooner seem to represent two conflicting strains in Pinter himself. Through these characters, one a poet and one a man of letters, Pinter discusses both his particular problem as an artist, and the problem for the other modern dramatists under review. Spooner provides a critical appraisal of Hirst. In Spooner's assessment Hirst is in a position of impotence, illustrating the "no man's land" of the artist who tries to reduce the complexity of existence by using his art to "freeze" a pattern that he wishes could be discovered in life. The faces trapped in Hirst's photograph album are "fixed, imprisoned" just as, in Hirst's day, "nobody changed. A man was." Pinter's longing for fixed essence and structural harmony in the world has manifested itself in drama which is excessively shaped. In No Man's Land he has criticised this type of art through Spooner's criticism of Hirst. Pinter appears to have come to the recognition that the desire for "shape" in actuality cannot be compensated for by pattern in art. It is interesting that Spooner is attracted to and repulsed by Hirst's position. The security of the artist

who falls back on old formulae and is ensured of success, thus maintaining an "identity", is attractive to the spare-time poet. But Pinter seems to realise that the gap between complex actuality - where one can never be sure "what night it is, this night or the next night or the other one, the night before last" (p.46) - and the ideal world of system and order is accentuated still further by the artist who loiters in "no man's land. Which never moves, which never changes, which never grows older, but which remains forever, icy and silent." (p.95) and who reproduces in his art, as represented by Hirst's photograph album, the old images and patterns. Pinter has recognised and abhorred this tendency in himself: "In one short television play of mine there were characteristics that implied I was slipping into a formula. It so happened this was the worst thing I've written. The words and ideas had become automatic, redundant. That was the red light for me and I don't feel I shall fall into that pit again. I trust that when I next fail it will be for different reasons. My basic approach to my work, anyway, is strongly opposed to such mechanism."³⁷ No Man's Land is a forceful statement of the unique dilemma of the sentimentalisch artist. That the artist is more reflective, more sensitive, more subtle, and more self-conscious than his contemporaries means that, when the human problem is posed by an excess of these qualities, art can offer no consolation, but only a very powerful expression of what the problem is.

...oo0oo...

Conclusion

The four dramatists under review share a religious disposition in an age of secularism. Each dramatist rejected realism for a symbolism that, in its aesthetic order, seemed to answer the human need to discover an order in actuality. A tendency has been traced in these playwrights to dramatise in allegorical terms personal philosophical views which, in a modern world lacking in common faith, cannot represent the shared views of their audiences.

The formalism of "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir" and Breath is meretricious because it offers no "ambiguity" in the desirable Empsonian sense. In No Man's Land an awkward personal allegory allays interest in the most absorbing facet of the play - the character of Spooner - and the uneasy combination of realistic and anti-realistic elements mars the work.

The order imposed by the form under review might therefore prove consolatory for the playwright, while its tendency towards lack of ambiguity is disturbing for the audience. Yeats's victory is that he is able to combine a paraphrasable personal allegory with non-paraphrasable symbolism. He developed a fully detailed, highly idiosyncratic philosophical system yet the form through which he expresses it offers a suggestive pattern rather than an inflexible schematism. Yeats's system provided him with "metaphors for poetry"¹ and crucial "stylistic arrangements of experience".² He insists that the seemingly "arbitrary, harsh, difficult symbolism"³ has a function analogous to that of a skeleton: "those hard symbolic bones under the skin"⁴ are necessary before his art can satisfactorily depict order.

Nevertheless, the symbols offered by Yeats to his audience - for example in The Cat and the Moon - can be interpreted by individuals in different ways.

Yeats's conclusion that "Man can embody truth but he cannot know it"⁵ must be the conclusion to this thesis : when "drama within the limitations of art" is successful in the modern age it suggests, rather than states, a perception of the pattern of actuality. The allegorical mode of Everyman is no longer acceptable in a secular age.

1 W.B.Yeats, A Vision, Macmillan, 1962, p.8.

2 Ibid., p.25

3 Ibid., p.23

4 Ibid., p.24

5 W.B.Yeats, To Lady Elizabeth Pelham, 4 January 1939
The Letters of W.B.Yeats, ed.Allan Wade, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954, p.922.

NOTES

Chapter One : "Everyman"

- 1 See Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, Heinemann, 1954, pp. 161-168 and Robert Potter, The English Morality Play, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 1-5 and pp. 222-225.
- 2 Quoted in Robert Speaight (op. cit.) p. 166. Speaight cites Poel's interview with Harold Begbie for The Daily Chronicle, 3 September 1913.
- 3 See A.C. Cawley (Ed.), "Everyman", Manchester, The University Press, 1961, pp.xviii-xix.
- 4 Lawrence V. Ryan, "Doctrine and Dramatic Structure in Everyman", Speculum 32, 1957, pp.722-735.
- 5 Thomas F. Van Laan, "Everyman : A Structural Analysis", PMLA, 1963, pp.465-475.
- 6 Quoted in Montrose J. Moses (Ed.), "Everyman", New York : Mitchell Kennerley, 1908, p.138.
- 7 For an excellent account of the medieval revival see Alice Chandler, A Dream of Order, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.
- 8 Robert Potter (op. cit) , pp.225-228, analyses Shaw's reaction to Everyman and he discusses Eliot's reaction on pp.237-241.
- 9 Back to Methuselah , The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw : Collected Plays with their Prefaces, Volume 5, Ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1972, pp.332-333.
- 10 Ibid., p.335.
- 11 Ibid., p.337.
- 12 Ibid., p.336.
- 13 Ibid., p.338.
- 14 Ibid., p.339.
- 15 Man and Superman, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw : Collected Plays with their Prefaces, Volume 2, Ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1971, p.519.
- 16 Ibid., p.519.
- 17 Ibid., p.685.

- 18 Ibid., p. 520.
- 19 Ibid., p. 521.
- 20 Ibid., p. 523.
- 21 T.S. Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", On Poetry and Poets, Faber and Faber, 1957, p. 80.
- 22 Ibid., p. 82.
- 23 Ibid., p. 86.
- 24 Ibid., p. 86.
- 25 Ibid., pp. 86-87.
- 26 Ibid., p. 87.
- 27 T.S. Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", Selected Essays, Faber and Faber, 1951, p. 111.
- 28 Ibid., p. 114.
- 29 Ibid., pp. 116-117.
- 30 Ibid., p. 113.
- 31 Ibid., p. 111.
- 32 Ibid., p. 116.
- 33 Man and Superman (op. cit.) p. 520.
- 34 Dante Alighieri, Epistle to Can Grande (Epistola xi), quoted in Barrett H. Clark, European Theories of the Drama, revised by Henry Popkin, New York : Crown Publishers, 1965, p. 38.
- 35 See Robert Potter (op. cit.), pp. 10-16 on the morality play as ritual drama.
- 36 A.C. Cawley (op. cit.), p. xx. Line numbers are cited in the chapter, referring to this edition of Everyman.
- 37 For details of the history of the idea of the Great Chain of Being see Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being, Harvard, The University Press, 1936, reprinted in the "Harper Torchbooks" series, New York : Harper and Brothers, 1960.
- 38 Quoted by Carol H. Smith, T.S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 185. Carol H. Smith cites John Beaufort, "The Confidential Clerk on Broadway", Christian Science Monitor, February 20, 1954, p. 16.

- 39 Quoted by Carol H. Smith (op. cit.), p.79. She cites T.S. Eliot, Essays Ancient and Modern, Faber and Faber, 1936, p.119.
- 40 T.S. Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", Selected Essays (op. cit.), p.132.
- 41 Man and Superman (op. cit.), p.520.
- 42 J. C.F. von Schiller, "Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung", Schillers Werke : in zwei Bänden (Zweiter Band), Munich, "Knaur Klassiker", Droemersch Verlaganstalt, 1954, pp.642-710, is the German text to which I shall refer in this section ; the English translation to which I shall refer is "On Simple and Sentimental Poetry", Schiller's Works volume 6, George Bell, 1910, pp.262-332.
- 43 J. C.F. von Schiller, "Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung", Schillers Werke (op. cit.), p.643. Translation : J. C.F. von Schiller, Works "On Simple and Sentimental Poetry", (op. cit.) p.264 :
"These objects which captivate us are what we were, what we must be again some day. We were nature as they are ; and culture, following the way of reason and of liberty, must bring us back to nature."
- 44 P. 656 of Schillers Werke ; p.280 of Schiller's Works : "The feeling we experience for nature resembles that of a sick man for health."
- 45 P. 656 of Schillers Werke ; p.281 of Schiller's Works : "All poets - I mean those who are really so - will belong, according to the time when they flourish, according to the accidental circumstances that have influenced their education generally, and the different dispositions of mind through which they pass, will belong, I say, to the order of the sentimental poetry or to simple poetry."
- 46 P. 660 of Schillers Werke ; p.285 of Schiller's Works : "The harmony that existed as a fact in the former state, the harmony of feeling and thought, only exists now in an ideal state. It is no longer in him, but out of him ; it is a conception of thought which he must begin by realising in himself ; it is no longer a fact, a reality of his life."

Chapter Two : Stephane Mallarme, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Arthur Symons

- 1 Arthur Symons, "Stéphane Mallarmé", The Symbolist Movement in Literature, Second Edition (revised), Constable, 1908, p.117.
- 2 Quoted in Guy Michaud, Mallarmé : l'Homme et l'Oeuvre, Paris : Hatier - Boivin, 1953, p.145. For an English translation of this volume see Guy Michaud, Mallarmé, translated by M. Collins and B. Humez, Peter Owen, 1966. On p.133 Mallarmé's statement is translated : "When you come right down to it, the world is made to culminate in a beautiful book." The subject is discussed by Mallarmé in "Le Livre, Instrument Spirituel", Oeuvres complètes, ed. by Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry, Paris : "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade", la Librairie Gallimard, 1956, pp.378-382.

- 3 Quoted in Guy Michaud, Mallarmé : l'Homme et l'Œuvre (op. cit.), p. 145. Translation by M. Collins and B. Humez (op. cit.), p. 133 : "To name an object is to suppress three-quarters of the enjoyment of a poem, which is made up of gradual guessing : the dream is to suggest it. It is the perfect use of that mystery that constitutes the symbol : to evoke an object little by little in order to show a frame of mind, or, conversely, to choose an object and cause a state of mind to emerge from it, through a series of decipherings."
- 4 For discussions of the contemporary literature of the occult see Guy Michaud, Mallarmé : l'Homme et l'Œuvre (op. cit.), p. 140 and Wallace Fowlie, Mallarmé, Denis Dobson, 1953, p. 262.
- 5 Arthur Symons, "The Later Huysmans", The Symbolist Movement in Literature (op. cit.), p. 139.
- 6 J. -K. Huysmans, À Rebours, Paris : Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1921, p. 265. (This edition is cited because of its inclusion of a preface by Huysmans.) Translation : Robert Baldick, Against Nature, Penguin Classics, 1959, p. 199 : "The truth of the matter was that the decadence of French literature, a literature attacked by organic diseases, weakened by intellectual senility, exhausted by syntactical excesses, sensitive only to the curious whims that excite the sick, and yet eager to express itself completely in its last hours, determined to make up for all the pleasures it had missed, afflicted on its death-bed with a desire to leave behind the subtlest memories of suffering, had been embodied in Mallarmé in the most consummate and exquisite fashion."
- 7 Mallarmé, "Hamlet", in "Crayonné au Théâtre", Oeuvres complètes (op. cit.), p. 299. The entire piece on Hamlet is relevant here : pp. 299-302. In translation the phrase quoted is : "An intimate and occult tragedy".
- 8 Igitur is in the Oeuvres complètes, pp. 423-451. See Wallace Fowlie (op. cit.), pp. 105-121, for a full analysis of Igitur.
- 9 For Mallarmé's expression of the importance of dance see especially "Ballets", Oeuvres complètes (op. cit.), pp. 303-307 and "Les Fonds dans le Ballet", Oeuvres complètes, pp. 307-309.
- 10 The lecture, "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam", is in the Oeuvres complètes, pp. 481-510.
- 11 Oeuvres complètes, p. 481. In translation : "A man familiar with dreaming comes here to talk about another, who is dead."
- 12 Ibid., p. 482. In translation : "truly and in the ordinary sense, did he live?"
- 13 Ibid., p. 496. In translation : "the man who only existed in his dreams".
- 14 Ibid., p. 504.

- 15 Quoted in A.W.Raitt, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et le Mouvement symboliste, Paris : Librairie José Corti, 1965, p.386. Raitt cites Le Goéland, August 1938. A translation is made by W.D.Halls in Maurice Maeterlinck : A Study of his Life and Thought, O.U.P., 1960, p.144 : "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam is the greatest admiration, the finest memory and the greatest shock in my life. My life has two mountain slopes, before and after Villiers. On the one side, shadow, on the other, light. On coming into contact with Villiers I understood what the apostles must have felt." Halls cites "Deux Inédits", Lettres françaises, 12 May 1949, pp.1-2. Neither Le Goéland nor Lettres françaises has proved available in London libraries : thus these secondary sources are cited.
- 16 W.B.Yeats, preface to Axel, translated by H.P.R.Finberg, Jarrolds, 1925, p.8.
- 17 Quoted in Jacques-Henry Bornecque, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam : Créateur et Visionnaire, Paris : A.G.Nizet, 1974, p.122. In translation : "a new dramatic literature".
- 18 Ibid., p.122. In translation : "the plot, the characters and the theatrical action are only of secondary interest".
- 19 Ibid., p.122. In translation : "It is enough to tell you that the play Axel has by no means been written for the stage and that the mere idea of its production seems almost unacceptable to the author himself."
- 20 Ibid., p.123. In translation : "the great anxiety of mankind before the enigma of life". (Here the word "anxiété" would seem to be the equivalent of Angst.) The second phrase in translation is : "this constant, this terrible and distant care".
- 21 Ibid., p.123. In translation : "in a dramatic action, a conception of the transcendental order".
- 22 However, for an argument that insists on Axel's dramatic power see Jacques-Henry Bornecque (op.cit.), p.124. For an insistence on the undramatic nature of the play see H.P.R.Finberg's introduction to his translation of Axel (op.cit.), p.27.
- 23 W.B.Yeats, preface to Axel translated by H.P.R.Finberg (op.cit.), p.7.
- 24 See W.B.Yeats, "The Tragic Generation", Autobiographies, Macmillan, 1961, p.320.
- 25 Ibid., p.305.
- 26 Ed. Ursula Bridge, W.B.Yeats and T. Sturge Moore : Their Correspondence 1901-1937, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953, p.132.
- 27 W.B.Yeats, preface to Axel translated by H.P.R.Finberg (op.cit.) p.8.

- 28 H. P. R. Finberg, introduction to Axel (op. cit.), p.16 .
- 29 "The Religious World", "The Tragic World", "An Occult World" and "The World of Passion" in Finberg's translation.
- 30 See Jacques-Henri Bornecque (op. cit.), p.127.
- 31 Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Axël, ed. by Pierre Mariel, Paris : La Colombe, Editions du Vieux Colombier, 1960, p.68.
- 32 Ibid., p.140.
- 33 Ibid., p.190. Translation by H.P.R.Finberg (op. cit.), p.213 :
 "She too is coming, who renounced the ideal of religion for this hidden gold, even as you will presently renounce your own sublime finalities for the same wretched secret. Here, then, face to face are the last pair of the two races chosen by me centuries ago in order that by simple, virginal humanity the twofold illusion of love and gold may be defeated, and that there may be founded, in a point of Generation, the virtue of a new Sign."
- 34 Axël, p.208.
- 35 Axël, p.210. Translation by Finberg (op. cit.), p.238. : "The Veil and the Mantle have both made renunciation : now they meet. The great work nears fulfilment."
- 36 Axël, pp.248-249. Translation by Finberg (op. cit.),pp.283-284 :
 "Our existence is full, and its cup flows over. What hour-glass will ever reckon the moments of this night? The future? - Believe me, Sara, we have exhausted it already. What will realities look like, tomorrow, when we compare them with the vision we have just lived through? (...) The quality of our hope forbids us life on earth, henceforth. What is there left for us to ask of this unhappy planet, where our sadness lingers on, save only pale reflections of such moments as these? You talk of Earth! What has it ever realized, this drop of frozen mud, whose Time is but a lie set in the face of heaven? It is this Earth, I tell you, which has become illusion! Understand me, Sara, we have destroyed in our strange hearts the love of life, and in reality are merely souls now! After this, to accept life would be mere sacrilege against ourselves. Live? Our servants will do that for us! "
- 37 The fragments published by Villiers in journals and found in his notes are reproduced in Axël (Mariel ed.) on pp.265-271.
- 38 See however W. M. Blows's 1956 Ph.D. Thesis for the University of London : "An Appraisal of Critical Assessments of the Outlook of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam in the light of a Detailed Examination of the Symbolism and Thought of the Ève future". This intricate thesis stresses Villiers' Catholicism and examines Axël as a satire on the demise of modern Western civilisation.

