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THE ART THEME IN JOYCE CARY'S FIRST TRILOGY

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THE ART THEME IN JOYCE CARY'S FIRST TRILOGY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Andrew Wright finds what he calls "the free man" in three different manifestations in the work of Joyce Cary: The creator who designs an image for himself of what his freedom ought to be; the "artist in description"; the "artist in fact."¹ It is difficult to say which of these types has most engaged Cary's mind, for Cary is primarily interested in the individual design of freedom. His best novels are those in which a major character is either the artist in description or the artist in fact. Only two of Cary's novels have as the protagonist an artist in fact--Mr. Johnson and The Horse's Mouth. The artist in fact as other than protagonist is to be found in at least seven Cary novels. The artist in description is to be found as protagonist in five novels, Charley Is My Darling, Herself Surprised, To Be A Pilgrim and Except The Lord and in a particularly limited way, A House of Children.

¹Andrew Wright, Joyce Cary, A Preface to His Novels (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 90.

The free man in Cary's first three novels, Aissa Saved, An American Visitor and The African Witch, is not an artist in either of these two senses; yet Cary's concern with design, or the "art of life," as Thomas Wilcher calls it in To Be A Pilgrim, is so evident in these works that Andrew Wright frequently uses the words "art" and "artist" in referring to the principals in these three novels. The artist as minor character appears first as Cleeve Corner in Castle Corner, the fourth novel; as Mr. Lommax in Charley Is My Darling, the sixth; as Geoffrey Tew in The Moonlight, the eleventh; and as Tom Nimmo in Prisoner of Grace, the thirteenth novel. The artist in these novels does not show a steady development toward the end product which would logically be Gulley Jimson of The Horse's Mouth. Geoffrey Tew and Tom Nimmo of course appear after Jimson. There are ten Cary novels which reveal the art theme. Two of these, Castle Corner and The Moonlight, need only be mentioned here as they do not employ this theme in any particularly significant way.

Wright notes that the first sketch of Jimson appears in the person of Lommax. The vaguely philosophical basis of Lommax's social irresponsibility is described by himself in words that might easily have been uttered by Jimson: "Perjury has no terror for the artist--he is damned already."¹ The only other sketch of Jimson

¹Ibid., p. 93.

appears in the person of Pinto Freeman in A House of Children, the seventh novel. If the artist as artist shows no logical progression toward the creation of the master artist Jimson, neither does the artist in description develop logically from Evelyn Corner in A House of Children to Chester Nimmo in Except The Lord. Coming between these two books is To Be A Pilgrim, in which the role of the specifically artistic imagination is the major interest. The power of art in Nimmo's life is great, although his function as artist in description is subordinate to his other roles and is in fact probably not sustained throughout the novel.

The development of the art theme in Cary's work begins with Mr. Johnson and ends with Prisoner of Grace because the time of Prisoner of Grace, near the end, seems to be somewhat later than that in Except The Lord. In the introduction of the art theme there appears a new and extremely important part of Cary's concept of the free man. The free man now becomes the destructive as well as the creative person.¹ As Cary's interest in art as a theme grows, so his own works improve throughout the canon. Cary's works do not, however, improve steadily after Mr. Johnson. Critics agree that in the main only three of the next seven novels are really good novels, and these three comprise the first trilogy, Herself Surprised, To Be A Pilgrim, and The Horse's Mouth.

¹Ibid. , p. 8.

Although the interest in the art theme is not sustained from Mr. Johnson on, its presence in the best works serves as a controlling norm within a given work. Art as norm is carefully developed in the art trilogy only; the use of art as norm throughout the canon shows, again not development, but diversity. As a norm in Mr. Johnson, Johnson's poetry, as it evolves into an ordered whole, becomes Johnson's vision of the ideal life which he lives in fragmentary episodes of revelry during which his poem is gradually composed. In the poem Johnson exists as a kind of life force designed to instruct the world in the "practice [of] dem great big happiness."¹ In the poem Johnson's infuriatingly practical wife becomes, like Sara Monday in Jimson's paintings, a symbol of fecund nature.

I got a lil girl, she roun' like de worl'.
 She smoot like de water, she shine like de sky.
 She fat like de corn, she smell like de new grass.
 She dance like de tree, she shake like de leaves.
 She warm like de groun', she deep like de bush.²

For Johnson, as the fecundating force,

The whole worl' make path for him, all same for de
 lions of de forest.
 De whole sea go dry for him all same dat King Moses
 from Egypt.
 De whole sky make light for him, all same de fire for
 Moses.
 De whole forest bow down for him . . .³

¹Joyce Cary, Mr. Johnson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 11.

³Ibid., p. 147.

Johnson's poem is presented in roughly six major sections, with one major theme: Johnson's relationship as creating force with creative nature. The first section is a description of Bamu before the wedding; the second a description of Johnson's relationship with the king of England; the third a description of Bamu during the bridal dance; the fourth is a description of the road. Johnson sees the road as a projection of his own phallic powers. It is his art, literally his music and dancing, which keeps the laborers on the job. The road viewed as a symbol of life in the raw is pointless. It really goes nowhere important and does no good whatever. Johnson's poem is good. It gives the road the only lasting value it has by using it as the materials of art. The fifth section is a song of Johnson's courage. The poet has just been beaten severely by the Waziri, who realizes that Rudbeck has no further use for Johnson now that the road work is finished and will no longer protect him. Because her husband is now an outcast, Bamu again leaves him. Johnson's song of courage is a vision of himself as a man of great power. He kills Gollup to maintain the vision, and must therefore be put to death by Judge Rudbeck.

The circumstances of Johnson's death are petty and sordid, yet the power of Johnson's art has been such that Johnson takes leave of the world not as it appears to those around him, but as it has been created in his poem:

Goodby, my night, my lil wife-night.
Hold me in your arms ten thousand time.¹

Johnson sees himself as literally absorbed into the life of his own poem. The comic littleness of his external life takes on in this way the dignity and pathos of an art whose perfection he has refused to see as something forever outside himself. He must have Bamu back in order that the poem can go on. Jimson kills his female, for he can be content with her in her visionary form. Both Johnson's life and poem work out the basic pattern of the life of the free man: The greater the intensity of one's freedom, the greater the vulnerability to destruction. The freedom to create is the freedom to destroy--and to be destroyed. One of the great attractions of Mr. Johnson is that the harshness of this view is given the redemptive order of art.

Cary's next novel, Charley Is My Darling, is a novel of childhood. In the essay written for the Carfax edition of this essay, Cary suggests in no way that he is interested in Charley as an artist except in the most general sense, in which any imaginative child is an artist. Much of the essay is given over to a description of Cary himself as a delinquent child. The precise nature of his interest in Charley is shown in the following quotation from the essay.

The significance of all this when I came to write Charley was the complex motives at work already in a child's mind; forces that are not different in kind from those that move a grown-up.

¹Ibid., p. 248.

The suddenness of temptation or, rather, inspiration, which (like many that come to an artist) is so quick that he doesn't even notice it, it leaves no moment for reflection. The imagination sees its opportunity, its prey, and instantly leaps upon it. You can watch this happen with any good talker, and you can see such inspired talkers carried suddenly away into brutalities. They drop bricks. That is to say, they are whirled into delinquency before they know it.¹

The basic danger and virtue of the creative imagination is its impulsive powers. In a person such as Charley, the imagination is "perpetually greedy"; therefore when the "world closes itself obstinately to his [the child's] mind, " he "will choose some valued thing to dirty or smash."² The motive power beneath the greedy desire to know the world imaginatively is described by the essay in the following way:

For of course the imagination is always looking for significance; both in the physical and moral world, that is its job, to put together coherent wholes, a situation with meaning, a place where the child does know, all the time, where he is.³

The imagination of the child is also described here as a "secret hunger . . . not only for aesthetic but moral comprehension."⁴

According to the essay, Cary is not interested in Charley as an artist but rather in some force in Charley which is the same force found

¹Joyce Cary, Charley Is My Darling (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), p. iii. The quotations from this essay are taken from the Harper and Brothers edition.

²Ibid., pp. v-vi.

³Ibid., p. vi.

⁴Ibid.

in the artist. The novel itself clearly reveals Charley to be an artist in description, for Charley's art is of a distinctly inferior sort, and it certainly does not engage Cary's mind as art, whereas Johnson's poetry is one of the most charming and memorable qualities of Mr. Johnson. Charley's stories are frequently summarized by Cary rather than told by Charley. Charley tells only four stories in any detail, and none of these is longer than two-hundred words. His only good painting, The Garden of Eden, is not described in any detail at all. Charley himself has little concern for the formal nature of his art.

Yet his artistic visions as shown in his stories do provide "coherent wholes" of an extremely limited and frequently criminal nature. He tells a few stories in which he sees himself as a successful artist; these stories alternate haphazardly with those of a criminal sort, and both kinds appear blended in Charley's life in the episode in which he lives secretly in the Galor house. This episode is a sadly reduced version of his ideal, artistic vision of himself. After this period in his life, Charley tells only one story, a story of violent destruction.

He begins his gangster stories in an attempt to find the identity he loses as a result of having his head shaved in the de-lousing to which he is subjected by the people who are helping to evacuate London during World War II. Because of his bald head, Charley becomes an outcast among the other children. Charley's first gangster story is about a group of criminals who take over a great country house and live there in

luxury with their women. The jeering boys are silenced by the story, but when a boy who has not been present to hear it suddenly begins to taunt him, Charley loses his powers. Again an outcast, he tries to do an impressionist painting of a bull, but he finds that Miss Alchin, an adult who ought to know what the artist Lommax would approve, does not care for the work. It is not sufficiently neat and representational. At the first opportunity, then, Charley resumes his gangster story and regains the respect of the other boys. He has now begun telling two stories at once, one the gangster story, the other of how he will take the group at his own expense to a nearby town and treat them. Although they know that he has no money, he so "holds the people by the power of his imagination,"¹ that he himself is convinced that he will make good his promise. He does so by stealing a car and snatching a purse. The children do not find Charley's actions strange, for they "are accustomed to the peculiar enjoyments of art."² When they arrive in Twyport for the day created by Charley, "they are all performing a kind of dance and song. . . . Charley's song is a saga of their adventure; his dance a play with danger."³ Fearing that he will be found out by the authorities, Charley again loses his hard-won sense of self and his status with the

¹Ibid., p. 72.

²Ibid., p. 74.

³Ibid., p. 92.

other children, and he again gives up his gangster stories and attempts to take an interest in his school work. Unable to do so, he slips away from school and helps Miss Alchin's mother to build a rock garden.

During this interlude he tells only one story. It is a continuation of his work on the rock garden, which is in itself "an artistic revelation,"¹ but which the civil defense authorities take over and make into a bomb shelter. "Like other artists,"² Charley must have something to work on, so that he begins helping two other boys build a cave house and resumes his gangster stories. Shortly after the cave house falls in, he is put on probation at Miss Alchin's house and is set to work doing still-lives of pots. Lifting the cloth on the table where he draws, and using the drawings as a blind, he does a Jimsonian painting of an Eden scene, later sandpapered off by Miss Alchin. Temporarily cut off by his probation from his friends, Charley tells only one story, one in which he achieves fame as a painter. Not content with this isolation, he begins to sneak away at night, goes to Burls House with his gang, gets drunk, enacts his vision of himself as a robber baron, and demolishes several rooms of the house. The paintings of Lommax, who has refused to take Charley seriously, are the boy's special target.

Escaping to the Galor cottage, Charley is given refuge by Lizzie, his girl friend, whom he has told stories of the house, rock

¹Ibid., p. 131.

²Ibid., p. 142.

garden and paintings the two would have when they get married. Hidden meanly from Lizzie's parents, living on food stolen from them by Lizzie, Charley in his conversations with the girl now checks his inventive powers, trying to make his desires commensurate with his practical ability. Charley is now willing to give up his art for a mundane though, to him, interesting way of life with Lizzie, having obtained the design for this life from a more sharply defined and colorful source, which is his art. Charley seems to be quite on the point of reaching this acceptance fully when he is discovered by the Galor parents and turned over to the police. In his next and final story, he destroys the remand home where he is waiting to be sent to prison. In his weapon, a tire lever, he takes "the nervous delight of an artist."¹

A House of Children, coming immediately after Charley Is My Darling, again shows Cary's interest in the ability of the imaginative child to structure small segments of experience into coherent wholes. That Cary likes to think of these wholes as being aesthetic in nature is shown by the fact that the narrator, Evelyn Corner, and his brother write plays and poems throughout the book. These coherent wholes are aesthetic in nature and they are like the structure which art gives, but they are only vaguely artistic in nature. The book does not concern itself first of all with art, but rather with the kinds of intuitive, direct

¹Ibid., p. 333.

experience which may furnish art much of its material. Even though the narrator by the time he reaches the age of nine has begun to write poems, the poems are exercises in childish ingenuity; they are not a structuring of any of the living experiences even hinted at, much less described, in the book. Throughout most of the novel, the art theme plays a minor role. Only at the end of the novel does it begin to assume a real significance for the narrator, who is actually a mask for Cary himself. Whereas Charley makes life imitate art because his life would otherwise be unbearable, Evelyn and Harry, the brother, who are happy children, do not even try to make art imitate life.

Pinto, the boys' tutor, is an artist, but he occupies a minor position in the novel except in a thematic sense. He is important in this way because "he was one of those people who could give the power of enjoyment; the sense of the concrete experience."¹ He is apparently unsuccessful as a playwright. The boys have no interest in him either as an artist or as a tutor, but as a companion of their excursions around Dunamara in Donegal. "It was he and my father who seized for us, now and then, out of the passing show of things, a sharp picture, a clear experience."² Considering the large place which the production of The Tempest occupies in the conclusion, it is tempting to try to see the

¹Joyce Cary, A House of Children (London: Michael Joseph, 1941), p. 10.

²Ibid., p. 11.

artist Pinto and the father as versions of the artist Prospero, who thus to the boys reveal the nature of art. It is logical to be so tempted, for in Pinto, Cary sows the seeds of the man who will become Jimson. Yet, Cary has kept Pinto and the father as two separate people because he is not here concerned with art itself; for the same reason, probably, he has divided himself into Evelyn and Harry:

I suspect that I divided myself in this way because I realized by some instinct (it was certainly not by reason) that the two together as a single character would be too complex for the kind of book I needed to write; a book full of that clarity, the large skies, and wide sea views, which belong to the vision of my childhood. For what would be clear and simple to the mind even of a child, is highly complex in description; and so the book that would be "true" to fact, would be false to the imagination.¹

Evelyn writes the poems--only a few lines of only two poems are given--and Harry writes the plays, but again, not as a reworking of experiences described in the book, but as expressions of pure imaginative strength:

Children are supposed to enjoy acting as a play-preparation for life; but we enjoyed acting not for its likeness to life, but for its unlikeness to our own lives. We always chose heroic parts and magnificent uniforms. While we strutted and spouted we were making for ourselves a world of romance, of poetry, and also invoking powers over the real world.²

Because Cary in this novel (and in none of the others save The Horse's Mouth) does not concern himself with the growth of the artist, the plays

¹Ibid., pp. vii-viii.

²Ibid., p. 137.

become progressively worse whereas the imagination, that of Evelyn, becomes better. Because they have been trained by Pinto and the father, the boys are prepared to live in a play, however bad it may be, and find "it more real than life."¹ They refuse to go see Pinto's first play because they are so caught up in rehearsing their own. Their next play fails completely because "plays were not so easy as they seemed, and with this went, as always, the feeling that life, too, was not so easy as it seemed."² Harry gives up play writing and turns to more practical pursuits, and Evelyn begins to lose his poetic inspiration. It is the rehearsals of Pinto's production of The Tempest that bring him back "into the current life."³ He strongly doubts that he himself has any real poetic gifts, but the "poetry [of The Tempest] played upon me directly as warmth and cold, mist and rain; carrying both idea and feeling."⁴

The last several pages of the novel are given to memories of The Tempest and its effect on Evelyn. Yet the novel as a whole has concerned itself with life rather than art. Cary here is describing the similarity between the child's responses to art and to life:

Children are born poets and singers. They sing to themselves in the cradle and delight in the simplest rhymes. They feel them by

¹Ibid., p. 172.

²Ibid., p. 175.

³Ibid., p. 220.

⁴Ibid., p. 223.

a direct experience just as they feel everything in life directly, without analysis or reason.¹

What a given work of art and a single experience of living give to the creative imagination is a sense of a "unity of experience."² Art and life both in this way form the mind. Until he sees The Tempest, Evelyn's grasp of his relationship to life is much more sophisticated than his understanding of art. After seeing the play, he says, "I didn't know poetry was like that."³ He therefore begins writing a poem "about a magician who was wrecked on an island where he tamed a wild man to do his will. His name, I think, was Osferro, and he had a familiar spirit called Lario."⁴ The poem is a failure. "The quality of our living experience could be translated into the experience of poetry which people would not read."⁵

The art theme in this novel as in Charley Is My Darling functions not as a controlling norm, primarily, but as a statement regarding the nature of the aesthetic experience in the mind of a child. To Charley, art is a norm, but the reader cannot accept most of his art. Cary himself is not interested in Charley's art except in so far as it is a

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 224.

³Ibid., p. 227.

⁴Ibid., p. 235.

⁵Ibid., p. 239.

reflection of the boy's predicaments. The tension between art and life is much greater in Charley Is My Darling than it is in A House of Children. Charley tells one story sustained in fragmentary form throughout the novel, whereas the art theme in A House of Children does not seem to be important at all in the first half of the novel.

Art in Sara Monday allows her to maintain within herself the original forms of primal Woman, Eve. As a norm in To Be A Pilgrim art offers itself to the sophisticated mind of Wilcher as an ideal of timeless intellectual beauty which allows him willingly to forsake the material world. Art in The Horse's Mouth manifests itself in patterns emanating primarily from the being of Sara and secondarily from Blake's mythology. Johnson, Sara, Wilcher and Jimson are defeated for the sake of their art. Nimmo is defeated by his art. It is against a Hebrew poem, part of which Nimmo at one time quotes, that he is most tellingly measured, but it is his own art that most effectively damns him, whereas the art of the protagonists discussed above redeems them. Nimmo's "art of stringing words together in poetic form"¹ is designed not to translate, to reveal, but to distort, to conceal. Nimmo knows that "art . . . has a fearful power and responsibility in the world--it acts directly upon the very centers of feeling and passion."²

¹Joyce Cary, Except The Lord (London: Michael Joseph, 1953), p. 99.

²Ibid., p. 93.

Nimmo utters these words immediately after seeing Maria Marten, an experience which was for him a dramatic representation of the Luciferian power about which his father had read to him and warned him in Paradise Lost. While discussing the effect on himself of seeing the play, Nimmo refers to the "irresistible appeal . . . of cruel and lustful egotism"¹ which he finds in Satan. Nimmo then hints that the clue to his crime lies in the experience of seeing the play and of deciding to use its black art for his own purposes. Nimmo's art becomes a powerful, luminously attractive one which is devoted in part to a life-long struggle against the forces of a dreadful poverty decreed, apparently, by God himself. Nimmo's art is so effective that he can use it to deceive himself when he chooses, and most of those around him, and most of his literary critics. The destructive workings of Nimmo's misuse of language are so frightfully complex that Cary builds into the first novel of the trilogy, Prisoner of Grace, an art theme which serves to reveal the worst side of Nimmo without equivocation.

In Mr. Johnson, Herself Surprised, To Be A Pilgrim and The Horse's Mouth, and even in Charley Is My Darling and A House of Children, the art theme involves the imitation of certain constants beneath the chaos of external life. These constants offer an aesthetic order toward which the principals are drawn and by which they willingly

¹Ibid., p. 94.

measure themselves. Nimmo realizes that his art is based on the order of a death-orientation, so that almost all of his language on the surface derives from a Hebrew-Christian ethic described in the psalm from which he takes the title of his book. It is the actor, Tom, Nimmo's son legally but Jim Latter's son actually, who in his highly skillful night club impersonations shows clearly the ghastly Satanic outlines of Nimmo's soul. Nina on one occasion sees this performance:

But even before he began to speak I saw that he was mimicking Chester--his first gesture, raising his hand to stop the applause was purely Chester's--and when he began to speak it was one of Chester's speeches. He spoke of the need for war to defend peace and to support true Christianity. He imitated even Chester's voice, and the peculiar way he had of screwing up his face when he had made a point and was waiting to let it sink in. . . . And at every moment I recognized some trick of Chester's that I had seen a thousand times and not really noticed, reproduced and made significant. When Tom rubbed his hands over each other in the air (a trick of Chester's) the action suddenly appeared loathsome, revealing a kind of horrible self-love; and when approaching a climax, he threw back his head, pointed with his finger, protruded his lips, and mouthed his words, his very mouth, the red twisting lips, seemed so disgusting that one wanted to turn away one's eyes.¹

Nimmo in retaliation kills Tom. The passage in which this murder is described is the last appearance of the art theme in Cary's novels.

Having used the art theme as norm so well in his best novels through 1944, it is to be regretted that Cary did not use it in A Fearful Joy, published in 1949. This novel is far too diffuse. It fails "because

¹Joyce Cary, Prisoner of Grace (London: Michael Joseph, 1954), pp. 340-341.

it attempts to chronicle too many of the revolutions in art and politics from the 1890's to the 1940's.¹ Had Cary concentrated on the point of view character, Tabitha Baskett, as an artist and omitted or reduced the concern with politics, the book might have come off better. As it is, Tabitha is not interested in art at all, although she does play the piano when a girl as a kind of self-punishment. During one brief period she plays for a living in a restaurant, but when she is offered a chance to become the mistress of a wealthy art patron, she accepts and sets up a salon for the nineties decadents. To her patron she looks precisely like a Beardsley drawing, but she does not know what he means by saying so and she does not try to find out. She never plays the piano again. She is chiefly interested in herself as a hostess and as a mother of her only child, a son by Bonser. Bonser, a crude sort of rogue with a great gift for enjoying life, is the only force that can stir Tabitha, and then only rarely, into an attitude or act of the kind of which Cary's artists and his artists in description are capable.

Doubtlessly if Cary had wished to work out consistently an art theme which would take into itself new and progressively complex meanings as the canon develops, he would not have allowed the Nimmo-Tom conflict to stand as his last statement on the subject. Cary's belief in the spiritual ordering force of language persists until he dies. Cary has only one perfectly consistent, intricately woven development of his

¹Wright, p. 90.

art theme sustained through a series of novels, and this development is found in his first trilogy. In his study of the relation between art and freedom, Cary does not do anything either before or after the first trilogy not implied strongly there. Nimmo, if he appeared in The Horse's Mouth, would be a version of the debased artist. It is possible that Cary could not do anything radically new with this theme after the first trilogy unless he made basic changes in his own artistic modes, as Jonson, for example, does in the movement from Old Comedy to New Comedy to tragi-comedy. There is little, if anything, in Cary's short fiction that bears on the art theme. The first trilogy contains all of Cary's fundamental beliefs regarding the role of art in the precarious being of the free man. It is for this reason that a study of the art theme in Cary's work can beneficially be devoted exclusively to the first trilogy.

Formal criticism dealing with this subject is almost non-existent.¹ Only a part of one article and a small part of one book concern themselves directly with it. There is a growing body of Cary

¹Of the more perceptive Cary criticism, there is one article which will be helpful when the time comes to determine the kind of novelist Cary is. This time cannot come, however, until a number of technical studies of the best novels have been made. In this article, Ryan observes that Cary is not an experimenter and therefore not a first generation novelist and that he is separated from other novelists of the second generation by the nature of his irony, which is based on the view that the world is ultimately comic. Marjorie Ryan, "An Interpretation of Joyce Cary's The Horse's Mouth," Critique, II (Spring-Summer, 1958), 29-38.

criticism, but most of it does Cary the disservice of being enthusiastic without being carefully analytical. Most of these works deal with Cary's ideas and his characters without reference to technical matters of language and structure. There are only four works in existence which attempt to deal with these matters in detail.

Cary employs the art theme to explore his major interest, which is not art itself but the creativity of the free mind. "The principle fact of life is the free mind. . . ." ¹ Cary believes that "If there is no free mind, then a person is a delusion, a mechanism which could not be aware of itself." ² The free mind, possessing self-awareness, is painfully aware of the isolation of the self; hence the need for a sense of creativity in an ordered form, the most perfect of which is aesthetic form, through which one can transcend the prison of the isolated self. It is no accident that a basic metaphor which the novels of the first trilogy have in common is imprisonment. The intensity of the sheer will with which Cary's people confront a harshly destructive reality has led Mr. George Woodcock to observe that these people

seek fulfillment in human terms so vast that they take on proportions of anti-divinity . . . one has the feeling that here is the last and ultimate flowering of that concept of man as an

¹John Burrows and Alex Hamilton, "The Art of Fiction, Joyce Cary," The Paris Review, VII (Winter, 1954-55), 65.

²Ibid., p. 73.

autonomous force which was launched by the Renaissance . . . celebrated by poets like Swinburne and Whitman in the high period of humanistic arrogance. . . . [Cary's books reflect a] . . . cult of individualism.¹

Because of the powerful assertion of will in someone like Jimson, for instance, Mr. Frederick R. Karl says that Jimson is not irrational in the modern sense, "despite the ultra-modern devices" Cary sometimes uses, for "in Cary's world, the individual still thinks his will can prevail. . . . Even if they destroy in order to re-create, they destroy with a definite end in view."²

¹George Woodcock, "Citizens of Babel, A Study of Joyce Cary," Queens Quarterly, LXIII (Summer, 1956), 235.

²Frederick R. Karl, "Joyce Cary: The Moralist as Novelist," The Contemporary English Novel (New York: Noonday Press, 1962), p. 133. Karl seems to think that characters must feel and act irrationally in order to be modern; yet he seems unable to make up his mind fully about the irrationality in Cary's people. A few pages after the citation above, he says, "Like many other Cary characters, Chester seems rarely to operate within the area of decision; rather, his choices are dictated by mysterious forces generated in his childhood, and without self-knowledge he can be neither profound nor even interesting. . . . Chester seems unaware of the forces driving him alternately to success and destruction" (p. 136). Whether Karl is correct or not in his insistence that Cary is a traditional novelist, C. G. Hoffman believes that in the trilogy form Cary achieves effects which are distinctly modern. According to Hoffman, Cary's trilogies contain the multiple point of view of the sort found in Lord Jim, for example, where multiplicity is gained through the balancing of the values of observer and observed. The narrative is focused on Jim, the analysis on Marlowe. The multiplicity of view point in Woolf and Joyce is achieved by doing away with the central observer altogether and dipping into the mind of any character at any given moment. Cary believes that "the more comprehensive a novel in scope, in width of scene, the more it loses in power and significance." (Hoffman is here quoting from Cary's Art and Reality.) The trilogy provides the scope and the individual novels retain

Those who have insisted that the three worlds of the novels in the first trilogy are so separate as to prevent a unified world from emerging¹ have not fully considered Cary's interest in the isolation of the individual mind. The unity of this trilogy will be discussed in some detail below, but it may be fruitfully suggested at this point that the separation of the principals on the level of plot is functional.

Cary tells us that art is "the bridge between souls, meaning by that not only men's minds but their character and feeling."² When Cary speaks of art in this sense, he means simply any verbal unit in a context which provides "tone" and "emphasis."³ Yet the artist, as distinguished from anyone else who puts words together, is concerned with an "intuition [which] always comes to him as from a world of permanent

the significance of "the personal view." C. G. Hoffman, "Joyce Cary: Art and Reality, The Interaction of Form and Narrator," The University of Kansas City Review, XXVI (October-June, 1959-1960), 274-275.

¹Typical statements on this head are those of Elizabeth Kerr and Glenn Hatfield. Kerr believes that the first trilogy is not fully satisfactory as a trilogy "because the three worlds were not sufficiently interlocked to give the richness and depth that he [Cary] sought." Elizabeth Kerr, "Joyce Cary's Second Trilogy," University of Toronto Quarterly, XXIX (April, 1960), 311. Hatfield says that the first trilogy "is given weak support on the level of plot, where it might have been most effectively urged." Glenn W. Hatfield, "Form and Character in the Sequence Novels of Joyce Cary" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Department of English, Ohio State University, 1956), p. 21.

²Joyce Cary, Art and Reality: Ways of the Creative Process (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1958), p. 21.

³Ibid.

and objective forms. "¹ Even though Sara, Wilcher and Jimson each "makes a world that is his work of art,"² the worlds derive to a significant degree from the "permanent and objective forms" which make up that aesthetically delightful world of Sara Monday.

¹Ibid. , p. 44.

²Ibid. , p. 90.

CHAPTER II

HERSELF SURPRISED

In Sara Monday Cary reveals what he calls a ". . . human constant . . . a part of reality objective to us, that is, a permanent character of the world as we know it . . ." ¹ Cary is not writing of Sara here but of the nature of "elemental characters" in whose existence we must believe else ² ". . . the world would probably vanish into nothing. " ³ Sara is in this sense Nature. In a more specific sense she is basic, pre-moral or perhaps supra-moral female nature. It will be one of the purposes of this study to show precisely, if possible, the human constant in Sara. The discovery of the elemental constant in Sara gives Thomas Wilcher a new vision of society and Gulley Jimson a new vision of God. Sara is taken into the minds of both men as a reshaping force. To these two men she is not only flesh, wife, mistress--raw material, but also pattern. To Wilcher she is for many years a

¹Ibid. , p. 19.

²Ibid. , p. 20.