- 39 W.B.Yeats, review of Axel, The Bookman, April 1894, p.15.
(Reprinted in Uncollected Prose by W.B.Yeats Volume One, ed.
John P.Frayne, Macmillan, 1970 : "A Symbolical Drama in Paris",
pp.320-325. The statement quoted is on p.324.)
- 40 H.P.R.Finberg, introduction to Axel (op. cit.), p.24.
- 41 Ibid., pp.17-18.
- 42 See Jacques-Henri Bornecque (op. cit.), pp.138-139.
- 43 Axël, p.183. Translation : Finberg, p.206 : "In your narrow
self-sufficiency you were nothing, while life lasted, but a dross
of animal instincts that resisted all divine selection! No call ever
reached you from beyond the world. You have made nothing of
yourself. And into the abyss of death you sink like a stone into the
void, without attraction, without aim."
- 44 Axël, p.249. Translation : Finberg, p.283 : "What will realities
look like, tomorrow, when we compare them with the vision we have
just lived through?"
- 45 Axël, p.249 and p.250. Translation : Finberg p.284 and p.285 :
"These words are beyond mortal thought" ; "It is almost godlike!"
- 46 Axël, p.251. H.P.R.Finberg omits "superhuman" from his
translation, p.287 : "No, no, it is impossible, inhuman : I cannot
conceive it!" A literal translation is "It is inhuman rather than
superhuman!"
- 47 Axël, p.253. Translation : Finberg, p.289 : "Can you not hear
the laughter of the human race if ever it comes to learn the shadowy
story, the superhuman madness of our death?"
- 48 Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle, (first published by Charles Scribner's
Sons, 1931), Fontana Library, 1961, p.135.
- 49 Siegfried Wenzel, The Sin of Sloth : "Acedia" in Medieval Thought
and Literature, (Chapel Hill : North Carolina) U. of North Carolina P.,
1967.
- 50 Ibid., pp.4-5.
- 51 T.S.Eliot, "Baudelaire", Selected Essays (op. cit.), p.423.
- 52 Arthur Symons, "Villiers de l'Isle-Adam", The Symbolist Movement
in Literature (op. cit.), p.57.
- 53 Quoted in Wallace Fowlie, Mallarmé (op. cit.), p.282.
In translation : "That which has been baptised Symbolisme, is
summed up very simply as the common intention of several groups
of poets (in other respects hostile among themselves) to take back
from Music what was owing to them."

- 54 Arthur Symons, Plays, Acting and Music, Constable (second edition) 1909, p. vii.
- 55 "Preface", Ibid., p. ix and "A Paradox on Art", p. 322, and "To Rhoda", Studies in Seven Arts, Martin Secker, 1924 (1st. published 1906), p. ii.
- 56 "A Theory of the Stage", Plays, Acting and Music (op. cit.), p. 201.
- 57 Ibid., p. 206 ; pp. 209-210.
- 58 "Everyman", "Annotations by the Way", Plays, Acting and Music (op. cit.), pp. 81-83.
- 59 "Cathedrals", Studies in Seven Arts (op. cit.), p. 111.
- 60 "The Later Huysmans", The Symbolist Movement in Literature (op. cit.), pp. 145-146.
- 61 "On Writing about Music", Plays, Acting and Music (op. cit.), pp. 230-231.
- 62 Walter Pater, "The School of Giorgione" (1877) in The Renaissance (first published by Macmillan in 1873 and including the essay on Giorgione in the third edition of 1888). In The Fontana library, Collins, 1961, p. 129.
- 63 In Studies in Seven Arts (op. cit.), p. i, Symons uses the first two sentences of "The School of Giorgione" as a motto for his book.
- 64 "Beethoven", Studies in Seven Arts (op. cit.) p. 130. The essay is on pp. 130-149.
- 65 Ibid., p. 135.
- 66 Ibid., p. 136.
- 67 Ibid., p. 138.
- 68 Ibid., p. 145.
- 69 Ibid., p. 144.
- 70 "The World as Ballet", Studies in Seven Arts (op. cit.), pp. 244-246. (See Frank Kermode's Romantic Image, Routledge and Kegan Paul, revised ed. 1961, pp. 49-91 for a discussion of the importance of the image of the dancer in literature of this period. See also the chapter on Arthur Symons, pp. 107-118.)
- 71 Ibid., p. 244.
- 72 Ibid., p. 246.

- 73 "Conclusion", The Symbolist Movement in Literature (op. cit.) pp. 174-175.
- 74 W. B. Yeats, "Reveries over Childhood and Youth", Autobiographies (op. cit.), p. 82.
- 75 "Conclusion", The Symbolist Movement in Literature (op. cit.), p. 171.
- 76 "Introduction", The Symbolist Movement in Literature (op. cit.), p. 4.
- 77 Ibid., pp. 7-9.
- 78 "Maeterlinck as a Mystic", The Symbolist Movement in Literature (op. cit.), p. 158.

Chapter Three : Maurice Maeterlinck

- 1 Maeterlinck, Le Sablier, (Paris) Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1936, pp. 7-8. Translation : B. Miall, The Hour Glass, Allen and Unwin, 1936, p. 9 : "Let him who believes that he knows the truth tell me what it is ; I should accept it with gratitude if it seemed acceptable. I, hitherto, have not discovered it ; which is why I am still looking for it, on my right hand and my left, before me and behind, in the light and in the shadows . . . I do not lament because a fresh effort will destroy what was built with such difficulty, and will sweep its ruins away into the unknown. That is all that it is possible for a man of good faith to do ; and I shall do no otherwise until others have convinced me that they are right. "
- 2 Maeterlinck (transl.), L'Ornement des Noces Spirituelles, de Ruysbroeck l'Admirable, (Brussels) Paul Lacomblez, Nouvelle édition, 1911, p. 16. Translation : Jane T. Stoddart, Ruysbroeck and the Mystics, Hodder and Stoughton, 1894, p. 27 : "This whole work, moreover, is like a magnifying glass turned upon darkness and silence ; and sometimes we do not immediately discern the outline of the ideas which are still steeped therein. "
- 3 T. S. Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", Selected Essays (op. cit.), p. 132.
- 4 Ibid., p. 135.
- 5 Ibid., p. 139.
- 6 Maeterlinck, Avant le Grand Silence, (Paris) Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1934, p. 32. Translation : Bernard Miall, Before the Great Silence, G. Allen and Unwin, 1935, pp. 29-30 : "revealing himself as a great melancholic, a great sceptic, a great despairer ; in a word, the man who has most truly felt and most profoundly understood the nature of human life : 'A tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing,' which, pending fresh revelations or discoveries in respect of humanity and the universe, is without a doubt the last word of our human truth. "

- 7 Maeterlinck, Macbeth, (Paris) Libraire Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1910, p.XIV. In translation : "A drama like Macbeth where (correctly speaking) the forces of the intelligence only carpet the background shows us that there are beauties more fetching and less perishable than those of thought ; or rather that thought need only be a sort of foreground, so natural that it seems indispensable, against which are outlined things infinitely more mysterious."
- 8 Octave Mirbeau, le Figaro, 24 August 1890. The review is reproduced in Maeterlinck, Bulles Bleues, Éditions du Rocher (Monaco), 1948, pp.207-208. Translation : W.D.Halls, Maurice Maeterlinck (op. cit.), 1960, p.23 : "M. Maurice Maeterlinck has given us the work of this age most full of genius, and the most extraordinary and most simple as well, comparable and - shall I dare say it? - superior in beauty to what is most beautiful in Shakespeare."
- 9 Maeterlinck, Théâtre, vol.1, (Paris) Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1918, p.VII. "A certain terrified and sombre harmony".
- 10 La Princesse Maleine, *ibid.*, p.37.
Gerard Harry's translation in "Princess Maleine" and "The Intruder", introduced by Hall Caine, Heinemann, 1892, is not literal :
"SECOND PAUPER : What are you doing here?
NURSE : We have taken the wrong road. "
A literal translation is :
"SECOND PAUPER : What are you doing here?
NURSE : We are lost. "
- 11 Théâtre, vol.1 (op. cit.), p.x. In translation: "The infinite, mysterious, hypocritically active presence of death fills every chink of the poem... It is a death indifferent and inexorable, blind, groping along in much the same way as chance, carrying off preferably the most young and the least unhappy, simply because they remain less placid than the more miserable, and because their attention is attracted by every unexpected movement in the night."
- 12 Théâtre, vol.1 (op. cit.), p.XI. In translation : "The ultimate and radical truth of our being".
- 13 *Ibid.*, p.XI. In translation : "this hostile nothingness".
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp.XII-XIII. This section is translated by Barrett H. Clark in European Theories of the Drama (op. cit.), pp.394-395 : "For centuries we have sung of the vanity of life and the irresistible power of emptiness and death, and summoned up sorrows that become more and more monotonous the nearer they approach to the ultimate truth. But now let us try to vary the appearance of the unknown which surrounds us and discover a new reason for living and persevering ; we shall at least be able to alternate our sorrows by mixing with them our reviving or falling hopes ... The supreme truth of death, nothingness,

and the uselessness of our existence - the point at which we arrive at the end of our inquiry - is, after all, only the limit of our human consciousness ... Before we are forced to admit this truth irrevocably, we must do our best for a long time to dissipate this ignorance and do what we can to find the light."

- 15 Théâtre vol. 1 (op. cit.), p. XIX. In translation : "the anguish of the unintelligible".
- 16 Maeterlinck, Bulles Bleues (op. cit.), p. 196. In translation : "One evening I met Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, the providential man who, at a moment foreseen by I know not what goodwill of chance, was obliged to guide and fix my destiny".
- 17 Ibid., p. 201. In translation : "In short, Princess Maleine, Mélisande, Astolaine, Sélysette and the phantoms who followed were waiting for the atmosphere which Villiers had created in me for their birth and their breath."
- 18 For a detailed account of Mallarmé's affinity with Maeterlinck on questions of dramatic theory and practice, see Haskell M. Block, Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama, Wayne State U.P., 1963.
- 19 The letter is reproduced in Remy de Gourmont, La Belgique Littéraire, (Paris) Éditions Georges Crès et Cie., second edition, 1915, pp. 99-102. In translation : "There is here a power of symbolisation which one does not find again in my little play".
- 20 See Henri Davignon, Charles Van Lerberghe et ses amis, Brussels : J. Ducolot, 1952, p. 38.
- 21 Ibid., p. 118. In translation : "a shiver and a new beauty". See also p. 167 : "Cet homme est étonnant en tout ce qu'il fait" : "This man is astonishing in everything that he does".
- 22 Cited by Maurice Lecat, Le Maeterlinckisme, (Brussels) Anc^{de} Libraire Castaigne, 1939, Volume One, p. 38. In translation : "The success of the matinée had been L'Intruse... The Belgian author is not the Shakespeare announced, but he obviously knows how to produce an effect of terror : he has made the spectators pass through every agony of fear."
- 23 Ibid. In translation : "L'Intruse was the great success. Symbolism, yes, but theatre and theatre of genius".
- 24 Ibid., In translation : "It was the revelation of the day for us."
- 25 Ibid. In translation : "Extraordinarily moving impression and theatrical power... The work is one of the most arresting that exist... Forceful and sensitive art ... It is a new form, deeply moving, of the human tragedy in drama."

- 26 Cited in Davignon (op. cit.), pp.38-39. In translation : "That conception of death is besides greater in our race and more startling at the same time, it seems to me."
- 27 Théâtre, vol.1 (op. cit.), p.226. Translation in "Princess Maleine" and "The Intruder" (op. cit.); translation of L'Intruse by William Wilson : p.208 : "One never knows what may happen."
- 28 Théâtre, vol.1, p.229. In translation : The Intruder (op. cit.),p.211 : "I think he will be deaf - dumb too, perhaps - the usual result of a marriage between cousins -".
- 29 Théâtre, vol.1, p.229. This "silence of reprobation" is not included by William Wilson in his translation.
- 30 Ibid., p.237. Translation : "The Intruder (op. cit.), p.218 : "There is a silence of the grave."
- 31 Le Trésor des humbles, (Paris) Mercure de France, 1910 ; "Le Silence", pp.9-25. The distinction is made on p.13. For translation see Alfred Sutro, The Treasure of the Humble, George Allen, 1911, pp.1-21. The distinction is made on p.7.
- 32 Théâtre vol.1 (op. cit.), p.243. In translation : The Intruder (op. cit.), p.223 : THE FATHER He is like all blind people.
THE UNCLE They think too much.
- 33 "Le Réveil de l'Âme", Le Trésor des humbles (op. cit.), pp.29-43. "The Awakening of the Soul", The Treasure of the Humble (op. cit.), pp.25-42.
- 34 Théâtre vol.1 (op. cit.), p.244. The Intruder (op. cit.), p.224 :
THE UNCLE Not to know where one is, not to know where one has come from, not to know whither one is going, not to be able to distinguish midday from midnight, or summer from winter - and always darkness, darkness! I would rather not live.
- 35 Théâtre vol.1 (op. cit.), p.258. In translation : The Intruder (op. cit.), p.237 : "I am here, all alone, in darkness without end! I do not know who seats himself beside me! I do not know what is happening a yard from me!"
- 36 Théâtre vol.1. (op. cit.), p.261. In translation : The Intruder (op. cit.), p.240 : "But you cannot see - all of you!"
- 37 Théâtre vol.1 (op. cit.), p.262. William Wilson does not include this line in his translation. An English version is : "I am longing to penetrate this darkness."
- 38 Ibid., p.267. The Intruder (op. cit.), p.245 : "There are moments when I am less blind than you, you know!"

- 39 Maeterlinck, Le Grand Secret, (Paris) Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1921, p.319. Translation: B. Miall, The Great Secret, Methuen, 1922, pp.267-8. "The Great Secret, the only secret, is that all things are secret. Let us at least learn, in the school of our mysterious ancestors, to make allowance, as they did, for the unknowable and to search only for what is there: that is, the certainty that all things are God, that all things exist in Him and should end in happiness, and that the only divinity which we can hope to understand is to be found in the depths of our own souls."
- 40 Although Maeterlinck's dialogue is in prose the repetitions and images have a pronounced poetic quality. In Dramatis Personae Arthur Symons points out that the two later plays, Ariane et Barbe-Bleue and Spur Béatrice are written in verse. He adds that "Maeterlinck once admitted that La Princesse Maleine was meant to be a kind of verse libre (sic), and [.] he had originally intended to print it as verse."
See A. Symons, "Maurice Maeterlinck", Dramatis Personae, Faber and Gwyer, 1925, pp.32-35.
It is interesting to note Symons's disapproval: "The mere printing of verse as prose, which Maeterlinck has favored (sic), seems to us a travesty unworthy of a writer of beautiful prose or of beautiful verse." (pp.34-35) This is surely too severe. Maeterlinck is writing neither poetry nor prose fiction but drama to be performed,
his dialogue is successfully poetic without seeming to be poetry.
- 41 Maeterlinck, Le Réveil de l'Arme, Le Trésor des humbles (op. cit.), pp.32-33. (1st. edition 1896).
- 42 Ibid., p.40.
- 43 Maeterlinck, L'Etoile, Le Trésor des humbles (op. cit.), p.128. Translation: A. Sautre, The Star, The Treasure of the Humble, (op. cit.), pp.128-129. (1st. edition 1897): "It is no longer the effects of disaster that arrest our attention; it is disaster itself, and we are eager to know its essence and its laws. It was the nature of disaster with which the earliest tragic writers were, all unconsciously, preoccupied, and this it was that, though they knew it not, threw a solemn shadow round the hard and violent gestures of external death; and it is this, too, that has become the rallying-point of the most recent dramas, the centre of light with strange flames gleaming, about which revolve the souls of women and of men. And a step has been taken towards the mystery so that life's terrors may be looked in the face."
- 44 Maeterlinck, Le Tragique Quotidien, Le Trésor des humbles (op. cit.) p.163. Translation: "The Tragical in Daily Life", A. Sautre (op. cit.), p.99: "Is it beyond the mark to say that the true tragic element, normal, deep-rooted, and universal, that the true tragic element of life only begins at the moment when so-called adventures, sorrows, and dangers have disappeared?"