³Ibid.

companion and mistress; later she becomes for him the ancient design wrought by all pilgrim spirits from Chaucer's wife to Bunyan's Christian. To Jimson she is for years mistress, wife, and the female of females, original woman. Later she becomes a symbol of universal being and the subject of his most ambitious painting.

The critic's first task in working with Herself Surprised will be to determine how Sara appears to the critic rather than to Wilcher and Jimson. To say so is to imply, of course, the belief that this novel does not depend on either of the other two novels for its aesthetic integrity. A valid, although naturally limited view of what Sara is as material and pattern can be deduced from a reading of her novel alone. The question "What is the meaning of Sara Monday?" may therefore be profitably considered at this point.

Sara herself is not interested in the problem of identity, the problem which engages so many protagonists in the modern novel. Although she has an intuitive knowledge of self that allows her to achieve a high degree of personality integrity, she is not interested in self-analysis of the sort that so afflicts Mrs. Dalloway, for example. Sara is, really, not interested in motive at all. She says at the end of the story that she knows herself better than ever before, but she does not. Her own story suggests that she does not, and the subsequent books in the trilogy confirm the fact that she does not. If she were deeply interested in knowing herself, she would probably, given her lack of

education and her puritan background, see herself as irrevocably fallen from innocence. However, near the end of her story, while living with Wilcher at Cravens Gardens, she remarks on her feeling of maiden innocence: ". . . I would be gay all evening, as if I'd been a young girl coming from a party or from the Communion; not yet knowing my own self or the traps of the world" ¹

Writing the story reveals little of herself to Sara. Apparently she is not aware of her real motives for writing it. She is glad enough of the opportunity to sell her book to the papers, for the money will defray Tommy's school bills; and the arrangement of material in the first few chapters suggests vaguely that she is writing with serial publication in mind. Chapter one, for example, ends with the suggestion that her husband may leave her because of her uncontrollable whimsicality. Chapter two ends with the hint that she is going to try to justify a life of practical expediency necessary to the happiness of unpretty women. The third chapter ends with the implication that the reader may look forward to an account of the fall of a respectable woman, but after chapter six the technique of ending each chapter with a promise of exciting things to come is abandoned, and from that point on, most of the chapters are arranged after a rather casual, primarily chronological fashion, each enclosing an episode which is, in the main,

¹Joyce Cary, Herself Surprised (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), p. 200. Subsequent quotations from this novel will be followed by page number.

pleasant to Sara's memory. In spite of her obvious failure to present an analytical account of her criminal motives and acts and by her cheerful unawareness of discrepancies in her tale, Sara does, however, characterize herself as a person whose identity is supremely worth investigation by the proper reader. It is true that Sara is cognizant of the fact that she is sometimes involved in a moral dilemma, but such knowledge is not painful to her: "If I did wrong with Mr. Hickson so often, I can't believe I did but right" (p. 38). What Hickson has given her, among other things, is a negative example in himself of the results of too much analysis: He thinks about his life so much that he can get no joy out of it (p. 40). Sara attempts neither to understand nor to exonerate herself in logical terms. When Monday accuses her of having affairs with Hickson, the garden boy, Jimson and perhaps others, Sara does not deny his charges, partially because they are very likely true and partially because she realizes that it is emotionally and intellectually simpler to let Monday blame himself than for her to try to present a complex of explanations. Therefore she merely tells him that she cannot trust herself. "I don't know what I am," she truthfully adds (p. 73).

There are three important ways in which Sara does know herself. She knows in a simple, fundamental way when and why she is lost, when and why she is found and when and why she is happy. She recognizes, accepts and rejoices in her instinctive need for a man to care for. It ought to be noted that Sara never mentions her maiden name;

she is interested in herself only as a wife. After driving Jimson away, following the funeral of Monday, by her emphatic refusal to marry him, she begins to feel uneasy. She begins to worry about whether he is working and about how he is otherwise managing (p. 103). She begins to feel a pressure in her chest. A few days after deviously letting him know where she is to be found, she sees him and knows what the pressure was about (p. 105). The result is that she "marries" him and achieves a sense of belonging and being; she feels "like a woman" (p. 107) instead of "like a truck, which goes where it is pushed and knows not why" (p. 107). When because of a punch in the nose she leaves Jimson and goes to Queensport, she feels that she has "no business to be there alone" (p. 135). When she returns to Jimson to the one room that she shares with him at Miss Slaughter's, she feels once more that she is in her "own home" (p. 142). She feels this way partially because she has taken over the duties of housekeeper and cook, and when she can clean a house, she creates it and thus it becomes hers. Therefore she says, "I found myself singing over my pots, delighted every day" (p. 142). Sara believes that her "true place" in the world is the kitchen (p. 182). Although Sara may at times be a bit devious when her joy in living is threatened, she is at bottom honest both in living her life and telling her story. It is doubtful that the newspaper people who buy her story are going to be greatly pleased with it. There are no lurid details of any kind in it. Sara is not promiscuous in

the usual sense, and she does not dwell on the physical pleasures of the few bedroom scenes mentioned. There is really very little, other than an occasional pious platitude, to make the book appealing to the public. Fortunately, Sara is being paid in advance.

Not only does Sara not see herself as having been promiscuous, but she does not sentimentalize her experience. She does not have to do so; she knows for certain that she has had a great deal of happiness, for she is an experienced practitioner of the art of loving life. She does not delude herself into mistaking any of the forms of pseudo-love, as Fromm calls it,¹ for the real thing. The realism of Sara's view of herself is shown in many ways, one of the most significant of which is this avoidance of the "abstractification of love in terms of time."² Sara is a remarkably full illustration of Fromm's theory of the kind of person who knows how to love. The four chief elements in the makeup of such a person are the following: self knowledge, discipline, concentration, patience. That Sara establishes, through a creative love, a highly successful relationship with the world there can be little doubt. Her kind of self-knowledge prevents destructive illusions; her knowledge is an "intuition, the essence of any art,"³ an intuition which is a blend of

¹Erick Fromm, The Art of Loving (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p. 99.

²Ibid., p. 101.

³Ibid., p. 4.

her simple theory and her practice of a disciplined life. Although Sara regards herself as having been at times self-indulgent, and though she sees her love of ease as having been the cause of her downfall, the real truth is that she is a disciplined person and thus is a "productive"¹ person. She always enjoys "a thing done right" (p. 137) whether in dressing, cleaning, cooking, or love-making. Even when angry with Jimson, if she sees that she is going to yield to his amorous advances in spite of herself, she will decide to make the event as pleasurable as possible: "So I had to do as he wished, and since to do so without kindness and kisses is a mean dirty thing, I let myself be friendly" (p. 141). Her love of seeing a thing well done is so great that while she is in the midst of her first great cleaning of Tolbrook, she refuses to consider going back to Jimson even though he urges her to return. Sara is not compulsive, not a perfectionist. Her labor at Tolbrook is based on an organic relationship with the household objects. Compulsiveness, being based on fear, is mechanistic, but "the creative person unites himself with his material."² Sara is Weib, mother, lover, producer; she is not the indolent, luxurious classical mistress. Sara realizes that she knows how to love. While sitting in the newly-cleaned kitchen at Tolbrook, she remembers "what Jimson said about my true

¹Ibid., p. 125.

²Ibid., p. 17.

home being the kitchen, and that I was a born servant in my soul, and my heart gave a turnover and I felt the true joy of my life" (p. 182).

Sara invites comparison with Molly Bloom in such a way as to give a certain specificity, or rather a certain emphasis, to Sara's identity. The literary kinship of the two women revealed in Ulysses and in Herself Surprised in itself alone confirms Jimson's final view of Sara as a symbol of fecundity, among other things. Both women justify their sexual adventures by insisting that they are merely creatures of nature, for which not they but God is answerable. Sara so insists at least fifteen times and by implication numerous other times. Molly is explicit on this score at least three times and by implication throughout her entire monologue. Sara's justification in one passage is couched in language much like that in one of Molly's: "Providence must answer for our shapes . . ." (p. 26). ". . . I suppose that's what a woman is supposed to be there for or he wouldn't have made us the way he did . . ."¹ The word "nature" is frequently used by Sara and Molly in their generous reflections on fleshly desire. Both women greatly admire their own bodies. Sara at age forty-six, in her bath, looks admiringly down at her body and bewails her loss of youth and love. Molly while making chamber music, looks longingly down at her body and yearns for a true lover. Both comment occasionally on their best features, their

¹James Joyce, Ulysses (New York: The Modern Library, 1946), p. 762.

breasts and thighs, which are large and fertile. The women particularly admire their breasts. "They excite myself sometimes,"¹ Molly says. Each sees likenesses between her body and those in classical statuary. Both have husbands who are slightly depraved. Bloom's mild fetishism is parallel to Wilcher's occasional exhibitionism. Neither woman cares greatly for other women, but are completely absorbed in their men. Neither gets along well with daughters. Each is so grief-stricken at the loss of an only male child that she can bear to allude to the loss only once. Both want to find sons. Sara will find a son in any male child who will allow her to do so; she has three such in the course of her life. Molly wants a son in Stephen Dadelus, but having perhaps less delicacy than Sara, she wants him as a lover also. Although Sara is not as complex in terms of overt symbolism as Molly is, both are symbols of the eternal female, of life force. Each retains her essential innocence by giving herself to life. Joyce is surely referring to Molly's special kind of innocence when he calls her Madonna Bloom.² Sara's book is a work in praise of earthly life and love. Molly's monologue "is a vision of abundance."³ She is "earth . . . life force"⁴ She is "sane full

¹Ibid.

²Jacques Mercanton, "The Hours of James Joyce, Part II," The Kenyon Review, XXV (Winter, 1963), 100.

³W. Y. Tindall, A Reader's Guide to James Joyce (New York: Noonday Press, 1959), p. 234.

⁴Ibid.

amoral fertilisable untrustworthy engaging shrewd prudent indifferent

Weib. Ich bin das Fleisch das stets bejaht. "¹ Another aspect of fecundity shared by these women is that both are richly lactescent during the nursing season. Sara nurses her babies for a full nine months and could nurse them longer if she wished; yet her breasts remain full and beautiful. Jimson sees them symbolically and draws what is apparently the traditional vein of fertility across them in one of the bath pictures.² Molly's breasts are so full that Bloom himself must give her relief orally, and he wishes to milk them into his tea. Tindall sees a sacramental significance in certain of Bloom's libations, and although he does not mention this one (not allowed by Molly in any case), it seems probable that Bloom's desire for such a drink may suggest not only an aspect of the man's spiritual isolation but also an aspect of the woman's failure to realize herself spiritually.

¹Ibid. Tindall is here quoting from Joyce's Letters. Compare Cary's statement that Sara's ". . . morals were the elementary morals of a primitive woman, of nature herself, which do not change; and she was supremely indifferent to politics, religion, economics." Quoted by Lord David Cecil, "The Novelist at Work: A Conversation Between Joyce Cary and Lord David Cecil," Adam International Review, XVIII (Nov.-Dec., 1950), 15. Note further the statement by Jimson that "when you knew Sara, you knew womankind, and no one who doesn't know womankind knows anything about the nature of Nature." Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 264.

²It is possible that Cary is here remembering Browning's Bishop, who has a lump of lapis lazuli "Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast." Cary shrinks from suggesting--except in the most subtle possible way in The Horse's Mouth--a comparison between Sara and the Holy Virgin.

It would indeed be willful for the critic to insist that Cary consciously wishes his readers to compare Sara and Molly. There are no overt allusions to Ulysses in Herself Surprised. If there is such an allusion in the trilogy, it occurs at the end of To Be A Pilgrim, where it seems likely that Cary wishes one to contrast Molly with Ann Wilcher.

The antiquity of Sara's essential being as a constant by which the true female may always be known is suggested in the observation by Andrew Wright that Sara has a Biblical counterpart in Sarah, the wife of Abraham. Wright here comments on an aspect of Sara's capacity for surprise not mentioned by other critics. When Abraham's Sarah, at the age of ninety-one, hears that she is to bear a son, she "laughed within herself, saying, after I am waxed old shall I have pleasure?"¹ Both these women are wanderers. Both allow themselves to be used by their husbands. The Biblical Sarah's services to the Pharoah are, to say the least, of a dubious nature; yet Abraham profits materially by them. Monday flourishes as a result of Sara's relationship with Hickson, and Jimson "rents" Sara to Wilcher. Both women apparently submit themselves deeply to their men in a way never found by most other women, and although Sara keeps her own integrity, she, like the women in Lawrence's novels, is never able to achieve perfect equilibrium in her love relationships. Like Lawrence's women, she

¹Quoted by Andrew Wright in an essay appended to Herself Surprised, p. 112.

lives in a mutable, tragic world. The literary figures with whom Sara may be profitably compared are all wife types. Even Molly can say yes to Bloom for all her life, even though she is at present engaged in an affair with Blazes Boylan. Cary strongly repudiates any suggestion that his Sara is at all like Moll Flanders--"that old bawd."¹ Moll Flanders is one of the most immoral and one of the least likeable women in literature, whereas Sara is "the most engaging woman in contemporary fiction."²

It is inevitable that the most engaging woman of pre-modern literature be called to mind by a study of Herself Surprised. Chaucer's Wife of Bath, like Sara, is a highly creative woman ever on the alert for an opportunity to be happy. Like Alison, Sara has been, for most of her life, a firm believer that the generative force of life has its basis in the flesh. Alison believes that the chain of Eros ascends from the "Venus Chambre" to God, and although Sara does not try to erect a philosophical rationale for her love of the flesh, it is to be noted that her religious affections are most strong when she is carrying on a satisfactory sexual affair. Sara and Alison are both "al Venerien," and therefore have a proper regard for their sexual attractiveness and at the same time have been properly admired by others for this quality.

¹Ibid., p. 284.

²Carlyle King, "Joyce Cary and the Creative Imagination," Tamarack Review, No. 10 (Winter, 1959), p. 49.

Ironically, the man each loved the best "was of his love dangerous. " Having loved passionately, both women have a painful awareness that "age, alas hath / al wol envenyme. " But yet not all: They both, at the end of their stories, still hope to find a workable love.

In a sense, Sara's story is an announcement to the world through the press that she knows how to be a good wife, that she is a skillful cook and housekeeper, that she is a warm lover and in general a circumspect human being. Alison's tale is a statement of her longing for the security of ideal love. What she will find is the love of God. Sara, however, is to be redeemed through love in this world only. Like the wife, she has five husbands whose lives with her make a story of the reconciliation of human nature to an ideal mode of conduct. Sara, unlike the Wife of Bath, is nevertheless not on her way to the City of God but to a life of brutal poverty which will end in a violent death at the hands of Jimson. Sara does not live in the carefully structured, Christian world of the Wife of Bath. Sara does finally find herself a young husband--a neurotic widower with whom she is not happy. She ends her life with an old husband, a brutal creature with whom she has nothing in common except a fear of a pauper's grave. Alison seems in her prologue to be able to argue her way into heaven by the sheer vitality of her rhetoric and by her brilliant distortions of the Pauline pronouncements on marriage, just as she has dominated her husbands by the force of her character and by her wiles. The point is that she

lives in a world where she can be finally and completely saved. The world of the comic experience in Chaucer's tales is framed by the larger worlds of the knight and the parson, and as the wife draws near to Canterbury, she is to participate in a saving act of penance to which the parson directs her. The prison chaplain merely tells Sara that she is getting what she deserves and no more. Sara's world is one of fearful insecurity and chance, a world in which at the crucial moments in her life she finds herself somehow surprised; for she cannot tell, really, whether she is saved or damned. Therefore she keeps her serenity and loves her life.

Although she is a wanderer who during her adult life has but one abode that one would normally call home, Sara's psychic energies are not vitiated through helpless diffusion. Wherever she is at any given time (except for the brief interlude with Rozzie) she knows enough about what she is to know what she wants. Her consistent and frequent use of domestic imagery shows her great love for and preoccupation with homey things. The fact that Sara in her metaphors so readily sees colors, forms, smells in domestic terms suggests her ability to make the world her home, that home is a creative image in the heart, an image which cannot be destroyed but only modified. Since she has no sense of history and since she, unlike Wilcher, has little of material value to be destroyed, she sees change itself as an organically creative thing. "Things change," she says, "like mold in a bread bin" (p. 39).

To maintain such a view is Sara's way of surviving destruction. Sara sees herself as having been acted upon, especially by her men, but the truth is that she makes a profound and in part aggressive commitment to what Cary sees as the basic psychic conditions of the female role. These conditions are not primarily but only partially those which require passiveness. Sara's love is as active as her imaginative power is vital. The significance of this vitality, for the ultimate purposes of this art trilogy, is revealed in her artistry as lover, and in her power of metaphor, which makes circumstances conform to an imaginative ideal.

Sara's interests are love, home, marriage, children. Her psychology is "al Venerien" and Marcien. (Jimson himself speaks respectfully of her military prowess in The Horse's Mouth.) The constant with which Sara seems to have been endowed by nature expresses itself as an intuitive drive to fulfill her interests. To be a lover without being also a wife will not satisfy her. When she engages in a love affair, she always manages to feel married. She makes no great point of this fact, because to feel married is for her perfectly natural. To be either wife or mistress would make Sara a parody of herself. Consequently, she patiently sets about teaching the reticent, bumbling Monday to be a fairly good lover, just as she puts aside any feelings of resentment toward Jimson, for not to do so would make her feel dirty. When she becomes the mistress of that penurious victim of routine, Thomas Wilcher, she always dwells, in her thoughts, on his better

qualities while submitting to him sexually. Being Venus-like, she may use her sex as a sort of trap, but although she is a fighter, she never uses her sex as a weapon, except in periods of mere female caprice totally uncalculated. To be merely a mistress and not in any sense wife and lover would be to betray the quality of motherhood in her nature and make her flesh unfecund. Sara's interests reflect her psychology as a kind of fixed constant of nature itself, but the full shape of this constant is revealed only when it expresses itself as process.

It is the design which this process follows that shows Sara to be artistic pattern. It has been noted above that Sara's intuitive powers are so disciplined, so concentrated in terms of her purpose to function fully as a female that the essence of her being blends with the raw material of her experience to produce a shaped life. Before this shape can be fully seen, the process in which essence and material become blended at a given point in Sara's life must be studied. The place which best illustrates the unifying power in Sara occurs not long after she becomes cook at Tolbrook. She is sitting in her kitchen at the end of a long day, feeling the joy of her work, reveling in the beauty of her surroundings. Because the passage is crucial to an understanding of Sara as a kind of artist-figure, it needs to be quoted in its entirety.

So here I am, I thought, mistress of my own world in my own kitchen, and I looked at the shining steel of the range and the china on the dresser glittering like jewels, and the dish covers, hanging in their row from the big venison one on the left to the little chop one on the right, as beautiful as a row of calendar moons, and the

kitchen table scrubbed as white as beef fat and the copper on the dark wall throwing out a glow to warm the heart, and the blue delf bowls like pots of precious balm.

And then beyond where the larder door stood ajar you could see bottles of oil and relish and anchovies and pickles and underneath the lid of the big flour bin as white as its own lovely flour; I call it a treat for queens to sink your hands in new wheaten flour. And next the larder, the dark scullery door with a wink within the brass taps to say: "Your servants, madam," and a slow drip from the one or other to tell me: "We are ready this minute and never will fail," and next the scullery, the kitchen pantry. I could not see its glass-fronted cupboards as fine as the British Museum, or its china and glass in thick heaps like the treasures of Aladdin. I could not see them, but I felt them like kingdoms in my charge. And, indeed, I felt bits of myself running out from the grand kitchen into pantry and scullery and larder and beyond into the passage and the stillroom and even to the wood cellar and the boot hole as if I was really a king or queen whose flesh is brought up to be the father of all his countries, and not to forget the little bye-lands even when they are on the dark side of the sun. You would say that I was putting out in buds like a shallot [*Italics added.*] with my big kitchen heart in the middle and my little hearts all around in the empire of those good faithful offices, all fitted up as they were. . . . Well, I thought, if you tied a knot of all the roads and railways and pipes and wires in the world it would come to a kitchen in the middle of it. And so close and neat, there wouldn't be room in it for a single piece of useless nonsense or vain furniture. For the great beauty of my jewels was that every one of them was needed . . . my shining armor was to keep dinners warm and my regiments were cut up chickens and ducks . . . (pp. 182-184).

Sara achieves the organic unity described in this passage in two ways principally, one of which is the force of her being; the other is her use of figurative language. It ought to be noted that at this point Sara is alone, forsaken by Jimson and, in effect, by her daughters. She is living in an ancient decaying manor from which the family have long since vanished. Yet Sara at this time feels herself to be at the very center of life; at the center of the kingdom of life, she rules as queen.

At the center of a great house, she is servant. At the center of the natural world, she is a shallot surrounded by burgeoning flowers which make seasoning for the food which becomes in another metaphor the regiments commanded by Sara in her war on chaos. The kitchen, which grows metaphorically out of Sara's flesh, a flesh designed, "brought up, " to give life to the world, becomes the center of all active life. The world flows out of Sara's flesh to shape itself in metaphoric form into a pattern which is "close and neat. " The process is an upsurge of the power of rebirth. The design is the formal design of art.

Sara is both form and matter. She has been absorbing the matter all her life; it has been growing in her for years. This matter has been absorbed specifically in her flesh by the force of the sort of experience which she describes as having with Jimson when they go to the Ancombe fair: "My flesh was so full of the dust and the warmth and the beer and the shaking" (p. 129). The flesh which for many years has taken into itself such generative matter as earth, heat, and Jimson's love will later reproduce this matter in artistic form. The reproductive process described in the kitchen scene is the climax of Sara's life as well as of her book.

Having seen, in part, what kind of character Sara is, it now remains to consider what kind of story she tells. What one finds is that the story produced by Sara is about an innocence which is inherent in the ability to be reborn. As the power of rebirth resides in the flesh of

Sara as Eternal Woman, Sara will tell a tale of the triumph--three major triumphs--of the flesh.

Even in her life with Monday Sara is able to find in her flesh a source of great vitality that makes her life, in general, pleasurable; but it is only after becoming involved with Jimson that she reaches heights of creativity allowed by her profound and special sensuality and limited only by her lack of the conceptual faculty. After being abandoned by Jimson and taken up by Wilcher, Sara begins a gradual committal to certain ossifying forces such as fear of law, fear of physical hardship, and a strong desire to save money. These are the qualities which are partially responsible for her imprisonment, a result symbolically appropriate. This is not to say, of course, that Sara loses all joy, for she certainly does not, but when we see her a few years after she writes her book, she has become an aged char whose chief concern is that she receive a decent burial. Nevertheless, she is capable even in these last years of achieving moments reminiscent of the former Sara-Eve so captivating to the men earlier in her life.

Although by the end of her life with Monday, Sara is in many ways the self-indulgent party girl, yet throughout the Monday period she consciously makes use of an intuitive peasant adroitness which enables her to find a generally happy and sometimes quite happy life for herself and Monday. Seeing that she has in Monday a partner utterly without imaginative strength, Sara brings about a rather dubious alliance of

herself and her husband with Hickson and in so doing provides for herself a life of gaiety and for Monday friends and a sense of self-importance. Even in moments of compunction resulting, in part, from having allowed Hickson certain freedoms, she still manages to feel intensely the joy of her life:

You may say that such a life was bad and trifling. Yet I think people were no worse then than now, and perhaps better. For in all our happiness there was more religion, and no one in Bradnall, however gay, would have thought of tennis on Sunday, or of not going to church. If I went to the bad at last, it was not the fault of the times, but of myself. It was not because I loved the parties and the gaiety and even as a mother and a matron up in the thirties, danced through twenty pairs of shoes in a year; but because I did not remember my weakness and study my faults, and because I forgave myself too easily for those evil deeds which always took me by surprise (p. 37).

Yet, a few pages later Sara repudiates self-blame: "After all, it was no great crime in Mr. Hickson to be a man and like me as a woman. Or if it was so, then Providence must answer for our shapes" (p. 26).

As Monday fades out of Sara's life, Jimson comes into it. Since Sara is, by virtue of her special symbolic relationship to God, a religious person, she is strongly attracted by Jimson's idea of the religious life. Sara first learns of this idea from Nina, Jimson's current mistress, who tells Sara that according to Jimson

we ought to live in God as familiarly as in a lodging, dining room, drawing room, bedroom, and kitchen. He did one of his best pictures about it for Mr. Hickson. But he would not take it . . . the picture showed the plumbing--there was even a w. c. with a man in it (p. 64).

Although Sara does not like Jimson's paintings, she likes his religious notions--this in spite of her quite conventional conscience. When she poses for Jimson while nude from the waist up (while still married to Monday), she cannot tell whether she has done "a religious thing or a bad one" (p. 67). The impulse on which Sara acts to put herself in Jimson's way is of the same kind that prompts her to form the alliance with Hickson. Yet the alliance with Hickson brings happiness to Monday, and the affair with Jimson brings death to Monday.

One of the inescapable facts of imaginative creativity is that the freedom which it implies both to create and destroy--and to be destroyed--is a freedom obtained at the price of security, moral as well as physical. Whether a given act will bring salvation or damnation, creation or destruction, Sara can never find out for herself, for the rise (until the end of her life) seems implied in the fall. As Sara puts off the old life with the dying Monday, she falls into sin with Jimson as the beginning of renewal. When the old Monday place is sold, Sara goes with Jimson to Ancombe to be the model for his Eve in The Garden of Eden, a painting to be done on the wall of the local chapel. The Monday place is Sara's last real home; when she leaves it, she goes as an Eve in exile with the divinely diabolic Jimson, who offers her perpetual recreation and pain, and who finally leaves her when she tries to reduce his genius to mere talent of the Royal Academy variety for the sake of financial security. When she sells the Monday place, it is her intention

to go into the hotel business with Rozzie Bamforth, but she finds herself instead living with Jimson and supporting him on swiftly diminishing funds inherited from Monday. Her view of Jimson as an exciting religious painter is now uncomfortably modified by her view of him as husband and provider. Sara would like to exercise considerable control over Jimson's art as well as his life. She now believes that "a little steady religion would be good for him." Throughout her life with Jimson Sara remains attracted to him on the level of her fleshly imagination, but before her honeymoon days are over, the disparity between the two people on the conceptual level becomes apparent to Sara. She finds that she believes Jimson's dislike of government is both mad and dangerous. Jimson believes that all the misery of the world derives from governments and that "there would be no peace and comfort anywhere till we all went back to live like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden" (p. 116). Jimson's wish to return to an Eden-like existence strikes Sara as a particularly absurd trick on Jimson's part to get her to go naked with him, but when she finds that this desire to return to a kind of prelapsarian state is a considered position with him, she thinks him even more irrational:

So I thought that when Gulley talked of going back to Adam and Eve, he meant only to get me to go naked before him, making his wish a religion. But I found out I was wrong for he would talk in the same way to anybody, and get excited and shout against the laws. What I wondered at, after only three days with Gulley, was why he had not been locked up long ago. Not that he was mad with me. But he was mad to the world. So I noticed what a lot of mad people

there were, and what a lot of nonsense talked, quite as bad as Gulley's and no one troubling their heads about it. Go you about with a man like Gulley and you will see what nonsense people listen to, as calmly as you please, and swallow every word, and then bring out some nonsense of their own (pp. 116-117).

Sara likes life with Jimson because he does not "care a damn about the law" (p. 117). But she does not like his saying he does not like the law. To Jimson and to his hero, Blake, freedom imposes its own proper laws deriving ideally from the four major faculties, or Zoas: the flesh, the emotions, the reason, the imagination. These laws are the only ones worth obeying in Jimson's view. He rejects other laws just as he rejects standard modes of painting. Sara-Eve cannot enter into Jimson's Pisgah vision of a material universe whose main function is to submit itself as raw material to Adam-Jimson. Jimson sees the material universe as an objective manifestation of the mind of God, a universe which must, therefore, be creative. When the world falls, as it will do, being free, Sara will re-create it on her level and Jimson on his. Although Sara cannot share a life on the conceptual, imaginative, level with Jimson, she can be aroused by him from her life of fleshly somnolence in somewhat the same way that Milton's Adam awakes the sleeping Eve.

Following the fall out of the Monday Garden, Sara enters with Jimson a life to which she refers on more than one occasion as a life of innocence. Most of her references to guilt feelings are references to the Monday period. With Monday, Sara's life had been one long game of

moral dodge-ball; with Jimson, the pleasure, when it comes, is unalloyed. Unfortunately, with her love of ease, Sara remembers her early days with Jimson rather than the later ones as being the ones which brought pleasures of the purest variety.

. . . Jimson and I caught up every moment, every bright day, every laughing face that passed, and every calm night, and rejoiced in it to each other and put it away in our minds. Even years afterwards, when we were at peace, we would bring out some trifle of that short time and admire it and enjoy it again, and live again by it in the time of our innocence (p. 119).

The period of this sustained feeling of innocence cannot last. To try to keep it alone always would in the nature of things bring about again the uncreative stasis of the days with Rozzie. Yet, Sara would like to keep it; it is enough for her. She therefore suffers when she begins to agitate for an academy painting from Jimson, unaware of what the consequences for Jimson's spiritual life would be. Sara wants to keep these days of innocence in time; Jimson wants to translate them into timeless art.

When Sara continues her battle to get Jimson to paint for money, she provokes him into giving her the first of a series of ruinous blows on the nose. When The Garden of Eden on the Ancombe chapel wall is finished and promptly mutilated by outraged parishoners, Sara insists that Jimson re-do the work in order that he can have his showing, hoping apparently that the show will bring in some money eventually. Jimson does not want to take the trouble of restoring the work, for he wants to get on with the next thing. The end of the conflict comes when Jimson beats Sara severely and leaves her.