- 45 Le Trésor des humbles, p.165. Translation : Sutro (op. cit.), pp.101-102 : "The true artist (...) will place on his canvas a house lost in the heart of the country, an open door at the end of a passage, a face or hands at rest, and by these simple images will he add to our consciousness of life, which is a possession that it is no longer possible to lose."
- 46 Le Trésor des humbles, pp.168-169. Translation : Sutro, pp.105-106 : "I admire Othello, but he does not appear to me to live the august daily life of a Hamlet, who has the time to live, inasmuch as he does not act. Othello is admirably jealous. But is it not perhaps an ancient error to imagine that it is at the moments when this passion, or others of equal violence, possesses us, that we live our truest lives? I have grown to believe that an old man, seated in his arm-chair, waiting patiently, with his lamp beside him ; giving unconscious ear to all the eternal laws that reign about his house, interpreting, without comprehending, the silence of doors and windows and the quivering voice of the light, submitting with bent head to the presence of his soul and his destiny - an old man, who conceives not that all the powers of this world, like so many heedful servants, are mingling and keeping vigil in his room, who suspects not that the very sun itself is supporting in space the little table against which he leans, or that every star in heaven and every fibre of the soul are directly concerned in the movement of an eyelid that closes, or a thought that springs to birth - I have grown to believe that he, motionless as he is, does yet live in reality a deeper, more human and more universal life than the lover who strangles his mistress, the captain who conquers in battle, or 'the husband who avenges his honour'."
- 47 Le Trésor des humbles, p.169. Translation : Sutro, p.106 : 'a static theatre'.
- 48 Le Trésor des humbles, p.180. Translation : Sutro, p.119 : "there are in man many regions more fertile, more profound and more interesting than those of his reason or his intelligence..."
- 49 W.D.Halls in Maurice Maeterlinck (op. cit.), p.25, notes that Maeterlinck admired Browning's work.
- 50 See Robert Browning, Paracelsus, Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1835, pp.vii-viii. See also Arthur Symons, An Introduction to the Study of Browning, (revised ed.) Dent, 1906, pp.4-9.
- 51 Théâtre, vol.1 (op. cit.), p.302. Translation : Laurence Alma Tadema, "Pelleas and Melisanda" and "The Sightless", Walter Scott, 1895, pp.192-193. :
 (A very distant clock strikes twelve very slowly.)
 THE OLDEST BLIND WOMAN Oh! how far we are from the asylum!
 THE OLDEST BLIND MAN It is midnight!
 SECOND BLIND MAN It is midday! - Does any one know?
 - Speak!

- 52 Théâtre, vol.1 (op.cit.), p.284. Translation : Tadema, p.172 :
"There is something between us..."
- 53 Théâtre, vol.1 (op.cit.), p.284. Translation : Tadema, p.172 :
"It is better to stay where one is!"
- 54 Théâtre, vol.1 (op.cit.), p.285. Translation : Tadema, p.174 :
SECOND BLIND MAN I think I am next you.
(They grope about them with their hands.)
THIRD BLIND MAN We cannot touch each other.
FIRST BLIND MAN And yet we are not far apart.
- 55 Théâtre, vol.1 (op.cit.), p.298. Translation : Tadema, pp.188-189 :
"I have tried to stand up ; there are thorns, nothing but thorns about me ; I dare not spread my hands out any more."
- 56 Théâtre, vol.1 (op.cit.), pp.311-312. Translation : Tadema pp.202-203 :
"We have never seen each other. We question each other and we answer each other ; we live together, we are always together, but we know not what we are! (...) We have never seen the house in which we live (...) For years and years we have lived together and we have never beheld each other! One would say we were always alone!"
- 57 Théâtre, vol.1 (op.cit.), p.342. Translation : Tadema, p.238 :
"Have pity on us!"
- 58 J.W. Mackail, Introduction to A.Sutro's translation of Aglaïne et Sélysette, Grant Richards, 1897, p.x.
- 59 Théâtre, vol.1 (op.cit.), p.308. Translation : Tadema (op.cit.), p.198 :
"I could only explain it to you by signs, and we cannot see..."
- 60 F.Sarcey, in Le Temps, 22 May 1893, cited by W.D.Halls, Maurice Maeterlinck (op.cit.), p.37.
- 61 Stéphane Mallarmé, "Planches et Feuilletés" in Crayonné au Théâtre, Cœuvres complètes (op.cit.), p.330. In translation : "It seems that a superior variation on the admirable old melodrama is played. Almost silently and abstractly to the point that in this art, where everything becomes music in the true sense, the part of an instrument similarly pensive, the violin, would be harmful because of its uselessness."
- 62 H.M.Block, Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama (op.cit.), p.112.
- 63 Maeterlinck, Théâtre, vol.2, (Paris) Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1918, p.135. Translation : L.A.Tadema (op.cit.), p.149 : "She was born for no reason...to die ; and now she is dying for no reason..."
- 64 Théâtre, vol.2, p.30. Translation : L.A.Tadema (op.cit.) pp.39-40 :
FELLEAS It is an old deserted spring. It was once, they say, a miraculous spring, - it opened the eyes of the blind, - it is still called 'blindman's well'.

MELISANDA Does it open the eyes of the blind no more?
 PELLEAS Now that the king himself is nearly blind,
 no one comes to it..."

- 65 Yeats praises William Morris's use of the motif in Essays and Introductions, Macmillan, 1961, p.56.
- 66 Théâtre, vol.2 (op.cit.), p.84. Translation: Tadema (op.cit.) p.93: "Ah! Misery!... I am here like a blind man that seeks treasure in the ocean's depths!... I am like a new-born infant lost in the forest".
- 67 Arthur Symons, "Annotations by the Way", Plays, Acting, and Music, (op.cit.), pp.77-78.
- 68 Arthur Symons, "Some Problem Plays", *ibid.*, p.130.
- 69 W.D.Halls, Maurice Maeterlinck (op.cit.), p.35.
- 70 John A. Henderson, The First Avant-Garde (1887-1894), Harrap, 1971, p.126.
- 71 Eugène Ionesco, Notes et contre-notes, (Paris) Éditions Gallimard, 1962, p.8. Translation by Donald Watson, Notes and Counter-Notes, John Calder, 1964, p.18.
- 72 Arthur Symons, "An Apology For Puppets", Plays, Acting, and Music (op.cit.), pp.3-8.
- 73 Arthur Symons "Maeterlinck as a Mystic", The Symbolist Movement In Literature,(op.cit.), pp.154-155.
- 74 M. Lecat, Le Maeterlinckisme, vol.1, (op.cit.), p.42.
- 75 Théâtre, vol.2 (op.cit.), p.162. Translation: In "Alladine and Palomides", "Interior" and "The Death of Tintagiles"; Three Little Dramas For Marionettes, Duckworth, 1899. A.Sutro, Alladine and Palomides, p.20: "It is so vast and I am so little; I am lost in it... And all those windows that look on to the sea... You cannot count them... And the corridors that wind, and wind, for no reason; and others that do not turn, but that lose themselves in the walls... And the rooms I dare not go into -"
- 76 Théâtre, vol.2 (op.cit.), p.233. Translation: William Archer, Interior (in volume above), p.65: "When one of them rises, walks, or makes a gesture, the movements appear grave, slow, apart, and as though spiritualised by the distance, the light, and the transparent film of the window-panes."
- 77 Cited in M. Lecat, Le Maeterlinckisme, vol.1 (op.cit.), p.44. In translation: "The work has produced a considerable emotion, the success has been the most sincere and the most truly spontaneous in the world."

"Intérieur ... has turned out to be almost as gripping in performance as on the page and that is not to say little."

- 78 Théâtre, vol.2 (op. cit.), p.241. Translation : W.Archer (op. cit.), pp.70-71. "She was perhaps one of those who shrink from speech, and everyone bears in his breast more than one reason for ceasing to live. You cannot see into the soul as you see into that room."
- 79 Théâtre, vol.2 (op. cit.), p.247. Translation : W.Archer (op. cit.) p.74. "Look, my child, look : you will see what life is."
- 80 Théâtre, vol.2 (op. cit.), p.247. Translation : W.Archer (op. cit.) p.75. "Oh! how peaceful they seem! I feel as though I were seeing them in a dream."
- 81 Théâtre, vol.2 (op. cit.), p.254. Translation : W.Archer (op. cit.) p.79. "We have pity on them, my child, but no one has pity on us."
- 82 Harold Pinter, August 7, 1960 in interview with Hallam Tennyson, B.B.C. General Overseas Service, cited in Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd, first published by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962; in revised Penguin ed., 1968, pp.265-6.
- 83 Théâtre, vol.2 (op. cit.), pp.242-253. Translation : W.Archer (op. cit.), pp.71-79 :
- | | |
|---------------|---|
| "THE STRANGER | See, they are smiling in the silence of the room... |
| THE OLD MAN | They think themselves beyond the reach of danger. They have closed the doors, and the windows are barred with iron. They have strengthened the walls of the old house ; they have shot the bolts of the three oaken doors. They have foreseen everything that can be foreseen... They think that nothing will happen because they have closed their doors, and they do not know that it is in the soul that things always happen, and that the world does not end at their house-door." |
- 84 Maeterlinck, "L'Évolution du Mystère", Le Temple Enseveli, (Paris) Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1902, pp.112-113. Translation : A.Sutro, "The Evolution of Mystery", The Buried Temple, G.Allen and Unwin, 1902, pp.109-110. "The keynote of these little plays is dread of the unknown that surrounds us. I... seemed to believe in a species of monstrous, invisible, fatal power that gave heed to our every action, and was hostile to our smile, to our life, to our peace and our love."
- 85 Le Temple Enseveli (op. cit.), p.115. Translation : A.Sutro (op. cit.), p.112. "We appear for an instant in limitless space, our one appreciable mission the propagation of a species that itself has no appreciable mission in the scheme of a universe whose extent and duration baffle the most daring, most powerful brain."

- 86 Eugène Ionesco, "Dans les armes de la ville", Cahiers de la Compagnie Madeleine Renaud-Jean-Louis Barrault, no.20, October, 1957, cited by Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd (op. cit.), p.23.
- 87 Le Temple Enseveli (op. cit.), p.51. Translation : A.Sutro (op. cit.), p.48 : "the endeavour to sum up the world in a syllogism is one of the oldest and vainest habits of man. In the region of the unknown and unknowable, logic-chopping has its perils".
- 88 Harold Pinter, The Birthday Party, Methuen (Second revised ed.) 1965, p.78.
- 89 A.Symons, "Some Problem Plays", Plays, Acting, and Music (op. cit.) pp.135-136.
- 90 Maeterlinck, L'Autre Monde ou Le Cadran Stellaire, Éditions de la Maison Française (New York), 1942, p.124. Translation : Marta K. Neufeld and Renee Spodhem, The Great Beyond, Rider and Co., 1951, p.91 : "We do not know ourselves better than we know the others. We do not see ourselves, we do not hear ourselves and listen only to the unknown which rules within us and leads us wherever it wants to go."
- 91 L'Autre Monde (op. cit.), p.147. Translation : Neufeld and Spodhem (op. cit.), p.106 : "For although everything changes continuously in our body and in our mind, we feel that we will never be able to free ourselves of our self, no matter how repulsive it appears to us."
- 92 Samuel Beckett, Film, Faber, 1972, p.11.
- 93 L'Autre Monde (op. cit.), p.100. Translation : Neufeld and Spodhem (op. cit.), p.73 : "The most discouraging thing is that there probably is nothing to know, nothing to understand, or at least nothing that resembles that which we call to know and to understand."
- 94 Samuel Beckett, "Froust" and "Three Dialogues" With Georges Duthuit, John Calder, 1965, p.103.
- 95 Théâtre, vol.2 (op. cit.), pp.276-277. Translation (N.B. This translation is of the earlier five-act version) : A.Sutro, The Death of Tintagiles (op. cit.), p.96 : "She lives there, all alone in the tower ; and those who wait on her do not go out by daylight (. . .) Her orders are carried out : but no one knows how . . . She never leaves the tower, and all the gates are closed night and day . . . I have never seen her, but it seems others have (. . .) She has a power which we do not understand, and we live here with a terrible weight on our soul . . ."
- 96 Théâtre, vol.2 (op. cit.), p.292. Translation : A.Sutro (op. cit.), p.105 : "we will defend you, and no evil can come near."

- 97 Théâtre, vol.2 (op.cit.), p.295. Translation : A.Sutro (op.cit.), p.107 : "There are sad evenings when our useless lives taste bitter in our mouths, and we would like to close our eyes..."
- 98 The earlier version is that in "Alladine et Palomides", "Intérieur", et "La Mort de Tintagiles" : Trois Petits Drames pour Marionettes, Collections du Brussels, reveil Edmond Deman Libraire, 1894.
- 99 Théâtre, vol.2 (op.cit.), p.273. Translation : A.Sutro (op.cit.), p.94 : "I have lived a long time in this island, and I might as well have been blind".
- 100 William Archer, The Theatrical "World" of 1895, vol.3 of The Theatrical World for 1893 (-1897), Walter Scott, 1894-1898, p.117.
- 101 Théâtre, vol.3, (Paris) Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1918, p.87. Translation : A.Sutro, Aglavaine and Selysette (op.cit.), p.75 :
 And I could see Death
 (I heard her soul moan)
 And I could see Death
 That still watches her breath...
- 102 Cited in M.Lecat, Le Maeterlinckisme, vol.1 (op.cit.), p.55. Translation : "It is not as I wanted it, this weak play, and when I review it as a whole in my mind, I do not like it at all. It was to have been the triumph and, altogether, the strength of things has made it almost the defeat of Aglavaine."
- 103 Maeterlinck, La Sagesse et La Destinée, (Paris), Libraire Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1918, p.36. Translation : A.Sutro, Wisdom and Destiny, George Allen, 1911, pp.38-39 : "We are told that the famous tragedies show us the struggle of man against Fate. I believe, on the contrary, that scarcely a drama exists wherein fatality truly does reign. Search as I may, I cannot find one which exhibits the hero in conflict with destiny pure and simple. For indeed it is never destiny that he attacks ; it is with wisdom he is always at war. Real fatality exists only in certain external disasters - as disease, accident, the sudden death of those we love ; but inner fatality there is none."
- 104 La Sagesse et La Destinée (op.cit.), pp.82-83. Translation : A.Sutro (op.cit.), p.88 : "Was the penitent thief not saved ; and that not alone in the Christian sense of the word, but in its fullest, most perfect meaning? Still had he to die, and at that very hour ; but he died eternally happy ; because at the very last moment he too had been loved, and a Being of infinite wisdom had declared that his soul had not been without value ; that his soul, too, had been good, and had not passed through the world unperceived of all men."
- 105 Le Temple Enseveli (op.cit.), p.131. Translation : A.Sutro, The Buried Temple (op.cit.), pp.127-128 : "It is time that the poet should realise that the symbol is legitimate only when it stands for accepted truth, or for truth which as yet we cannot, or will not, accept ; but the

- symbol is out of place at a time when it is truth itself that we seek. And, besides, to merit admission into a really living poem, the symbol should be at least as great and beautiful as the truth for which it stands, and should, moreover, precede this truth, and not follow a long way behind."
- 106 Cited in Paul Huygelen, Maeterlinck and England, Ph.D. thesis for the University of London, 1954, p.80.
- 107 Arthur Symons, "Monna Vanna", Plays, Acting, and Music (op.cit.), p.141.
- 108 Maeterlinck, "Le Drame Moderne", Le Double Jardin, (Paris) 1909 Bibliothèque - Charpentier, pp.119-120. Translation: A.T.de Mattos, The Double Garden, George Allen, 1914, pp.102-103: "Whatever the temptation, he dare not sink into inactivity, become mere philosopher or observer. Do what one will, discover what marvels one may, the sovereign law of the stage, its essential demand, will always be action. With the rise of the curtain, the high intellectual desire within us undergoes transformation; and in place of the thinker, psychologist, mystic or moralist there stands the mere instinctive spectator, the man electrified negatively by the crowd, the man whose one desire is to see something happen... And there are no words so profound, so noble and admirable, but they will soon weary us if they leave the situation unchanged, if they lead to no action, bring about no decisive conflict, or hasten no definite solution."
- 109 Arthur Symons, "Monna Vanna", Plays, Acting, and Music (op.cit.), p.141.
- 110 Florence G.Fidler, The Bird That Is Blue: A Study of Maeterlinck's Two Fairy Plays, Selwyn and Blount, 1928, pp.18-19.
- 111 Ibid., p.viii.
- 112 Before Herbert Trench's Haymarket Theatre production in London (1909-1910) the blue bird of the title was not widely interpreted as 'happiness'. Trench's programme note stated: "The Blue Bird, inhabitant of the pays bleu, the fabulous blue country of our dreams, is an ancient symbol in the folk-lore of Lorraine and stands for Happiness." See Paul Huygelen (op.cit.), p.111, and Florence G. Fidler (op.cit.), pp.21-22.
- 113 Cited in Paul Huygelen (op.cit.), pp.97-98.
- 114 Maeterlinck, La Mort, (Paris) Bibliothèque - Charpentier, 1913, p.242, pp.213-214. Translation: A.T.de Mattos, Death, Methuen, 1911, pp.104-5, p.86. N.B. This translation was published in English before the French text was published in France, and it is a translation of the first draft of La Mort. I cite it here as it is more readily available in London libraries. Cur Eternity is the translation (also by A.T.de Mattos) of the full text of La Mort as published in Paris in

1913, (Methuen, 1913). See also Our Eternity pp.218-219 ; pp.194-195. "we move in the illusion of seeing and knowing that which is strictly indispensable to our little lives", "It were not at all astonishing if the consciousness of the universe, in the endeavour to form itself, had not yet met with the aid of the necessary chances, and if human thought were seconding one of those decisive chances. Here there is a hope. Small as man and his thought may appear, he has exactly the value of the most enormous forces that he is able to conceive, since there is neither great nor small in the immeasurable (...) The mind alone perhaps occupies in infinity a space which comparisons do not reduce to nothing."

- 115 "Le Vieux qui ne veut pas Mourir", L'Autre Monde ou Le Cadran Stellaire (op. cit.), p.202. Translation : "The Old Man Who Does Not Want To Die", The Great Beyond (op. cit.), p.143 : "I do not have any friends. They all died..."
- 116 L'Autre Monde (op. cit.), pp.206-207. Translation : The Great Beyond (op. cit.), p.146 :
- | | |
|--------------|--|
| " THE SHADOW | There are no more sins in death. |
| THE OLD MAN | What will God say? |
| THE SHADOW | What you will say. |
| THE OLD MAN | Will He judge me? |
| THE SHADOW | You shall be your own judge. You are not afraid of yourself. " |
- 117 L'Autre Monde (op. cit.), pp.215-216. Translation : The Great Beyond (op. cit.), pp.152-153 :
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| " THE OLD MAN | Could we not wait for a while? |
| THE SHADOW | What for? Today or tomorrow, what difference does it make? " |
- 118 L'Autre Monde (op. cit.), p.226. Translation : The Great Beyond (op. cit.), p.161 : "Men are always alone when they die."
- 119 L'Autre Monde (op. cit.), p.231. Translation : The Great Beyond (op. cit.), p.164 :
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| " THE SHADOW | <u>(Rises, throws its cloak away and the form of an angel appears, with great white wings and head outlined in light. It comes close to the bed.)</u> |
| | Come! I was your death. Now, I become your life... I am yourself, and I am taking you... Together we will live... Come, we will live for ever! ... |
| | <u>(One moment of darkness, then the window breaks with a crash. Wrapped in its wings, the Shadow and its warden disappear in the light.) "</u> |
- 120 Paul Huygelen (op. cit.), p.222.
- 121 G.B.Shaw, "L'Oeuvre", Dramatic Opinions and Essays, Archibald Constable, 1907, vol.1, pp.55-63.

- 122 Bernard Shaw : Collected Letters, 1874-1897, ed. by Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1965, p. 508.
- 123 Preface to Plays Unpleasant, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw (vol.1) ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1970, p. 27.
- 124 Preface to Three Plays For Puritans, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw (vol.2), ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1971, pp. 15-16.
- 125 Preface to The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw, (vol.3), ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1971, p. 687.
- 126 Man and Superman, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw vol.2 (op. cit.), p. 592.
- 127 See W.D.Halls (op. cit.), pp. 69-71, p. 110.
- 128 Bernard Shaw Collected Letters, 1898-1910, ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1972, p. 235.
- 129 Ibid., p. 908.
- 130 Ed. Clifford Bax, Florence Farr, Bernard Shaw, W.B. Yeats : Letters, Cuala Press, 1941, p. 31.
- 131 T.S.Eliot, "Dante" (1929), Selected Essays, (op. cit.), p. 238.
- 132 Ibid., p. 239.
- 133 Ibid., p. 240.
- 134 Ibid., p. 242.
- 135 Ibid., p. 243.
- 136 T.S.Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), Selected Essays (op. cit), p. 289.
- 137 T.S.Eliot, "Baudelaire" (1930), Selected Essays (op. cit.), pp. 423-4.
- 138 T.S.Eliot, "Arnold and Pater" (1930), Selected Essays (op. cit.) p. 440.
- 139 Ibid., p. 442.
- 140 T.S.Eliot, "'Rhetoric' and Poetic Drama" (1919), Selected Essays (op. cit.), pp. 41-42.
- 141 T.S.Eliot, "Hamlet", (1919), Selected Essays (op. cit.), p. 145.
- 142 T.S.Eliot, "Poetry and Drama" (1951), On Poetry and Poets (op. cit. .) pp. 77-8.

- 143 Cited in May Daniels, The French Drama of the Unspoken, Edinburgh U.P., 1953, pp.98-99, (La Jeune Belgique tome 1X, p.331, 1890). In translation : "Could the human being be replaced by a shadow, a reflection, a projection of symbolic forms or a being which could possess the look of life without having life?"

Chapter Four : W.B.Yeats.

- 1 To Katharine Tynan, 20 April 1888, The Letters of W.B.Yeats, ed. Allan Wade, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954, p.69.
- 2 "Four Years : 1887-1891", The Trembling of the Veil, in Autobiographies (op. cit.), pp.115-116.
- 3 Ibid., p.141.
- 4 Uncollected Prose by W.B.Yeats, vol.1, ed. John P.Frayne (op. cit.), p.419. From Yeats's review of The Well at the World's End, The Bookman, November, 1896.
- 5 Autobiographies (op. cit.), p.148.
- 6 Ibid., p.191. In his The Vast Design, Edward Engelberg connects Yeats's view of culture with Schiller's essay, "Uber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung". See The Vast Design, Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1964, pp.55-57. Although Professor Engelberg writes on p.55 : "Yeats had made particular note of the division, which a century earlier Schiller had set down in his classic essay on naive and sentimental poetry", he has indicated in a letter to the author (20 June 1976) that, "The sentence should read '...note of a division...' not 'the division,' for the way it stands it obviously can mislead one into thinking that Yeats actually knew of Schiller and read the 'Naive and sentimental' essay. No. He did know of Schiller, but I doubt he read the essay."
- 7 Autobiographies (op. cit.), p.193. See Peter Ure, Towards A Mythology, U.P. of Liverpool, 1946 for an excellent study of Yeats's quest for a mythological art.
- 8 Autobiographies (op. cit.), p.193.
- 9 Ibid., p.195.
- 10 Richard Ellmann cites this quotation from Yeats's letter to Edmund Dulac in 1937. See Yeats : The Man and the Masks, Faber and Faber, paperback edition, 1961, p.294. I agree with Helen Vendler that "A Vision is a natural, foreseeable, and inevitable production of Yeats's

- maturity, an integral part of his work - not an irresponsible compilation of his declining years." (Yeats's "Vision" and the Later Plays, Harvard U.P. and O.U.P., 1963, p.16).
- 11 Arthur Symons, The Symbolist Movement in Literature, (op. cit.) pp. v-vii.
- 12 To Lady Gregory, 29 March 1900. Ed. Allan Wade, The Letters, (op. cit.), p. 337.
- 13 "The Symbolism of Poetry", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p. 153. In the following discussion I quote from the essay which forms pp. 153-164 of Essays and Introductions.
- 14 "Beckett's Letters on Endgame" in Daniel Wolf & Edwin Fancher (ed.), The Village Voice Reader : A Mixed Bag from the Greenwich Village Newspaper, Grove Press (New York), 1963, p. 168.
- 15 Ibid., p. 168.
- 16 Collected Plays, Macmillan, 1960, p. 324.
- 17 Edward Engelberg, The Vast Design (op. cit.), p. 114.
- 18 Arthur Symons "Mr. W. B. Yeats", Studies in Prose and Verse (op. cit.), pp. 230-241.
- 19 Ibid., p. 241.
- 20 A. Symons, "Maeterlinck as a Mystic", The Symbolist Movement in Literature, (op. cit.), p. 159.
- 21 A. Symons, "Mr. W. B. Yeats", Studies in Prose and Verse (op. cit.), p. 240.
- 22 A. Symons, "Maeterlinck as a Mystic", The Symbolist Movement in Literature (op. cit.), p. 153.
- 23 To Katharine Tynan, July 1891, The Letters, ed. A. Wade (op. cit.), p. 173.
- 24 To Clivia Shakespear, 7 April 1895. The Letters (op. cit.), p. 255.
- 25 To Lady Gregory, 9 December 1909. Ibid., pp. 541-542.
- 26 Ed. John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson, Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, Volume Two, Macmillan, 1975, pp. 45-46.
- 27 John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson (op. cit.), note this (p. 45).
- 28 "The Celtic Element in Literature", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), pp. 185-187.

- 29 "Ireland and the Arts", *ibid.*, p.203.
- 30 "The Play of Modern Manners", The Cutting of an Agate, *ibid.*, p.274.
- 31 "Has the Drama of Contemporary Life a Root of its own?", *ibid.*, p.276.
- 32 "Emotion of Multitude", Ideas of Good and Evil, *ibid.*, pp.215-216.
- 33 John P.Frayne and Colton Johnson (*op. cit.*), p. 53.
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 To J.B.Yeats, 5 August 1913. The Letters (*op. cit.*), p.583.
- 39 To J.B.Yeats, 14 June 1917. *Ibid.*, pp.626-627. See Helen Vendler, Yeats's "Vision" and the Later Plays (*op. cit.*), on the origins of A Vision.
- 40 To Olivia Shakespear, postmarked 9 February 1931. The Letters (*op. cit.*), p.781.
- 41 C.G.Jung, Psychology and Alchemy, translation by R.F.C.Hull, R.K.P., 1953, p.15.
- 42 "The Tragic Generation", The Trembling of the Veil, in Autobiographies (*op. cit.*), p. 320.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (*op. cit.*), p.41.
- 45 C.M.Bowra, The Heritage of Symbolism, Macmillan, 1943, p.194.
- 46 *Ibid.*, pp.195-6.
- 47 William York Tindall, "The Symbolism of W.B.Yeats", first published in Accent, V (Summer 1945), revised 1962 and reproduced in John Unterecker (ed.), Yeats, Prentice-Hall, 1963, pp.43-63. The words quoted are on p.45.
- 48 Robert O'Driscoll, Symbolism and Some Implications of the Symbolic Approach : W.B.Yeats during the eighteen-nineties, (Dublin),The Dolmen Press, 1975, p.9.

- 49 Harry Goldgar, "Axël de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et The Shadowy Waters de W.B.Yeats", Revue de Littérature Comparée, vol.24, 1950, pp.563-574. See also Marie-Hélène Pauly, "W.B.Yeats et les symbolistes français", Revue de Littérature Comparée, vol.20, 1940-46, pp.13-33.
- 50 "Epilogue" to Per Amica Silentia Lunae in Mythologies, Macmillan, 1959, p.367.
- 51 To John O'Leary, (during the week ending 23 July 1892) The Letters (op. cit.), pp.210-211.
- 52 "Magic", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p.28.
- 53 C.G.Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, translation R.F.C.Hull, R.K.P., 1959, pp.3-4.
- 54 "Magic", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p.49.
- 55 Michael J.Sidnell, George P.Mayhew and David R.Clark, Druid Craft : The Writing of "The Shadowy Waters", (Dublin) The Dolmen Press, and O.U.P., 1972.
- 56 Ibid., p.79.
- 57 In their A Commentary on the Collected Plays of W.B.Yeats, Macmillan, 1975, A.Norman Jeffares and A.S.Knowland state wrongly that the Collected Plays version is the 1907 Acting Version (See p.58 and p.61). In The Variorum Edition the speeches listed as variants from the Collected Plays version (on p.322 and p.337) appeared in the 1907 Acting Version. The Collected Plays version is that first published in Plays For An Irish Theatre, A.H.Bullen, 1911 (reprinted in 1913).
- 58 Ed.Russell K.Alspach and Catharine C.Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B.Yeats, Macmillan, 1966, p.340.
- 59 To Fiona Macleod, ? early January 1897. The Letters (op. cit.), p.280.
- 60 To Clement Shorter, 27 May 1899, and to Lady Gregory, 21 December 1899. Ibid., p.320 and p.331.
- 61 To George Russell (AE), 27 August (possibly 1899). Ibid., p.324.
- 62 To Frank Fay, ? 20 January 1904. Ibid., p.425.
- 63 Sidnell, Mayhew and Clark, Druid Craft (op. cit.), p.302.
- 64 To Florence Farr, 15 July 1905. The Letters (op. cit.), p.453.
- 65 To Arthur Symons, 10 September 1905. Ibid., p.460.

- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats (op. cit.), p. 340.
- 68 See Chapter Three, pp. 127-8.
- 69 For quotations from The Shadowy Waters see pp. 147-167 of Collected Plays (op. cit.).
- 70 See Sidnell, Mayhew and Clark (op. cit.), p. 17 ; also, Jeffares and Knowland (op. cit.), p. 62 ; also, S.B. Bushrui, Yeats's Verse-Plays : The Revisions 1900-1910, O.U.P., 1965, p. 9.
- 71 "Anima Mundi", Per Amica Silentia Lunae, in Mythologies (op. cit.), p. 346.
- 72 A Vision, Macmillan, 1962, p. 135.
- 73 See Jeffares and Knowland (op. cit.), pp. 62-67 for an account of the significance of the Rose symbol in Yeats.
- 74 Leonard E. Nathan, The Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats, (New York and London), Columbia U.P., 1965, pp. 74-5.
- 75 Michael Sidnell, George Mayhew and David Clark (op. cit.), p. 306.
- 76 To Florence Farr, ? July 1905, The Letters (op. cit.), p. 454.
- 77 Leonard E. Nathan (op. cit.), p. 74.
- 78 Jeffares and Knowland (op. cit.), p. 59.
- 79 Michael Sidnell, George Mayhew and David Clark (op. cit.), p. 312.
- 80 For valuable discussions of the revisions of The Shadowy Waters see also S.B. Bushrui (op. cit.), pp. 1-38 and Thomas Parkinson, W.B. Yeats : Self-Critic, (Berkeley and Los Angeles) U. of California P., 1951, pp. 59-75.
- 81 "An Introduction for my Plays", Later Essays and Introductions, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p. 530.
- 82 W.B. Yeats, On The Boiler, (Dublin) The Cuala Press, 1939, pp. 33-4.
- 83 W.B. Yeats, "The Play, the Player, and the Scene", from Samhain : 1904, in Explorations, Macmillan, 1962, pp. 168-9.
- 84 "The Autumn of the Body", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p. 190.
- 85 W.B. Yeats, "First Principles", from Samhain : 1904, in Explorations, pp. 153-4.

- 86 "The Return of Ulysses", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p. 198.
- 87 To Sydney Cockerell, 18 March 1903, The Letters, p. 397.
- 88 See Robert Potter, The English Morality Play (op. cit.), pp. 272-3. Potter notes that "Direct proof is lacking though critics are virtually unanimous in recognising the influence of Everyman on The Hour Glass (sic)."
- 89 W. B. Yeats, "The Dramatic Movement", from Samhain: 1904, in Explorations (op. cit.), p. 130.
- 90 *Ibid.*, p. 139.
- 91 Cited by S. B. Bushrui, "The Hour-Glass": Yeats's Revisions, 1903-1922", in W. B. Yeats: Centenary Essays, ed. D. E. S. Maxwell and S. B. Bushrui, Nigeria: Ibadan U. P., 1965, p. 190.
- 92 W. G. Fay, "The Poet and the Actor", Scattering Branches: Tributes to the Memory of W. B. Yeats, ed. Stephen Gwynn, Macmillan, 1940, p. 129.
- 93 See Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival (op. cit.), pp. 165-6.
- 94 To Lady Gregory, 13 June 1902, The Letters (op. cit.), p. 375. In 1910 Craig designed the set and costumes for The Hour-Glass: see The Letters, p. 555 (To J. B. Yeats, 24 November 1910).
- 95 See S. B. Bushrui, Centenary Essays (op. cit.), pp. 189-214 for a full account of Yeats's revisions.
- 96 John Rees Moore in Masks of Love and Death, Ithaca and London, Cornell U. P., 1971, p. 83, comments: "The two countries of the mind - the visible world of nature and other people, the invisible order of imagination and spiritual being - are the scene and source of conflict in all Yeats's dramatic fables." On p. 85 he states that "Yeats once referred to this play as 'a parable of the conscious and the subconscious life'."
- 97 Ed. Denis Donoghue, W. B. Yeats: Memoirs, Macmillan, 1972, p. 191.
- 98 Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot, Faber, p. 74.
- 99 "Anima Hominis", Fer Amica Silentia Lunae, in Mythologies (op. cit.), p. 331.
- 100 *Ibid.*, p. 334.
- 101 For quotations from The Hour-Glass see Collected Plays, pp. 299-324.