Sara's deficiencies on the conceptual level are amusingly suggested by certain parallels between Sara and Chaucer's Pertelote. When Jimson suffers attacks of depression attendant upon an occasional failure in creative energy, Sara always insists that he is merely "stuck" (p. 141). One recalls Pertelote's domestically solicitous suggestion to Chaunticleer that his worries derive from a need of a purge. So much for his divinely oracular visions!

The destruction-creation process, the falling and rising movement that makes a pattern in the life of the free spirit, is described by Sara in one place as being simply a kind of "bounce" (p. 161). In so doing she emphasizes the basically sensuous quality of her responses to pain and pleasure and of her understanding of true innocence. When Jimson beats and leaves her, she considers her situation for a few days and then reasons that

when the ball hits the floor, it must bounce or burst. I was knocked so low I couldn't go any lower and there was nothing to do but get up. So I got up and no credit to my quality or my religion, for God forgive me, I had not been to church since Christmas, and I had my hair curled over the cut and I went to a little public in Queensport where I was known and put down my name at a registry office for a cook's place (p. 164).

Sara rises into the life of Tolbrook, where she becomes cook and later both cook and mistress to Mr. Thomas Wilcher. Here she experiences happiness, but not of the intense kind she had with Jimson. She is forced by the miserly Wilcher to accept small wages, for her reputation has suffered as a result of living with Jimson. Furthermore,

before the improvident artist leaves her, he leads her into careless spending so that she is taken into police custody for bad checks. Later, because of her good work at Tolbrook, Wilcher takes Sara to his London house, Cravens Gardens, a dismal hole compared to Tolbrook. Here Wilcher persuades Sara to assume the duties of both cook and housekeeper at housekeeper's wages, but she gets her own back by indulging herself in minor thefts of which Wilcher is the victim; she is perhaps compromising with her conscience when she decides to give Wilcher nocturnal solace. However, her real reasons for doing this are her natural generosity and her love of having "a husband in bed again."

This is not to say that Sara accepts her duties as mistress without examining herself on the issues involved. But, just as when posing for Jimson during the Monday period she cannot tell whether she is performing a religious act or a bad one, so now she says, "I was quite confused between my conscience and my duties" (p. 214). Nature, it seems to her, has suggested that man and woman sleep together in a warm bed and if Mr. Wilcher keeps going out at night to "that rough, coarse woman," he is apt to "come down with chills or even double pneumonia" (p. 214). Content at last with these considerations of such weighty corporeal significance, Sara accedes to Mr. Wilcher's wishes without further compunction, obeying nature rather than conscience, and finds that "his way was a real pleasure; he was so thoughtful and attentive" (p. 215). This pleasure is heightened for Sara when the two

lovers find each other to be religious. When Wilcher is confined to his house by relatives who fear that he will be jailed for exhibitionism, Sara is glad, for she will now get an even better chance to know his "true religious heart" (p. 232). Sara and Wilcher consider each other to be highly moral in the best traditional sense. As they are conservatives in taste, their favorite novelists are Yonge and Jane Austen. With Wilcher, Sara has a placid kind of happiness, but then with him she has very few physical hardships; her life with him is circumspect. Her most daring act, until she starts visiting the Jimson household again, is stealing from Wilcher in order to give money to Jimson without dipping into her savings. If she does not give money to Jimson, she will have him on her hands again; in short, she will find herself living with him again, and she has learned to love comforts too much:

. . . I was in such terror of Gulley coming to take me away. I was grown such a coward I would lie awake at night in a sweat to think of his beatings. I could not believe how I had been so happy with him, and I wondered at my strength in those days and thought how I had fallen off, and was the more exposed to a letdown in my old age. Savings in the post office were something. . . . It was from this time that I began to pay Gulley installments every week, but whether to keep him in some comfort and please my conscience, or only to keep him away and please my flesh, I could never tell (pp. 207-208).

One may wonder why Sara feels a need to quiet her conscience on any matter that has to do with Jimson. It is true that she has stolen a few paintings from him, but it also is true that she supported him during the Ancombe years. It is probable that she feels guilty at her

reluctance to commit herself again to the fearful joy that Jimson offers. She has changed since her golden days with Gulley. She is no longer young. Therefore we see her shuttling back and forth between Cravens Gardens and Jimson's studio. Cravens Gardens has become the sign of her conservatism, the place where she can find peace for her body; from this refuge she ventures forth in stolen weekly visits to Jimson, where she becomes involved for a few hours each time in the violent life of the painter and his new mistress and his son Tom, the fruit of his secret affair with Rozzie. Although Sara intensely loves these visits, she cherishes her place at Cravens Gardens. It is this double life that comprises the outward mode of the conflict between creation and destruction that one finds at the larger pattern of Sara's life at this time. Because Sara steals to support the new Jimson family, refusing to use her own hard-won savings for this purpose, she goes to prison. Yet, had Sara been able to remain quietly at Cravens Gardens and shut Jimson entirely out of her life, she would probably have suffered a drastic spiritual loss. Since she does not sustain such a loss, she can maintain her fine sense of primal innocence. She does not repudiate her crimes, not even when reviewing her life while writing her story. "I was not afraid or unhappy. I was surprised at myself and my devastations" (p. 272). The pleasure Sara has taken in her life and in telling her story is too great for even the most casual reader to fail to notice it. Her vow, therefore, to keep, as she puts it, "a more watchful eye, next time,

on my flesh, now I know it better" (p. 275) is hardly convincing.

Sara sees her story as a story of triumph; she begins it by relating a triumph--her marriage to Monday. The length of time between the Monday period and the Jimson period is brief, a matter of days, and Sara does not dwell on it as it is a rather unpleasant period for her. The painful happiness of the Jimson period is followed by one of peace with old Wilcher. This is a period in which the true joy of her life can ripen into conscious existence. Sara is not aware that in yielding to her love of peace she is also giving way to influences which are potentially destructive. She sees the destructive element in her life as purely literal in nature, and since she must honestly admit that her life has been happy, she does not talk a great deal about her unhappiness. She believes, appropriately enough, that her worst troubles have been caused not by the nature of life itself but by another woman, Blanche Hipper.

The story Sara tells has as its most obvious design the three great periods of her happiness. By so arranging her tale, Sara exonerates herself for a failure to feel a deep sense of guilt. She artfully manipulates, or rather selects, the facts that appear to show her life as it has been at its best. Her story is, as it were, a bringing forth of life. It is the finished product of the burgeoning process in which Sara's essential being blends with the materials of her culinary craft. Sara's book grows out of her, as her Tolbrook kitchen does, as the formally shaped, carefully disciplined labor of love. Her book is not

about art, or history, philosophy, religion. Her book is herself, or rather the shape of herself.

CHAPTER III

TO BE A PILGRIM

The story of Thomas Wilcher begins where Sara Monday's ends. It is appropriate that Wilcher's story follow Sara's. Wilcher is going to do great things with his life yet, although he will not live long, whereas Sara has resigned herself to the fact that her greatest happiness is in the past and that what beauty she will find from this point on will derive chiefly from the security provided by a good place as a cook. Her story is, in the main, over. Wilcher's is, in a sense, just beginning. Both Wilcher and Sara delight in remembering the past, but Sara's interest in the past does not go far beyond the level of reminiscence, and Wilcher's interest is in exploration and discovery. His quest into the past is in itself a pilgrimage. Although Wilcher has wanted to be a pilgrim, he has thought for most of his life that he is little more than an ordinary lawyer. He discovers near the end that his life has become uniquely meaningful, and when he makes this discovery, he finds that he has entered the ways of the pilgrim imagination.

When his family die, and when he is later taken from Sara, he is left without contact with the kind of vitality which most of these people

had shown. Until his final realization that he too is a pilgrim of sorts, Wilcher feels that he has failed to live bravely and freely because he did not do what he most wanted to do: become a missionary to India. He fails to do this because when his father dies and leaves Tolbrook to the prodigal Edward, Edward refuses to take care of the estate and in fact makes plans to sell its timber, plans which leave Wilcher aghast, so that he returns to his burdensome managerial position, originally taken up at the request of Edward, who did not wish either to live on the estate or to be otherwise encumbered with its problems. By allowing Edward to become in debt to him, Wilcher obtains the ownership of his beloved Tolbrook and is thus forced by his love of the place to give up his plans to be a missionary.

Because Tolbrook involves him in its life and makes him assume its cares, Wilcher both hates and loves it. When he returns to it to die, he feels free, momentarily, from these cares because he thinks that he has decided to abandon the place and go to Sara in London; but as he wanders about inside the old house, sensing the memories stored there, he is awakened into an intense excitement of the kind that characterizes Cary's people at their best:

I was excited by the thought of exploring the old house, after so many years. I opened all doors to these memories, from which, in my late mental anxiety, I had fled, and at once my whole body like Tolbrook itself was full of strange and quick sensations. My veins seemed to rustle with mice, and my brain, like Tolbrook's roof, let in daylight at a thousand crevices. . . . I stood and

wondered at myself. "You old fool, you'll catch cold." But my excitement increased. I seemed to be expecting something.¹

What he expects to hear is the voice of Lucy, which will urge him to leave Tolbrook forever. Sara apparently is still in jail; Wilcher keeps himself from knowing precisely when she gets out. He puts his letters to Sara under the carpet instead of mailing them. He does not mail one to her until the last moment, when he has decided finally to go to her. Therefore Wilcher's desire to hear the voice of Lucy is based not merely on the desire to perform an act which will free him, but also on the felt need to discover and remake himself. Much of the book is devoted to a journey into the past, a quest parallel in psychological significance to the Jungian night journey. When Wilcher calls out to the dead Lucy, he does so partially to frighten Ann, his niece and physician, and partially because he is seized by his precariously intense imagination, which makes him feel that the past may open some source of strength to him. This strength, he supposes, will become available to him through the agency of mere fancy, a mode of memory. But what actually occurs at this moment is a phenomenon peculiar to the imagination.

Now, I do not believe in ghosts. They are, I believe, uncanonical. It was, I consider, merely the name Lucy, uttered aloud in the old nursery, which had a certain effect upon my nerves

¹Joyce Cary, To Be A Pilgrim (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 5. All subsequent citations from this novel will be followed by page numbers in parentheses.

and threw me into confusion. Certainly my pulse raced, my ears drummed, and my head sang. I felt very queer indeed. And then all at once, something happened which caused me a severe shock; much more than I had bargained for. The voice of Lucy spoke to me. But not from a child's level. It was into my ear, and a phrase that I did not invent: "To be a pilgrim" (p. 8).

This occasion is for Wilcher "a real discovery . . . an experience"

(p. 8), which gives him the direction that his search for meaning is to take for most of the book. In Lucy's words Wilcher finds

. . . the clue to Lucy, to my father, to Sara Jimson; it is the clue to all that English genius which bore them and cherished them, clever and simple. Did not my father say of Tolbrook which he loved so much, "Not a bad billet," or "not a bad camp?" And Sara . . . put down no roots into the ground; she belonged with the spirit. . . . I ought to have been a wanderer to. . . . I must be free (pp. 9-10).

Such episodes as this one in which the imagination reproduces and reinterprets the voice, the meaning, of Lucy occur throughout the novel; for it is the function of the creative imagination to grasp the essential, hence the eternal force that flows in the spirit of man. The past, then, becomes present for Wilcher, to reveal itself to him, to 'raise [him] out of the darkness . . . "making him feel "like a new man" (p. 40).

Wilcher now understands for the first time what the driving force in Lucy's life was. It has been difficult to see why Lucy forsakes all, her comforts, her father, Tolbrook, to be the wife of the non-conformist preacher, Puggy Brown, who at his best is a junior edition of John Bunyan and at his worst a parody of Brigham Young. Wilcher now knows that Lucy has followed Brown not to be a martyr, "not because her conscience troubled her. Nor for the sacrifice. But for the adventure.

Lucy was one of those whose faith is like a sword in their hands, to cut out their own destinies" (p. 48). And once Lucy has immersed herself in "that mysterious universe of passion and faith" (p. 89), it is no longer possible for her to find peace at Tolbrook, not even when Brown takes a second wife to bed and makes Lucy her chambermaid. After making the "discovery" experienced in hearing Lucy's voice, Wilcher continues for many pages ruminating on the meaning of her words. Another thing he remembers which helps him to understand the motive force of Lucy's life is a conversation with Lucy about her religion. During the conversation Wilcher notes with surprise that Lucy has no interest whatever in religion. When he tells her that he had supposed that she was a Christian, she replies,

"What's that got to do with it? And if you do go into the Church, Tommy, I hope you won't be canting hambug. I'd much rather you were the real old brandified kind like that man over at Combe Barten. They say he has children all over the country. But I don't suppose you'll ever get married. You're a born old maid" (p. 81).

When the mother expresses relief over the fact that Lucy has left Brown (only temporarily, as it turns out), and observes that Brown's religion probably doesn't make people "better or more charitable," Lucy's answer is simply that "Puggy doesn't bother about tea-table virtue" (p. 82). Wilcher remembers feeling at the time of these exchanges that Lucy excited him "to the love of God, of religion, to some grandeur of thought" (p. 83). But the old man now realizes that his earlier view of Lucy and

thus of himself was extremely limited: "I feel it as something deeper, more passionate. The life of the spirit" (p. 83). Wilcher can now know that in failing to be a missionary, a wanderer, he has not altogether failed himself, that a life of the spirit is still possible for him. He now finds also that he can accept Brown in spite of the fact that Brown has opposed most of the traditions which Wilcher has fought most of his life to uphold. This acceptance is one of the preliminary steps toward Wilcher's final acquiescence in the plan of Robert, the son of Lucy and Brown, to destroy Tolbrook and make it into a working farm. What Wilcher feels, ultimately, is that if Lucy and Brown can give themselves over to hard lives that destroy the body for the sake of the spirit, he can bring himself to accept the destruction of Tolbrook. Bringing himself to this acceptance is a gradual and agonizingly difficult thing. It is fitting that he should have a sense of what Lucy's reaction would have been to Robert's great, multi-colored tractor, a contraption which is soon to be moved into the Adams room, where grain is to be threshed.

One reason that Wilcher cannot give himself over completely to the excitement of seeing the old manor torn up and re-shaped into new forms is that he is disturbed over the attitudes with which Robert and Ann have gone into their marriage. To Robert and Ann, marriage is merely a state, perhaps temporary, into which they have unthinkingly drifted. To Lucy, marriage was an act of faith of a sort which Wilcher must find for himself before he can give up his Tolbrook. When Lucy

tells Wilcher that she is going to run away with Brown, her voice, he recalls, conveyed "a tremor of excitement and fear" (p. 47), for Lucy knew instinctively that the way to a good life was through an "act of faith and courage" (p. 48). With the Benjamites, Brown's followers, Lucy finds that one of her principal tasks is scrubbing floors; yet Lucy has "the joy of the lord" (p. 54), says Wilcher, for she has had the daring to throw "herself upon the dark wave of fate, of God's mysterious will" (p. 72), the result of which is that before she is old she has lost her looks and her health.

Wilcher's new-found insights into his sister's life, while they exhilarate him, also increase his feeling of isolation, a condition which he tries to overcome by participating in the lives of Robert and Ann. Still unable to so participate meaningfully in the present, Wilcher continues his examination of his past. He now begins to see Edward, long his hero, in a different light. For most of his life Wilcher has believed that Edward had immersed himself in a life of meaningful action, of heroic political and amorous adventure. To him, Edward was the center of a vital artistic, intellectual life. Now, however, he sees the pathetic limitations of Edward's vision. Edward's view of Lucy's elopement with Brown is much to the point. When Wilcher observes that Lucy had given up everything for God, Edward replies:

Do you think so? My impression is that Lucy hasn't any religion at all. But she has a great sense of class. She has turned herself into a char because she feels that her own class is finished. She

doesn't feel grand enough as a mere lady. She has flown to the arms of Puggy to give herself the sense of nobility (p. 69).

In this conversation Wilcher asks Edward if he believes in God, to which question the statesman replies, "Oh, yes; I mean I believe in his existence. But how does one keep up one's interest in him?" What Edward's words really mean, as Wilcher comes to see, is that Edward is deficient in his ability to become involved in the flow of life; his death is a process in which the life forces in him become gradually paralyzed.

Realizing now that Edward's faithless life had led inevitably to a suicidal kind of world pain, Wilcher can move on to a re-evaluation of Bill and Amy, toward whom he has allowed himself to feel a frustrating condescension caused by their childlike unintellectuality. "It was a fashion to make a joke of them, and I followed the fashion all my life" (p. 101). Wilcher now feels that Bill and Amy were wise in seeking not permanence and stability but movement, flux, turmoil. What earlier had seemed to be naivete in the couple is now revealed as an unsophisticated faith of a deep and elemental kind, the "faith of children who come home every day to a new world; and from that faith they looked out, as monks once looked from this room, at the world as spectacle" (p. 101). Just as the monk's priory was torn down to be used in the building of Tolbrook and thus was caught up in the processes of creation, so Bill and Amy sustained hard and painful lives. The monk, Bill and Amy "had the same innocence" which is the capacity to be reborn.

It is extremely important to the spiritual development of old Wilcher that he pursue this train of thought:

When, on these mornings, the window arches of the old cell frame a cold spring sky and the first buds on the great lime, I think, "The medieval monks who looked out of these windows at sky and buds did not see them with clearer eyes than Bill's. Both looked out from a security and faith as strong as a child's surrounded by the unseen care of its mother. Bill's cry of 'I say, look at this, look at that,' had the same medieval quality of 'Loud sing Cuckoo,' that true lyric, which is a cry of delight and welcome" (p. 102).

Although Wilcher would like to act on his new understanding of Bill and Amy, he still feels that he can "find spring through memories and the ideas of a scholar" only (p. 103): "The life through the tradition" (p. 103). Yet, a moment later, he has a strong sense of the pilgrim spirit in himself. It is spring at the time of the writing of this passage, and the divinely seminal forces of the earth which regenerate Chaucer's sondry folke slowly penetrate history, England and Tolbrook to reach the old scholar, "stirring dull roots," so that

the house seems to rock beneath me like a ship. . . . I feel as if I were at sea, as if England itself were afloat beneath me on its four waves, and making the voyage of its history through a perpetual sea spring. . . . She is the true Flying Dutchman (p. 103).

But the disturbing oscillation between the desire for adventure and the desire for the peace of stasis continues here. Wilcher ends his lyric meditations by the observation that "the proper conduct of a ship requires a certain discipline, an order" (p. 104). He is uttering clichés deriving from a habit of mind characteristic of the traditionalist, but

when Ann a few lines later mentions that there are rumors of a rising German militarism, Wilcher does not bother to counter with his clichés. Instead, he returns to his reminiscences concerning the marriage of Bill and Amy. Nonetheless, when the war fever reaches a high pitch, Wilcher becomes extremely agitated; but again he avoids taking refuge in clichés, this time not because of his almost desultory pre-occupation with reminiscence, but because of a carefully considered need to review his life and find strength in the idea, and perhaps the act, of desperate adventure. He therefore briefly reviews the entire course of his life, seeing that it has been characterized by "three great waves of passion and agitation . . . like the waves you see from all these western cliffs, never finding rest" (p. 220).

The apathy of Ann, Edward's daughter, further disturbs Wilcher, for her feeling is really more than apathy; it borders on being a feeling of nihilism. When Wilcher says that it is possible for religious wars to destroy civilization, Ann asks, "Would that matter very much?" (p. 236). Her question reminds Wilcher of the pessimism of Edward, even more pronounced in Julie, Edward's mistress and later the mistress of Wilcher himself. Julie had tried, on the brink of World War I, to convince Wilcher of the existence of a vast evil will against which no friend of civilization could stand. He remembers the helpless terror he felt when listening to her, for he had feared that she was correct. When the war broke out, however, and the first great wave of his life fell

"with one tremendous crash," the "terror and foreboding" in Wilcher disappeared (p. 238), in the confusion and intensity of purpose like that which Lucy must have felt when she committed herself to the "dark wave of passion" which was her life with the Benjamites.

Wilcher remembers that the men in the enlistment lines looked and acted as if they were "upon a religious holiday, a pilgrimage" (p. 238); and he remembers thinking of Chaucer's

Sundry folk, by aventure y fall,
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all.

What Wilcher is doing here, in calling this scene to mind, is attempting to find for himself a religious, though not altogether Christian, rationale by which to deal with the fact of destruction. The fact that he was, even as a young man, able to achieve a sense of the religious nature of the world is now of great importance to him, for he can see a further religious significance in his soldier-pilgrim venture of the World War I days. "We were," he says, "like monks who have foresworn the world, who have no responsibilities in it except to save it by the devotion and sacrifice of our lives" (p. 239). The meaning of Wilcher's allusions to Bunyan's hymn is to be found, partially, in the context of Wilcher's memories of and in his present assessment of his World War I days. "Enlistment" (an echo of the military language in Pilgrim's Progress) can bring "a peace of the spirit" (p. 240). He remembers the words of his pilgrim-soldier brother: "We're all in God's hands" (p. 240). When Wilcher

finally forsakes Tolbrook to go to Sara, he feels as Bill, Amy, Lucy and Sara must have felt all their lives: that he is "striking camp" (p. 299).

It is Sara who, during her long stay with him, prepares him to understand his past. While living at Tolbrook as cook, she "renewed to [him] the joy which is the life of faith" (p. 29). Wilcher is drawn to Sara (as Tolstoy and Wordsworth were drawn to the peasant mind) because she is "one of those people to whom faith is so natural that they don't even know why they have it" (p. 3). He has known somehow throughout the time of the writing of his journal where Sara will be living when she is released from prison, for when he escapes Tolbrook, he goes immediately to her house. His earlier statements that he is waiting to find out where she will be living have simply disguised the fact that he cannot bring himself to leave Tolbrook any sooner. He does not leave, in fact, until he has a dream in which Tolbrook is suffocating him, and he once again begins to rejoice in the idea of Sara's wandering spirit as a force which he mistakenly believes can save him from destruction by Tolbrook. He will learn better shortly, but at the moment of his departure he feels free (p. 300), a state which cannot be maintained purely in a destructive world. When he finds Sara, she, not wanting to become involved with him again, tells him to go to a nearby hotel and wait for her so that she can have a chance to get in touch with Ann. While waiting in the hotel Wilcher surveys the static faces of the

patrons and contrasts these people with Chaucer's pilgrims, who knew where they were going, and feels himself to be so near salvation (p. 321). When Wilcher finds that he has been deceived and rejected by Sara, he reduces his aims, but he finds in compensation that the scope of his understanding has been enlarged. He is now content with the pleasure of living from day to day, feeling each day as "a gift of heaven" (p. 323). He now believes that he has been mistaken in thinking that he could ever have committed himself to life in the way that others have done. He feels that he can be a pilgrim "by race only" (p. 342); yet he dies feeling the pilgrim spirit intensely.

Wilcher reaches this view of himself partially because of his final understanding of the meaning of Tolbrook as a symbol. His first important insight into the meaning of Tolbrook brings him the understanding that Tolbrook's history has been one of change and decay, creation and destruction (p. 103); yet he has, up to this point, not been able to commit himself fully to the rhythms of Tolbrook's history because of his great love for the place, a love which brings the terrible pain of loss. At times when he considers leaving, he tries to assume a simple view of reality in which conflicting forces of creation and destruction cannot be reconciled in any way. At such times Wilcher blames himself for having too much loved "sticks and stones and all that helpless, hopeless tribe" (p. 113). Later in his last days at Tolbrook, finding himself deeply involved in the hectic lives of Ann and Robert, he makes

a statement of reconciliation, the full import of which can be understood only by a consideration of Wilcher as an artist-figure.

Not all his piety, wit, scholarship, love can give Wilcher the experience of freedom he seeks throughout the novel. He cannot find the needed mode, ready to hand, in either past or present. He must create his own, and the creation itself becomes the mode. Like many of Cary's creative people, Wilcher is a version of the artist. The kind of artist which one finds Wilcher to be is based primarily on Wilcher's psychology, which has its corollary in what he calls his "art of life" (p. 123).

Therefore an investigation of Wilcher's stated and implied views of psychology is a helpful preliminary to an examination of Wilcher's art. The old man frequently shows his dislike of modern depth psychology, for he feels that it compartmentalizes concepts of human behavior into what he indignantly calls "German boxes." When Wilcher, fearful for Ann's morals, tells the girl that he looks upon his former liaison with Sara as "a terrible sin," Ann tells him that he should not allow himself to entertain morbid guilt feelings. She explains that his strict upbringing merely produced predictable reactions. "This folly," Wilcher says, "I do not answer" (p. 32), for he is enraged at his niece's detached psychologizing. One reason for his anger at this particular point is probably that he suspects Ann of implying that Lucy's feeling for Brown was not altogether wholesome. Ann's explanation for

Lucy's attachment to Brown would be that Lucy rebelled against a typically Victorian tyrant of a father whom she loved desperately and neurotically. Wilcher prefers to explain human behavior, even aberration, in terms of the degree of faith a person or an age may possess. He sees even pathology as a debased form of religion, a kind of "parapolydiabolism" whose "devils are figments" (p. 310). If Wilcher can successfully prove the validity of his views of psychology, then he can, with even firmer purpose, set about the cruel and baffling task of recovering his lost faith. Wilcher's preference for the older faculty psychology is revealed in his distinctions between argument and experience:

"Young children . . . cannot, of course," I said, "understand the arguments for the existence of God, simple and irrefragable as they are. They can be taught only to recognize the experience of God, of goodness in their own hearts, and in other people's acts, so that when they grow older, they are ready for those proofs upon which faith must stand, unbreakable and triumphant" (p. 73).

Wilcher explains the good marriage of his soldier brother and wife by saying that Bill and Amy naturally "expected to be happy, to love one another, etc., and therefore they did so" (p. 98). "A kind of faith cure," Ann replies. "I suppose romantic people could go on being happy--it was a kind of hallucination" (p. 98). To this Wilcher rejoins heatedly that the conduct of Bill and Amy was based on "the whole idea of an age" (p. 98). Ann then shifts her position slightly by implying that the old lawyer is a victim of a monomania which expresses itself in the desire to preserve Tolbrook as an heirloom for the grandson of

Edward and Lucy and that he has unconsciously thrown herself and Robert together for his purposes. Wilcher then tries to end the subject by saying that "all this hairsplitting between a man's will and his deeds leads from one piece of nonsense to another. How can you tell what anyone's intentions are except by his acts" (p. 99)?

Cary's own view of human psychology is, as we would expect, not so simple as that which Wilcher would like to maintain for himself. There is indeed a strong suggestion that Ann is correct in implying that Wilcher has acted as matchmaker. His hope for a union between Ann and Robert is, however, a thing which he cannot, early in the book, unequivocally acknowledge because he cannot at this time fully relate to the present, which he distrusts and fears. When he discovers that Ann and Robert are carrying on a nocturnal affair, he lies awake "uneasy, " feeling some "secret excitement, some cunning passion" (p. 15). Yet the next morning, seeing that Ann is eager to go to Robert, he does not reprove her. "Run along and play . . . , " he says; "God knows which of us is the madder" (p. 16). On occasion Wilcher confesses to conscious intentions of leaving the pair alone, although he qualifies his confession by saying "I had always supported the emancipation of women" (p. 19). When Ann, after she is pregnant, suggests that Wilcher feels guilty for his "selfishness and seeking" shown in bringing her and Robert together, Wilcher vehemently denies having any such feeling. Ann's response to his denial is, as usual, to

attack from the flank in saying that Wilcher should not feel guilt, for a world in which people could calmly accept selfishness as the prime mover in human affairs would be a restful one. In such acceptance all painful ambiguity would be resolved. "An abominable remark," Wilcher says, "that tunnels like some devil's miner into the very grounds of hope and love. . . . You old fool, you know there is love, there is hope, there is faith. Does not everything in this house say to you 'God is'" (p. 100)? In endowing Wilcher with these attitudes, Cary proposes to show that truth resides in character if it is to be found at all in the post-Freudian world. Wilcher, in rejecting depth psychology, is searching for a faith which, in the past, has worked.

Therefore, he insists that he is more interested in action than in motive. He is content to say, on numerous occasions, that Lucy was possessed of "a devil." By saying so, Wilcher apparently means that Lucy had excessive psychic energy which often precipitated her into mischievous acts but which she was able to use in doing "God's work" (p. 40). Wilcher's view of diabolic energy is really more complex than he might wish. It parallels vaguely that of Jimson, who taking his cue from Blake, sees excess as good, inertia as evil. Neither Wilcher nor Jimson has any interest in clinical analysis of the creative forces which feed human imagination. Wilcher reveals his art, therefore, in learning to conform himself to creative patterns shown in the original forms of things, as Jimson calls them. Tolbrook, Wilcher finally understands,

is a "Platonic form" (p. 295).

To say that Wilcher is an artist in the usual sense of the word would be asking too much of the critical intelligence, but Wilcher does manifest qualities which are peculiar to the artist. Through a series of original insights, Wilcher remakes Tolbrook, which is itself, in a purely material sense, a work of art containing the raw material, the original forms, with which an artist must work. Tolbrook, in becoming a symbol of creativity and life, remains a work of art into which Wilcher wishes to be absorbed, as Yeats yearned for mystical union with Byzantium.