- 102 "Anima Mundi", Per Amica Silentia Lunae, in Mythologies (op. cit.), p. 356.
- 103 A Vision (op. cit.), p. 68.
- 104 To Ethel Mannin, 20 October 1938, The Letters (op. cit.), pp. 917-918.
- 105 This is reminiscent of the Ruskin cat controversy in the Yeats - Sturge Moore correspondence. The controversy lasted "five or six years": Ursula Bridge, Introduction to W.B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore: Their Correspondence 1901-1937, (op. cit.), p. xvii. On p. 63 the subject of Ruskin's cat is first raised by Yeats. The letter is dated 16 January 1926: "John Ruskin, while talking with Frank Harris, ran suddenly to the other end of the room, picked up, or seemed to pick up, some object which he threw out of the window. He then complained that it was a tempting demon in the form of a cat. Now if the house cat had come in both cats would have looked alike to Ruskin. (I know this for I once saw a phantom picture and a real picture side by side.) Neither your brother nor Russell gives any criterion by which Ruskin could have told one cat from the other." The difference in philosophical terms between the house cat and Ruskin's cat became a substantial problem which was argued in the letters.
- 106 Christopher Marlowe, Dr. Faustus, ed. John D. Jump, "The Revels Plays" series, Methuen, University Paperback, 1968 (1st published 1962), p. 100.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 "An Introduction for my Plays", Later Essays and Introductions, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p. 530.
- 109 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats (op. cit.), p. 645.
- 110 "William Blake and the Imagination", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), pp. 111-114.
- 111 "William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy", *ibid.*, p. 116.
- 112 *Ibid.*, p. 140.
- 113 "Symbolism in Painting", *ibid.*, p. 148.
- 114 *Ibid.*
- 115 *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- 116 *Ibid.*, p. 150.
- 117 "Art and Ideas", The Cutting of an Agate, *ibid.*, p. 350.

- 118 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats (op. cit.), p. 805.
- 119 Ibid., p. 805.
- 120 Ibid., p. 807.
- 121 Ibid., p. 807.
- 122 Ibid., p. 807.
- 123 "A People's Theatre" from "The Irish Dramatic Movement" in Explorations (op. cit.), pp. 249-250.
- 124 Ibid., p. 250.
- 125 Ibid., pp. 252-3.
- 126 For the initial aims see "The Theatre", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p. 166.
- 127 Explorations (op. cit.), pp. 254-7.
- 128 Ibid., p. 257.
- 129 Ibid., p. 259.
- 130 Ibid., p. 258.
- 131 Essays and Introductions p. 221. In the following discussion I quote from "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", The Cutting of an Agate, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), pp. 221-237.
- 132 John Rees Moore, Masks of Love and Death (op. cit.), p. 5.
- 133 "The Symbolism of Poetry", Ideas of Good and Evil, in Essays and Introductions (op. cit.), p. 159.
- 134 Hiro Ishibashi, Yeats and the Noh (Dublin), The Dolmen Press, 1965.
- 135 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats (op. cit.), p. 805.
- 136 Collected Plays (op. cit.), p. 469. Quotations from The Cat and the Moon are from the Collected Plays edition, pp. 461-472.
- 137 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats (op. cit.), p. 808.
- 138 Ibid., p. 806.
- 139 Ibid., p. 807.

- 140 Lady Gregory, The Collected Plays 111 : Wonder and the Supernatural, ed. Ann Saddlemyer, (Gerrards Cross) Colin Smythe, 1970, pp.371-2.
- 141 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats (op. cit.), p.1308.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 Ibid.
- 144 Ibid., p.807.
- 145 A Vision (op. cit.), p.23.
- 146 Ibid., p.23.
- 147 Ibid., p.24.
- 148 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats (op. cit.), p.807.
- 149 "The Tragic Generation", The Trembling of the Veil, in Autobiographies (op. cit.), p.295.
- 150 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats (op. cit.), p.806.
- 151 F.A.C. Wilson, Yeats's Iconography (1st. published by Victor Gollancz, 1960), Methuen University Paperback, 1969.
- 152 A Vision (op. cit.), p.177.
- 153 Ibid., p.182.
- 154 Ibid., p.182.
- 155 Ibid., p.182.
- 156 Ibid., pp.177-8.
- 157 Ibid., pp.180-181.
- 158 Helen Vendler, in Yeats's "Vision" and the Later Plays (op. cit.), does not mention The Cat and the Moon but her analysis of A Vision and the late plays is relevant. She concludes (p.254) that "The plays take up the primary questions posed by A Vision : how do we account for the perpetual vigor (sic) of the imagination, and how should we react in the presence of an obsolete poetic tradition?" Yeats's examination of art and the artist is held to be his central subject.
- 159 Collected Plays (op. cit.), p.467.

- 160 F.A.C. Wilson, Yeats's Iconography (op. cit.), pp.155-156.
- 161 A Vision (op. cit.), pp.24-25.
- 162 Ed. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats, (op. cit.), pp.806-807.
- 163 To Lady Elizabeth Pelham, 4 January 1939, The Letters (op. cit.), p.922.
- 164 To Dorothy Wellesley, 23 December 1936. Ibid., p.876.
- 165 To Katharine Tynan, 12 February 1888. Ibid., p.59. A good essay on the personal relationship of Shaw and Yeats, and the circumstances surrounding the rejection by Yeats of John Bull's Cther Island for the Abbey Theatre, is M.J. Sidnell's "Hic and Ille : Shaw and Yeats", in Theatre and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland, ed. Robert O'Driscoll, C.U.P. and U. of Toronto p., 1971, pp.156-178. Seven letters from Yeats to Shaw are appended.
- 166 To John C'Leary, 15 April 1894, The Letters (op. cit.), p.231.
- 167 'The Tragic Generation', The Trembling of the Veil, in Autobiographies (op. cit.), pp.281-283.
- 168 To Lady Gregory, postmarked 12 March 1900, The Letters (op. cit.), p.335.
- 169 To Lady Gregory, 7 November 1904. Ibid., p.442.
- 170 To Florence Farr, 7 October 1907. Ibid., p.500.
- 171 W.B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore : their correspondence, 1901-1937 (op. cit.), p.9.
- 172 To George Russell (AE), 1 July 1921, The Letters (op. cit.), p.671.
- 173 See A Vision (op. cit). pp.154-157.
- 174 To Florence Farr, 6 June 1902, Bernard Shaw Collected Letters 1898-1910 (op. cit.), p.275.
- 175 To Sean C'Casey, 19 June 1928, The Letters of Sean O'Casey : Volume 1, 1910-1941, ed. David Krause, Cassell, 1975, p.285.
- 176 Ibid., p.284.
- 177 Ibid., p.298.
- 178 'Preface' to John Bull's Cther Island, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw, Volume 2, (op. cit.), p.808.

- 179 "Preface" to The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw, Volume 3 (op. cit.), p.758.
- 180 To Lady Gregory, 19 August 1909, Bernard Shaw Collected Letters 1898-1910 (op. cit.), pp.858-9.
- 181 Yeats wrote to Edmund Dulac in 1937 of A Vision : "I do not know what my book will be to others - nothing perhaps. To me it means a last act of defence against the chaos of the world, and I hope for ten years to write out of my renewed security." cited Richard Ellmann, Yeats : The Man and the Masks (op. cit.), p.294.
- 182 T.S.Eliot, "William Blake", Selected Essays (op. cit.), pp.321-322.
- 183 T.S.Eliot, After Strange Gods : A Primer of Modern Heresy, Faber, 1934, p.44.
- 184 Ibid., p.46.
- 185 T.S.Eliot, 'Religion and Literature ', Selected Essays (op. cit.), p.388.
- 186 T.S.Eliot, "Yeats ', On Poetry and Poets (op. cit.), p.256.
- 187 Ibid., p.258.
- 188 Ibid., p.258.
- 189 Ibid., p.260.
- 190 Ibid., p.261.
- 191 Ibid., p.262.
- 192 Ibid., p.262.
- 193 Ibid., p.262.
- 194 T.S.Eliot, "Poetry and Drama ', ibid., p.78.
- 195 W.B.Yeats, On The Boiler (op. cit.), p.14.
- 196 Ibid., pp.25-26.

Chapter Five : Samuel Beckett

- 1 See A.Alvarez, The Savage God (First published by Weiden^{feld} and Nicolson, 1971), Penguin, 1974, pp.244-283. This study of suicide and literature takes its title from Yeats's comment after the first performance of Alfred Jarry's Ubu Roi, and its thesis is that "In a

sense, the whole of twentieth-century art has been dedicated to the service of this earthbound Savage God [. . .] an art which is more extreme, more violent and, finally, more self-destructive than ever before". (Penguin ed. p.245).

- 2 W.B. Yeats, Collected Poems, Macmillan, 1961, p.211.
- 3 W.B. Yeats, "The Tragic Generation", The Trembling of the Veil, in Autobiographies (op. cit.), p. 349.
- 4 Ibid., pp. 348-9.
- 5 Arthur Symons, "A Symbolist Farce", Studies in Seven Arts (op. cit.), p. 236.
- 6 Ibid., p. 238.
- 7 See Selected Works of Alfred Jarry, ed. Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor, Methuen, 1965, p. 83. For Jarry's writings on the theatre, including his various comments on Ubu Roi, see pp. 67-93.
- 8 Arthur Symons, Studies in Seven Arts (op. cit.), p. 239.
- 9 Ibid., p. 239.
- 10 Ibid., p. 240.
- 11 Samuel Beckett, Watt, Calder and Boyars, 1963, p. 153.
- 12 John Chalker, "The Satiric Shape of Watt", in Beckett the Shape Changer, ed. Katharine Worth, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p. 28.
- 13 Richard N. Coe, "God and Samuel Beckett", Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Molloy", "Malone Dies", "The Unnameable", ed. John O'Hara, Prentice-Hall (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey), 1970, p. 94.
- 14 Waiting for Godot, Faber and Faber, 1965, p. 43.
- 15 Ibid., p. 43.
- 16 Ibid., p. 77.
- 17 Endgame, Faber and Faber, 1964, p. 38.
- 18 Ibid., p. 39.
- 19 Ibid., p. 22.
- 20 Happy Days, Faber and Faber, 1966, p. 11.
- 21 Ibid., p. 12.

- 22 "Play" and two short pieces for radio, Faber and Faber, 1968, p.15.
- 23 Ibid., p.16.
- 24 Not I, Faber and Faber, 1973, p.3. (The pages are unnumbered in the text. My numbering commences from the page with the first stage directions.)
- 25 Samuel Beckett : cited by Israel Shenker, "Moody Man of Letters", New York Times, Sunday May 6 1956, Section 2, p.3.
- 26 Samuel Beckett in interview with Tom F.Driver, cited by David H. Hesla, The Shape of Chaos, Minneapolis : The University of Minnesota Press, 1971, pp.6-7.
- Hesla cites 'Beckett by the Madeleine', Columbia University Forum, IV, Summer 1961, pp.22-23.
- 27 Israel Shenker, "Moody Man of Letters", New York Times (op. cit.) p.1.
- 28 T.S.Eliot, 'Poetry and Drama', On Poetry and Poets (op. cit.), pp.86-87.
- 29 Samuel Beckett, "Proust" and "Three Dialogues" With Georges Duthuit (op. cit.), p.124.
- 30 Ibid., p.125.
- 31 T.S.Eliot, 'Poetry and Drama', On Poetry and Poets (op. cit.), p.86.
- 32 John Fletcher, Samuel Beckett's Art, Chatto and Windus, 1967, p.75.
- 33 Walter Fater, The Renaissance (op. cit.), p.129.
- 34 Samuel Beckett, 'Dante ... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce', Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, Faber and Faber, 1972, pp.13-14. (First published in 1929 by Shakespeare and Co., Paris.)
- 35 See New Theatre Magazine, Samuel Beckett Issue, vol.XI no.3, pp.16-17, for Beckett's letter to George Devine concerning Play.
- 36 Marcel Mihalovici, "My Collaboration with Samuel Beckett", John Calder (Introduction), Beckett at Sixty, Calder and Boyars, 1967, pp.20-21.
- 37 Samuel Beckett, "Proust" and "Three Dialogues" With Georges Duthuit (op. cit.), p.88.
- 38 Ibid., p.92.
- 39 Ibid., p.92.

- 40 "Beckett's Letters on Endgame", The Village Voice Reader (op. cit.), p.168.
- 41 Samuel Beckett, "Play" and two short pieces for radio (op. cit.), p.35.
- 42 Samuel Beckett to Alan Schneider, quoted in "Waiting For Beckett" by Alan Schneider, which appeared first in Chelsea Review, Autumn number 1958, and is reprinted in Beckett at Sixty (op. cit.), p.34.
- 43 Beckett's words as reported by Walter D. Asmus, "Beckett Directs Godot", Theatre Quarterly, vol. V, no.19-20, 1975, p.23.
- 44 W.B. Yeats, A Vision, (op. cit.), p.25.
- 45 Film (op. cit.), p.11.
- 46 "Beckett's Letters on Endgame", The Village Voice Reader (op. cit.), p.168.
- 47 Israel Shenker, "Moody Man of Letters" (op. cit.) p.3.
- 48 Endgame (op. cit.), p.45.
- 49 *ibid.*, pp.49-50.
- 50 Trapp's Last Tape and 'Embers', Faber and Faber, 1965, p.13.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p.17.
- 52 *Ibid.*, pp.19-20.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p.19.
- 54 "Proust" and "Three Dialogues" With Georges Duthuit (op. cit.), p.14.
- 55 "Play" and two short pieces for radio (op. cit.), p.16.
- 56 New Theatre Magazine vol. xi no.3. 1971, pp.16-17.
- 57 *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.
- 58 Israel Shenker, "Moody Man of Letters", New York Times (op. cit.), pp.1-3.
- 59 See Martin Esslin, "Voices, Patterns, Voices", Gambit vol.7 no.28, pp.93-99, for an account of the development in Beckett's drama.
- 60 To Israel Shenker (op. cit.) p.1.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p.3.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p.3.

- 63 Ibid., p. 1.
- 64 Ibid., p. 3.
- 65 Ibid., p. 3.
- 66 Arthur C. Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher, New York : The Macmillan Company, 1965, p. 35.
- 67 Friedrich Nietzsche, Die Geburt der Tragödie, in Werke, vol. 3. i, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Berlin : Walter de Gruyter, 1972, p. 33. In translation see The Birth of Tragedy, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, vol. 1, translated by W. A. Hausmann and edited by Oscar Levy, George, Allen and Unwin, 1st. published 1909, 3rd. edition 1923, p. 36.
- 68 See Werke vol. 3. i., p. 52, and The Complete Works, vol. 1, p. 61.
- 69 I have quoted this in English to emphasise the parallel between the vocabulary that Nietzsche uses and that familiar to us from modern Existentialist philosophy. See p. 62 of The Complete Works, vol. 1, and p. 53 of Werke vol. 3. i.
- 70 Edith Kern, in "Moran-Molloy : The Hero as Author", in Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Molloy", "Malone Dies", "The Unnameable" (op. cit.), pp. 35-45, examines Beckett as a Dionysian artist.
- 71 Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Samuel Beckett, or 'Presence' in the Theatre", in Samuel Beckett ("Twentieth Century Views" series), ed. Martin Esslin, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, 1965, p. 113.
- 72 Waiting for Godot (op. cit.), p. 14.
- 73 Hugh Kenner, Samuel Beckett, John Calder, 1962, p. 135. See pp. 133-139 for a discussion of the stage consciousness of Waiting for Godot.
- 74 Waiting for Godot, pp. 34-35.
- 75 Hugh Kenner, Samuel Beckett (op. cit.), p. 136.
- 76 Waiting for Godot, pp. 72-73.
- 77 Ibid., p. 75.
- 78 Walter D. Asmus, "Beckett Directs Godot" (op. cit.), p. 23.
- 79 Waiting for Godot, p. 83.
- 80 Ibid., p. 86.
- 81 Ibid., p. 87.

- 82 Ibid., p.88.
- 83 Ibid., p.91.
- 84 See Hugh Kenner, Samuel Beckett (op. cit.), pp.155-165.
- 85 Endgame (op. cit.), p.49.
- 86 Ibid., p.35.
- 87 Ibid., p.39.
- 88 Ibid., p.45.
- 89 Ibid., p.49.
- 90 Ibid., p.49.
- 91 Ibid., p.51.
- 92 E. G. Ruby Cohn, 'The Plays of Yeats through Beckett coloured Glasses', Threshold 19, Autumn 1965, p.44.
- 93 Happy Days (op. cit.), p.10.
- 94 Ibid., p.31.
- 95 Ibid., pp.32-33.
- 96 Ibid., p.43.
- 97 Francis Warner, 'The Absence of Nationalism in the Work of Samuel Beckett', in Theatre and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland, (op. cit.), 1971 p.191.
- 98 'Play' and two short pieces for radio (op. cit.), p.10.
- 99 Ibid., p.11.
- 100 Ibid., p.16.
- 101 Ibid., p.16.
- 102 Ibid., p.20.
- 103 New Theatre Magazine, vol.xi no.3, pp.16-17.
- 104 Play, p.16.
- 105 Ruby Cohn, Back to Beckett, Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton U.P., 1973, pp.212-213.
- 106 Not I (op. cit.), p.11.

- 107 Ruby Cohn, Back to Beckett (op. cit.), is especially good on this aspect, pp.122-212.
- 108 Walter D. Asmus, 'Beckett Directs Godot' (op. cit.), pp. 23-24.
- 109 Samuel Beckett 'Texts for Nothing' VIII, No's Knife, Calder and Boyars, 1967, p.110.
- 110 W. B. Yeats, A Vision (op. cit.), p. 25.
- 111 En attendant Godot, ed. Colin Duckworth, Harrap, 1966, p. lvii.
- 112 Ibid., p. xcvi. Duckworth cites for this quotation Drama Survey, Fall, 1962.
- 113 Ed. Russell H. Alspach and Catharine C. Alspach, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats (op. cit.), p. 807.
- 114 Eva Metman, 'Reflections on Samuel Beckett's Plays', Samuel Beckett, ed. Martin Esslin (op. cit.), pp. 127-8.
- 115 See Colin Duckworth (op. cit.), pp. xc-xci: 'One act would have been too little, three too much.'
- 116 Waiting for Godot, p. 10. Page references will be included in the text from this point.
- 117 See Siegfried Wenzel, The Sin of Sloth: 'Acedia' in Medieval Thought and Literature, (op. cit.), p. 32.
- 118 Ibid., p. 108.
- 119 Raymond Federman and John Fletcher, Samuel Beckett: His Works and his Critics, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, and London), U. of California P., 1970, p. 157, cite Peggy Guggenheim as a source for this.
- 120 'Play' and two short pieces for radio, p. 27.
- 121 See Walter A. Strauss, 'Dante's Belacqua and Beckett's Tramps', Comparative Literature XI no. 3, Summer 1959, pp. 250-261.
- 122 See Samuel Beckett, Murphy, John Calder, 1963, reprinted Calder and Boyars, 1969, pp. 76-80. (First published by G. Routledge, 1938.)
- 123 Richard Lee Francis, 'Beckett's Metaphysical Tragicomedy', Modern Drama, December 1965, p. 262.
- 124 C. G. Jung, 'Answer to Job', Psychology and Religion: West and East, volume 11 of the Collected Works, translated by R. F. C. Hull for Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958, p. 417.

- 125 To Tom Driver, cited by David H. Hesla (op. cit.), p. 230.
- 126 Walter D. Asmus, "Beckett Directs Godot" (op. cit.), p. 23.
- 127 Ibid., p. 23.
- 128 Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger, Frank J. Warnke, and C. B. Hardison, Jr., Macmillan, 1975, p. 810.
- 129 Waiting for Godot, p. 34. See Walter D. Asmus (op. cit.), p. 24.
- 130 "To the Moon", Shelley: Poetical Works, O. U. P., 1967, p. 621.
- 131 This is Beckett's own division; see Walter D. Asmus (op. cit.), p. 22.
- 132 See, for example, G. S. Fraser's anonymous article for TLS, "They Also Serve", February 10, 1956, p. 64: Godot is a modern morality play, on permanent Christian themes"; he notes that the "differentiating quality" of Godot compared with Everyman is that "Didi and Gogo do not complete their pilgrimage". Also Ruby Cohn, Back to Beckett, (op. cit.), p. 135 and p. 217: Godot (leans) on the medieval morality'.
- 133 Ed. A. C. Cawley, Everyman (op. cit.), p. 1.
- 134 'Trouste' and 'Three Dialogues' With Georges Duthuit (op. cit.), p. 67.
- 135 'Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce', Our Exagmination (op. cit.), p. 22.
- 136 Ibid., p. 22.
- 137 Everyman (op. cit.), p. 18.
- 138 'Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce' (op. cit.), p. 22.
- 139 Ibid., p. 22.
- 140 Murphy (op. cit.), p. 53. See also More Fricks Than Kicks, Calder and Boyars, 1970, p. 31. The shorter C. E. D. definition of caul is "The amnion or inner membrane enclosing the foetus before birth".
- 141 Brian Finney, 'Assumption to Lessness: Beckett's Shorter Fiction', in Beckett the Shape Changer, ed. K. Worth (op. cit.), p. 65.
- 142 'Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce' (op. cit.), p. 12.
- 143 Everyman (op. cit.), p. 23.
- 144 Ibid., p. 2.
- 145 Ibid., p. 2.
- 146 John Filling, Samuel Beckett, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 155.

- 147 John Pilling, in a letter to the author, March 19 1976.
- 148 See Katharine J. Worth's "Yeats and the French Drama", Modern Drama, 1966, pp.382-391, and her forthcoming book The Irish Drama of Europe, for analyses of the connections between Yeats, Maeterlinck and Beckett.
- 149 Maeterlinck, L'Autre Monde ou le Cadran Stellaire (op. cit.), p.72. Translation : The Great Beyond, by Marta K. Neufeld and Renee Spodhem (op. cit.), p.53 : "Man's natural state is death."
- 150 Maeterlinck, L'Autre Monde ou le Cadran Stellaire (op. cit.), p.131. Translation : Neufeld and Spodhem (op. cit.), p.95 : "Whatever I said, I believed was the truth, or at least, my last truth. But it seemed less true, once it was expressed ; by uttering it, I had killed half of it."
- 151 Maeterlinck, L'Autre Monde ou le Cadran Stellaire (op. cit.), p.131. Translation : Neufeld and Spodhem (op. cit.), p.95 : "If I had to live again, I would find a way to avoid being born."
- 152 Maeterlinck, Le Sablier (op. cit.), pp.21-22. Translation : The Hour-Glass, by B. Miall (op. cit.), p.9 : "One falls asleep a child and one wakes an old man. One makes the tour of one's cradle, and finds oneself on the brink of one's tomb."
- 153 Maeterlinck, Avant le Grand Silence (op. cit.), pp.66-67. Translation : Before the Great Silence, by B. Miall (op. cit.), p.57 : "I have changed my 'ego' a dozen times, and that famous continuity on which all our hope of immortality is based is probably, even in this life, no more than the shadow of an illusion."
- 154 Beckett, 'Proust' and 'Three Dialogues' With Georges Duthuit (op. cit.), p.13.
- 155 Maeterlinck, Avant le Grand Silence (op. cit.), p.146. Translation : B. Miall (op. cit.), p.120 : "All that we think, all that we know, all that we are, is born of a little food that rots in our intestine."
- 156 Maeterlinck, L'Autre Monde ou Le Cadran Stellaire (op. cit.), pp.171-172. Translation : Neufeld and Spodhem (op. cit.), p.121 : "They (the dead) do not talk, they say all in the language of silence."
- 157 Maeterlinck, Le Sablier (op. cit.), p.160. Translation : B. Miall (op. cit.), p.160 : "The silence by which words are encompassed is often more important than the words themselves. One speaks to God, the mystics tell us, only in silence."
- 158 Maeterlinck, Le Sablier (op. cit.), p.17. Translation : B. Miall (op. cit.), pp.18-19 : "From childhood men pass their lives in waiting for one knows not what, but for something which, to their thinking, is unduly

long in arriving. They speed the hours as one speeds them before the first tryst of a great love. It is only at the last moment that they perceive that the unknown thing which they have so long desired is no other than death. Some do nothing as they wait for it ; others have the air of doing something, and they are the less unhappy. But at bottom their life is the same."

- 159 Maeterlinck, Le Sablier (op.cit.), p.150. Translation : B.Miall (op.cit.), p.150 : (Man's only prayer is) "the passionate investigation and study of the unknown".
- 160 Maeterlinck, Le Sablier (op.cit.), pp.170-171. Translation : B.Miall (op.cit.), p.170 : "You cannot imagine nothing, except - by imagining nothing. And to imagine nothing is - not to imagine. All that you are thinking of may be whiteness, blackness, emptiness, transparency - but it will still be something."
- 161 Maeterlinck, Le Sablier (op.cit.), p.176. Translation : B.Miall (op.cit.), p.175 : "shall we end by understanding that we understand nothing, that we never shall understand anything, and that this is the only thing which we can understand?"
- 162 Eugène Ionesco, "Toujours sur l'avant-garde", Notes et contre-notes (op.cit.), p.40. Translation : Donald Watson, "Still About Avant-Garde Theatre", Notes and Counter-Notes (op.cit.), p.57 : "far closer to the lamentations of Job, the tragedies of Sophocles or Shakespeare, than to the tawdry drama known as committed or boulevard theatre".
- 163 "Texts for Nothing" VIII, No's Knife (op.cit.), p.109.
- 164 'Krapp's Last Tape' and 'Embers' (op.cit.), p.20.
- 165 'The Essential and the Incidental', Beckett's review of Sean O'Casey's Windfalls in The Bookman vol.87, 1934, p.111.
- 166 Beckett to Cyril Cusack, on the occasion of the Shaw Centenary celebrations, June 1956, reprinted in Samuel Beckett : An Exhibition, catalogue by James Knowlson and foreword by A.J. Leventhal, Turret Books, 1971, p.23.
- 167 Ibid., pp.22-23. For an excellent study comparing Beckett and Synge see James Knowlson's 'Beckett and John Millington Synge', Gambit, vol.7 no.28, John Calder, 1976.
- 168 See Federman and Fletcher, Samuel Beckett : His Works and his Critics (op.cit.), p.105.
- 169 See Katharine J.Worth's article 'Yeats and the French Drama' (op.cit.), and her forthcoming book The Irish Drama of Europe ; Ruby Cohn : 'The 11 days of Yeats through Beckett Coloured Glasses' (op.cit.), ; Marilyn Gaddis, 'The Purgatory Metaphor of Yeats and Beckett', London Magazine, vol.7, August 1967, pp.33-46.

- 170 Francis Warner, "The absence of nationalism in the work of Samuel Beckett", Theatre and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland (op. cit.), p.191.
- 171 W.B.Yeats, Collected Plays (op. cit.), p.210.
- 172 K.J.Worth, "Yeats and the French Drama" (op. cit.), p.390.
- 173 Ibid., pp.385-6 ; Ruby Cohn, "The Plays of Yeats through Beckett Coloured Glasses" (op. cit.), pp.41-42.
- 174 W.B.Yeats, Collected Plays (op. cit.), p.208.
- 175 Ibid., p.210.
- 176 Ibid., p.213.
- 177 Happy Days (op. cit.), p.20.
- 178 W.B.Yeats, Collected Plays (op. cit.), p.219.
- 179 Ibid., p.217.
- 180 Happy Days (op. cit.), p.16.
- 181 Ibid., p.42.
- 182 For the most detailed comparison see Marilyn Gaddis (op. cit.), See also John Rees Moore, Masks of Love and Death : (op. cit.), p.246 : "In a dim way, these two beggars foreshadow Beckett's 'tramps' both in attitude and tone of voice (. . .) But Yeats's beggars have their Godot." See also p.348 : "As a Symbolist, Yeats is closer to Beckett than he is to Maeterlinck, but he is not very close to either."
See Francis Warner, "The absence of nationalism in the work of Samuel Beckett", Theatre and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland (op. cit.), p.190 : "Yeats's tramps - not least in The Cat and the Moon and Purgatory, where two are on an empty road, under a tree, waiting - resemble Gogo and Didi in Waiting for Godot in their similar predicament".
See John Fletcher and John Spurling, Beckett : A Study of his Plays, Eyre Methuen, 1972, p.58 : "Waiting for Godot shows parallels, too, with some of Yeats's plays. In The Cat and the Moon of 1926, for example, two beggars, one halt and the other sightless, have for years managed to compensate their respective infirmities by the blind man carrying the lame man on his back."
See also Ruby Cohn, "The Plays of Yeats Through Beckett Coloured Glasses" (op. cit.), p.44 and John Pilling, Samuel Beckett (op. cit.) p.156.

- 183 See introduction to Aristophanes, "The Wasps", "The Poet and the Women", "The Frogs", David Barrett, Penguin, 1964, p.13.
- 184 See Samuel Beckett : An Exhibition (op. cit.), p.23.
- 185 Sophocles, The Theban Plays, translation : E.F. Watling, Penguin, 1947, p.59.
- 186 Hamlet, II, ii, ll. 305-317, the Signet Classic Shakespeare edition, ed. Edward Hubler, N.Y. : The New American Library, and The New English Library 1963, p.80.
- 187 See Jan Kolt, Shakespeare Our Contemporary, translation : Boleslaw Taborski, Methuen, 1964.
- 188 King Lear, III, iv, ll.109-111. The Arden Shakespeare edition, ed. Kenneth Muir, Methuen, 1961, p.122.
- 189 Ibid., IV, vi, l.135 (p.178).
- 190 Ibid., IV, vii, ll.46-48 (p.190).
- 191 Ibid., IV, vi, ll.180-185 (p.181).
- 192 Ibid., IV, vi, l.193 (p.182).
- 193 Ibid., IV, i, ll.19-21 (p.148).
- 194 Ibid., IV, i, ll.36-37 (p.149).
- 195 Enoch Brater's articles on Not I make use of Beckett's link with the Surrealists : "Noah, Not I, and Beckett's 'Incomprehensibly Sublime' " (Comparative Drama 8 1974-1975, pp.254-263) and "The 'I' in Beckett's Not I " (Twentieth Century Literature vol.20,1974, pp.189-200).
- 196 Eugene Jolas, preface to transition 21, March 1932, the Service Press.
- 197 Sedendo et Quiesc(i)endo, transition 21, pp.13-20. Federman and Fletcher in Samuel Beckett : His Works and his Critics (op. cit.), note that "Owing to a misprint, the story is persistently entitled Sedendo et Quiesciendo", p.12. "Quiescendo" is the correct form. The story is collected with stories by Kafka, Gertrude Stein, Calderon, Henry Michaux, and Harold Rosenberg, under the heading of "Anamyths, Psychographs and other prose-texts". In Jolas's list of neologisms (p.324) "anamyth" is defined as "a fantastic narrative that reflects preconscious relationships" ; "psychograph" is defined as "a prose text that expresses hallucinations and phantoms".
- 198 "Poetry is Vertical", transition 21, March 1932, pp.148-149.
- 199 See Federman and Fletcher (op. cit.), for details of these translations, pp. 93-94 and p.98.

200 Antonin Artaud, Ceuvres complètes, Tome 1, (Paris) Librairie Gallimard, 1956, pp.343-347. Translation : Antonin Artaud, Collected Works, volume 1, transl. Victor Corti, Calder and Boyars, 1968, pp.236-239 : "Maeterlinck uses certain thought patterns whose relevance to the present day is not remarked on enough. A certain method of fusing - by virtue of whatever mysterious similarities - things and feelings, and placing them on the mental level, while avoiding the metaphorical, is to be found at the basis of ultra-modern poetic theory. (. . .) His theatre soon became a whole world where the theatre's traditional characters reappear, evoked from within. With Maeterlinck, the unconscious fatalism of ancient drama becomes the mainspring of the action. The characters are puppets, moved by the fates. (. . .) Maeterlinck evoked the figures of the mystics of old for us. He knew how to attune us to the stages of their thought. We really feel we are getting to the heart of the problem with him. (. . .) Drama is the highest form of mental activity. The nature of the most profound things is to clash and combine, to infer. Movement is the principle of life itself. Maeterlinck endeavoured to give life to forms and states of pure thought. Pelléas, Tintagel (sic) and Melisande are like the perceptible figuration of these fair-seeming feelings. A philosophy emerged from these contacts and Maeterlinck attempted later to express it, to give form to the main thesis of everyday drama. Here fate unleashes its whims, there the rhythm is mental and rarified. We are at the very eye of the storm, in circles as static as life.

'Maeterlinck was the first to introduce the manifold richness of the subconscious into literature. The imagery in his poetry is arranged according to principles which do not occur in normal consciousness. (. . .)

'Maeterlinck appeared in literature at the right moment. He was a symbolist by nature, by definition. His poems, plays and essays are like the different states and shapes of one single thought. "

201 Antonin Artaud, "Le Théâtre et la Peste", Le Théâtre et son double, Ceuvres complètes, Tome 4, (Paris) Éditions Gallimard, 1964, p.37. Translation : Antonin Artaud, "Theatre and the Plague", The Theatre and its Double, Collected Works, volume 4, transl. V. Corti, Calder and Boyars, 1974, p.19: "a revelation, urging forward the exteriorisation of a latent undercurrent of cruelty through which all the perversity of which the mind is capable, whether in a person, or a nation, becomes localised '.

202 Antonin Artaud, ibid., p.39. Translation : Corti, p.21 : "whether in this world that is slipping away, committing suicide without realising it, a nucleus of men can be found to impress this higher idea of theatre on the world, to bring to all of us a natural, occult equivalent of the dogma we no longer believe".

203 Antonin Artaud, "La mise en scène et la métaphysique", ibid., p.53. Translation : "Production and Metaphysics", Corti, p.30 : "the great metaphysical fear underlying all ancient theatre".