Wilcher is a conscious stylist. At one point he checks himself when his prose becomes what he considers "too romantic" (p. 29). On another occasion he briefly adopts the lawyer's account-book style in an effort to come at a rational understanding of himself (p. 84). The range of Wilcher's literary allusions is fairly impressive: Beowulf, Piers Plowman, Chaucer, Bunyan, Austen, Wagner, Priestly, Whistler, Ibsen, Trollope, Kipling, Beerbohm, Thackery, Dowson, Keats, Plato, the Bible; in addition there are implied allusions to Wordsworth and Coleridge. Wilcher employs one consciously sustained literary parallel, that of his own life with Bunyan's Christian. Another parallel, of which he is probably not conscious, is that between himself and Chaucer's Man of Law. Wilcher sees certain episodes of his life as "living poems." Furthermore, it is unavoidable that the reader be aware of the implications inherent in the contrast between the art of

Edward--his poetry, his life--and that of Wilcher. Finally, Wilcher's isolation, which probably more than anything else accounts for his writing his story, is a condition inevitably associated with the modern artist.

That Wilcher is conscious that life may at times take on a form which is a kind of art is shown in the following quotation:

Who can say that our old water parties, with their dozen boats, their band, their decorated bowers on every island, were not acts [revealing] realized romance, living poems? In which we sought for something ideal, something beyond the fact, some abiding place.

The last, the greatest of these water festivals was for the Jubilee. And I came to it unwilling from a party of young men who, like myself, thought themselves dedicated to God.

I was the eldest of them by two years. I had spent more than two years, since my father's illness, as his helper. The other three were still undergraduates; but in mind, I think I was still the simplest.

For forty years I have looked back upon that reading party as upon my happiest hour. I see myself climbing Snowdon by the long Pig Path . . . (pp. 132-133).

That Wilcher's recollections of tranquillity are a source of spiritual strength to him is obvious. What is not so obvious is the significance of his seeing some of the episodes of his early life as living poems.

That the old water parties were structured, ceremonial quests for the ideal is of particular importance to an understanding of old Wilcher's present spiritual condition. To grasp what Cary is doing here, one must consider two things: The context of the quotation as it reveals the ironic discrepancy between the past, the ideal, art itself; and the real, the present. The second element needing examination at this point is the fact of Wilcher's reference to climbing Snowdon. If the water parties

of the past are parallel to the one which is being held at the present moment by Robert and Ann, the force of the parallel is easily felt. Robert and Ann do not know the art of life which is based on faith. Hence the purpose of the digression in which Wilcher describes his Snowdon journey while lying in bed listening to the raucous sounds of Robert's jazz. That faith itself is a work of the creative imagination Wilcher clearly demonstrates as he recalls his mountain climbing accompanied by a low Protestant literalist logician. This young man, a preacher, believes in a faith which comes from Biblical revelation only. But Wilcher, whose basic faith is really the stronger, constantly interrupts his own arguments to give vent to lyric praise of Snowdon's beauty (p. 135). A work of art such as a water party is therefore an act of faith. The meaning of Wilcher's unorthodox views on psychology now becomes fully apparent. It is too easy and perhaps entirely wrong to see a particular meaning in Wilcher's references to Snowdon, for although Wilcher never refers overtly to Wordsworth, it is tempting to find certain parallels between Wordsworth and Wilcher. It is in an attempt to recapture lost faith, lost imaginative powers, that Wordsworth composes The Prelude and Wilcher To Be A Pilgrim. The point of such a comparison, if indeed such a comparison be allowed, is the emphasizing of the notion of Wilcher as a version of the artist who sees a relation between faith and creativity. Neither Wordsworth in The Prelude nor Wilcher in To Be A Pilgrim regains a lost faith of the kind

for which they begin their works, but both do achieve a new, redemptive vision.

When at one of the great water parties Wilcher's missionary zeal is suddenly modified by a meeting with Julie Eeles, the actress, Wilcher does not feel that he is violating his image of himself as a religious man. He justifies his attraction to Julie in terms which again reveal the aesthetic contours of his actions and beliefs. It is appropriate that Wilcher be attracted to an actress famed for her great artistry. Julie's very rooms are a shrine dedicated to an art whose high priest is Beardsley. Yet, Wilcher cannot enter fully into the world of Julie, even though she becomes his mistress; for her faith is in art objects, the chief of which is Edward. She herself becomes progressively less creative, less interested in art of any kind, and more effete as she grows older. Gradually Julie's effeteness degenerates into vulgarity, a concomitant, in Julie's case, of alcoholism. Knowing that a spiritual intimacy between himself and Julie is impossible, and feeling the increasingly heavy burden of Tolbrook, Wilcher decides merely to pay Julie's rent and visit her once a week. Possibly as a result of his contacts with the theatrical world, Wilcher now performs a parody of his ideal self. For a time he becomes an actor of sorts by dressing in Indian costume and painting his face to give lectures on India to local church groups.

Since Wilcher never gets to post and haste o'er land and sea to

Nirvana, the peace resulting from non-involvement in mundane duties, it does not surprise one to find him intensely interested in the spiritual history of a provincial English preacher. Wilcher is quite conscious of certain similarities between his own life and that of Bunyan's Christian. It is possible that the old lawyer is attracted by the fact that Bunyan was probably no more a conscious artist than he himself is. It is certain, at any rate, that Wilcher is much attracted by a book which records an honest unsophisticated search for meaning, for faith. When Christian meets one of his most severe tests in the Valley of Humiliation, Apollyon tries to convince him of the ineffectuality of faith. He is almost overcome by Apollyon, and at this point articulates one of the major themes of To Be A Pilgrim: "Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy! When I fall I shall rise."¹ The fact that destruction and death are of necessity to be found in the pilgrim life is conveyed in the military imagery of both books. What might be called an archetypal example of this imagery is introduced in Bunyan's book at the point at which Christian and Charity are talking about the "Lord of the Hill." Here the dreamer says, "I perceived that he had been a great warrior [who] had slain him that had the power of Death . . . he did it with loss of blood . . . such a lover of poor pilgrims."² At a point much later in the book

¹John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress, ed. C. W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1909), p. 64.

²Ibid., p. 57.

Great-Heart and Valiant are discussing the dangers of the pilgrimage when a subject on which Valiant has a great deal of information comes up. Great-Heart says, "Then this was your victory, even your Faith"; to which Valiant replies,

Who would true valour see
Let him come hither . . .
To be a pilgrim.¹

Wilcher's fears of the pilgrim life, which have kept him from victory, or so he thinks most of his life, are paralleled by Christian's misgivings about his ability to fly destruction and live up to his calling. There is a point in Wilcher's life, as in that of Christian, at which he finds a key called "Promise" by Christian and Sara Jimson by Wilcher. "I wandered in despair," says the old man, "among senseless noises and foulness, not knowing where I was nor how I had got there" (p. 28). "I knew no living soul, not even Lucy, until I knew Sara, and found in her the key of my own soul" (p. 13). In the last days of both Wilcher and Christian the problem of faith is still great. When Wilcher comes back to Tolbrook with Ann to begin the journal of his pilgrimage, he is in darkness. As Christian prepares to die, a "great darkness" falls upon him; both pilgrims realize that the only way to complete the pilgrim journey is to die, although both try to find some other way, Christian by asking if "there is no other way to the gate,"² and Wilcher by trying

¹Ibid., p. 120.

²Ibid., p. 161.

to escape Tolbrook. To try to make too much of these parallels, important as they are, would be to lose sight of the fact that whereas the key to the way out of the nihilism of despair is for Christian the "Promise" of a Christian heaven, for Wilcher this key is a profane love (the love of Sara) which leads to salvation on the human plane only.

The precise way in which Sara in her capacity as an artist figure helps Wilcher to find salvation will be dealt with later. Nevertheless, it ought to be observed at this juncture that it is perhaps a flaw in the trilogy that the specifically artistic relationship between these two people is not so clear and detailed as it is in the case of Sara and Jimson. Sara's most significant influence on Wilcher is to be seen during the years before the old man comes back to Tolbrook to write his book. Since Wilcher, unlike Jimson, is not an artist, at the end of his life he turns away from Sara and sets his mind on Tolbrook, a work of art in the most obvious sense. Sara will not return to Wilcher, but he has Tolbrook ready to hand. Tolbrook, appropriately enough, is a symbol of considerably less significance than is Sara and therefore easier for a provincial old scholar to understand. Yet, Sara sufficiently restores his faith to the point that he can begin the pilgrimage which is the artistic quest of the act of writing. Wilcher believes in the outward mode of Sara's life (hence the necessity of his views on psychology); therefore he can believe in the structure, if not the Christianity, of Christian's life. He can consequently believe in the structure, the art

of life which to him Tolbrook symbolizes. Wilcher can then, finally, create Tolbrook as an idea, a purely artistic construct.

Both Cary's and Chaucer's men of law are redeemed by the stories they tell. They are both redeemed through art. Both these lawyers have defects of character which have prevented them from attaining, directly, the heights of faith which they so admire in others. Both have a great love of money and land. Both seem busier than they are; that is, both neglect things of ultimate importance; both are deeply immersed in the law. Wilcher confesses that he has a lawyer's instincts (p. 177), and he gives chapter eighty over entirely to defending the importance of wealth. His defense, it might be noted in passing, is much more acceptable morally than that of Chaucer's lawyer. Chaucer's man is apparently proud of his story, for it illustrates obliquely his idea regarding the value of riches: He would not have the story to tell had not "a marchant," presumably a wealthy one, "me taught a tale." Chaucer's Man of Law, unlike Wilcher, has a faith which he never questions. He assumes unconsciously and correctly that none of his auditors would doubt the truth of his tale. Unconsciously he accepts a spiritual truth which denies the point of his prologue: the "hateful harm, condicion of poverté!" It is interesting to note that this man has learned well his exceedingly long tale, although he is apparently not aware that he is speaking verse. The Man of Law, for all his bourgeoisie complacency, will successfully complete his pilgrimage. Living in an

age of faith and being given to memory work rather than to creative thought, he does not tell a tale of agonizing exploration and discovery. His tale instead is a story of acceptance, of submission to forces which send Custance into strange lands and strange waters which seem at first to take her on a directionless journey "all at sea" as Wilcher says, describing his own state (p. 342). One of the main themes of The Canterbury Tales is, of course, the theme of acceptance; for Chaucer, in giving his pictures of the vital English character, is careful to point out long before the parson has his say that the way to salvation is the way of suffering. For most of his life Wilcher has desired to repudiate the ways of the flesh, but like Chaucer himself, he loved them too much. But whereas in Chaucer the tales and the retraction stand in a final opposition, in Wilcher the material and the spiritual are reconciled in the vision of Tolbrook new-created as idea: "Material love. What is material? What is the body? Is not this house the house of spirits, made by generations of lovers" (p. 342)?

Although Wilcher, like the Flying Dutchman is redeemed through love (for Wilcher the love of Sara and ultimately the art of Sara), he does not go to the heaven of legend. Wilcher is redeemed by the pilgrimage of his art, in which he searches for the final meaning of Sara (and Amy and Lucy). He searches with the same desperate need that drove Vanderdecken to go on his courseless quest for a woman whose pity and love would save him from the agony of wanderings which

would otherwise be eternally mortal.

The Flying Dutchman was a man whose great daring caused him to totally reject the prudential way of life. Therefore, considering the ambiguous relationship between creation and destruction which one finds in the work of Cary, it is appropriate that not all versions of the Flying Dutchman legend agree on the point relating to the nature of the Dutchman's commitment.¹ According to one version, the Dutchman's oaths are referred to heavenly powers; according to another, this intrepid captain swears by the powers of hell.² When Wilcher ceases to try to save either himself or Tolbrook, he sees that both are both saved and destroyed, for to be free is to be free to be destroyed. Although Wilcher is finally willing to share the fate of Tolbrook, he is not bound to the material Tolbrook; it is but one room of his house. His real house is an island (p. 341) sailing like a ship recklessly through time. In simultaneously perceiving and re-creating the historical, spiritual and artistic nature of Tolbrook, Wilcher has forged his soul and completed a pilgrimage.

Although Wilcher is not a conscious artist, his brother Edward is. Edward, it would seem at first, is a more likely choice for the role

¹Ernest Newman, The Wagner Operas (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1928), p. 5.

²H. A. Guerber, Stories of the Wagner Operas (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1896), p. 25.

of artist-protagonist than Wilcher. Edward is not only a devoted patron and student of the arts, but he is a poet of sorts, a prolific one apparently, although Wilcher quotes only seventy-seven lines of his poetry. These lines, as selected by Wilcher at random to make his own points, make a kind of poem although not a good one; for Edward, unlike Tolbrook, is not the kind of material with which Wilcher can do his best creative work. The critical value of studying the function of Edward's poem is that the creative power of Wilcher is greatly enhanced thereby. Wilcher, without Edward as a kind of foil, would suffer unjustifiably when compared with Jimson.

This poem in a very general fashion presents Edward's spiritual history. The scheme of the work is roughly chronological. It begins with a statement regarding the madness of the English race then refers, causally, as it were, to the delusions of childhood happiness, then to Edward's days of Oxford dandyism. For Wilcher's sake the poem is shown in its entirety below. The line numbers have been added as aids to quick reference.

- 1 Mad Englishmen. Why not? Whose Sunday bells
Ring in raw beef and fifteen different hells.
Children forget their wrongs; a happy set
- 4 Were we; or if we weren't, children forget.
She's true; for proof, today she cuts me dead
And headlong throws herself at Papa's head.
Grace, Lord, I crave. Answer thy servant's question:
- 8 Is this Thy grace I feel, or indigestion?"
Memento Mori, spite of Keats and Kants,
God strikes and strangers see your winter pants.
The art of happiness? High art it is

- 12 To walk that tight rope over the abyss.
 See our funeral gondolas in black and white;
 Bury our Venice age, with Beardsley's rite.
 Let tyrannies all to free republics pass
 16 The one by coppers rules; the others, brass.
 Government rascals! so cries honest Hob.
 True, God made rascals; each man for his job.
 God loves democracy; the proof is plain;
 20 It cannot die; tho' hopelessly insane.
 Hard-breasted Nan snubbed Socrates. With zeal
 Her harder hand moulded the Greek ideal.
 Freedom at any price. So cry all those
 24 Who've had her once, paid through or with the nose.
 Haul our great rebel's flag to Ritz's top
 The statesman's art is knowing where to stop.
 I knew Versailles, said Talleyrand; nor since
 28 Such tolerant grace of life. True! traitor-prince.
 The Foreign Office? All John Bull must know
 This writing on the outer door: F. O.
 Statesman and scholar, he disdains to try
 32 The hero's role before the scholar's eye.
 A statesman still in judgment, smiles at praise
 For trifles which amuse a scholar's days.
 Modest in triumph, silent in defeat,
 36 No littleness could tempt his vast conceit.
 Tyrants Hate Truth, death takes them by surprise,
 Hail democrats, who love the larger lies.
 Descent from apes. Quite so. But please to crack
 40 This nut, professor. How long climbing back?
 All women bitches, liberty a lie,
 So soldiers, who for home and freedom die.
 Men, women, laws relax. When Angelo doffed
 44 His coat, they say, the waiting stone turned soft.
 Life tragic to the soul; to mind a joke
 Now tragi-comic, gives its cruelest stroke.
 Grief for the dead, tho' sharper it returns;
 48 That grief which only grief, by grief, relearns,
 Tempers the heart in which it beats and burns.
 But that comedian who sold comic truth
 For laughs, and missed the laugh; age playing youth
 52 To seem a doting fool; those heroes' scars
 Who shot themselves in aiming at the stars
 Of glass, third class, can find no anodyne
 Hurt pride in its own pride still seeks to pine;
 56 Self-ridicule puts poison on the knife

- And leaves a wound that festers all your life.
 Now dead ambition which no rot can sink
 Bloats on the soul corrupting in its stink;
 60 Not time destroys the old but creeping spite
 For all they fought for, in a bungled fight.
 For fame along the street, June's summer gush
 Choking the sun with gilt, the leaves with plush,
 64 For triumphs lost which won would still be mean--
 They die of laughing at their might have been
 A Rock, his faith, defying all the shocks
 Of time and tide; and dead like other rocks.
 68 Professor B, profound in his acumen,
 Knows everything, as eunuchs know their women.
 Leave politics to us, the Tories cry,
 For politicians cheat and rob and lie.
 72 All breaks, all passes save God's cry to men,
 Break all, die all, that ye be born again.
 One flesh, one mind, in wishing to be two,
 For two can love again, as strangers do.
 76 Where away England, steersman answer me?
 We cannot tell. For we are all at sea.

Lines 11-12 suggest that the art of happiness is the art of self-deception, an art which children practice best and which only the most callow dandy could long sustain. Even the art of Beardsley loses its significance as an ordering power in a "Venice age," an age of corruption and madness. Lines 15-22 are presumably written during Edward's rise to a position of influence in the political world, and the remaining ones, the majority, during the period of his decline. Lines 15-22 state briefly the basis of democratic equalitarianism: that each man performs his job in conformity to a divine decree that all men be either illiterates or rascals. Thus Edward excuses his cynicism. Lines 23-24, according to Wilcher's gloss on them, imply that love of freedom may be based merely upon a desire to escape "scruples, any

responsibility, and duties. To lie forever in a sweet unrest, etc. , upon the old hag's poison-dripping breasts and so on" (p. 200). It is Edward's cultivated detachment that prevents a political involvement reflecting a love of freedom so powerful that "it sooner or later overthrows all its enemies, and creeps like a madness in the veins" (p. 200). Therefore Edward's rejection of "responsibility . . . duties . . ." takes the form of a withdrawal from the political scene. Lines 27-28 record this fact, although the reader would not understand the lines were it not for Wilcher's gloss on them:

They [Edward, Julie, Mrs. Tirit] were faithful to friendship, to kindness, to beauty, never to faith. They could not make the final sacrifice. They took a holiday at the wrong time. . . . They would rather die in peace than live in pain (p. 202).

Wilcher recalls that Edward's young wife quoted lines 31-36 against him in an attempt to get him to return to politics. The conflict between the statesman and scholar which his wife sees in Edward shows the painful self-awareness which may result from too-refined sensibilities.

Edward seems to express in lines 39-40 a feeling that man has sustained a great loss in his evolutionary movement toward self-consciousness. The loss of faith in man's ability to know himself leads logically to the nihilism expressed in lines 41-42:

All women bitches, liberty a lie,
So soldiers, who for home and freedom die.

Wilcher is probably conscious of how these lines contrast with his own words describing his first feelings as a soldier: "We were like monks

who have foresworn the world, who have no responsibilities in it except to save it by the devotion and sacrifice of their lives" (p. 239). Yet, Wilcher says that he was filled with a "secret desire" (p. 239) to yield to the kind of nihilism expressed in Edward's couplet. While this is a feeling which Wilcher combats in himself all his life, it is one to which Edward slowly but completely succumbs.

The end of Edward's poem is a statement of total defeat, whereas the end of Wilcher's book is a statement of triumph in defeat.

The scholarly Edward eventually refuses to trust the power of the idea, for it is a power which he sees as far more destructive than creative. The idea, according to Edward, instead of making sense of reality by structuring it merely changes it and in so doing renders it invalid as a source of truth:

" . . . Yes, it's interesting to see how revolutions actually come about--how they cast their shadow before them--no, not a shadow"--Edward visibly elaborated the material for a couplet--"a bar of heat. It's as if a furnace door has been opened--the furnace where new societies are forged, and the heat at once begins to melt everything, even a long way from it, things which will not be ready for the crucibles for a long time--idea, institutions, laws, political parties, they all begin to lose their firmness. "

I had often heard Edward on this subject. He had thought to see the same process twenty years before, and I was about to remind him of the fact. But I remembered suddenly an old couplet of his:

Men, women, laws relax. When Angelo doffed
His coat, they say, the waiting stone turned soft.

And suddenly the idea came home to me and I was frightened. It seemed that the very ground grew thin beneath me, and everything about me began to change form, to dissolve. As if there were an infection of change in the very walls, books, and Edward's bent figure, white hair, and hollow cheeks (p. 274).

The twenty lines (lines 41-61) which follow the couplet quoted above quite logically follow Edward's denial of the beauty and creative force of human ideas. All idealism must then be seen as only " . . . stars / Of glass, third class" Edward's statement regarding the dissolving process in which all ideas and institutions lose their firmness is echoed and elaborated in lines 72-73. Edward's view of man's acceptance of destruction as a necessary preliminary to rebirth here finds its most cynical expression, for it specifically denies any possibility of a spiritual meaning for the world. Probably Edward intends the couplet to have one meaning only, the one it takes on when Wilcher quotes it to illustrate his anguish during the worst period of his exhibitionism. But for Wilcher the lines also suggest the possibilities of redemption. The couplet is placed at the end of the chapter which contains the history of his perversion and thus immediately precedes the chapter dealing with his escape from Tolbrook and his journey to Sara.

If critics ever become interested in the art theme of To Be A Pilgrim, there will doubtlessly be some who will not be able to accept the scattered couplets as a poem. Nonetheless, it must be granted that the couplets, taken as a whole, do show a causal and biographical progression, however tenuous. Furthermore, there is a sub-surface development providing a kind of unity. For example, the theme of lost faith in love and knowledge works toward a climactic statement in lines 68-69. The themes of insanity, corruption, organic and spiritual,

are summed up in the final statement of complete lostness in the concluding couplet.

Wilcher's reconstruction of Edward's poem is analogous to his reconstruction of Tolbrook. Being neither poet nor architect, Wilcher rebuilds, rediscovers on the level of imaginative perception, drawing on his creative powers for the context of both the poem and the reconstructed Tolbrook.

The closed couplet is sadly appropriate as a reflection of Edward's attempt to order what he himself calls the essential littleness of his life. Tolbrook is an epic built in the great room of the pilgrim island, as opposed not only to the little couplets of Edward, but also to the "sonnets" built in "pretty rooms" by Donne. Edward's life was a spiritually solipsistic one, a closed system. That his verses are ineffective as art reflects a jarring disparity between Edward's external elegance and his internal incoherence. Although his tastes in painting were as avante garde as his political ideas were radical, his great desire for an unchanging intellectual order prevented his accepting the forces of organic change. He is never able to surrender himself fully to human love. His women, during his political career, are a professional mistress and a married woman, a woman whom Edward is forced by Wilcher to marry so that Wilcher himself can have the mistress. Edward's second wife is a rather soulless finishing school product, who is obviously, for Edward, little more than a collector's

item. The fact that Edward is such an avid and careful collector of art objects is a commentary upon his life like that which Browning's Bishop makes upon himself.

Edward's inability to achieve a sense of the spiritual mysteries of life is repeated in his daughter Ann. Had the novel been written from her point of view, the chief effect would have been one of a vast ennui. Ann's art of life is reflected clearly in a conversation with Wilcher regarding a steel engraving hanging on one of Tolbrook's walls:

" . . . Today is like the picture in the back passage, isn't it--with the old squire and the little girl," a remark which, referring apparently to a steel engraving beside the kitchen door, entirely threw me out, and scattered my ideas.

It was a January afternoon, with a sprinkle of snow, and the gray fields, the silver sky, the cottages seen at a distance through the fine lines of the branches certainly made a scene just like the engraving. And for a moment as often at such unexpected strokes of imagination, I did feel like the old man in the picture, whose hat and cape coat, wellington stick I had often examined as a child, climbing upon a chair to discover, with my shortsighted eyes, whether the stick made real holes in the snow, and whether the artist had put in all the footprints.

"And this girl," I thought, "who is holding my arm, she is rather like the little girl in the picture. She has the same short skirt, and she wears a handkerchief tied over her head. Ann is like a peasant again, going back to the soil. She is even gray-faced like the little girl, with the big eyes that old-fashioned artists gave their little girls. Her eyes seem bigger since she began to be so ill." And for a moment my feeling was that reality had actually disappeared out of the world, and that such an absurd appearance from the past as myself, and so flimsy a being as Ann, the peasant from Kensington, were simply figments or phantoms.

"Did it always hang in the back passage?" Ann said. "I don't remember it was there. I thought it was upstairs somewhere."

"It was in the night nursery. But what does it matter where it was, and I don't think this afternoon is at all like a picture. It's a real winter day of the best kind--the kind you get only in England--where human beings can still go out and enjoy themselves," and so on. For I felt indignant with the girl for her romantic stuff

which was trying to deprive me of life. [Italics added] I thought, "I may be old, but I don't belong to the past. It is this sad gray-faced little girl, the imitation simpleton, who has gone back into the past, the most primitive past; she lives in a perpetual winter, austere, colorless; a cruel and bleak winter . . ." (pp. 73-74).

Ann's art of life is shown in her identification with the girl in the engraving, a period piece reflecting the unimaginative stasis of its creator. That Ann should make this identification is consistent with her resignation to a bucolic life with the primitive Robert. More important, that Ann should see her life as circumscribed by the gray engraving is a comment upon her only endeavor to be even remotely artistic: her attempts to write her father's memoirs. Her interest in the past differs sharply from Wilcher's. It is one of detached curiosity, a curiosity motivated by a feeling of having failed to live vitally in the present. In trying to immerse herself in the memories of her father, she is removed even further than he from contact with creative forces. Edward at least created the illusion of being involved in human affairs, and he did attempt to order his life through his poetry until the end of his life when he turned to his memoirs. Ann feels that there is little hope for personal order in her life; hence her desultory rummaging through Edward's notes to share vicariously the order which she has been led to believe is there.

In attempting to ascertain the function of each character in this novel, the critic will encounter some difficulty in dealing with John, the son of Bill and Amy. Why does Wilcher devote so much space in his journal to this young man? If it is Cary's purpose to show the problems

of the post-war generation, surely he has done so adequately in Robert and Ann. And yet not so, for Wilcher does not see the problems of these two as being specifically post-war in nature. The inclusion of John can to a degree be justified, for John and his friends constitute a generation which comes between that of Edward, Lucy, Bill and Amy and their children. Ann is approximately ten years old when John is a young man being discharged from the Army. Care by thus placing John chronologically achieves an additional effect of density and richness proper to the memories of Wilcher, for the life of Wilcher has been anything but barren. The question which Wilcher raises with his pages on John is "How does faith fail?" This question cannot properly be asked of any of the other characters. All the other characters keep their faith, and Edward and Ann never had any to lose. In John the loss is permanent whereas in Wilcher himself it is only recurrent.

John is even more than Ann the heir of Edward. He is "more like Edward" than his own parents; he even looks like Edward. Unlike his soldier father, John comes home from the war with a feeling of growing helplessness. This feeling begins consciously in Edward at the beginning of the war. These two men, uncle and nephew, emerge from the war years in roughly the same spiritual condition. They understand each other. When Wilcher takes John to Edward hoping that the older man can help the younger to find his way, Wilcher is dismayed to perceive Edward acquiescing in John's pessimism. The loss which

society sustains in the failure of a John or an Edward is what Cary wishes to indicate here. The descriptions of John and his wife and the group with which these two find themselves could easily be found, as it were, in an early Waugh novel. What these descriptions contribute artistically to To Be A Pilgrim is that they set off by contrast the spiritual heroism of old Wilcher. Faith receives its most cogent and most daring affirmation through the belief in and the creation of art. John chooses the art of Edward, Wilcher the art of Sara, which leads him to the art of Tolbrook.

Tolbrook Manor is one of the most remarkable symbols in modern fiction. It is both art and life, the raw material of art. Physically, Tolbrook manifests the shapeless, haphazard arrangement of life. The irregularity of the design of Tolbrook suggests the failure of "these generations" as Keats calls them, to achieve the ideal order which is desired by Wilcher and which can be found only in art. Therefore Wilcher finally purifies Tolbrook by giving it ideal form in his mind.

Part of Tolbrook, the two Adams rooms, was created by artists, part of it by mere architects. The building reflects in a properly chaotic fashion various periods of English history. Part of it is Tudor, part Jacobean, part Restoration and part Victorian. The Wilcher line does not itself extend back into the Medieval period, nor do the various members of the family line correspond as symbols to historical periods.

Cary avoids any such schematized presentation, for he wishes to suggest the effect of the formlessness of life itself.

Wilcher begins giving the history of Tolbrook immediately after trying to convince Ann that she is wrong in her analysis of selfishness as the basis of human conduct, the basis in particular of Wilcher's desire to have the Tolbrook line continued in a descendant of Edward and Lucy. Wilcher wants at this point to preserve in life what can be preserved only in art. While trying to concentrate his energies upon the business of securing the name Edward for Ann's new-born son (p. 113), Wilcher learns that Robert has just destroyed the old outlines of Tenacre, a section of Tolbrook manor. The old man then almost dies of a heart attack. Since it is the essence of Tolbrook which most engages Wilcher's imaginative energies, Wilcher gives us not a family chronicle but a spiritual history. This history is given in two major ways: through analysis of family character and through images which reflect the conflict between art and life, stasis and change, creation and destruction.

One such cluster of images is found in a description of the Adams saloon as Wilcher finds it shortly after his discovery of the loss of Tenacre:

I was surprised, for the saloon, being disused, had been locked up for many months to keep out the drafts which blew threw the house from its neglected windows and the cracks in its floor. I could not even find the key, and decided to go round by the garden entrance. I had not entered this part of the garden for a

long time. And now, approaching the saloon from the outside, I noticed a broad, muddy path broken through the laurels, reaching to the double French windows of the great room. The doors, enlarged by the removal of a central post, were open and inside on the floor of the room, under the white pillars and gilt decorations of its cornices, stood a new reaper and binder and a two-furrow plow. Sacks had been spread on the parquet below the machines, but the iron wheels had splintered the sills of the doors and broken the outer step.

I stepped into the room and looked about me. Rakes and hoes were leaning against the classic paneling, garden seats were planted before the inner doors, and a workbench stood under the great central chandelier of the three, under which, as my grandmother has recorded, Jane Austen once flirted with her Irishman. Upon the one chair remaining in a corner a yard cat was suckling two kittens. It needed nothing more to say that barbarians had taken possession. She did not even run from me, but lay watching, with up-twisted neck and the insolent calm ferocity of some Pict or Jute encamped in a Roman villa.

British country gentlemen of the fourth century were, I suppose, often more cultivated than ourselves. Their families had lived for two or three centuries in those beautiful manors, among an art and literature already ancient. Their comforts were beyond ours. And when we look at their bathhouses and see the marble steps worn hollow by the naked feet of a dozen generations, we feel so close to them that we suffer for them in their terror and destruction.

A gentle and quiet people, who loved home as no others, whose very gods were domestic. But this room breathes of a double refinement--the Roman art of life distilled through the long spiral of English classicism (pp. 122-123).

Obviously the point of this scene is not lost on Wilcher. The room itself as a work of Roman art and then of English art will have to suffer change and destruction. The great beauty of the saloon has become a burden to Wilcher for he now wishes to give his full energies to making the child of Robert and Ann into a proper sort of heir. Wilcher begins to cast about for a way to deal with his confused feelings and in so doing finds that he is able to believe that a plow, even in the Adams room, can "taken in the

proper spirit . . . be an inspiration" (p. 124). He then decides that the baby ought to have Brown's name as well as Edward's; for Brown, to whom he has turned his thoughts in an effort to accept the destruction of Tolbrook, now seems to have been better equipped for life than Edward. The final point of the scene is not fully appreciated by Wilcher until the very end of his journal when the machinery is put to work. What the room will at last mean to Wilcher is essentially what Keats' urn meant to the poet: "When old age shall these generations waste, " art, the beauty of form, of idea, not necessarily art object, will remain. The eternal formal principles of art are illustrated (enacted as art in life) by the threshing crew as they work beneath the classical engravings and statuary in the saloon:

. . . The huge machine, like a species of Roman siege engine, towers in the middle of the floor, driven by a tractor among the broken laurels . . . behind Farley, who is feeding to Robert on the top of the machine, I see over the middle window a rural trophy in plaster of delicate scythes and sickles, sheaves and hayforks, tied up in pale blue ribbon. But the thick chaff dust, which lies along every panel molding like yellow snow, is already hiding their beautiful detail, characteristic of Adams refinement.

Farley's head, when he takes his stand upon a new load, almost brushes the cupids, on the ceiling, painted among the fine Adams plaster by Angelica Kaufmann. They seem to be flying round the old man's bald brown skull like cherubim round one of El Greco's saints . . .

The grinning and horned Pan who, in white marble, plays upon his syrinx under one end of the magnificent mantelshelf, famous among the scholars of architecture, carries on one horn some laborer's luncheon, tied up in a red handkerchief; and round his waist, mixed with the marble flowers and grasses, hangs a bunch of real onions on a string. His grin reminds me of Robert's smile. . . . Robert's voice answers from among the gods and goddesses on the ceiling . . . (pp. 236-237).

Robert here is apparently a version of Pan. Robert's devotion to farming and his fertility, as shown in Ann and Molly, qualify him to be at least a junior edition of that ancient nature god. That Robert is anything but appealing as a person is Cary's comment on the poignance of the loss of a beauty which only centuries can produce. The presence of the engravings and statuary seems to imply that divinity (eternality of form) in order to remain alive may re-enact itself as the art of life.

The angle of vision forced upon Wilcher by Robert's first bringing the harvest machinery into the saloon allows Wilcher to speculate further upon the symbolic nature of the rhythms of Tolbrook's history. His allusions to the Picts and the Jutes and to Roman art lead him to note that Alfred himself was once considered "the modern man in a changing world" (p. 130). The inspiration provided by a plow "taken in the proper spirit" gives Wilcher a sense of the richness of what Whitehead calls the harvest of tragic beauty. The meaning of triumph and defeat is to be found in the correlative patterns of change in nature and in history:

Upon the wheat lay the color of harvests since Alfred, and its ears grew plump with the hopes and anxieties of all those generations that sowed with Beowulf and plowed with Piers and reaped with Cobbett. Even at my own last harvest at Tolbrook, nine years ago, the gardener's boy brought me from the field a little plait of straw. He did not know what it was (p. 130).

By referring to names out of myth, history and art, Wilcher is summoning up strength to give up Tolbrook and inspiration to keep it as pure ideal form. Immersed in history, Wilcher is trying to accept the lessons of

the history of his race. The names Beowulf, Piers and Cobbett, seemingly selected at random by Wilcher in his lyric meditations provide a complexity one might not expect from Wilcher in his use of allusion. Beowulf, although a hero of mythic, epic stature, could not preserve intact his civilization. To compare Beowulf and Wilcher in any other way would be absurd. Nonetheless, Wilcher is in a very loose sense an epic hero. In a particular way--through allusion and detail--his story gives an account of the spiritual life of his race. As symbol of the racial pilgrim, Wilcher is the hero around whom a great number of episodes are grouped to form an epic story. Wilcher in struggling to preserve Tolbrook is symbolically trying to preserve the spiritual life of his race. The thought that even Beowulf as a spiritual force of enormous powers could not save his people from destruction seems to give Wilcher inspiration rather than despair. Beowulf as a spiritual force has not been lost, for "the generations that sowed with Beowulf," seeking salvation through war and death, plowed with Piers--existed spiritually with Piers--who is himself a work of English art. The awkwardness of the pun on Piers Plowman does not vitiate the impact of Wilcher's choice of Piers as a hero worthy of emulation, bizarre though the choice may seem at first glance.

Piers as a hero cannot be said to possess the grandeur of Beowulf. Yet, he preaches, as Wilcher has wanted to preach, rejection of the material for the spiritual. Piers sees the English country side

with its "field full of folk" as a microcosmic symbol of mankind, as Wilcher himself seems to do. The quality that most attracts Wilcher to Piers is probably the preacher's non-conformist spirit which because of the preacher's faith is not only ready to accept but to demand change. Piers is a good guide for the pilgrims who wish to seek St. Truth, for the truth is that change, and death, will overwhelm Mankind. "The shape of a field, the turn of a lane . . ." or a Roman villa will be lost, for they are "transient appearances" (p. 130). One may legitimately hope for the preservation of the art of life only, an art which is an art in that it imitates formal design as the human figures in the Adams room re-enact the classical design of the engravings and statuary. The true pilgrim, as Wilcher sees him, must leave his house for otherwise it will ensnare his soul.

To group Beowulf and Piers with Cobbett, a figure from politics rather than from art, suggests the kind of confusion which perhaps has its counterpart in the fact of Tolbrook's lack of formal order. The formal elegance of the Adams rooms is modified by the rather rambling arrangement of the rest of the manor. One must remember that Wilcher is not an artist per se but perhaps an artist figure, who like Jonson's Face is something other than an artist but who describes and enacts the artist's role. The fact that Cobbett was a farmer who sought freedom through change is probably of some interest to Wilcher. He would also find Cobbett's interest in the history of the

Protestant reformation of some significance.

Whatever one may say regarding the pertinence of this odd grouping of Beowulf, Piers and William Cobbett, the logic which informs it is the logic of poetic language. It is not therefore surprising to find Wilcher next dwelling on the notion of ritual sacrifice to the corn gods, a ritual performed by the Tolbrook laborers. The history of Tolbrook, as Wilcher sees it, is the history of the order of nature: "There is a time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up . . ." It is time for Tolbrook to "break down." Wilcher's moving exegesis on the third chapter of Ecclesiastes inspires the old man to remember that his grandfather actually pulled down the ruins of an ancient chapel to build a byre, "an act of courage, to destroy walls six or seven centuries old" (p. 131).

Such ruminations of Wilcher's as these have led Mr. Hatfield to the conclusion that what Wilcher seeks is the "lover's dream of permanence" in the grave.¹ Wright, who directed Hatfield's work, disagrees by saying that Wilcher finally commits himself to life and change.² It is certain that Wilcher would like to have the best of two worlds; in his preservation of Tolbrook on the level of artistic vision

¹Hatfield, "Form and Character in the Sequence Novels of Joyce Cary," p. 44.

²Wright, p. 123.

he has these two worlds.

Ultimately, Wilcher's concept of himself, of Tolbrook, of his civilization, seems strikingly like that expressed by Shakespeare's Prospero in his explanation of the nature of his art. Wilcher himself is probably unaware of any such similarity, but the reader is led to suspect its existence in the background of Wilcher's mind when the old man, in talking of the "living poems" of Tolbrook's halcyon days, refers to the "magic islands" of Tolbrook's lake. Numerous references to England as a floating island appear in the novel. One of the most important of these metaphors, a submerged one, occurs near the end when Wilcher describes himself as seeming "to float in another world, far detached from the turmoil of history and full of another brightness, another tension, than the fire and conflict of human life" (p. 290). This other "brightness," although Wilcher does not say so, surely radiates from the eternal forms of art, "Platonic forms," which Wilcher says are Tolbrook (p. 295). Wilcher can say so now, for he has earlier concluded that "civilization is a fabric hanging in the air" (p. 237); it is, as Prospero says, "the baseless fabric of this vision . . . an insubstantial pageant"

Since Wilcher is a version of the artist figure, To Be A Pilgrim can be considered a work shaped by Wilcher himself in a way that most first-person novels cannot. An examination of the structural techniques in Wilcher's novel will reveal that arrangement of material

is carefully suited to Wilcher's need to create a form which will enable him to preserve the past while committing himself to the present. The technique of the cut-back is the structural device most extensively used in To Be A Pilgrim to achieve this purpose. Barbara Hardy says that this device as used by Wilcher is completely conventional.¹ The following comments, it is hoped, will show that Hardy is in the main quite wrong. The cut-back as used here appears in a variety of ways, the most interesting of which is the one in which temporal lines between the worlds of the past and present suddenly dissolve, as in those times when Wilcher finds himself talking to Lucy or to Amy long after these two women are dead. This particular use of the cut-back shows an intensity of desire to find strength in the past which again reminds one of the function of the past in Wordsworth's theory of artistic creation expressed in the preface to The Prelude. The intensity of Wilcher's reflections is such that the subject "does actually exist in the mind" as Wordsworth says. It might be noted in passing that in addition to other parallels between Wordsworth and Wilcher noted above that there is one more which may further suggest that Wilcher like Wordsworth is turning to the past for inspiration to create. If one may take a slight liberty with the poet's biography, it will be observed that the sisters of both men, both sources of profound inspiration, are given the name Lucy.

¹ Barbara Hardy, "Form in Joyce Cary's Novels," Essays in Criticism, IV (April, 1954), 185.

Wilcher's sister who died in childhood was, incidentally, named Dorothy, a fact of perhaps no significance at all. Any analysis of the cut-back in To Be A Pilgrim will need to take into account the omission of the blending cut-backs in all but the earlier sections of the novel. Obviously certain of Wilcher's attitudes undergo change during the course of the novel. As this kind of cut-back becomes less frequent, so do Wilcher's references to his madness. In the last sections of the work, such references do not appear at all. As Wilcher gradually gains the courage needed to forsake Tolbrook and go to Sara, his efforts to cling to the past become less frenetic because he is moving toward an ideal in which past and present will be blended in a more satisfyingly formal structure.

That the structural qualities of this novel are not altogether simple is further shown in a series of cut-backs of a somewhat more conventional yet equally subtle nature. In chapter 86 Ann implies that she would like to know the answer to the question, "What is the role of woman?" "I thought she was asking me a question," Wilcher says, "but I did not know what it was" (p. 195). Here Wilcher does not attempt an overt reply, being engaged with thoughts of another kind, but the following chapter deals with Wilcher's former belief that Julie Eeles knew the answer. In chapter 87 Wilcher records Julie's proposal that she and Wilcher make some sort of nocturnal arrangement conducive to his comfort, as he has now become her protector. Julie did, in fact,

have a very definite idea of what her role should be: submission to male creativity. However, the contrast between Ann and Julie as presented in these two juxtaposed chapters will turn out later not to be a valid one. In chapter 88 Wilcher returns to Ann's question but immediately forgets it when suddenly Ann says that she believes her father's life to have been wasted, implying by this statement that even though Edward supposedly knew what he wanted to be he struggled uselessly against a meaningless world. Again, then, in chapter 89 Wilcher remembers with a shock that he has heard Edward utter essentially the same words during a crucial political campaign. Wilcher suddenly begins to identify Julie with the "old hag" with "poison-dripping breasts" i. e. , irresponsibility. Later, the identification will become quite overt, and Wilcher is to see Ann as a somewhat more valuable person than Julie. Therefore the implications of a single contrast such as that afforded by the cut-back in chapter 87 may find themselves eventually reversed through a given series of cut-backs.

Some of the cut-backs provide simpler structural comment than those involving the Julie Eeles-Ann contrast. One such series begins with Wilcher's escape from Tolbrook and his journey to London to marry Sara. The record of this unsuccessful quest is interrupted by the account of Wilcher's days of exhibitionism. Obviously the purpose of this digression is to underline the human need for change and adventure. Presented dramatically, this bit of history provides a gauge

for ascertaining the degree of Wilcher's desperation. The principle point of contrast lies in the two types of acts described by Wilcher in the cut-back and in the present. The first type, while it is an act of some daring, is a gesture of despair and is thus destructive in its effects. The act of finding and marrying Sara, on the other hand, would be a creative, redemptive one. But Cary, in not allowing Wilcher to marry Sara at this point continues the theme of the artist-like isolation of Wilcher and in so doing shows a creative imagination which finds that it is sufficient unto itself. The three chapters giving the history of Wilcher's exhibitionism, 135, 136, 137, might conceivably be placed elsewhere in the novel. That they are effectively put where they are has already been indicated in part, but the final justification for their being so positioned will be revealed in an examination of the general significance of Wilcher's exhibitionism. If Wilcher can be validly considered a kind of national symbol, then his statements analyzing his aberration become particularly important to one of the chief thematic conflicts in the novel: the conflict between destruction and creation. Wilcher is carrying on an affair with Sara at the time his depravity is most acute; yet he seems to feel an overweening desire to destroy himself by degrading behavior. Why does Wilcher feel the urge to distort "the whole moral world," as he puts it (p. 306), if he is finding adequate sexual release with Sara? The answer probably is that Sara is giving him something that he has had from some of his

previous housekeepers. He is happier with Sara than with his other women, it is true, but what Sara gives him during the affair is little more than a heightened sense of domesticity, the very thing against which he has struggled all his life and which all his life he has resented deeply. At least this is apparently one of the stronger effects of his relationship with Sara at the time. Wilcher welcomed the first world war for the same reasons, or rather for some of the same reasons, that he sought out his victims in dark lanes and parks: "To change the pattern" (p. 210). As Wilcher cannot change the pattern by marrying Sara, he will conform himself to the pattern provided by the art of Tolbrook, specifically the art of the Adams saloon.

The narrative element which furnishes the material for the cut-backs is, of course, the stories of the members of Wilcher's family. Most of these stories are sustained throughout the novel, but the story of Amy is the one continued longest, being finished only two pages from the end of the book. The story of Sara is little more than a brief digression and a few allusions. Plot requirements for the placing of Sara's story have already been discussed. The question now is why should Amy's story be continued longer than the others. Why should Wilcher say, as he goes to bed on the last night of the journal, "And lying here now, I miss Amy more than all those whom I have known" (p. 341)? An answer to this question may suggest by implication what an examination of the structural values of the other stories could reveal.

It is likely that Wilcher in his desperate wish for peace has wished to emulate what he takes to be Amy's calm acceptance of the destructive. His description of Amy's refusal to contemplate the possibilities of a second world war is to the point (p. 106). One of his final comments on Amy is in this vein:

Amy and Sara, countrywomen both. They didn't submit themselves to any belief. They used it. They made it. They had the courage of the simple, which is not to be surprised. . . . Amy's "got to die sometime" has been on the lips of every private soldier since the first army went into battle. . . . To Amy, death in this true shape was a familiar, and she received him like an afternoon caller. But to me here death is a wonder . . . (p. 339).

Wilcher looked for peace in his reunion with Sara; not finding this peace he resumes the story of Amy, whom he believes to have been more like Sara than any other person in his life has been. At the end, he finds that the only acceptance available to him obtains in his power of achieving the great, turbulent vision of himself, his house, his land as "the pilgrim . . . of the world" (p. 342). Throughout the novel Wilcher has told the stories of other people, arranging these stories around his own, and in so doing has created a work of art in which he places himself at the center. This arrangement has as its correlative the design of Wilcher's vision of himself at the center of Tolbrook as pure idea in which is contained the formula for the art of life.

The chief stylistic devices of this novel are in the main those characteristic of most of Cary's best work.

The speed, the high excitement, the hilarity of his [Cary's] prose match the exuberant spirits of his characters. The sentences are quick and electric; the chapters are usually short and the divisions between them unobtrusively indicated; the narrative goes rushing and leaping at a rate that makes the reader wish for an occasional pause or at least a change of pace. . . . What Cary does achieve brilliantly is a wonderful sense of immediacy. . . . As Walter Allen has put it, "While reading, we are at the cutting-edge of the present. Cary is incomparable among living novelists at pinning down the sense of life at the actual moment of being lived." . . . One of his devices for achieving a sense of immediacy is the frequent and sudden switch to the historical present tense of the verb.¹

Most critics who have commented on the sharp sense of the present in Cary's prose have made their comments in the form of generalizations only, feeling perhaps justifiably that analysis of such a pleasing device would not be necessary. The historical present is used exclusively in Mr. Johnson, extensively in The Horse's Mouth and frequently in To Be A Pilgrim although not at all in Herself Surprised. In To Be A Pilgrim, the transitions from past to either historical present or present are so abrupt that one may not notice them until he has read for several lines beyond the point at which the breaks occur:

As I stand here at the door of the nursery staircase, collecting my strength for the climb, I hear Lucy's voice screaming to me furiously, "Tommy, Tommy. Aren't you ready?" She is disgusted by my irresponsible conduct. She darts round the corner, a rosy child in a white fur tippet and a blue coat. She seizes my hand, jerks it violently, and yells, "No, he isn't ready--and his face is still dirty. Oh, you are a nuisance."

The jerk still jerks me now. But apparently it did not cause me any distress, for I remember nothing else until I am walking

¹King, Tamarack Review, No. 10, pp. 45-46.

along the drive, through red mud, with my hand firmly locked in Lucy's (p. 17).

The lack of preparation for these transitions achieves on the level of style what Cary wishes to achieve on the level of idea: the sense of urgency that lies behind the soul's need to perceive and re-create original forms for itself.¹ The first such passage does not occur until page 14 of the novel, and it is sustained for only one sentence. The tone of the first few pages is quiet. Wilcher is calmly analyzing his new situation as the ward of his niece, with whom he has just reluctantly returned to Tolbrook. After the first day or two of exploring the old house, he finds himself growing excited. He then hears Lucy speaking to him, telling him to be a pilgrim (p. 8), and he begins his long year's labor of trying to be free. It is shortly after deciding to search for freedom that he first uses the historical present tense. It is at about this point that the flow of the prose seems to increase in velocity. The sense of high speed in the passage cited above is produced in two ways: by the frequent recurrence of sibilants and by the use of short sentences, each describing a gesture which is a part of a logical sequence: "She darts around the corner, a

¹Cf. Hatfield, "Form and Character in the Sequence Novels of Joyce Cary," p. 58 and Hardy, Essays in Criticism, IV, 185. Hatfield says that Wilcher's "stylistic slips into historical present in discussing the past" reveal that for Wilcher the past is more real than the present. Hardy implies that Wilcher uses this device to show the "flow of generations as a contemporaneous rather than as a consecutive thing," but she concludes, mistakenly, I believe, that Wilcher must use this technique because he lives only in the past.

rosy child in a white fur tippet and a blue coat. She seizes my hand, jerks it violently, and yells . . . "

The particular kind of parenthesis, of qualifying phrase, which is found in a given sentence also conduces to the effect of immediacy. Such phrases are almost invariably descriptive rather than purely analytical. The images which constitute these phrases usually reveal a character in action. Cary seldom describes a character in repose. In the following passage Wilcher is trying to persuade Edward to give up his financially and morally wasteful ways. The two are sitting late at night by a fire.

Edward pays no attention to me. He taps the coal again, a big coal which ought to be left alone. A bad and extravagant habit of Edward. And in my surprise and alarm at his strange mood, I say sharply, "Don't spoil the fire--I never knew anyone waste coal as you do." Edward pays no attention to me. He reflects a moment, letting his cigarette hang crookedly, and then gives the coal a sharp rap. "That's it, Tommy--is life worth living? Give a man everything in the world, give everyone everything they think they want, and they might still ask that question." . . . And having tapped the coal on all sides, he gives it such an expert stroke that it flies into thin pieces. I still see him, in the flow of the blaze, smiling at his own feat . . . (pp. 68-69).

With his customary penetration into human psychology, Cary has not given Wilcher the style of a lawyer, who might normally be expected to chronicle his life with clerical precision and attention to external detail. Instead, Wilcher's style is that of a man who is deeply and wildly in love with life. It is the style of a man who has ordered his love into an intellectually comprehensive, spiritually gratifying, aesthetically acceptable form.

CHAPTER IV

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

One may suppose that Gulley Jimson begins dictating his memoirs shortly after being taken away from the demolished chapel where he was doing his great mural The Creation. The story Jimson tells begins a year earlier, at a time when he has just been released from prison, about 1938, when Jimson is sixty-seven years old. The story concerns Jimson's attempts to do three major paintings, The Fall, The Raising of Lazarus, and The Creation. If one sees the abortive attempt to do the Lazarus painting as primarily a forerunner of the greater Creation, then there would be two major artistic efforts in the novel corresponding to the natural rhythms of the creative imagination: the process in which one falls to rise. Jimson's tale chronicles a quest for a final all-encompassing perception which will explain and affirm the divine fecundity of the eternal world.

Jimson goes straight from prison to his unfinished Fall, pausing enroute a few minutes to admire "small portions of the eternal world"¹

¹Cary, The Horse's Mouth, p. 1. Subsequent quotations from this novel will be indicated by parentheses.

revealed by the muddy Thames and to see if he can borrow money from his friend Coker for paint and brushes. Upon arriving at his lodging, an abandoned boat shed, Jimson finds that The Fall has been badly mutilated by children and casual moralists. But finding himself excited by the painting, he steals paint, makes a brush of rope's end and paints until late that night. Approximately a week later, before he can finish the painting, Jimson finds himself in prison again as a result of stealing from George Hickson, millionaire art patron and one of Jimson's oldest friends. When Jimson gets out of prison this time, he finds that his boat shed is now occupied by Old Mother Necessity in the form of Coker's mother. Failing to rescue his painting, which has long since been put to use as roof patching by Mrs. Coker, Jimson discovers that he does not really want to do The Fall after all. "What I like," he says, "is starting new ones" (p. 173). By this time Jimson has been hunted down by Professor Alabaster, an "art cricket" as Jimson calls him, who wants to do The Life and Works of Gulley Jimson, and who particularly wants to procure an early Jimson nude for Sir William Beeder, another millionaire art patron. Unable to get the desired painting from Sara Monday, who has one locked in her ancient cook's box, Jimson soon finds himself doing the Lazarus--uncommissioned--on a wall in the Beeder apartment while the Beeders are away on a trip. Learning that the Beeders have suddenly returned, and fearing that his powers may be depleted by another tour in prison, Jimson flees London and goes to

Burlington, where he sustains himself by passing off as art photos picture post cards of local scenes. After being hospitalized by a severe beating administered by a man who fears that Jimson is going to ruin the Burlington trade, Jimson returns to London. He kills Sara in a final, unsuccessful attempt to obtain the nude still desired by Sir William, and is forced to reproduce one of his other Sara nudes which had recently been given by Hickson to the Tate. With the money from the sale of this copy, Jimson purchases equipment to begin work on The Creation.

Jimson's quest for a final all-embracing formal vision is interpreted by himself in terms of William Blake's "The Mental Traveller." The speaker in Blake's poem sees himself as traveling through a land of "dreadful things,"¹ the birth, life and death of a man who is "born in joy" then given to

a woman old
who nails him down upon a rock,
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold.²

Of the three females in the poem, the first crucifies the man; the second forsakes him; the third also crucifies him. The first female, having become an old woman, crucifies the male while he is a boy, delighting in her conquest by counting his nerves and in feeding on his pain.

¹Geoffrey Keynes, Poetry and Prose of William Blake (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1948), p. 110.

²A copy of "The Mental Traveller" will be found in the Appendix.

Prevented by this situation from fulfilling himself in a life of male creativity, the boy becomes an old man while the woman grows younger, so young in fact, that she becomes once again a "virgin bright." At this point, by a great effort of will, the man is suddenly enabled to free himself of the woman's domination and to conquer her, making her his "Garden fruitful." Soon, however, he fades, an "aged Shadow," wandering in a state of confusion induced, apparently, by some failure of love the nature of which may be deduced only tentatively. In this state, he performs the thankless offices of a philanthropy which involves his giving jewels produced oyster-like by the painful martyrdom of the love experience. Out of this pain springs the completed, formally structured product of his labor, a "Female Babe," who almost immediately chooses not to live with her creator; instead, she conspires with a lover to drive her creator, whom Jimson sees as an artist, from his house; he then becomes a beggar, wandering, "blind and age-bent," until he finds another "Maiden." The "Guests," or beggars, who have formerly fed upon the artist's pain, now flee, for the artist, seemingly strong in the possession of his new maiden, can temporarily shape circumstances nearer to his heart's desire: "The Eye altering alters all." The "Eye," it may be supposed, is the sign of the artist's power, a power to which the mundane world responds with "holy dread" as in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." In the experience with the third female, the artist triumphs by virtue of an energy which is greater than his power

to give it a lasting shape: "The senses roll themselves in fear." The trees begin to "bring forth sweet Extacy" in a condition created by nature asserting herself uncontrolled by the artist.¹ The following stanza describes a region characterized by a terrifying vision of infertility.

The new perception of reality of which the new Maiden, the third one, is a sign does not provide the material for fulfillment. The artist has the idea, but it is not big enough to suit the demands of his powers. Therefore in order to keep the vision, which is at present all he has to sustain him, he must reduce the scope of strength and desire. Accordingly, the maiden "does him to Infancy beguile." The formal inadequacy of this perception, this maiden, is a failure to establish a proper relationship with nature--the "Moon," which "shrink[s] away" and the "dark desart all around," symbols whose very juxtaposition in Blake would suggest an unworkable incongruity. The bewildered artist, having lost a flow of inspiration which should come through the forms of the natural world, and having been reduced not to youth but to infancy,

¹The trees here apparently grow in the "desart planted o'er / With Labyrinths of wayward Love." In the preceding stanza the maiden's "fear plants many a thicket wild." If it is true, as Stanley Gardner asserts, that the forest is in Blake always associated with "evil and tyrannic force," then one would have to see this state of ecstasy as having been created not by nature uncontrolled by the artist but as created by false art itself. False art and the false artist are sometimes seen by Jimson as fused in the person of Lady Beeder. Stanley Gardner, Infinity on the Anvil (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), p. 18.

pursues his maiden through

thickets wild . . .
Till he becomes a wayward Babe
And she a weeping woman Old.

Although the artist has temporarily escaped the first woman old and has survived the loss of the maiden born of his own pain, he is not wise enough to know how to deal with the third maiden. The experience with this maiden, a movement from age to infancy, is basically unorganized. In his final state of infertility the artist loses all creativity, although he does retain a kind of negative power: the arm of anyone who touches him becomes withered, and the country in which he lies ill becomes a desolate place in which lovers no longer wander and in which "every tree does shed its fruit." Only the old woman can approach the ruined artist, and she crucifies him upon "the Rock."¹

Jimson sees the young females of "The Mental Traveller" as potentially ideal form in their first appearances to him, but the woman old, who is the dominant figure in the poem, he sees in a far more complex fashion. To put it as simply as possible, Jimson sees the woman old as necessity in all its guises. Jimson first begins to compare

¹H. H. Vendler reads the poem in essentially the same way that Jimson does. Vendler, and according to her, Yeats, strongly insists that one of the basic antinomies of the poem is the conflict between innocence and experience. That Jimson is preoccupied with resolving this conflict is shown in many passages of the novel. H. H. Vendler, Yeats's Vision and the Later Plays (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 51. Andrew Wright's reading of the poem, given in his introduction to the 1959 Harper's edition of The Horse's Mouth, departs in no significant way from the reading suggested above.

himself with the Blakean artist in the poem when he is interrupted in his work on The Fall by necessity in the form of logical analysis.

Another of these guises is poverty, another is the deterministic order of things; one is what Blake calls Urizenic reason, the enemy of imagination; yet another is what Blake would call Orcian sexual guilt.

Necessity may also manifest itself as woman in love who wants a home and an adequate income. However, the woman old in her most baffling manifestation as necessity becomes a debased version of original vision and form. Jimson's problems derive from necessity in all of these forms except the Orcian one, although we learn from Herself Surprised that Sara strongly objected to being painted in the nude.