- 204 Antonin Artaud, *ibid.*, p.54. Translation : Corti, p.31 : "In Oriental theatre with its metaphysical inclinations, as against Western theatre and its psychological inclinations, this whole complex of gestures, signs, postures and sound which make up a stage production language, this language which develops all its physical and poetic effects on all conscious levels and in all senses, must lead to thought adopting deep attitudes which might be called active metaphysics."
- 205 Cited by Enoch Brater, "The 'I' in Beckett's Not I" (*op. cit.*), p.200.
- 206 Charles Marowitz, "A Quick Walk Away from Samuel Beckett," Encore, IX March-April, 1962, p.44.
- 207 *Ibid.*, p.44.
- 208 Antonin Artaud, "Sur le Théâtre balinais", Le Théâtre et son double, Œuvres complètes, Tome 4, (*op. cit.*), p.76. Translation : "On the Balinese theatre", Collected Works Volume 4 (*op. cit.*), p.46 : "the star dancer's gesture is highly significant, always touching the same spot on his head as he does, as if he wanted to mark the place and existence of some focal mind's eye".
- 209 'Breath' and other shorts, Faber and Faber, 1971, p.25.
- 210 Antonin Artaud, "Le Théâtre et la cruauté", Le Théâtre et son double, Œuvres complètes Tome 4 (*op. cit.*), p.104. Translation, "Theatre and Cruelty", Collected Works Volume 4 (*op. cit.*), p.66 : "Practically speaking, we want to bring back the idea of total theatre, where theatre will recapture from cinema, music-hall, the circus and life itself, those things that always belonged to it."
- 211 Martin Dodsworth, "Film and the religion of art", Beckett the Shape Changer, ed. K.Worth (*op. cit.*), p.181.
- 212 Ruby Cohn, Back to Beckett (*op. cit.*), p.212.
- 213 *Ibid.*, p.211.
- 214 'Breath' and other shorts (*op. cit.*), p.21.
- 215 *Ibid.*, p.20.
- 216 *Ibid.*, p.21.
- 217 *Ibid.*, p.19. Other quotations from the "dramaticule" will be found on pp.19-20.
- 218 James Knowlson, in his article "Good Heavens" for Gambit vol.7, no. 28, John Calder, 1976, pp.101-105, describes an earlier version of Come and Go in which this is made explicit.
- 219 Ruby Cohn, Back to Beckett (*op. cit.*), p.211.

- 220 Enoch Brater, "The 'I' in Beckett's Not I" (op. cit.), p.196.
- 221 Not I (op. cit.), p.1. Other page references are noted in the text.
- 222 Ruby Cohn in Back to Beckett (op. cit.), pp.212-213, discusses this aspect of Not I.
- 223 Play (op. cit.), p.17.
- 224 James Knowlson mentioned this in his broadcast for BBC Radio 3 : From "Godot" to "Footfalls", first broadcast in April 1976 for Beckett's birthday celebrations, and repeated on 9 July 1976.
- 225 That Time, Faber and Faber, 1976, p.9. Other page references are noted in the text.
- 226 Footfalls, Faber and Faber, 1976, p.12. Other page references are noted in the text.
- 227 Martin Esslin, "Voices, Patterns, Voices" (op. cit.), p.98.
- 228 James Knowlson mentioned this in his broadcast, From "Godot" to "Footfalls" (op. cit.).
- 229 See Walter D. Asmus, "Beckett Directs Godot" (op. cit.), p.23.
- 230 Israel Shenker, "Moody Man of Letters" (op. cit.), p.1.

Chapter Six : Harold Pinter's 'No Man's Land'

Page references to No Man's Land, Eyre Methuen, revised, paperback edition, 1975, are cited in the text.

- 1 "Between the Lines", an account of a speech to the Seventh National Student Drama Festival in Bristol, The Sunday Times, 4 March 1962, p.25, col.5.
- 2 See "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot, Faber and Faber, 1969, pp.14-15.
- 3 The phrase is Pinter's own, quoted in Martin Esslin; Pinter : A Study of his Plays, Eyre Methuen, 1973, p.35. Martin Esslin cited Pinter's interview with Kenneth Tynan, in the series People Today, BBC Home Service, 28th October 1960 ; pre-recorded 19th August 1960.
- 4 Lawrence M. Bensky, "Harold Pinter : An Interview", in Arthur Ganz (Ed.), Pinter, "Twentieth Century Views" series, (Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey) Prentice-Hall International, 1972, p.29.

- 5 Quoted in Martin Esslin, Pinter (op. cit.), p. 35.
- 6 "Harold Pinter Replies", New Theatre Magazine volume 11, no. 2, 1961, pp. 8-9.
- 7 Katharine J. Worth, Revolutions in Modern English Drama, G. Bell and Sons, 1973, pp. 86-100.
- 8 For criticism emphasising Pinter's influence by Beckett, see :
Martin Esslin, 'Godot and His Children : The Theatre of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter', in William A. Armstrong's collection Experimental Drama, G. Bell and Sons, 1963, pp. 128-146. "Like Beckett, Pinter wants to communicate the mystery, the problematical nature, of man's situation in the world. However natural his dialogue, however naturalistic some of his situations may superficially appear, Pinter's plays are also basically images, almost allegories, of the human condition." (p. 140).
Ruby Cohn, 'The World of Harold Pinter', in A. Ganz (op. cit.), pp. 78-92 places Pinter "between Beckett and the Angries" : "Like Osborne, Pinter looks back in anger ; like Beckett, Pinter looks forward to nothing (not even Godot)." (p. 79).
- 9 "Harold Pinter : An Interview" in A. Ganz (op. cit.), p. 22.
- 10 Harold Pinter, "Beckett", in John Calder (Ed.), Beckett at Sixty : a Festschrift (op. cit.), p. 86.
- 11 "Pinter on Beckett", New Theatre Magazine vol. xi no. 3, 1971, p. 3.
- 12 Pinter read the following passages from "Molloy", "Malone Dies", "The Unnameable", John Calder (Publishers Ltd.) 1959, reprinted by Calder and Boyars Ltd., 1966 : pp. 88-91 (from "It was winter" to "where he happened to be") ; pp. 225-226 (from "And I must say" to "not knowing what my prayer should be nor to whom") ; pp. 305-306 (from "All these Murphys" to "until I need speak no more") ; pp. 388-391 (from "No point either, in your thirst" to "that's enough") ; pp. 414-418 (from "I see nothing" to "I'll go on").
Mention should also be made of the fact that Pinter performed in Beckett's rough sketch for a radio play, Rough for Radio, for BBC Radio 3, in the Beckett birthday celebrations in April 1976.
- 13 "Molloy", "Malone Dies", "The Unnameable" (op. cit.), p. 91.
- 14 Ibid., p. 225.
- 15 Ibid., p. 390.
- 16 Ibid., p. 417.
- 17 Ibid., p. 417.
- 18 Ibid., p. 418.
- 19 Russell K. Alspach and Catharine C. Alspach (Eds.), The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats (op. cit.), p. 805.

- 20 J.A.M. Whistler, "Mr. Whistler's 'Ten O'Clock' ", in The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, William Heinemann, 1890, pp.131-159. See p.155 for the quoted pronouncement.
- 21 See "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", The Complete Plays and Poems of T.S. Eliot (op. cit.), p.14.
- 22 See The Waste Land, The Complete Plays and Poems of T.S. Eliot (op. cit.), p.62.
- 23 See Sweeney Agonistes, The Complete Plays and Poems of T.S. Eliot (op. cit.), p.122.
- 24 Ibid., p.125.
- 25 Quoted in Martin Esslin (op. cit.), p.40 : he cites the programme note for The Room and The Dumb Waiter at the Royal Court Theatre on 8th. March 1960.
- 26 The Dwarfs in "A Slight Ache" and other plays, Methuen, 1968 corrected ed., pp.111-112.
- 27 'Between the Lines', The Sunday Times, (op. cit.), col.7.
- 28 Ibid., cols. 6-7.
- 29 Gerard Manley Hopkins, letter to A.W.M. Baillie, 1864, in Gerard Manley Hopkins : A Selection of his Poems and Prose, ed. W.H. Gardner, Penguin, ¹⁹⁵³p:159.
- 30 Ibid., pp.156-157.
- 31 Lawrence M. Bensky, "Harold Pinter : An Interview", A. Ganz (op. cit.), pp.31-32.
- 32 Quoted in Hugh Nelson, "The Homecoming ; Kith and Kin", Modern British Dramatists, ed. John Russell Brown, "Twentieth Century Views" series. (Englewood Cliffs : New Jersey), Prentice-Hall, 1968, pp.153-154. Hugh Nelson cited Harold Pinter and Hallam Tennyson's interview for the BBC General Overseas Service, August 7, 1960.
- 33 "Harold Pinter Replies" (op. cit.), p.10.
- 34 Lawrence M. Bensky, "Harold Pinter : An Interview", A. Ganz (op. cit.), p.32.
- 35 "Between the Lines", The Sunday Times (op. cit.), col.6.
- 36 Ibid., col.6.
- 37 "Harold Pinter Replies", New Theatre Magazine (op. cit.), pp.9-10.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a list of the books, the theses, the unpublished radio broadcasts and the articles that have been cited. Publishers are given and places of publication outside London are named. Abbreviations are as follows :

U.	= University
F.	= Press (e.g. U. of Toronto P.)
<u>PMLA</u>	= <u>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</u>
<u>TLS</u>	= <u>Times Literary Supplement</u>

Where several works are cited by one author, these are listed in chronological order. Where several works are cited by one author and these include both original works in a foreign language and translations of those works, the original works are cited first in chronological order, followed by the translations in chronological order.

Books, Theses, and Unpublished Radio Broadcasts

ALVAREZ, A., The Savage God, first published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971, and re-issued by Penguin, 1974.

ARCHER, William, The Theatrical World of 1895, Walter Scott, 1896. Vol. 3 of The Theatrical World for 1893(-1897), Walter Scott, 1894-1898.

ARISTOPHANES, "The Wasps", "The Feet and the Women", "The Frogs", translated by David Barrett, Penguin, 1964.

ARTAUD, Antonin, Oeuvres complètes, tome 1, Paris : Librairie Gallimard, 1956.

———, Oeuvres complètes, tome 4, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1964.

———, Collected Works, volume 1, translated by Victor Corti, Calder and Boyars, 1968..

———, Collected Works, volume 4, Calder and Boyars, 1974.

BECKETT, Samuel, "Molloy", "Malone Dies", "The Unnamable", John Calder (Publishers Ltd.), 1959, reprinted by Calder & Boyars Ltd., 1966.

———, "Beckett's Letters on Endgame", in WOLF, Daniel and FANCHER, Edwin (Eds.), The Village Voice Reader : A Mixed Bag from the Greenwich Village Newspaper, Grove Press : New York 1963, pp.166-169. (First published by Doubleday : Garden City, N.Y., 1962.)

———, Watt, Calder and Boyars, 1963.

- , Endgame, Faber and Faber, 1964.
- , "Proust" and "Three Dialogues" with Georges Duthuit, John Calder, 1965.
- , "Krapp's Last Tape" and "Embers", Faber and Faber, 1965.
- , Waiting for Godot, Faber and Faber, 1965.
- , Happy Days, Faber and Faber, 1966.
- , En attendant Godot, ed. Colin Duckworth, Harrap, 1966.
- , No's Knife, Calder and Boyars, 1967.
- , "Play" and two short pieces for radio, Faber and Faber, 1968.
- , Murphy, (first published by G.Routledge, 1938), John Calder, 1963, reprinted : Calder and Boyars, 1969.
- , More Pricks Than Kicks, Calder and Boyars, 1970.
- , 'Breath' and other shorts, Faber and Faber, 1971.
- , Film, Faber and Faber, 1972.
- , Cur Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, Faber and Faber, 1972. First published by Shakespeare and Co., Paris, 1929.
- , Not I, Faber and Faber, 1973.
- , Footfalls, Faber and Faber, 1976.
- , That Time, Faber and Faber, 1976.
- , Rough for Radio (broadcast), B.B.C. radio 3, April 1976.

BENSKY, LAWRENCE M., "Harold Finter : An Interview", in A. Ganz (ed.), Finter, "Twentieth Century Views" Series, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall International, 1972, pp.19-33.

BLOCK, Haskell M., Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama, Wayne State U.P., 1963.

BLOWS, W. M., "An Appraisal of Critical Assessments of the Outlook of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam in the light of a Detailed Examination of the Symbolism and Thought of the Êve future", Ph.D. Thesis for the University of London, 1956.

BORNECQUE, Jacques-Henry, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam : Créateur et Visionnaire, Paris : A.G.Nizet, 1974.

- BOWRA, C. M., The Heritage of Symbolism, Macmillan, 1943.
- BROWNING, Robert, Paracelsus, Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1835.
- BUSHRUI, S. B., Yeats's Verse-Plays : The Revisions 1900-1910, O.U.P., 1965.
- , 'The Hour-Glass' : Yeats's Revisions, 1903-1922", in D.E.S. Maxwell and S.B. Bushrui (eds.), W.B. Yeats : Centenary Essays, Nigeria : Ibadan U.P., 1965, pp.189-216.
- CAWLEY, A. C., 'Everyman', Manchester, The University Press, 1961.
- CHALKER, John, 'The Satiric Shape of Watt', in Katharine J. Worth (ed.), Beckett the Shape Changer, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, pp.19-37.
- CHANDLER, Alice, A Dream of Order, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.
- CLARK, Barrett H., European Theories of the Drama, revised by Henry Popkin, New York : Crown Publishers, 1965.
- COE, Richard N., 'God and Samuel Beckett', in ^{O'HARA, John (ed.),} Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Molloy', 'Malone Dies', 'The Unnamable', Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, 1970. pp.91-113.
- COHN, Ruby, Back to Beckett, Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton U.P., 1973.
- , 'The World of Harold Pinter', in Arthur Ganz (ed.), Pinter, ('Twentieth Century Views' series), Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall International, 1972, pp.78-92.
- DANIELS, May, The French Drama of the Unspoken, Edinburgh U.P., 1953.
- DANTO, Arthur C., Nietzsche as Philosopher, New York : The Macmillan Company, 1965.
- DAVIGNON, Henri, Charles Van Lerberghe et ses amis, Brussels : J. Ducolot, 1952.
- DODSWORTH, Martin, 'Film and the religion of art', in K.J. Worth (ed.), Beckett the Shape Changer, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp.161-182.
- ELIOT, T. S., After Strange Gods : A Primer of Modern Heresy, Faber and Faber, 1934.
- , Selected Essays, Faber and Faber, 1951.
- , On Poetry and Poets, Faber and Faber, 1957.
- , The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot, Faber and Faber, 1969.

ELLMANN, Richard, Yeats : The Man and the Masks, Faber and Faber, paperback ed., 1961.

ENGELBERG, Edward, The Vast Design, Toronto : U. of Toronto P., 1964.

ESSLIN, Martin, 'Godot and His Children : The Theatre of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter', in Experimental Drama, ed. William A. Armstrong, G. Bell and Sons, 1963, pp. 128-146.

———, The Theatre of the Absurd (First published by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962), Revised ed., Pelican, 1968.

———' Pinter : A Study of his Plays, Eyre Methuen, 1973.

FAY, W. G., 'The Poet and the Actor', in Stephen Gwynn (ed.), Scattering Branches : Tributes to the Memory of W. B. Yeats, Macmillan, 1940, pp. 115-134.

FEDERMAN, Raymond and FLETCHER, John, Samuel Beckett : His Works and his Critics, Berkeley and Los Angeles, and London : University of California P., 1970.

FIDLER, Florence G., The Bird That Is Blue : A Study of Maeterlinck's Two Fairy Plays, Selwyn and Blount, 1928.

FINNEY, Brian, 'Assumption to Lessness : Beckett's Shorter Fiction' in K. J. Worth (ed.), Beckett the Shape Changer, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 61-83.

FLETCHER, John, Samuel Beckett's Art, Chatto and Windus, 1967.

FLETCHER, John, and SPURLING, John, Beckett : A Study of his Plays, Eyre Methuen, 1972.

FOWLIE, Wallace, Mallarmé, Denis Dobson, 1953.

FRAYNE, John P. (ed.), Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, Volume 1, Macmillan, 1970.

———, and JOHNSON, Colton, Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, Volume 2, Macmillan, 1975.

GOURMONT, Remy de, La Belgique Littéraire (2nd. ed.), Paris : Éditions Georges Crès et Cie., 1915. First published by

GREGORY, Lady Augusta, The Collected Plays III : Wonder and the Supernatural, ed. Ann Saddlemyer, Gerrards Cross : Colin Smythe, 1970.

HALLS, W. D., Maurice Maeterlinck : A Study of his Life and Thought, O. U. P., 1960.