It will be observed that "The Mental Traveller" is organized around three major experiences with what Jimson calls form. These three experiences correspond at certain points not only to the three attempts to do major paintings in The Horse's Mouth, but also to the three major artistic periods of Jimson's life. These three periods are the classic, the impressionist, and what may be called the surrealist epic but which Jimson calls the new classic. Having reached a stage of uncreativity in the first period of his career, Jimson became, he says, "an aged shadow," the term which the "Mental Traveller" artist uses to describe his condition at the end of the experience with the first female. The second period begins when Jimson sees a Manet (p. 50), a "maiden vision . . . that floating tissue of color," which he

pursues in great pain and frustration for four years (p. 57). When at the end of four years he is shown a "room of [his] own confections" (p. 58), he temporarily despises himself, and begins "arguing and reading and drinking" (p. 58) until one day he happens to see Blake's Job drawings. This event begins his third period: "Goodbye impressionism, anarchism, nihilism, Darwinism and the giddy goat, now staffering with rheumatism. Hail the new classic. . . . I studied Blake and Persian carpets and Raphael's cartoons and took to painting walls" (p. 59).

Jimson is not, during the time of The Horse's Mouth, trying to find either a new kind of reality or a new way of structuring reality. He is searching for new modes of being rather than for new, radically different modes of giving shape to what he sees. In The Horse's Mouth, the most obvious and destructive counterpart of the first female of "The Mental Traveller" is Mother Coker, who completely destroys Jimson's Fall while he is in jail. As Jimson moves toward a decision to give up his Fall entirely, he finds himself having dinner with the Beeders, an event which begins his second quest, or his second major work of the novel. At this time, Jimson does not know what his next work will be. During the meal he makes proposals for doing various works, but as it is difficult for an artistic conception to be fully formed in the land of the Beeders, Jimson does not subsequently refer to any of these proposals. When an opportunity to use a Beeder wall comes,

Jimson suddenly realizes that he ought to do The Raising of Lazarus.

He works hard for several weeks, and just as the idea has formed itself fully in his mind, Lady Beeder suddenly appears and, in effect, drives Jimson out of town. The fine vision which Jimson has wooed through "Labyrinths of wayward Love," has been sustained in the false state of creative frenzy, false because the experience takes place in the Beeder apartment. Lady Beeder here appears as necessity as a debased version of both the artist and artistic form. At times Jimson seems to see this woman as form per se, ". . . more beautiful than true" (p. 158), a subject to be discussed at some length below. The third major appearance of the woman old in The Horse's Mouth comes at the time when Jimson has fully caught his third major vision, the woman-whale. Here the woman old, again Lady Beeder, needs Jimson for her own purposes, and she will have him knocked off his wall and nearly killed in order to fulfill them.

The Fall is one of the major efforts of the new classic period. On the second day of work on this painting, following the release from prison described on the first page of the novel, Jimson is interrupted by Mr. Plant and "two other preachers." The result of this interruption is that Jimson begins an interpretation of "The Mental Traveller" which introduces the major themes of that poem into the novel. When the preachers begin heckling the artist with their suggestions that The Fall is an outgrowth of the present "cult of ugliness," and when Plant

begins trying to explain the painting to the others in reasonable, that is purely literal terms, Jimson tries to ignore the men. Instead of ignoring them, he finds himself growing angry, and in a desperate attempt to objectify his situation, he begins quoting Blake's poem:

I've traveled through a land of men
 A land of men and women too
 And heard and saw such dreadful things
 As cold earth wanderers never knew . . .
 And if the babe is born a boy, that is to say, a real vision
 It's given to a woman old
 Who nails him down upon a rock
 Catches his shrieks in cups of gold (p. 42).

"Which means," says Jimson, "that some old woman of a blue nose nails your work of imagination to the rock of law, and why and what; and submits it to a logical analysis" (p. 42). While disgustedly scraping out part of the painting, Jimson says to himself, "The Old Horse doesn't speak only Horse" (p. 43). In short, he has temporarily lost the sense of form, his new insight. Unable to paint, Jimson walks out along Greenbank Hard, where he sees a pair of young lovers, and meditates upon the common fate of man in love, repeating to himself the quatrain quoted immediately above. These reflections are still playing about the surface of his mind when a piece of sky reminds him of Sara's old pink powder puff. He then remembers his former passionate enslavement to Sara, and quotes another "Mental Traveller" passage corresponding to this memory. Jimson then recalls how he overcame his utter subjugation to Sara and how, in the process of mastering her on the level of human relationships, he learns also how to paint her:

Mastered it. Yes, I can remember the feeling; your brushes like a carpenter's tools. Yes, I found out how to get Sara on canvas. . . . The flesh was made word; every day. Till he, that is Gulley Jimson, became a bleeding youth. And she, that is, Sara, becomes a virgin bright.

And he rends up his manacles
And binds her down for his delight
He plants himself in all her nerves
Just like a husbandman his mould
And she becomes his dwelling-place
And garden fruitful seventy fold. (p. 46)

Jimson's joy in the memory of former successes is short-lived, for when he sees a telephone booth, he is reminded once again of his present state of spiritual dessication. When told that the police are after him for telephoning threats to Hickson, he feels utterly desolate. He remembers at this point how his mother had always dealt with necessity, particularly necessity as poverty, for it is Jimson's sudden thoughts of his extreme poverty that incite him to call Hickson. From the time that Jimson is attacked in his studio by Mr. Plant and the two other preachers until the time he begins remembering his mother, he is confronted by old woman necessity in five different forms. Unable for the moment to cope with any of them, Jimson recalls that his mother, although not an artist, had the ideal imaginative powers of the artist. She had the ability to make her vision and her form one:

A sense of form. . . . Yes, by God, you need technique to make a good job of life. All you can get. You need to take necessity and make her do what you want; get your feet on her old bones and build your mansions out of her rock (p. 52).

But "the problem," says Jimson, "is to get hold of the form you need" (p. 59).

A few hours later at Plant's meeting Jimson will discover that seeing Sara again has partially renewed his controlling powers.

Although Sara is by this time an old woman, when she becomes intoxicated with Jimson's talk and his fondling and with Plant's beer, she reveals to the artist the "old original" woman, the original form of the eternal female, the insight into primal reality which his Fall has been lacking. "Yes, I thought, and that's what I've been missing in my Eve, something female . . . the everlasting Eve, but all alive-oh" (p. 83). Yet, unfortunately the next day the form for the Fall keeps fleeing from the painter until he stops and does a sketch of Sara, "as she was, broad as a door" (p. 86). Jimson now believes that he has once again discovered his maiden, but he is soon to discover in two more major episodes of the novel that the maiden will not stay found.

The movement from Jimson's first efforts on The Fall, after getting out of prison, to his encounter with Sara at Plant's shows the asemplastic, modifying imagination at work. The context of this movement is a world of destruction. The Fall in the leaky old boat shed viewed in this light seems merely a symbol of a more profound kind of form which is a technique of conduct found in Jimson's mother-- and in Sara and Wilcher. Before Jimson is able to finish the first day of his new experiments with working Sara into The Fall, he will be in jail again. Yet, in the week of freedom which begins at the opening of the book, Jimson lives so intensely that the reader has a sense of the

passage of much time. This ability to compress a seemingly large amount of time into a small scope makes action conform to the philosophy of the artistic perception which reveals eternity in a moment of time.

Of considerable importance to an understanding of Jimson's view of "The Mental Traveller" is the fact that Jimson believes one of the themes of the poem to be the quest for love. The central problem of Blake's eternal man, Albion, as shown in Blake's prophetic books, was the development of a harmonious relationship with Jerusalem, the eternal woman. Jimson, old man that he is, no longer searches for love on the sexual, romantic level. Women have always been a source of inspiration to Jimson, but now when he speaks of his love life, he is referring to the need not to love any particular person but simply the generated body of the world. "Go love without the help of anything on earth," he says, quoting Blake, "and that's real horse meat." That Jimson in the utter commitment of his swiftly waning years must now reject the physical relationship emphasizes his isolation and shows the sustaining power of the imagination. Because he has immersed himself in the creative life, he is fully aware, as Blake's Albion comes to be, that one of the chief glories of man is the love of the flesh, love of the world. In fact, Jimson throughout the novel says and demonstrates that the only way to cope successfully with necessity in any of her forms is to love. But the only love to which Jimson is now actively dedicated is

love of art; in this dedication he is indeed the demon lover, encircled like the artist-lover in "Kubla Khan," yet frantically, aggressively creative. That Jimson's love of the world is specifically and deeply religious will be shown below in the discussion of The Creation.

Andrew Wright accurately points out that injustice is one of the major themes of The Horse's Mouth.¹ This theme is central to Jimson's complex idea of freedom. It has already been observed that injustice is, according to Jimson, one of the forms of the old woman necessity, who can be overcome only by the creative powers of the artist. Mr. Plant and his Spinoza make a revealing foil for Jimson. The philosophic, aesthetic and pragmatic inadequacies of Spinozan necessity are shown in Mr. Plant. Jimson says that one reason that the old cobbler believed so strongly in Spinoza is that "Spinoza was all for making the best of a bad job" (p. 83). In a world so hard to endure because there seems to be so little love, Spinoza teaches the value of endurance by telling people "that God doesn't love them" (p. 84), that furthermore man is really the helpless victim of a deterministic universe: "Plantie has been kicked about the world like a football, and so he likes to be told that he isn't any better than a football, except to kiss the foot that kicks him. It makes him feel more brisk and independent" (p. 84). This notion of the order of things makes

¹Wright, p. 125.

Mr. Plant feel free; according to the old cobbler, the way to achieve this sense of freedom is contemplation of the laws of God revealed in nature and philosophy and religion. Freedom, then, in these terms, would consist in understanding why one is not free. "To contemplate the glory of creation," in Mr. Plant's way, would be an expression of resignation to situations perceived by the intellect to have been and to be unalterable. When Plant loses his hand and cannot do his work, he remains resigned. "I want to think. What I feel is that it can't be wasted--a thing like this. It means something" (p. 128). Nevertheless, Plant becomes a victim of self-pity, like Coker, who when she loses her Willie continues her nightly prayers--"He's our father, isn't he" (p. 89)? She is planning to throw acid into the face of the blonde who stole Willie away. When Plant, by accidentally coming into possession of the restroom keys in the doss where he lives, becomes a powerful figure there, he seems to forget "his philosophies" (p. 243) and with them his bitterness. "He'd stopped looking for a rabbit hole and was feeling the nature of things at last" (p. 243). In Jimson's view both justice and injustice are mere matters of blind chance. "Why should it [the loss of a hand] mean anything? Does a kick in the stomach from a blind horse mean anything" (p. 128)? Plant has tried to establish a relationship with God by contemplation only, and therefore has been for most of his life out of touch with reality as perceived by the senses, the "Five windows [which] light the cavernd man" (p. 1).

Jimson indicates this view of Plant in comic terms in an episode which takes place before the loss of the hand. A few hours before the gala meeting at which Professor Ponting speaks, Plant is out on the Hard trying to recruit a congregation. Meeting Jimson and others of the Greenbank crowd, he stops, hoping for an opportunity to invite them to his meeting:

"Nice evening, Mr. Jimson," and he looked round quickly to see if it was a nice evening.

"Very nice," said Bert. "Bit of all right, all right. What about that wet."

Plantie let out a sigh, but in the middle of the sigh he snatched off his bowler and gave it a fierce look to teach it not to come unbrushed until after the meeting. Then he put it back again, and said,

"Beautiful, beautiful. Never saw such stars." And he looked quickly up to make sure that there were such things still to be seen.

"Hitler would laugh," said Franklin.

"Come on, son," said Bert, taking his arm. "Come on, come on, come on."

"But it strikes a big cold through the pavement," said Plantie, slapping down his feet to see if it was a pavement that struck cold (p. 64).

Plant's separation from nature is further indicated that evening by his joining in the singing of "Jerusalem" while Jimson in the scullery is recreating the eternal woman. After the meeting, Plant takes off his shoes, lights his pipe and contemplates the works of Spinoza.

Jimson does not like Plant's discourse on "Old Ben," for it is a painful reminder of days when he too had fallen for "The old Eye" (p. 83). In fact, Jimson remembers once having bitten a man "who didn't like Spinoza; or perhaps he'd never heard of him and didn't want to hear" (p. 83).

Cary's own view of freedom of the will, as shown in a conversation with Lord David Cecil, is that freedom consists not so much in a person's being able to modify external circumstances as in his creative awareness of his individuality:

"Insects are not free for they live inside a communal feeling, they don't seem to be able to convey feelings to each other, they live inside . . . if they had separate feelings, well, the hive would bust up inside in no time. Now, of course, this produces the freedom and isolation of the human being, and does produce great tragedy as well as happiness. "¹

This view is similar in some respects to that of Spinoza, but the fact remains that the artistic imagination may see that the rhythms of the world's life are creative and that if they are so, then it is possible for the artist to immerse himself in the flow of perpetually original and therefore non-determined forms,² forms which remain original because they are forever being created and which give both sensual and aesthetic joy to be kissed "as it flies. " The one who perceives and loves these forms "lives in eternity's sun rise. "³

Jimson's objections to the Spinozan world view are, on

¹Cecil, Adam International Review, XVIII, 15-25.

²Such forms would be, for example, ". . . Herself, Sara. Sara, the individual female. The real old original fireship . . . (p. 28) ". . . the old original . . . (p. 77) . . . the Everlasting Eve . . . (p. 83) . . . or a combination of lights and shadows ". . . as glorious as the first of things . . . (p. 63) . . . like a working model of the earth before somebody thought of dirt, and colors and birds and humans" (p. 66).

³Keynes, p. 11.

aesthetic grounds, crucial ones. Jimson agrees with Spinoza that to have a sense of justice is a waste of time. (It has caused Jimson to have to go to prison at least three times.) Jimson objects that Spinoza's view of man's relationship to nature is deductive and external and therefore of little use to the artist. "Contemplation is not the doings. It doesn't get there, in fact" (p. 101). Jimson discusses the relationship of his definition of freedom to aesthetic theory while Coker and Hickson argue about the monetary value of paintings.

Contemplation, is in fact, ON THE OUTSIDE. It's not on the spot. And the truth is that Spinoza was always on the outside. He didn't understand freedom, and so he didn't understand anything. Because after all, I said to myself, with some excitement, for I saw where all this was leading to. Freedom, to be plain, is nothing but THE INSIDE OF THE OUTSIDE . . .

Whereas Old Bill, that damned Englishman, didn't understand anything else but freedom, and so all his nonsense is full of truth; and even though he may be a bit of an outsider, HIS OUTSIDE IS ON THE INSIDE . . .

But what you get on the inside, I said to myself, is the works--it's SOMETHING THAT GOES ON GOING ON. Hold on to that, old boy, I said, for it's the facts of life. . . . It's the kick in the old horse. It's the creation. And that's where it's leading me. Right up to that blasted picture of mine . . .

The Fall is a frost. It's something contemplated from the outside. . . . For what happened, I asked myself . . . what happens to a thousand Eves and Adams every night of the week somewhere under the willows or the palm tree shade. . . . It's a Fall. Into the pit. The ground gives away, and down you go, head over heels. Unless, of course, you know how to fly. To rise again on your wings (pp. 102-103).

The effect of these almost incantatory assertions is that Jimson achieves a new sense of formal and spiritual insights (p. 105) which are to be carried over into his final work, The Creation. Achieving artistic

insight, like falling in love, is an act of the imagination asserting the non-communality of the mind. Each member of a love relationship would therefore be new created both by loving and by being loved:

Girl going past clinging to a young man's arm. Putting up her face like a duck to the moon. Drinking joy. Green in her eyes. Spinal curvature. No chin, mouth like a frog. Young man like a pug. Gazing down at his sweetie with the face of a saint reading the works of God. Hold on, maiden, you've got him. He's your boy. Look out, Puggy, that isn't a maiden you see before you, it's a work of imagination. Nail him, girlie. Nail him to the contract. Fly laddie, fly off with your darling vision before she turns into a frow, who spends all her life thinking of what the neighbors think . . . (p. 44) . . . love doesn't grow on the trees like apples in Eden--it's something you have to make. And you must use your imagination to make it too, just like anything else. It's all work, work. The curse of Adam. But if he doesn't work, he doesn't get anything, even love. . . . The fallen man--nobody's going to look after him. The poor bastard is free--a free and responsible citizen. The Fall into freedom (p. 178).

Jimson's notions of the inadequacies of Spinoza for both the artist and the man are defined in yet another way in which Jimson relates the vision of Spinoza to that of the artist in "The Mental Traveller." The eye of the artist in the poem is creative: "The Eye altering alters all." That Jimson is using the eye as a symbol to make a distinction between creative and contemplative power is shown in many ways, one of which is his reference to Spinoza as "old Diamond Death." "What do you mean, Old Diamond Death?" Plant asks.

I didn't know what I meant till Plant asked me. But then I saw the diamond flashing different colors off every facet, and never moving from its place. The cold eye . . .

"Spinoza was the most independent man that ever lived," Plant said, "never asked for anything of anybody. He'd rather have died, and he did die. And mind you," said Plant, getting fierce all at

once, "a happy man. In the contemplation of the majesty and glory of God's being. "

"Old Million Eye. "

"What do you mean Old Million Eye? "

"I don't know. "

But I saw once a photograph of a fly looking at an electric bulb. It didn't move, and neither did the bulb.

"Didn't need anything, " said Plant. "Why, anyone can contemplate" (pp. 129-130).

As creator, Jimson need have no basic concern with the philosophic, moral import of his work. If his work is a genuine product of the imagination, it is de facto good. One result of its being good is the pleasure Gulley takes in the feeling of controlling power not available to Spinozan humility. Jimson's great need is to see and imitate reality of the sort which the "altering Eye" presents to him. "The visual, naturally enough, is Gulley's route to both discovery and recovery. . . . It is Gulley's motive, as it is his style, to 'see small portions of the eternal world.'"¹ Jimson sometimes uses the words "I saw" to begin his descriptions of his visions as they form themselves in his mind. Oddly enough, the use of this phrase does not increase as Jimson's life becomes progressively more complex and disastrous throughout the novel; nor does the phrase in itself become correlatively more significant as the external world of necessity gradually closes in on Jimson to destroy his Creation. A pattern that is revealed by this expression is shown in the fact that when Jimson says "I saw, " he is indoors, where he cannot see

¹Andrew Wright, "Introduction to The Horse's Mouth, " the Harper's edition, p. xv.

the external forms of nature. A more significant pattern reveals itself in the summary and prophetic qualities of the visions, prophetic here in the sense that they contain elements which grow both in size and in importance as they continue to appear in the novel. Two of these elements comprise a statement regarding the nature of the relationship between passion and vision. There are four of these visions prefaced with the formulaic "I saw"; none of them is ever painted.

The first one occurs in Coker's bar, where Jimson is trying to find a way to procure paints and brushes to continue work on The Fall. Jimson's conversation with Captain Jones and Coker, out of which the vision grows, consists, on the part of Jones and Coker, of a discussion of the relative merits of sight and hearing. Captain Jones says that he would prefer to be like his daughter and lose his hearing rather than his sight. Coker, who is ugly and who hates mirrors and pretty women, would prefer to lose her sight. Jimson thinks to himself that Jones's daughter ought to become an artist's model "or an artist" (p. 13), feeling perhaps that she would to a degree be exercising a faculty superior to that of hearing. But since even if "you did tell her she wouldn't believe you," Jimson redeems her symbolically by including her in the painting which he then does in his imagination. Coker is in the painting also. Both Coker and Jones's daughter are in the painting given fulfillment. Jimson gives each a "holy babe," possibly versions of the infants born in "The Mental Traveller." The babes are apparently the products of the

tears, which are, Jimson says elsewhere, intellectual things. The tear is "a joy. It's wisdom in vision. It's the prophetic eye in the loins. The passion of intelligence" (p. 103). The tears which the ugly, maimed girls weep in this vision will not be mentioned again for several days, but when they are used again, we see that they have become fully developed symbols defining the capacity to participate fully in the love experience. They will have become symbols of the ability to fall.

The second of the four visions which have the formulaic beginning marks another important point in the development of Jimson's idea of the fall. Again, Jimson has just been released from prison and is standing inside Ikey's, having temporarily abandoned his attempts to cheat Ikey out of a canvas. Shortly before going to prison for this last tour, Jimson has rejected his Fall in its present form. What The Fall needs is what Blake can furnish: the idea of Oothoon, who learns how to weep. While in prison this time Jimson has re-read Blake's Jerusalem, a symbolist study in the psychology of the fall. As a consequence, upon being released from prison, he now wants something bigger. "Trouble with the Fall--it's not big enough. All at once I had the feel of the Fall. A real Fall. Fire and brimstone. Blues and reds. And I saw green fire in the top left next the red tower" (p. 118). Throughout this vision Jimson sees symbols of generation, which lead him, almost consciously, toward a decision to do The Creation. The "red tower," which appears here for the first time, is an elementary, phallic version

of the great whale of The Creation. The phallic nature of the tower provides an improvisation on the theme of the creative vision available to sexual passion and as such repeats the earlier statement regarding the "prophetic eye in the loins" (p. 103).

A few minutes later Jimson goes to his boat shed to examine his Fall and discovers that his quarters are now occupied by Coker, now pregnant. Mother Coker soon shows Jimson that it is impossible that he should live with them there. He therefore searches for Mr. Plant and finds him living in a nearby doss, grieving over his lost hand, uncomforted by his Spinoza. In Jimson's third vision he sees "Old Diamond Death," Spinoza. "I saw the diamond flashing different colors off every facet. . . . The cold eye. . . . Now if he had been set in the top of a drill, I thought, to bore the rock--he would have got hot--the sparks would have flown--" (p. 129). This vision is a parody of the one in which the red tower appears; this tower, as a symbol of generation, has its counterpart in the diamond drill. Spinoza, "Old Million Eye," like the diamonds he shapes, mirrors the external world instead of penetrating into internal reality. The world's body for Spinoza remains a barren seed bed. Set in the top of the drill, Spinoza would have got hot and caused the sparks to fly; but they will not fly in the way the "little flames like men and women" in the red-tower vision "rust together burning each other up like coals," as they fall into the love experience.

Jimson talks a great deal about Spinoza in his book; and since the action of the book covers only about twelve months, one may wonder why the old artist seems so concerned with him, especially when we consider the fact that Jimson is dictating his book while in the hospital with a stroke from which he may not recover. One answer is, of course, that Jimson may wish to re-affirm for himself in every way possible--including the use of Spinoza as a foil--the divine fecundity of the artist. This he could need to do both before and after his stroke, for in so doing he affirms the superiority of his own chaotic life and thought over Spinozan order. Perhaps one reason that Jimson begins his book at a point twelve months prior to his Creation is that it is at this point in his life that the habit and necessity of seeing (without painting) have become intensely precious to him. Before the jail term which has just expired at the beginning of the book, Jimson has had, for some time, fairly adequate working materials.

Jimson's next vision, the fourth, takes place during dinner with the Beeders and precedes the never-finished Raising of Lazarus. It is possible that Jimson senses the philosophic problems of doing meaningful work in the Beeder flat, the Land of Beulah, where it is impossible to fall into experience, and where, therefore, the "passion of intelligence" cannot be felt. Whether or not Jimson actually is aware that he may have trouble working with the Beeders, it is they who prevent him from completing his Lazarus or his Creation. Failing to

communicate with the Beeders while dining with them, Jimson will decide, when he finds that they are out of the country, to act on his earlier suggestion that he do a wall painting for them, a suggestion quite ignored by the somnolent Sir William. During the dinner Jimson tries out on the Beeders his notion of the relationship between good and evil, or energy and inertia. The Beeders' lack of understanding of Jimson's views is exceeded only by their polite indifference.

And after the fish, I began to swim. My eyes were opened and I saw the light. The candles kept growing into silver porches, and the flowers walked under them like green girls with chorus hats. Their flames looked at me like the eyes of tigers just waking from sleep. Lying on their sides and opening one eye at a time. Tiger, tiger, burning bright. A ravening brute with a breath like a rotten corpse and septic claws. This beauty grows with cruelty . . . Flycatchers and flesh eaters. Flowers of evil . . . Art lives on babies. . . . Do you believe in Spinoza, Sir William. To accept all the works of creation with humble delight. . . . I could see old Spinoza with round spectacles and a white apron polishing a lens and looking at my tigers. On a ground of tall brown trees . . . No sky. No blue, no vision. . . . The green girls began to dance under the silver porches and shake their silver hips (pp. 157-158).

That "This beauty grows with cruelty" is a powerful and uncompromising observation on the meaning of the fall not into inertial acceptance but into freedom. It is also a statement of the nature of the creative imagination isolated by its very power which places it beyond the reach of the rational, discursive Spinozan intellect, not to mention the unreflecting Beeder mind. Jimson at the end of the book clearly identifies himself with the deaf cat, Snow, and the tiger of which Snow reminds him. As Jimson watches Snow, he is thinking of the beauty which has emerged from the cruel death which Sara has sustained at his

hands; he has destroyed Sara in order to work on his Creation, just as he formerly has beaten her in order to work on his Garden of Eden in the Ancombe chapel. Jimson sees the destructive aspect of the tiger as in part a sign of the ability to accept the consequences of the fall into experience. Jimson knows that he is a destructive, even criminal person. Unlike his political counterpart, Chester Nimmo, Jimson accepts and uses his powers of destruction to rise into creativity and the perpetual innocence resulting therefrom. Nimmo lies to himself and to his readers for the sake of his Satanic egoism, which becomes ultimately an inertial force. Jimson's sins are committed in the service of art; therefore Jimson neither defends himself nor forgives himself for them. Marlowe's artist, Faustus, forsakes art for life; when he discovers that life without art is formless, he realizes that he is in hell. For art's sake Jimson too repudiates the normal concerns of life but because he believes official intellectual norms to be too weak for effectual battle with the world of necessity. In rising above such norms, Jimson sees himself as not subject to conventional evaluation by them. Faustus, having yielded up the Icarian powers on which he might have risen above the world which so bored him, can have no faith even in the diabolic art with which he occasionally amuses himself but with which he might better have constructed forms reflecting the magnitude of his disillusionment. With this kind of art he might have avenged himself. Instead, he faithlessly yields himself up to conventional

devils, calling out on conventional gods to save him.

The Beeders, being truly corrupt, are in the hell of almost total inertia. They "forgave everybody before he spoke" (p. 156), for they have no interest whatever in the nature of evil. They are content with their blissfully untried and therefore worthless innocence.

The flowers and flames of the "green girls" are versions of the same figures which appear in the vision which comes to Jimson in Coker's bar. The "art [which] lives on babies" is again a statement of the creative person's ideal participation in the destruction-creation process. The "flesh eaters"--the tigers, the creative imagination--to survive must die into life. When the Beeders remain unmoved by the strange and fearful symmetry of Jimson's mind, Jimson will wreck their apartment as a comic object lesson on their failure to understand good and evil, creation and destruction.

One of Jimson's most monumental insults to the Beeders is his painting of the many feet on the wall which has formerly supported Lady Beeder's feeble efforts. The feet are a sign of the true artist's triumph. Jimson strides over the Beeders' finest feelings, but this happy couple do not even bother to forgive Jimson; they are too unconcerned to assure themselves that the figures are indeed feet.

In the first five lines describing this fourth vision, Jimson refers to the sense of sight five times. Four more such references appear in the next twenty lines; the vision fades and there follows a

paragraph given almost entirely to describing Lady Beeder's eyes. They are described as works of art wrought with careful attention to external detail. They are to be seen, not to see. "Penciled all about with radiating strokes of blue-gray," they look like artificial flowers, "the shadows of petals." Jimson has just seen in vision flowers "like green girls," flaming with life "like the eyes of tigers."

Jimson cannot sell (or give) the Beeders a painting of the sort that this vision would be. What he does finally sell them is an early Bath, a copy, "the real stuff. But in a small way" (p. 99). Fleeing London, he discovers that the various earlier visions are beginning to coalesce into one great "whale of an idea." The new forms so possess him that the burgeoning shapes of his coming Creation arrange themselves so naturally before his eyes that he no longer bothers to preface his descriptions of them with the formulaic "I saw." It is as if these forms are produced without conscious effort on Jimson's part. When he sees what has risen out of his mind, he says, as though unaware of what precisely has been happening to him, "That's what I want . . ." (p. 249).

Jimson's "altering Eye" is what saves him from ruin by all forces which unmodified would be too powerful for him. Blake's artist in "The Mental Traveller" has completely lost his vision by the end of his career. His vision, his sense of sight, is not even mentioned in the conclusion of the poem. As Jimson's vision expands throughout the novel, the Creation grows, taking into itself and reshaping, controlling

not only symbols of generation and rebirth, but also forms and institutions which would otherwise destroy Jimson. "Churchill's hat," may for example represent the government, which anarchist Jimson hates so fervently; the tower of London probably represents imprisonment; St. Paul's dome may represent institutionalized religion; the apples and trees which Jimson sees in exile in Burlington represent the work of Old Adam Jimson being reborn through discovery of new knowledge and being; the fish represent being in general, womankind, Sara, in particular, who by the force of her femaleness would control Jimson as man and as artist. There is no form of life which Jimson is unable to see in its ideal creative aspect.

The confrontation of the artist by materialistic necessity is shown in what is possibly the most comic episode of the novel when Jimson dines with the Beeders. Jimson refers to the Beeder flat as Beulah (p. 160), a place in Blake "where the doubting masculine mind is put to sleep and enclosed in a protective space by the daughters of Beulah (the benevolent emotions). The daughters urge the sleeper to take it easy for a time and not think (dispute), lest it think itself into a fall."¹ The Beeders (possibly an ironic pun on Breeder) certainly do not fall in the Blakean, Jimsonian sense: They have no children; their lives are utterly aseptic, spiritually and physically. "Children," says

¹Wright, Joyce Cary: A Preface to His Novels, p. 133.

Gulley, "are not born in the land of Beulah" (p. 158). To the rich and complacent Beeders Gulley says, "Your duty is to be rich and happy" (p. 159). Lady Beeder replies that they are not really rich, for her husband suffered financial setbacks in the war. Sir William, by this time literally half-asleep, stirs himself to say that the war was "perhaps not an unmixed evil" (even though it did cause him some financial loss). "It gave us the league," he says. "It taught us to be prepared" (p. 160). Sir William continues in this profound vein, "only a dream in Beulah . . . his voice sleepy" (p. 160). Looking at Lady Beeder, Jimson thinks to himself, "Oh the darling, Oh daughter of Beulah" (p. 159). Because there can be no generative force in Beulah, the Beeders conclude that Jimson is merely drunk when he proposes doing on one of their walls a painting of sunflowers and tigers. The irony of the Beeders' response to this proposal is subtle and telling. Jimson is here alluding to two well known poems of Blake's, "Ah, Sunflower" and "The Tyger." "Ah, Sunflower" is a moving lyric study in frustrated sexual longing. In the poem, the "pale virgin lying in snow" arises from the "grave"--her untried sexual purity, and seeks out the forces of male generation, the sun. "The Tyger" is a study of a fiercely creative strength which would be anathema to the Beeders. They do not commission the painting.

If the Beeders are a manifestation of materialistic necessity and therefore versions of the woman old, Lady Beeder herself is a

version of the woman old as debased artist; her paintings are phases of the woman old as debased form. Her work is more than merely derivative and innocuous; it is she and her husband who are ultimately responsible for the Borough Council's decision to tear down Jimson's great wall. If Lady Beeder cannot nail her artist down or put him to sleep, she can at least knock him off his wall.

The word necessity may be applied to the function of the Beeders in at least two other senses. It is in a practical way, on the level of plot, that Jimson's relationship to the Beeders as necessity is most obviously defined. Necessity in the sense of want hangs over Jimson throughout the novel. The acceptance by the Beeders of a vulgar form of philosophic determinism is the other sense. The fact of human suffering need be given no real thought by them. When Jimson questions them on their view of evil, they give him for reply a half-dozen clichés. Their real concern is whether or not the toast has improved. They take for granted that a kind of social Couéism is at work as a law in the processes of history: "I don't think any government will allow all the unemployment again. . . . The slump . . . certainly did much to push forward social legislation . . ." (p. 159). When Jimson demurs, Lady Beeder asks him if he doesn't "believe in science" (p. 160).

It is because of their philosophical vacuity that the Beeders refuse to become Jimson's patrons. Whereas Jimson has at one time

found Spinoza's determinism attractive but deeply inadequate, he finds the Beeders' to be merely mindless. Spinoza's was an ordering art of the intellect; Lady Beeder's is a mindless talent that orders nothing but destroys all: ". . . the jaws of death" (p. 155). It is as meaningless as "Annie Laurie" blown by the sphincteral apparatus through a key hole.

All his life Jimson has been working toward a full understanding of the meaning of Sara, who is the "woman of women" (p. 98). Having suffered from the fell hand of Lady Beeder, Jimson now seems to understand Sara better than ever before. Deeply depressed by unsatisfactory work on The Fall, Jimson meets Sara after a long separation and realizes suddenly that she is his true model. During the abortive interlude with Lady Beeder, Jimson forgets Sara on the conscious level of his mind, but when he flees London, images of Sara return and take place in his mind, although in altered form. At the center of everything said about Sara stands that great female's perfect foil, Flora Beeder. For all of Lady Beeder's vices there are corresponding virtues in Sara. Lady Beeder's chief vice, noted above, is a failure to experience the Jimsonian sense of sin. She sees and feels neither sin nor innocence. She cannot weep, for her eyes are merely painted on. She is childless, almost fleshless. Jimson constantly upbraids her about her unfallen state, for he is deeply concerned with the archetypal Eden fall and rise; for rightly understood, this process is the most important fact of human experience.

When Jimson says that the "world of imagination is the world of eternity" (p. 35), he means, among other things, that he sees the universal in the particular: "the jug of jugs and the woman of women" (p. 98). The particular that has revealed most of eternity to him is Sara. As he goes to see her for the first time in several years, a few days after getting out of jail at the opening of the novel, he is reminded afresh by thoughts of her that "everything that lives is holy" (p. 34), that the flesh is the "door of paradise . . . the Holy land" in which one falls "to rise again." Sara knows everything and yet is still surprised, because she lives in innocence (p. 34). Later in the novel Jimson is thinking of Sara when he does his Bromion-Theotormion drawing in Hickson's show room:

The soul of innocence, maidenhood, could never be destroyed so long as it lived in the free spirit. For it would always be new created in real virginity. The virginity of the soul which never allows experience to grow stale. Which never allows custom to hide the wonders of love (p. 104).

True virginity is achieved through passion, which is Sara-Eve-Jerusalem in the Vala aspect--the sexual aspect. This aspect is absolutely necessary to the proper functioning of Enitharmon, who is imagination in Jerusalem, and of Los, who is imagination in Albion, Blake's eternal man. It is in this way that the flesh is the "door of paradise." The flesh can therefore reveal "small portions of the eternal world." The generative energy in the world is divine because, as Jimson sees it, it proceeds symbolically from fleshly vigor.

The pride of the peacock is the glory of God
 The lust of the goat is the bounty of God
 The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God
 The nakedness of women is the work of God (p. 19).

Pride, lust, wrath, nakedness mean excess and excess means plenitude. Only an imagination of great daring, tiger-like, can grasp this notion as a spiritual fact and make it the basis of epic art. Only a Jimson or a Blake could grasp the full implication of the fact that "every generated body in its inward form is spiritual" and thus innocent basically (p. 97). Only a "son of Los" that is, a Jimson (p. 97) can comprehend such a doctrine. Such praise of the son of Los may seem facile enough on the discursive level, but Jimson, like Blake, comprehends innocence as only the symbolist artist can. "Innocence is by definition universal" if it is viewed from the inside.¹ "Innocence is universal reconciliation"² of "idea and corporiety"³ on both the philosophical and aesthetic level. God is "alone the Prolific. . . . God only acts & Is in existing beings or Men."⁴ Therefore to seek a reconciliation of one's nature with Nature as Sara does in her life and as Jimson does in his art, would be to seek universal innocence. Jimson's whale with a woman's face is possibly

¹Gardner, p. 24.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 24. Gardner is here quoting Blake's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell."

his most complete statement of this innocence. Jimson is so caught up in this doctrine that he feels, apparently, little guilt for killing her, although he weeps over her death. And he gives her life in his Creation.

Jimson strongly insists on this relationship between Blakean innocence and imagination. He repeats throughout the novel that the really creative person is one who accepts, uses, or rather is caught up in a synthesis of balanced life forces, or zoas, as Blake calls them. Therefore Sara can "commit adultery at one end and weep for her sins at the other," as the artist succinctly points out, "and enjoy both operations at once" (p. 24). This quality in Sara defines her innocence and her strength as a mode of combating the cruel, un-Blakean division between body and spirit. When Coker says that Sara looks as if she has been on the streets, Jimson thinks, "Wouldn't do Sara any harm if she had . . . she'd always be game for a laugh and keep her floors clean" (p. 33). The reason for this unique resiliency in Sara is a Blakean one: Generative lust is a good.

This is not to say, of course, that either Blake or Cary believes that a prostitute can maintain her essential innocence. Prostitution may be as ruinous to the soul as frigidity. This fact is suggested all through Blake's work, and in Cary's Prisoner of Grace, Nina's corruption is shown symbolically in her loose sexual relationships. Nina becomes corrupt because she consciously allows herself to be manipulated for mechanistic political purposes. Neither in the process nor in the purpose

can she find "sweet delight." But when Sara allows herself to be used by Jimson, she becomes "spiritual fodder," and she receives as much as she gives, remaining "pure, simple, affectionate."¹ Sara constantly searches for a form, a home, in which her womanhood can find completeness; Jimson searches for a form that will give completeness to his artistic visions. Both, despite the chaos of their lives, frequently find this formal organization for what would otherwise be shapeless lives. Considering, then, the important role that innocence seems to play in Jimson's view of the ideal form, it is interesting to note these lines written on a page of Blake's The Four Zoas:

Unorganized Innocence: An impossibility.
Innocence dwells with Wisdom, but never with Ignorance.²

Jimson, like Blake, assumes that "every man has to go through a microcosmic version of the Fall--a breaking up and a remaking--in order to achieve spiritual wholeness."³ A necessary part of this experience is Blakean lust, which teaches that the "only innocence of value is 'organized innocence.'"⁴ Sara is as "surprising, engaging,

¹Nathan Cohen, "A Conversation with Joyce Cary," The Tamarack Review, No. 3 (Spring, 1957), p. 9.

²Margaret Rudd, Organized Innocence, The Story of Blake's Prophetic Books (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), Fly leaf.

³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴Ibid., p. 14.

paradoxical wise and foolish a woman as ever failed to distinguish between virtue and sin"; she was careless about other people's property, but "her intentions were entirely innocent."¹ Prescott in making this observation shows his awareness of the quality of innocence although he does not deal with its philosophic and aesthetic basis. This is also true of Hamilton's view of Jimson as we see in his remark that there is an innocence even in Jimson's "assaults upon the ten commandments, and an entire absence of calculated malice."²

Jimson's philosophy of the creative life being what it is, one would expect his theories of art to involve some such idea of organicism as that found in some of the major Romantic poets such as Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge. The most detailed and explicit analysis of his basic artistic theory is given when Jimson gets out of the hospital, after being beaten up in Burlington, and starts looking for a wall on which to paint his Creation. At this time he has no place to live and is therefore taken by Coker, now a mother herself and now more than ever Mother Necessity. Coker feeds Jimson well, puts him to bed early and takes away his trousers to ensure his getting enough rest.

And I had to be out in the air. Even one day in bed was putting a cramp on my ideas, tucking them up in a tight parcel. My

¹Kenneth Hamilton, "Boon or Thorn? Joyce Cary and Samuel Beckett on Human Life," Dalhousie Review, XXXVIII (Winter, 1959), 433.

²Orville Prescott, "Two Modern Masters: Cozzens and Cary," In My Opinion (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1952), p. 195.

imagination was working inwards instead of outwards; it was fitting things into a pattern, instead of letting them grow together. [*Italics added.*] If I stayed in the boat shed for a week under Cokey, I said, I could say goodbye to my Creation--it would turn into a little square picture with four corners and a middle. However big I made it on the wall, it would be a piece of art work. A put-up job. A jig-saw of the back room. Whereas a real picture is a flower, a geyser, a fountain, it hasn't got a pattern but a Form. It hasn't got corners and a middle but an Essential Being (p. 249).

Such a work will not imitate literal reality. To be essential and thus universal, it must not only distort its shapes, but it will join anatomical parts of figures which on the material level would seem to be related only because they inhabit the same universe. A whale, for example, might have a woman's face, or a mole might have a man's hands.

The gradual development of The Creation in Jimson's mind is one of the most brilliant studies of the artistic imagination in existence. The reception by the primary imagination of the disparate images that will be broken up and reunited by the secondary imagination, to use Coleridge's terms, into the dynamic new forms of The Creation begins quite early in the novel. After visiting Sara with Coker, Jimson goes back to his boat shed and begins working on The Fall. He is frustrated by a feeling that the painting is all wrong. In desperation, he draws some flowers, but dislikes them; then he suddenly makes a figure which at first resembles an Indian club but which then begins to look like a fish. He paints a row of fish, which keep him from feeling that his Eve is "faked." He now works well for a while, rejoicing in his fish, which, as life symbols, have probably been suggested to him by the visit to Sara.

(Later the identification of the great whale with Sara will be explicit.)

"Those fish were catching my fancy," he says. "All the green silver noses in a row on top of the water . . . knobs sticking out of the flat" (p. 37). When his inspiration is killed by Plant and the preachers, he wanders by the river, where the boats tied on the Hard look like "stranded whales," "stranded" perhaps because Jimson has temporarily lost his power. A few minutes later, he sees the rising moon as having a "nozzle" (p. 63), which glances backward to the knobby noses of the fish in the Fall and forward to the moon which looks "as solid as a whale" (p. 229). The discovery of the fish while painting The Fall is described as a birth, that is, a product of intuition rather than deduction. "What the hell could it be?" Jimson asks. "A fish. And I felt a kick inside as if I was having a foal [a reference to himself as 'the old horse']. Fish. Fish" (p. 36). The new Sara-Eve which Jimson envisions after meeting Sara at Plant's swims before his lager-blurred eyes like a "golden fish" (p. 85). When Jimson decides to do Eve with Sara's body, he says that he wants a body "smooth and thick as a column and strong as a tree" (p. 90).

This vision will re-emerge during Jimson's first night in Burlington as the trees and the moon and the whale: "I hadn't seen a real wild tree for twelve years. I couldn't take my eyes off 'em, bulging out into the moon as solid as whales. . . . And then again I felt that shape of the big fish . . . " (p. 229). Apparently neither moon nor trees

appear in The Creation, but for the last 150 years both have been well-known symbols of the artistic imagination, and as such point almost explicitly to the fact of the organic synthesis taking place in the mind of Jimson. But before Jimson reaches the place that he can feel the "shape of the big fish," he must abandon any idea of completing The Fall. Even before he realizes that Mrs. Coker has destroyed his Fall, early versions of the great whale, far too big for his Fall, are taking shape in his imagination.

Trouble with the Fall--it's not big enough. . . . I saw green fire in the top of the left next the red tower . . . (p. 118) . . . A great cloud over on the Surrey shore . . . Shaped like a tower about a mile high and a half mile thick. . . . I could use that cloud . . . opposite the tower (p. 119).

Later, when Jimson sees the trees "bulging out into the moon, solid as whales," the major image is almost ready for birth. He now consciously feels it growing: "The whale of an idea" (p. 230). It is, indeed, an idea of such a scope as can be described discursively only by Blake:

"There exist in the eternal world the permanent realities of everything which we see reflected in the vegetable glass of Nature." And I thought, in the works of Gulley Jimson. Such as red Eves and green Adams, blue whales . . . (p. 235).

As Gulley says further, "It was the biggest idea of my life."

It had begun from those trees on our first night in the country [Burlington]. Something bigger than the new Fall. A Creation. And I saw it about fifteen feet by twenty, the biggest thing I had ever seen. . . . This thing grew on me all the time I was in hospital, till I dreamed blue whales, like gasometers; and red women growing out of the ground, with legs like Lolie's roots; and trees putting out their apples to the wind, like little breasts (pp. 237-238).

A few days later, the "red women growing out of the ground," and the trees with apples like "little breasts" become the "woman tree . . . round as a gasometer . . . blue as a whale . . . with a woman's face" (p. 249).

The point of tracing the growth of Jimson's final great whale is not merely to show that the idea does have a development. An IBM machine could show that fact. The significance of this development is that it is anything but additive. It has proceeded from Jimson's entire view of material reality, from his conception of the unity and holiness of all things. This growth of disparate images into a new wholeness is a triumph over all necessity and all time. It illustrates one of the central ideas of Cary's fiction and Jimson's life: Life is creative; it is not a machine. To be creative, it must also be destructive. This is the tragic fact. While Jimson paints the wall, thinking of Sara, the whale weeps, and so does Jimson, knowing, of course, that "a tear is an intellectual thing. "

The lachrymae rerum, which culminate in Jimson's weeping while The Creation is being painted, have appeared all through the novel. One is reminded thus of the world of Blake's "The Grey Monk,"¹ a world of insecurity, revolution and destruction. What Blake's poem says is that the only power that can cope with destruction is the imagination:

¹A copy of "The Grey Monk" will be found in the Appendix.

"But vain the Sword & vain the Bow,
 "They never can work War's overthrow.
 "The Hermit's Prayer & the Widow's tear
 "Alone can free the world from fear.

"For a Tear is an Intellectual Thing,
 "And a Sigh is the Sword of an Angel King,
 "And the bitter groan of the Martyr's woe
 "Is an Arrow from the Almighty's Bow.¹

The unity that makes the tear an "intellectual thing" is the unity of the creative life as a formal mode in itself. In the light of this statement it is interesting to note that Jimson does not complete a single painting during the course of the book. But unlike the tears of the Grey Monk, the tears of Jimson have not dried up. Jimson refuses to sit passively on the "stony Bed" of necessity.

The first work of Jimson's in which the tears appear is one of the many which Jimson never tries to put on canvas or plaster. It is Coker's-bar painting.

And I saw all the deaf, blind, ugly, cross-eyed, limp-legged, bulgeheaded, bald and crooked girls in the world, sitting on little white mountains and weeping tears like sleet. There was a great clock ticking, and every time it ticked the tears all fell together with a noise like broken glass tinkling in a plate. And the ground trembled like a sleeping dog in front of the parlor fire when the bell tolls for a funeral. . . . Yes, and a lot of nuns pushing perambulators, with a holy babe in each. Yes, and every nun with a golden crown. Yes and the nuns would be like great black tear drops. They could be the tear drops (p. 13).

The tears of the girls, who are given babies by Jimson, become nuns as a sign of the holiness of the sexual experience. Why the nuns are

¹Keynes, pp. 117-118.

black is not an easy question unless the answer is only too obvious.

Jimson may decide, he says, to make them green. Among the symbols of eternity, which physically dominate the other figures in the painting, are "everlastings." Other flowers described in the painting are "burning." The mountains themselves look like fire "blue-white and blue-green." The generative female is herself a symbol of eternity, as one sees not only in The Creation, but also in other less obvious ways. Observing Coker preening for Hickson, Jimson notes that she particularly admires her silk stockings. "For eternity is in love with the productions of Time" (p. 95).

While doing the Bromion-Theotormion drawing (p. 104), Jimson is talking to himself about the nature of true virginity and unconsciously recalling his Coker's-bar vision. He is sitting beneath Hickson's Sara in Her Bath. Suddenly he thinks of Blake's Oothoon, of Jerusalem, who "weeps not" at all (p. 104) because she is ill; she hates and fears passion. The tear, being a sign of the ability to fall, is also a sign of joy. To grasp this fact imaginatively is the end of wisdom. Jimson's tree of knowledge and life throws down a "shower of tears" which become fish, or being (p. 105). The whale's eyes in The Creation gaze at Jimson like "all the grief and glory in the world." Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether it is the woman-whale or the dead Sara who is crying (p. 303). Sara and the whale are clearly associated in the fevered brain of old Jimson as he sits on his scaffold late into the night

trying to finish his wall. "Sall," he says, "you old bluemange [he has repeatedly referred to the whale as being blue], you've taken the whole world to your bosom . . . a world's sweetheart, I said" (p. 305). This statement reflects Jimson's final interpretation of "The Mental Traveller" as a poem about the quest for love and for form.

The great whale as essential being perhaps suggests some debts to Melville and for this reason needs, in itself, little comment. To give this great primeval being a woman's face is an indication of the wild genius which sees the creative participation of all life in a great bizarre unity. The woman-whale nursing her young shows pictorially the enormous, powerful fecundity at the center of life. Melville sees ultimate being as something for which man can strive only, something in which most men can participate only theoretically. His whale is masculine.

The temporal limits suggested by the woman and whale as separate creations in time indicate the unusual epic range of the proposed painting. One is accustomed to think of the epic as being enclosed within and defining certain qualities of a given culture. But Jimson's subject, spreading itself over aeons, says that life is always beginning. Therefore a single moment of real being comprehends all time in itself, just as every heart beat is a sunrise (p. 227).

Since a work of art is the product of intellectual passion rather than cool deduction, artist Jimson takes his tips from Plato's horses

rather than from his driver.¹ Hence Jimson's rejection of Plato as well as of Spinoza. The trouble is, however, "THE OLD HORSE DOESN'T SPEAK ONLY HORSE." It frequently speaks the language of the woman old. "The job," says Jimson, "is always to get hold of the form you need" (p. 59).

The fact that Jimson describes most of his paintings instead of actually doing them has given rise to a variety of critical comment. The simple fact that he is a painter telling his own story bothers Enid Starkie, who finds the novel technically unsatisfactory, for a painter "expresses himself in color rather than words."² Elizabeth Kerr says that Jimson's motives for writing are weak as compared to those of Sara and Wilcher.³ Andrew Wright correctly points that Jimson writes because he cannot paint, being hospitalized and that he always talks when he cannot paint.⁴ A great deal of his talk is concerned with what he would paint if he had the opportunity. As Albion and Los were

¹"The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction." At first glance it may seem that Jimson has forgotten his Blake, but as Gardner notes in Infinity on the Anvil, p. 31, Blake at one point in the Proverbs puts the horse among animals which represent impulsive desire; but at the point at which this quotation appears, the horse is desire "tamed . . . instructed."

²Enid Starkie, "Joyce Cary, A Personal Portrait," The Virginia Quarterly Review, XXXVII (Winter, 1961), 130.

³Kerr, University of Toronto Quarterly, XXIX, 313.

⁴Wright, Joyce Cary: A Preface to His Novels, p. 132.

separated from their emanations, so Jimson is usually separated from his forms, his maidens. Because Jimson is so often separated from what he most needs, and because he is a brilliantly "conscious ironist . . . telling his own story, the tragic necessity of his comic resiliency is always before us, constructed by himself."¹ Woodcock believes that Jimson's talk gives the book an "almost visual extra dimension."² The prose "which he talks has taken on something of the plastic concreteness which we usually associate with the visual arts."³ Clearly, one reason that Jimson tells his story is that he is a comic, ironic "apologist for the symbolist method."⁴

If life is almost hopelessly chaotic and if form is so difficult to find, then the symbolist may solve two problems at once by saying that form is, when he finds it, meaning. Jimson is not perverse. He does not submit to chaos by simply arranging complementary colors in geometric designs. He does want to find and convey meaning. Hence his interest in using Blake's epic world as a background for his own work. Jimson's desire to make his paintings mean something which in part has its origins in Blake's mythology presents the "considerable

¹Woodcock, Queens Quarterly, LXIII, 243.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Hazard Adams, "Joyce Cary's Three Speakers," Modern Fiction Studies, V (Summer, 1959), 113.

problem of striking the proper balance between literary and aesthetic form. "¹ Jimson himself articulates this problem in talking about the inadequacies of his Fall:

"Trouble with the Fall--it's not big enough. All at once I had the feel of the Fall. A real fall. Fire and brimstone. Blues and reds. And I saw green fire in the top left next the red tower. And the red tower opened to show a lot of squares full of blue and green flames. Symbols of something. Generation would do. Or a lot of little flames like men and women rushing together, burning each other up like coals. And then to carry the pattern upwards you could have white flowers, no very pale green, moving among the stars, imagination born of love. Through generation to regeneration. Old antic propriety falling down on his nose and seeing constellations. Yes, the destruction of old fly button, the law by the force of nature. . . . Oh to hell, I said, with the meaning. What I want is those green flowers on a pink sky. "²

"And in these words the problem of the symbolist is completely expressed. "³ Form, the symbolist says, is meaning. "The only satisfactory form of communication is a good picture," Jimson says. "Neither false nor true. But created" (p. 85). We are never allowed to forget that Jimson's constant search for new forms is simultaneously search for meanings, however, all of which derive from his basically spiritual view of art and reality. For Jimson, as for Blake,

Prayer is the Study of Art.
Praise is the Practice of Art.
Fasting &. , all relate to Art.

¹Hazard Adams, "Blake and Gulley Jimson: English Symbolists," Critique, III (Spring-Fall, 1959), 10.

²Ibid., p. 11.

³Ibid.

The outward ceremony is Antichrist.
The Eternal Body of Man is the Imagination.¹

That Jimson considers himself a painter of religious art and that he considers himself a religious artist is evident on almost every page of The Horse's Mouth. His occasional references to heaven and hell are no more fortuitous than are his frequent references to the fall of man. These references are both Blakian and Biblical. There are two views of hell in Blake, one bad--the concept sanctioned by official Christianity--the other good, which official Christianity considers anathema. The bad hell, in which most of mankind dwells, is a complex one having diverse manifestations, one of which is passive resignation to the official God, Nobodaddy. One of Nobodaddy's chief characteristics is an inertial force out of which his love of death grows.² According to Blake, old Nobodaddy's reaction to the forthcoming French Revolution may be summed up in the following lines:

Then old Nobodaddy aloft
Farted & belch'd & cough'd,
And said, 'I love hanging & drawing & quartering
Every bit as well as war & slaughtering.
Damn praying & singing,
Unless they will bring in
The blood of ten thousand by fighting or swinging."³

¹Ibid., p. 13.

²Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 69.

³Ibid., p. 63.

Jimson says that the Nazis are starting a war because "They're against modern art. . . . Hitler never could put up with modern art. His game was watercolor in the old colored water style. Topographical. . . . All wars are due to modern art" (p. 295). Hitler in his love of death is paying homage to Nobodaddy, whose love of passivity is exceeded only by his furious hatred for energy. Jimson sees that the followers of Nobodaddy will scream out for human sacrifice unless they happen to be able to live lives of easeful tolerance as the Beeders do. Jimson takes the Beeders to be officially although perhaps not nominally Christian and therefore viciously unimaginative; yet he controls them, partially, by the force of his comic vision: He slyly shows the true source of Lady Beeder's talent to be Nobodaddy himself when he says that Lady Beeder's work requires no more talent than "farting Annie Laurie through a key hole." Jimson tries not to blame the Beeders, for they are individuals, but he will rage freely against an abstraction like the government. For vengeance, having Nobodaddy as its origin, is evil, while "the voice of honest indignation" is not.¹ Nobodaddy is a lover of death; he is a jealous God who enjoys killing love; in his world people do not fall into creative love but into a hell of Selfhood, or jealousy, as defined by Blake.² The unimaginative man who achieves

¹Keynes, p. 186.

²Frye, p. 81.

Beulah or uncreative "love"¹ will find himself in the state of jealousy, therefore of Selfhood. The way out of this state is the way of sexual love, for the senses are the doors of the imagination. Blake's logic in this matter is briefly comprehended in these statements from "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell":

1. Man has no body as distinct from his Soul; for that called Body is a portion of Soul discerned by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.

2. Energy is the only life, and is from the Body, and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.

3. Energy is Eternal Delight . . .

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom . . .

He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence . . .

Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires
THE ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years is true, as I have heard from Hell.

For the cherub with his flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at tree of life; and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite & corrupt.

This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.

But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged; this I shall do by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.

If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.²

The hell of human, sexual, love becomes spiritually efficacious when a man accepts his desires as imaginative forces and therefore good. Hell can become ideally an "upsurge of desire and passion within the rising

¹Ibid. , p. 72.

²Keynes, pp. 182-187.

body so great that it will destroy the present starry heavens as he [Blake] calls it. "¹

Margaret Rudd sees this "upsurge of desire" as something experienced in the rites of the sacred marriage which every spiritually whole person eventually passes through. The effect of such an experience is the marriage of heaven and hell, or the two conflicting sides of ourselves--reason and intuition. In this ritual as practiced in pagan religions of the ancient world, the female dedicated her virginity to a parent god and thus accepted her sexual nature as a source of spiritual power.² Blake, according to Rudd, believes that man still has an acute need to re-enact some such ceremony but that he cannot do so as a believer in official Christianity. Blake shows that "'All Religions are One,'" because all deities reside in the human breast when the "' . . . true Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius.'"³ The parent god to which one must reconcile his nature can therefore be a god who approves human lust. What happens psychologically when the reconciliation takes place is that condemnatory reason (or logos) and intuition, achieve balance. The sacred marriage is much like the Blakean apocalypse in that the apocalypse can occur when men stop "playing their silly game

¹Frye, p. 197.

²Rudd, p. 195.

³Ibid.

of hide and seek with nature. "¹ What man needs to understand is that his present body is vile only in that it is limited in its powers of perception. In the apocalypse man does not lose his present body, but his body becomes infinitely expanded and the intensity and range of his perceptions become concomitantly greater. "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear as it is, infinite. "² Man should therefore not reject his nature but accept and use it³ because in the apocalypse "sex is transformed, not eliminated . . . the word 'consummation,' often applied to the apocalypse, refers both to the burning world and the sacred marriage. "⁴ Man is reborn into Jerusalem, the true church, when he allows himself to fall into the hell of sacred marriage.⁵ When Jimson while working on his great mural says that he is building his Jerusalem, he means that he is giving objective form to the creative forces which produce the apocalyptic vision of immortality. When the objective form crumbles and the world falls away, the vision remains; Jimson is in a hurry to get away from the debris and get his new world on canvas.

¹Frye, p. 195.

²Keynes, p. 87.

³Frye, p. 195.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid. , p. 196 and Rudd, p. 262.

Cary holds that the orthodox felix culpa is a symbol of ideal human attitude, just as Hawthorne, for example, does. Both authors see the fall as a necessary preliminary to maturity, but whereas Hawthorne's people fall only once, if at all, Cary's Sara and Gulley fall frequently. The emphasis in Hawthorne is on the fall; in Cary it is ultimately on the rise which can open a door of eternity, of joy, in which a Jimson can say "I am but two days old" (p. 120).