- HENDERSON, John A., The First Avant-Garde (1887-1894), Harrap, 1971.
- HESLA, David H., The Shape of Chaos, Minneapolis : The University of Minnesota Press, 1971.
- HOPKINS, Gerard Manley, Gerard Manley Hopkins : A Selection of his Poems and Prose, ed. W.H.Gardner, Penguin, 1953.
- HUYGELEN, Paul, Maeterlinck and England, Ph.D. thesis for the University of London, 1954.
- HUYSMANS, J.-K., À Rebours, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1921.
- , Against Nature, a translation of À Rebours by Robert Baldick, Penguin Classics, 1959.
- IONESCO, Eugène, Notes et contre-notes, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1962.
- , Notes and Counter-Notes, a translation of Notes et contre-notes by Donald Watson, John Calder, 1964.
- ISHIBASHI, Hiro, Yeats and the Noh, Dublin : The Dolmen Press, 1965.
- JARRY, Alfred, Selected Works of Alfred Jarry, ed. Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor, Methuen, 1965.
- JEFFARES, A.Norman, and KNOWLAND, A.S., A Commentary on the Collected Plays of W.B.Yeats, Macmillan, 1975.
- JUNG, C.G., Psychology and Alchemy, translated by R.F.C.Hull, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953.
- , Psychology and Religion : West and East, translated by R.F.C.Hull, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.
- , The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, translated by R.F.C.Hull, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959.
- KENNER, Hugh, Samuel Beckett, John Calder, 1962.
- KERMODE, Frank, Romantic Image, Routledge and Kegan Paul, first published in 1957, revised ed. : 1961.
- KERN, Edith, "Moran-Molloy : The Hero as Author", in John O'Hara (ed.), Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Molloy", "Malone Dies", "The Unnameable", Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, 1970, pp.35-45.
- KNOWLSON, James, Samuel Beckett : An Exhibition, Turret Books, 1971.
- , From "Godot" to "Footfalls", B.B.C. Radio 3, April 1976, and repeated 9 July 1976.

KOTT, Jan, Shakespeare Our Contemporary, translated by Boleslaw Taborski, Methuen, 1964.

LECAT, Maurice, Le Maeterlinckisme, Brussels : Anc^{ne} Libraire Castaigne, vol.1, 1939; vol.2, 1941.

LERBERGHE, Charles Van, Les Flaireurs, Brussels : Paul Lacomblez, 1891.

LOVEJOY, Arthur G., The Great Chain of Being, first published by Harvard U.P., 1936, "Harper Torchbooks" series, New York : Harper & Bros., 1960.

MAETERLINCK, Maurice, "Alladine et Palomides", "Intérieur", et "La Mort de Tintagiles" : Trois Petits Drames pour Marionettes, Collections du Brussels, Edmond Deman Libraire, 1894.

———, Le Temple Enseveli, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1902.

———, Le Double Jardin, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1909.

———, Macbeth, a translation into French, Paris : Libraire Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1910.

———, Le Trésor des humbles, Paris : Mercure de France, 1910.

———, L'Ornement des Noces Spirituelles de Ruysbroeck l'Amirable, a translation into French, Brussels : Paul Lacomblez, 1911.

———, La Mort, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1913.

———, Théâtre, vol.1, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1918.

———, Théâtre, vol.2, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1918.

———, Théâtre, vol.3, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1918.

———, La Sagesse et la Destinée, Paris : Libraire Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1918.

———, Le Grand Secret, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1921.

———, Avant le Grand Silence, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1934.

———, Le Sablier, Paris : Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1936.

———, L'Autre Monde ou le Cadran Stellaire, New York : Éditions de la Maison Française, 1942.

———, Bulles Bleues, Monaco : Éditions du Rocher, 1948.

———, "Princess Maleine" and "The Intruder", introduced by Hall Caine, translated by Gerard Harry and William Wilson, Heinemann, 1892.

———, Ruysbroeck and the Mystics, translated by Jane T. Stoddart, Hodder and Stoughton, 1894.

- , "Pelleas and Melisanda" and "The Sightless", translated by Laurence Alma Tadema, Walter Scott, 1895.
- , Aglavaine and Selysette, translated by A. Sutro, Grant Richards, 1897.
- , "Alladine and Palomides", "Interior" and "The Death of Tintagiles" : Three Little Dramas For Marionettes, translated by A. Sutro and W. Archer, Duckworth, 1899.
- , The Buried Temple, translated by A. Sutro, G. Allen and Unwin, 1902.
- , Death, translated by A. T. de Mattos, Methuen, 1911.
- , The Treasure of the Humble, translated by Alfred Sutro, George Allen, 1911.
- , Wisdom and Destiny, translated by A. Sutro, George Allen, 1911.
- , Our Eternity, translated by A. T. de Mattos, Methuen, 1913.
- , The Double Garden, translated by A. T. de Mattos, George Allen, 1914.
- , The Great Secret, translated by B. Miall, Methuen, 1922.
- , Before the Great Silence, translated by B. Miall, G. Allen and Unwin, 1935.
- , The Hour Glass, translated by B. Miall, Allen and Unwin, 1936.
- , The Great Beyond, translated by Marta K. Neufeld and Renee Spodhem, Rider and Co., 1951.
- MALLARMÉ, Stéphane, Ceuvres completes, ed. Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry, Paris : 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', La Librairie Gallimard, 1956.
- MARLOWE, Christopher, Dr. Faustus, ed. John D. Jump, 'The Revels Plays' series, Methuen, 1962. Published as a University Paperback in 1968.
- MAXWELL, D.E.S., and BUSHRUI, S.B., W.B. Yeats : Centenary Essays, Nigeria : Ibadan U.P., 1965.
- METMAN Eva, "Reflections on Samuel Beckett's Plays", in Martin Esslin (ed.), Samuel Beckett ("Twentieth Century Views" series) Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, 1965, pp.117-139.
- MICHAUD, Guy, Mallarmé : 1 Homme et l'Œuvre, Paris : Hatier-Boivin, 1953.
- , Mallarmé, translated by M. Collins and B. Humez, Peter Owen, 1966.

MIHALOVICI, Marcel, "My Collaboration with Samuel Beckett", in Beckett at Sixty : a Festschrift (a collection introduced by John Calder), Calder and Boyars, 1967, pp.20-22.

MOORE, John Rees, Masks of Love and Death, Ithaca and London : Cornell U.P., 1971.

MOSES, Montrose J., "Everyman", New York : Mitchell Kennerley, 1908.

NATHAN, Leonard E., The Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats, New York and London : Columbia U.P., 1965.

NELSON, Hugh, "The Homecoming : Kith and Kin", in John Russell Brown (ed.), Modern British Dramatists, "Twentieth Century Views" series, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, 1968, pp.145-163.

NIETZSCHE, F.W., Die Geburt der Tragödie, in Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, vol.3.i, Berlin and New York : Walter de Gruyter, 1972, pp.4-152.

———, The Birth of Tragedy, in The Complete Works, vol.1, ed. Oscar Levy, translated by W.A.Haussmann, George Allen and Unwin, 1909.

O'CASEY, Sean, The Letters of Sean O'Casey : Volume 1, 1910-1941, ed. David Krause, Cassell, 1975.

O'DRISCOLL, Robert, Symbolism and Some Implications of the Symbolic Approach : W.B.Yeats during the eighteen-nineties, Dublin : The Dolmen Press, 1975.

PARKINSON, Thomas, W.B.Yeats : Self-Critic, Berkeley and Los Angeles : U. of California P. and C.U.P., 1951.

FATER, Walter, The Renaissance, first published by Macmillan, 1873, and including "The School of Giorgione" in the 3rd. ed. of 1888, Fontana Library, Collins, 1961.

FILLING, John, Samuel Beckett, Routledge, 1976.

FINTER, Harold, "Beckett", in Beckett at Sixty : a Festschrift, a collection introduced by John Calder, Calder and Boyars, 1967, p.86.

———, The Birthday Party, second revised edition, Methuen, 1965.

———, "A Slight Ache" and other plays, Eyre Methuen, 1968.

———, No Man's Land, Eyre Methuen, revised paperback edition, 1975.

FOTTER, Robert, The English Morality Play, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.

FREMINGER, Alex, WARNKE, Frank J., and HARDISON, C.B., Jr., Princeton Encyclopoedia of Poetry and Poetics, Macmillan, 1975.

RAITT, A.W., Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et le Mouvement symboliste, Paris : Librairie José Corti, 1965.

ROBBE-GRILLET, Alain, "Samuel Beckett, or 'Presence' in the Theatre", in Martin Esslin (ed.), Samuel Beckett ("Twentieth Century Views" series), Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, 1965, pp.108-116.

SCHILLER, J.C.F.von, "Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung", Schillers Werke : in zwei Bänden, vol.2, Munich : "Knaur Klassiker", Droemersch Verlaganstalt, 1954.

———, 'On Simple and Sentimental Poetry', Works, vol.6, George Bell, 1910.

SCHNEIDER, Alan, "Waiting For Beckett", in Beckett at Sixty : a Festschrift, a collection introduced by John Calder, Calder and Boyars, 1967, pp.34-52.

SHAKESPEARE, William, Hamlet, The Signet Classic Shakespeare edition, ed. Edward Hubler, New York : The New American Library, and The New English Library, 1963.

———, King Lear, The Arden Shakespeare edition, ed. Kenneth Muir, Methuen, 1961.

SHELLEY, P.B., Shelley : Poetical Works, O.U.P., 1967.

SIDNELL, M.J., 'Hic and Ille : Shaw and Yeats', in Robert O'Driscoll (ed.), Theatre and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland, O.U.P. and U. of Toronto P., 1971, pp.156-178.

SIDNELL, Michael J., MAYHEW, George P., and CLARK, David R., Druid Craft : The Writing of "The Shadowy Waters", Dublin : The Dolmen Press, and O.U.P., 1972.

SHAW, G.B., Dramatic Opinions and Essays, Archibald Constable and Co., 1907.

———, Florence Farr, Bernard Shaw, W.B.Yeats : Letters, Cuala Press, 1941.

———, Bernard Shaw : Collected Letters, 1874-1897, ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1965.

———, Bernard Shaw : Collected Letters, 1898-1910, ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1972.

———, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw : Collected Plays with their Prefaces, vol. 1, ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1970.

———, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw : Collected Plays with their Prefaces, vols. 2 and 3, ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1971.

——, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw : Collected Plays with their Prefaces, vol. 5, ed. Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, 1972.

SOPHOCLES, The Theban Plays, translated by E. F. Watling, Penguin, 1947.

SYMONS, Arthur, Studies in Prose and Verse, J. M. Dent, 1904.

——, An Introduction to the Study of Browning, revised ed. : Dent, 1906.

——, The Symbolist Movement in Literature, revised 2nd. edition, Constable, 1908.

——, Plays, Acting and Music, 2nd. edition, Constable, 1909.

——, Studies in Seven Arts, Martin Secker, 1924. First published in 1906.

——, Dramatis Personae, Faber and Gwyer, 1925.

SMITH, Carol H., T. S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton U. P., 1963.

SPLAIGHT, Robert, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, Heinemann, 1954.

TINDALL, William York, "The Symbolism of W. B. Yeats", in John Unterecker (ed.), Yeats, 'Twentieth Century Views' series, Prentice-Hall, 1963, pp. 43-63.

UNTERECKER, John, A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats, Thames and Hudson, 1957.

URE, Peter, Towards A Mythology, U. P. of Liverpool, 1946.

VENDLER, Helen Hennessy, Yeats's "Vision" and the Later Plays, Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard U. P., and O. U. P., 1963.

VILLIERS DE L'ISLE-ADAM, Jean Marie Mathias Philippe Auguste, Comte de, Axël, ed. Pierre Mariel, Paris : La Colombe, Editions du Vieux Colombier, 1960. First published by Paris : Quantin in 1890.

——, Axel, translated by H. P. R. Finberg, Jarrolds, 1925.

WARNER, Francis, "The Absence of Nationalism in the Work of Samuel Beckett", in Robert O'Driscoll (ed.), Theatre and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland, O. U. P., and U. of Toronto P., 1971, pp. 179-204.

WENZEL, Siegfried, The Sin of Sloth : 'Acedia' in Medieval Thought and Literature, Chapel Hill : North Carolina, U. of N. Carolina P., 1967.

WHISTLER, J. A. M., "Mr. Whistler's 'Ten O'Clock' ", in The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, William Heinemann, 1890, pp. 131-159.

WILSON, Edmund, Axel's Castle, first published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931; Fontana Library, 1961.

WILSON, F.A.C., Yeats's Iconography, Methuen University Paperback, 1969. First published by Victor Gollancz, 1960.

WORTH, Katharine J., Revolutions in Modern English Drama, G. Bell and Sons, 1973.

YEATS, W.B., Plays For An Irish Theatre, A.H. Bullen, 1911.

———, On The Boiler, Dublin : The Cuala Press, 1939.

———, W.B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore : Their Correspondence 1901-1937, ed. Ursula Bridge, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953.

———, The Letters of W.B. Yeats, ed. Allan Wade, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.

———, Mythologies, Macmillan, 1959.

———, Collected Plays, Macmillan, 1960.

———, Autobiographies, Macmillan, 1961.

———, Collected Poems, Macmillan, 1961.

———, Essays and Introductions, Macmillan, 1961.

———, A Vision, Macmillan, 1962.

———, Explorations, Macmillan, 1962.

———, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats, ed. Russell K. Alspach and Catharine C. Alspach, Macmillan, 1966.

———, W.B. Yeats : Memoirs, ed. Denis Donoghue, Macmillan, 1972.

Articles

ASMUS, Walter D., 'Beckett Directs Godot', Theatre Quarterly, vol. v, no. 19-20, 1975, pp. 19-26.

BECKETT, Samuel (and others), 'Poetry is Vertical', transition 21, ed. Eugène Jolas, March 1932, The Servire Press, pp. 148-149.

———, Sedendo et Quiesc(i)endo, transition 21, ed. Eugène Jolas, The Servire Press, March 1932, pp. 13-20.

———, 'The Essential and the Incidental', The Bookman, vol. 87, 1934, p 111.

——, "Beckett's Letter to George Devine re 'Flay'", New Theatre Magazine, Samuel Beckett Issue, Vol. XI no. 3, 1971, pp. 16-17.

BRATER, Enoch, "Noah, Not I, and Beckett's 'Incomprehensibly Sublime' ", Comparative Drama, 8, 1974-1975, pp. 254-263.

——, "The 'I' in Beckett's Not I", Twentieth Century Literature, vol. 20, 1974, pp. 189-200.

COHN, Ruby, "The Plays of Yeats through Beckett Coloured Glasses", Threshold, 19, Autumn 1965, pp. 41-47.

ESSLIN, Martin, "Voices, Patterns, Voices", Gambit, vol. 7 no. 28, pp. 93-99.

FRANCIS, Richard Lee, "Beckett's Metaphysical Tragicomedy", Modern Drama, December 1965, pp. 259-267.

FRASER, G.S., "They Also Serve", TLS, 10 February 1956, p. 84.

GADDIS, Marilyn, "The Purgatory Metaphor of Yeats and Beckett", London Magazine, vol. 7, August 1967, pp. 33-46.

GOLDGAR, Harry, "Axël de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et The Shadowy Waters de W. B. Yeats", Revue de Littérature Comparée, vol. 24, 1950, pp. 563-574.

JOLAS, Eugène, "Preface", transition 21, The Servire Press, March 1932.

KNOWLSON, James, "Beckett and John Millington Synge", Gambit, vol. 7, no. 28, John Calder, 1976, pp. 65-81.

——, "Good Heavens", Gambit, vol. 7, no. 28, John Calder, 1976, pp. 101-105.

MAROWITZ, Charles, "A Quick Walk Away from Samuel Beckett", Encore, ix, March-April 1962, pp. 43-45.

PAULY, Marie-Hélène, "W. B. Yeats et les symbolistes français", Revue de Littérature Comparée, vol. 20, 1940-1946, pp. 13-33.

FINTER, Harold, "Harold Pinter Replies", New Theatre Magazine, vol. II, no. 2, 1961, pp. 8-10.

——, "Between the Lines", The Sunday Times, 4 March 1962, p. 25.

——, "Pinter on Beckett", New Theatre Magazine, vol. xi, no. 3, 1971, p. 3.

RYAN, Lawrence V., "Doctrine and Dramatic Structure in Everyman", Speculum, 32, 1957, pp. 722-735.

SHENKER, Israel, "Moody Man of Letters", New York Times, Sunday May 6 1956, Section 2, pp. 1-3.

STRAUSS, Walter A., "Dante's Belacqua and Beckett's Tramps", Comparative Literature, XI, no. 3, Summer 1959, pp. 250-261.

VAN LAAN, Thomas F., "Everyman : A Structural Analysis", PMLA, 1963, pp. 465-475.

WORTH, Katharine J., "Yeats and the French Drama", Modern Drama, 1966, pp. 382-391.

.....oo0oo.....