Jimson's biggest work up to the time of The Creation is the Holy Innocents, mentioned only once as an earlier work. All of Jimson's new classic works deal with Biblical subjects; being so, they emphasize the fact that the good artist is per se Christian.¹ Jimson says that his religion is "low" and "peculiar" (p. 25), a word he remembers Captain Jones using in referring to the sect to which his wife belongs. Jimson realizes that he, being a son of Los, Blake's symbol for the creative imagination, the artist, is indeed peculiar. But whereas Los is actually psychoneurotically peculiar until he builds his Jerusalem, Jimson like Blake is peculiar in the sense that he is set apart by his visionary powers from normal concerns. Even Jimson's highly unorthodox behavior shown in forsaking wife and family to follow art can be viewed as a religious act. Doubtlessly he is aware of Blake's commandment on that head: "You must leave Father & Mother

¹Frye, p. 89.

& Houses & Lands if they stand in the way of Art. "¹ When Jimson forswears the world for the sake of art, he is not merely indulging himself, for he commits himself to the poverty and pain of the Mental Traveller's quest for form. That this quest sometimes leads him into darkness is implied perhaps nowhere better than in the experience of seeing a Manet for the first time (p. 57).

Always it is Jimson's immediate purpose to find a half-minute, at least, of revelation (p. 98): The creative imagination "opens doors for you" (p. 48). Considering Jimson's specifically religious intentions as a painter, it is possible for one to see the woman-whale as something more than a version of the primal female source of life. The fact that she is repeatedly described as being blue (Mary's color) and the fact that she is nursing her young are highly suggestive. What Jimson may be doing here is using Blake's view of Christ as born forever of incarnate love. Such a notion would doubtlessly seem shocking to people who live in the normal world. It is a notion that Cary does not make use of in any of his other works. Enid Starkie, writing of Cary's work as a whole, says that Cary believed in God but that "Cary used God . . . for what the novelist would call a symbol and transferred to it every element of goodness which he could not explain rationally in the sad world which he saw. "² The Blakean religious influence is to

¹Quoted by Frye, p. 89.

²Starkie, Virginia Quarterly Review, XXXVII, 115.

be found only in The Horse's Mouth. However, Walter Allen gives Jimson his quite logical place in the context of Cary's work. Cary uses Jimson, Allen says, "to express from an unusual angle, a vision of the English nonconformist tradition." To Jimson's friends, he is "perfectly normal, for they know that religion takes men in diverse ways . . ."¹ Yet when Jimson refers to himself as "the old horse," he is seeing himself as the primary source of his own inspiration. In so doing he is very likely reflecting Blake's belief that true deity " . . . resides in the human breast . . . he being the Poetic Genius." Jimson's last great wall, his Jerusalem, his Creation, is his "salvation" (p. 310). The joy Jimson takes in his demolished wall is so great that he laughs, and he is being perfectly consistent in his diction when he says that laughter is prayer (p. 311).

¹Walter Allen, "The Horse's Mouth," Reading A Novel (London: Phoenix House, 1956), p. 56.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The art theme of this trilogy has yet to be fully stated, and it cannot be so stated until another matter has been considered. This matter is the question of the artistic wholeness of the trilogy. If it is to be said that Cary's art figures in this trilogy enhance one's understanding of art and society by being in any way significantly original, then it ought first to be shown that the trilogy is itself a coherent work of art. It is further necessary to deal with the matter of the artistic integrity of the trilogy because this integrity has recently been seriously questioned on the crucial grounds that the world view presented in all of Cary's work has ultimately no basis in objective moral, spiritual or intellectual reality. Robert Bloom has made the only detailed statement of this view.¹ If Mr. Bloom is correct, then Cary's novels should be no longer studied except perhaps as negative examples of the work of a novelist who has brilliant gifts for language

¹Robert Bloom, The Indeterminate World: A Study of the Novels of Joyce Cary (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962).

and characterization but no sustained control of moral ideas. Father John Teeling has cogently answered Bloom's objections, but neither Bloom's objections nor Teeling's replies deal in any significant detail with the art trilogy. A brief review of the Bloom-Teeling disagreement will provide a short-cut to the subject presently in hand--the artistic unity of the trilogy--and at the same time allow a shortening of what might otherwise be a tediously lengthy attempt to locate an objective norm. It will eventually become apparent that such a discussion is of as much importance to an understanding of the aesthetic values in the lives of the principals in Cary's trilogy as it would be to an understanding of aesthetic design in the moral life of, for example, Maggie in The Golden Bowl.

Teeling's study, unfortunately a brief one, concerns itself with answering Bloom's charges about the moral world of Cary's work as a whole; then taking one novel as his example, he proceeds by careful textual analysis to show that Bloom has simply not correctly read at least this one work. Bloom singles out for special attack the political trilogy. Teeling begins his reply by quoting from Cary's critical pronouncements to show that Cary was extremely aware of the novelist's obligations to a moral real:

In Art and Reality Cary says that "underneath the chaos of events, there are laws, or if you like consistencies, both of fact and feeling," and so we have "a reality consisting of permanent and highly obstinate facts, and permanent and highly obstinate human nature." More specifically, Cary states: "Men have in fact

obtained more power over matter, but to change it is impossible. It may be said that all works of art, all ideas of life, all philosophies are 'As if,' but I am suggesting that they can be checked with an objective reality. They might be called propositions for truth and their truth can be decided by their correspondence with the real. " [*Italics added by Teeling*] . . . The artist deals with the reality outside the mind. "All great artists are preoccupied, as if by nature, with reality. They assume, from the beginning, that it is their task to reveal a truth about some permanent and fundamental real" . . . the problem with Bloom's position is that it is flatly contradicted by Cary in both his theory and practice. In a sentence in Art and Reality that would almost seem specifically written to refute Bloom's book, Cary says, "When we speak of the novelist and the poet's revelation of truth we mean that it is essentially moral, that it asserts a moral meaning in the real, and that we can check the meaning by reference to our knowledge of that real. "¹

Teeling contents himself with only a few more quotations, of which these are typical, from Cary's non-fiction, realizing that Bloom has also managed to find material in the non-fiction to support his own view.

The sympathetic student of Cary's work may justifiably share Father Teeling's fears that "Bloom's book, standing far upstream in the river of Cary studies may well tend, despite serious limitations, to divert that stream into ultimately unprofitable channels. "² Such a fear is doubly justified by the fact that most of the criticism of Cary's work to this point is of little value. Therefore although Bloom's objections to the art trilogy are few as presented in his book, they are damaging in the extreme and ought not to be allowed to stand unchallenged.

¹John Teeling, S. J., "Joyce Cary's Moral World," Modern Fiction Studies, IX (Autumn, 1963), 277-279.

²Ibid., p. 276.

Early in his discussion of Herself Surprised, Bloom says flatly that "we cannot place Sara, with any real assurance as a moral being."¹ Yet at the end of his discussion of this novel, Bloom contradicts himself by saying that Sara "may be trusted [*Italics added.*] to do the human, maternal, wifely, life-giving--if officious--thing."² If Sara may be "trusted" to be all this, then the "equivocal, mystifying part of her" is not, Bloom to the contrary, "what we must know her by"³ but merely part of what we must know her by. The "equivocal, mystifying" quality is naturally a part of such a woman as we may trust Sara to be. Bloom himself is bothered by the element of mystery in Sara in only one part of his mind, for he says that "on the whole, her deepest [*Italics added.*] impulses though Cary often keeps them from her own view as well as the readers, are sound enough."⁴ At the risk of being tiresome, one may ask how Bloom knows these "deepest impulses" to be "sound" if he does not know what they are. Between his highly indeterminate opening and closing remarks on Herself Surprised, Bloom objects to Sara's "moral inventiveness,"⁵ her "moral" virtuosity, her "many motives,"⁶

¹Bloom, p. 86.

²Ibid., p. 90.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 87.

⁶Ibid.

and the "ambiguity [which] plays over . . . her deepest motives." ¹ Why Bloom objects to the "ambiguity" of Sara's "deepest motives" when he finds her "deepest impulses" sound is hard, at first, to say. But after a study of his critical methods as employed in his sections on To Be A Pilgrim and The Horse's Mouth, one begins to realize that Bloom is not confused by the novels but by his own critical methods. The methods employed in his reading are, however, really quite something else, for Bloom quite sees that Sara has, as Cary says, the "elementary morals of a primitive woman, of nature herself, which do not change." ²

Bloom's chief objection to To Be A Pilgrim seems to be that its "central conflicts" are "not resolved." ³ Why this irresolution should be seen as an artistic flaw Bloom completely fails to make clear. Furthermore, why Bloom himself sees it as a fault is never made clear. It is true that Bloom does make a detailed statement of what he considers the book's faults, but he fails to show why he thinks they are faults. Bloom correctly although regretfully finds Wilcher "an endlessly divided figure"; ⁴ Wilcher's chief problem as Bloom, again correctly, sees is that Wilcher cannot give his allegiance fully to either

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 96.

⁴Ibid., p. 91.

the past or the present. Wilcher desires a "nontraditional confrontation of the present"¹ but he tries to justify this desire by "tracing its . . . tradition."² This "irreparable cleavage"³ in Wilcher presents us with a "vision of indeterminate time."⁴ Actually, the only way that one can be sure that Bloom intends these observations as comments on the novel's flaws is to note the word "indeterminate" above. By the time one has read this far, he realizes that it is for Bloom a pejorative term of immense critical implication for whose meaning the reader must return to an earlier section in which Bloom begins his case by reference to Cary's non-fiction. When one returns to this earlier section, he finds that "indeterminate" as Bloom uses it refers primarily to a novel's lack of any built-in moral or epistemological locus which will work for the reader as an "absolute truth"⁵ which confirms the reader's own "direct knowledge"⁶ of things. That this is perhaps not an altogether tenable view of the nature of art is here beside the point. But such being Bloom's position, it is indeed puzzling to find him saying that the "triumph of

¹Ibid. , p. 93.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid. , p. 96.

⁵Ibid. , p. 25.

⁶Ibid. , p. 35.

To Be A Pilgrim is that it holds its polarities together in the imposing, tormented figure of its narrator. "¹

The case which Bloom makes out against To Be A Pilgrim is rendered yet more puzzling by his feeling of concern over Wilcher's inability to commit himself in action:

Wilcher, like Cary, can have it both ways. The vision here is of the pastness of the present, the presentness of the past. It is the vision of indeterminate time entertained at the last by a figure whose life has been plagued by time and his sense of powerlessness before it. ²

When he speaks of Wilcher's "powerlessness," it may be assumed that Bloom refers to Wilcher's failure to act, to choose; for Bloom elsewhere observes that Wilcher merely "looks on,"³ that he merely "observed the life there"⁴ Bloom finds Wilcher's admission that Tolbrook's beauties have been "transient appearances"⁵ a confirmation of his own view of Wilcher. Precisely why such shrinking from action should be found by Bloom to be an artistic flaw is hard to say. Surely one has by now become accustomed to it in the modern novel. Yet apparently for Bloom this non-action is the very essence of the objectionable "indeterminateness. "

¹Ibid., p. 96.

²Ibid., p. 92.

³Ibid., p. 90.

⁴Ibid., p. 95.

⁵Ibid., p. 96.

It is quite true that Wilcher has always looked on instead of committing himself to either the past or present. There is, however, a very good reason that this is true and an examination of this reason will lead one to the controlling center of the novel. The point has already been made that Tolbrook is a work of art of great significance to an understanding of the novel and that Wilcher himself is in many ways an artist-figure. What Wilcher finally chooses is neither past nor present, but both, as they come to be reinterpreted by him in his final vision of Tolbrook as a symbol. Tolbrook is not only a work of art in itself, but it becomes the raw material of Wilcher's art, which is the creative vision of certain principles of order applied to the partially shapeless work which is the manor itself. There are three major stages in the development of the final product of Wilcher's imagination: The discovery of certain constants in history and literature; the discovery of these constants as residing in Tolbrook as a work of art and as a symbol of the art of life; and finally the discovery that Tolbrook has its counterpart on the level of Platonic idea and that on this level it will not be destroyed.

Wilcher must view Tolbrook in this fashion if he is to do anything about the state of lostness in which he finds himself at the opening of the novel. When at the end of the novel Wilcher stands in the great Adams room and sees the plaster engravings of classical nature deities, he is quite aware of the significance of the human counterparts working

below at their harvesting activities. The art of the past encloses the activity of the present and is itself in turn surrounded by Tolbrook in a designed unity which allows Wilcher to choose both past and present. The material Tolbrook has done all it can do for Wilcher. It has taught him the art of life; it is not, unlike Keats's urn, a symbol of art.

Wilcher has known that there is a time for reaping and for sowing, for building and for tearing down. Wilcher has been unable, as Bloom says rightly, to do either, but he has acquired the synthetic vision of the artist which enables him to endure these painful rhythms in an ordered way. The dynamic stasis of Keats's "Cold pastoral" figures have an analogue in Cary's plaster nature deities, but the human counterparts in the harvest scene force Wilcher to turn partially from both the art objects and the material of life itself. What he turns to finally is a creation peculiarly his own. The material world of time and change is a world which is still precious to him but it is one which he can leave in death for it has its counterpart in an ideal state. As death comes, "the landscape draws in its shadows . . . its details are even insignificant . . . [they are] like small copies of the real, like miniatures . . ." (p. 341). Wilcher's use of the words "copies and miniatures" instead of "shadows" or "microcosms" is a part of a pattern of language which has revealed a concern with art throughout the novel. The original from which the copies and miniatures are made is the new vision of life which by now has fully formed itself in Wilcher's mind.

Tolbrook has been reshaped into idea; it is "only one room in my house" (p. 341).

Bloom's persistence in mistaking complexity for indeterminateness leads to a series of devastatingly bad readings of several passages in The Horse's Mouth. Bloom's major objection to The Horse's Mouth as a whole is apparently not based on the mere absence of an "objective relative" but on a "relativism founded on multiplicity, inclusiveness and indeterminateness"¹ which reveals itself in the stylistic flaws of the novel. "The major problem of The Horse's Mouth is whether the novel can hold its seriousness and its comedy together."² Bloom believes that Cary intended the novel to be "fundamentally serious"³ in its treatment of the conflict between the artist and society. "Yet this conflict," says Bloom, "is treated comically in the novel."⁴ The heavy emphasis on the comedy of Jimson's life does not, according to Bloom, merely vitiate the force of the seriousness, but

threatens at last to stave off all seriousness as well. It is difficult to preserve any idea of Gulley as a spiritual descendant of William Blake, creating, in an ineffably new visionary and symbolic style, works of the highest imaginative and spiritual grandeur, as we behold him plaguing his former patron Hickson in a hilarious threatening phone call, or spend, in what is perhaps the funniest

¹Ibid., p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 103.

³Ibid., p. 97.

⁴Ibid.

scene in the fiction of the present century, an afternoon and evening with him at the home of the millionaire Beeders. The comedy in these scenes, and in any number of others, is too fundamental, too intrinsic a part of Gulley to be a mere tactic. It defines him and his relationships more surely and more memorably than anything else about him. If he is at war with the massive indifference and antipathy that surrounds him and his work, we remember the outrageous gusto with which he does battle more than the complex of exalted causes which he does battle for.¹

One reason for the overriding force of the comic in Jimson is that Jimson's style of speech is apparently, according to Bloom, largely comic. As an example, Bloom quotes a part of the Burlington-escape passage in which Jimson, fleeing the Beeder apartment, attacks the government. Of this passage Bloom says that "it is difficult indeed for Cary to move from this kind of unfettered language and emotion to that solemn portrait of the artist which seems also, in some measure to be his concern in The Horse's Mouth."² The word "solemn" is perhaps an unhappy choice to describe what Cary wishes to do in The Horse's Mouth, but that is beside the point. The point is that throughout the passage, of which Bloom quotes only a small portion, Cary carefully holds before the reader the full seriousness of Jimson's life. One notes in the first place that at this point Jimson is ill, and that although he is not usually concerned about his health, he twice refers to it here and on one occasion expresses fear that he is about to have a stroke. The facts

¹Ibid. , p. 100.

²Ibid. , p. 102.

which seem most cogently to answer Bloom are those which have to do with Jimson's use of Blake in this passage, a use which seems to preserve quite intact the "idea of Gulley as a spiritual descendant of William Blake." Jimson is here making a serious use of Blake. Most of the lines which are paraphrases of Blake are not in themselves funny; some of them are rather moving: "I forgive 'em, Nosy. And tomorrow I shall forget 'em. To forgive is wisdom, to forget is genius. And easier. Because it's true. It's a new world every heart beat. The sun rises seventy-five times a minute" (p. 227). This paraphrase of lines from Jerusalem shows Jimson transcending his life as a "clown" by choosing to resume his movement toward the vision of The Creation. In falling out of the land of Beulah--the land of the Beeders, Jimson knows that he has now the perfect freedom and the work of being reborn. By remembering his Jerusalem, Jimson keeps alive within himself the growth of his Creation. By the time he gets off the bus in Burlington, he is ready to see another vision of his great whale. Therefore it is to be observed that the overtly Blakean passages with which Jimson preserves his vision of himself as a vitally, aggressively creative artist are serious in intent and in effect.

Equally serious are those passages in this episode in which Jimson directly compares himself to Blake even though they are set in a comic context. Jimson is in the habit of referring to Blake as "Old Billy Blake," or "Old Randipole Billy," or "that damned Englishman";

but he never does so in an attempt to reduce Blake to his own size. Jimson lives familiarly in Blake's world, or at least in a part of it. Jimson knows that he is a genius and therefore does not shrink from comparing himself to the artist-figure in "The Mental Traveller," and thus to Blake himself, a comparison which is sustained in the fact of the poem's giving a diagram of the structure of Jimson's book. When Jimson, continuing his indictment of the government, says, quoting Blake, "I also stood in Satan's bosom and beheld its desolations" (p. 227), one must remember that Jimson is old and sick, that he has no money and no paint and no home, and that he is on the run from the police. To preserve his sanity and, incredibly enough, to keep his inspiration, he must see himself as Blake saw himself--as a power radically unlike the government, which "can't rise out of its damnation" (p. 227). The Jimson-Blake comparison is extended into the following six-line quotation from Milton. Much of the language of this passage, which Bloom finds typically "unfettered," is indeed tumultuously comic; and although it is partially Blakean in origin, it shows neither Blake nor Jimson as clownish. The spectacle of Jimson's struggle to keep his imaginative powers whole by forgiving the government because it is a "spectre of Hell . . . a figment" (p. 227) and therefore cannot help itself is a spectacle revealing a grotesque but immensely impressive dignity in Jimson.

Bloom's most destructive comments on Jimson are the following:

The picaro in Gulley overmasters the representative symbolic artist. We remember him not so much as a desperate clown, a tragic clown, or a Blakean clown, who embodies the predicament of original art in a petrified, unimaginative world, but simply as a clown--inspired, if you will, but by a satirical and comic impetus. We must love him in the end for his sheer comic exuberance and energy. . . . Gulley's speculations on Blake and on the inherently unjust design of the universe do not serve, any more than Sara's moralizing, to make him a coherent, assessable figure. He can, in his own phrase, "keep on keeping on"; but Cary never asks, as we may be inclined to, where he is going.¹

It has been shown above that most of Jimson's activities are distilled into symbolist forms which appear constantly throughout the novel in Jimson's conversations, in the paintings he describes but never does, and in his three major efforts. Not only do these forms appear constantly thus, but they appear in carefully patterned and organically growing forms. Where Jimson is going is to paint his Creation. It is difficult to believe that Jimson is driven merely by a "satirical and comic impetus." All of Jimson's paintings are completely serious in nature, whereas the great prophetic poems of Blake, works of "the highest imaginative and spiritual grandeur," as Bloom calls them, have been known to provoke laughter however hysterical, even in the serious and sympathetic student. Perhaps it ought to be observed again that Jimson's idea of the tear as an intellectual thing is to be found in both overt and submerged form in numerous places in the novel. The variance between the comic and the serious which in Bloom's thinking prevents

¹Ibid., pp. 103-104.

Jimson from being a "coherent, assessable figure" may be seen as artistically functional if one accepts the comedy as a way of underlining the fact of Jimson's isolation as an artist. The comedy is a protective device, among other things, as Bloom notes, but not, Bloom to the contrary, "a mere protective device."¹ By laughing at and forgiving the Beeders and the government and the borough council, Jimson can keep alive his Blakean belief in love--"and that's real horse meat" (p. 310). Comedy, laughter, is a necessary part of the artistic mode of Jimson's life. Laughter enables him to love and love enables him to paint, to be an artist. This is what Jimson means when he says that laughter is the same thing as prayer, and "Prayer," as Jimson has learned from Blake, "is the Study of Art."

Mr. Bloom's final objection to the trilogy is that the novels do not, as a unit, reveal a "total design."² It is true that Cary incurs some risk that his three worlds will never become one world when he takes as one of his problems "the isolation of mind."³ Although Bloom does not feel it necessary to support his statement, it is necessary to show that he is wrong. One indication that he is wrong lies in Cary's use of Blake's "The Mental Traveller." Between The Horse's Mouth

¹Ibid., p. 103.

²Ibid., p. 104.

³Adams, Modern Fiction Studies, V, 112.

and "The Mental Traveller" there are more similarities than differences. The preponderance of these similarities strongly draws attention to the fact that Cary in Jimson is concerned with the cyclical rhythms found in the artistically creative life. That the poem is a version of Jimson's artistic career has been commented on in detail above. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that there are certain correspondences between the poem and each of the other two novels and between the poem and the trilogy as a unit. The existence of these correspondences serves two purposes: to give particular point to the designation "art trilogy," and to emphasize the power of the mind to create a structured freedom. Like the poem, each novel contains three major movements. Each of these three movements in the poem and in each novel is a movement from success to defeat, although these experiences of defeat in the novels reveal defeat in external terms only. That the defeat in Blake's poem is a mental or spiritual one emphasizes by contrast the spiritual triumph of the protagonists in the novels. The spiritual triumph is a breaking out of the prison of isolated subjectivity by discovering a form which translates a certain objective real, a constant, found in the flow of the world's life. That this discovery is an artistic one has, it is hoped, already been established in this study.

Adams also finds that

The whole trilogy can be shown to illustrate that cyclical occurrence which Gulley had found in "The Mental Traveller" and the prophetic books. In Blake's major prophecies, which enlarge upon the

pattern of "The Mental Traveller," Los the artist or creative spirit, Urizen the aged rationalist or tyrannical preserver of the status quo, and any number of female wills soliloquize at length over their particular troubles. In the first book of the trilogy, Herself Surprised, we have in these terms the soliloquy of a Blakean female will (Sara Monday); in the second, To Be A Pilgrim, the soliloquy of an aged Urizenic figure (Tom Wilcher) looking back over his days of Orcian radicalism; in the third, the soliloquy of a Los-like figure (Gulley Jimson) who actually demonstrates his visionary ability by superimposing the whole situation upon the structure of Blake's poem.¹

The poem moves from youth in its first phase to youth in its third phase, the phase which naturally and ideally should be that of old age. The trilogy begins with the youth of Sara and moves to the old age of Jimson and his rebirth. The pointed structural contrasts between the poem and the trilogy exist also in the widening and intensifying of artistic consciousness that takes place in the trilogy. Sara is not conscious of her role as artist at all, although she clearly reveals design and process in revealing material. Wilcher is not principally concerned with art as form but as mode. Jimson is almost solely concerned with art as form. The progressive sharpening of consciousness throughout the trilogy has as its proper concomitant an ascending scale of degrees of freedom as a further contrast. At the base of the one world of freedom which the trilogy makes is the kind of freedom found in Sara, a freedom limited by her being Woman, whose true home is the kitchen. Her consciousness is narrow. Her experience of freedom is intense but

¹Adams, Critique, III, 13.

not broad. Wilcher's experience of freedom is both intense and broad, although it is in the main limited to the temporal boundaries of history, politics, law--the social world. Wilcher, however, experiences his freedom far less often than either Sara or Jimson. Jimson is concerned with the temporal only in the sense that "Eternity is in love with the Productions of Time. "

Cary has referred to Sara as the character who is the binding force in the trilogy.¹ It is in the kindly flesh of Sara that Wilcher finds strength to move into the third phase of his life, the phase in which his creative powers are greatest, and most specifically artistic in nature. It is Jimson's rediscovery of the original power of Sara's flesh that prompts his movement toward his Creation. Viewed in this light, the second two novels are seen as growing naturally out of the first one. The shaping force which emanates from Sara enables Wilcher to achieve original formal perception of creative rhythms in the spiritual life of society. This force in Sara gives Jimson the renewed understanding that "There exist in the eternal world the permanent realities of everything which we see reflected in the vegetable glass of Nature" (p. 235). Nature in her most creative form is Sara. The final shape of the world of Cary's art trilogy derives from nature, has its most diverse manifestations in society, and is most intensely illuminated in pure symbolist art.

¹Ibid.

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APPENDIX

THE MENTAL TRAVELLER

I travel'd thro' a Land of Men,
A Land of Men & Women too,
And heard & saw such dreadful things
As cold Earth wanderers never knew.

For there the Babe is born in joy
That was begotten in dire woe;
Just as we Reap in joy the fruit
Which we in bitter tears did sow.

And if the Babe is born a Boy
He's given to a Woman Old,
Who nails him down upon a rock,
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold.

She binds iron thorns around his head,
She pierces both his hands & feet,
She cuts his heart out at his side
To make it feel both cold & heat.

Her fingers number every Nerve,
Just as a Miser counts his gold;
She lives upon his shrieks & cries,
And she grows young as he grows old.

Till he becomes a bleeding youth,
And she becomes a Virgin bright;
Then he rends up his Manacles
And binds her down for his delight.

He plants himself in all her Nerves,
Just as a Husbandman his mould;
And she becomes his dwelling place
And Garden fruitful seventy fold.

An aged Shadow, soon he fades,
Wand'ring round an Earthly Cot,
Full filled all with gems & gold
Which he by industry had got.

And these are the gems of the Human Soul,
The rubies & pearls of a lovesick eye,
The countless gold of the akeing heart,
The martyr's groan & the lover's sigh.

They are his meat, they are his drink;
He feeds the Beggar & the Poor
And the wayfaring Traveller:
For ever open is his door.

His grief is their eternal joy;
They make the roofs & walls to ring;
Till from the fire on the hearth
A little Female Babe does spring.

And she is all of solid fire
And gems & gold, that none his hand
Dares stretch to touch her Baby form,
Or wrap her in his swaddling-band.

But She comes to the Man she loves,
If young or old, or rich or poor;
They soon drive out the aged Host,
A Beggar at another's door.

He wanders weeping far away,
Untill some other take him in;
Oft blind & age-bent, sore distress,
Untill he can a Maiden win.

And to allay his freezing Age
The Poor Man takes her in his arms;
The Cottage fades before his sight,
The Garden & its lovely Charms.

The Guests are scatter'd thro' the land,
For the Eye altering alters all;
The Senses roll themselves in fear,
And the flat Earth becomes a Ball;

The stars, sun, Moon, all shrink away,
 A desart vast without a bound,
 And nothing left to eat or drink,
 And a dark desart all around.

The honey of her Infant lips,
 The bread & wine of her sweet smile,
 The wild game of her roving Eye,
 Does him to Infancy beguile;

For as he eats & drinks he grows
 Younger & younger every day;
 And on the desart wild they both
 Wander in terror & dismay.

Like the wild Stag she flees away,
 Her fear plants many a thicket wild;
 While he pursues her night & day,
 By various arts of Love beguil'd,

By various arts of Love & Hate,
 Till the wide desart planted o'er
 With Labyrinths of wayward Love,
 Where roam the Lion, Wolf & Boar,

Till he becomes a wayward Babe,
 And she a weeping Woman Old.
 Then many a Lover wanders here;
 The Sun & Stars are nearer roll'd.

The trees bring forth sweet Extacy
 To all who in the desart roam;
 Till many a City there is Built,
 And many a pleasant Shepherd's home.

But when they find the frowning Babe,
 Terror strikes thro' the region wide:
 They cry "The Babe! the Babe is Born!"
 And flee away on Every side.

For who dare touch the frowning form,
 His arm is wither'd to its root;
 Lions, Boars, Wolves, all howling flee,
 And every Tree does shed its fruit.

And none can touch that frowning form,
Except it be a Woman Old;
She nails him down upon the Rock,
And all is done as I have told.

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THE GREY MONK

"I Die, I Die!" the Mother said,
"My Children die for lack of Bread.
"What more has the merciless Tyrant said?"
The Monk sat down on the Stony Bed.

The blood red ran from the Grey Monk's side,
His hands & feet were wounded wide,
His body bent, his arms & knees
Like to the roots of ancient trees.

His eye was dry; no tear could flow:
A hollow groan first spoke his woe.
He trembled & shudder'd upon the Bed;
At length with a feeble cry he said:

"When God commanded this hand to write
"In the studious hours of deep midnight,
"He told me the writing I wrote should prove
"The Bane of all that on Earth I lov'd.

"My Brother starv'd between two Walls,
"His Children's Cry my Soul appalls;
"I mock'd at the wrack & girding chain,
"My bent body mocks their torturing pain.

"Thy Father drew his sword in the North,
"With his thousands strong he marched forth;
"Thy Brother has arm'd himself in Steel
"To avenge the wrongs thy Children feel.

"But vain the Sword & vain the Bow,
"They never can work War's overthrow.
"The Hermit's Prayer & the Widow's tear
"Alone can free the World from fear.

"For a Tear is an Intellectual Thing,
"And a sigh is the Sword of an Angel King,
"And the bitter groan of the Martyr's woe
"Is an Arrow from the Almighty's Bow.

"The hand of Vengeance found the Bed
"To which the Purple Tyrant fled;
"The iron hand crush'd the Tyrant's head
"And became a Tyrant in his stead."