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ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE: NO OTHER GOD--
A VISION OF LIFE.

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1968
Language and Literature, general

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

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THELMA RAE PAYNE THOMPSON

1969

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE: NO OTHER GOD
A VISION OF LIFE

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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Norman, Oklahoma

1968

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE: NO OTHER GOD

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the two principal administrators of Bishop College, Dallas, Texas, I express immeasurable gratitude for their spiritual and financial magnanimity in providing the opportunity which made possible this study at the University of Oklahoma. In his heroic capacity to feel the future stirring, Dr. Milton King Curry, Jr., President, actively set a precedent for the faith and perseverance to prosecute an ideal to its fullest fruition. Dr. Charles L. Knight, Academic Dean, provided a dynamic symbol of striving for academic excellence.

In the preliminary stages of this study, my gratitude to the following persons is inestimable: Mrs. Rebecca A. Hudson, Reference Librarian, Bishop College, for the magnitude of her assistance in helping to find a working text of the poetry involved and for securing numerous materials from the Dallas libraries; Mrs. Gail Buckley for cooperative efforts in child-care and typing; and Mrs. Kay Barrick, in a special way, for strenuous typing to prepare reading copies.

A special kind of appreciation is expressed to Professor Jack Lehmer Kendall, Director of the Study. He provided the initial inspiration for the project through his intellectually invigorating courses in Victorian literature. Most particularly, my profound gratitude is felt for his many hours of meticulous, painstaking reading and general supervision of the study.

To each committee member -- Professor Rudolph Bambas, Professor Victor Elconin, Professor James Sims, and Associate Professor David French -- I express infinite thanks for stimulating support and helpful suggestions which contributed to the finalization of this study.

The myriad relatives and friends who have encouraged me both by word and deed are too numerous to be listed by names. They have my enduring love and gratitude as manifestations of my indebtedness to them.

DEDICATION

To
Reginald Mack Leffall, III
for his
unwavering faith
and
quintessential inspiration

and
to the hallowed memory of my beloved father
John Edward Payne, Sr.
whose inspiriting charisma is a magnificent legacy
to his progeny

and
to the heaven around me
in my seven-year-old
daughter
Harolyn Edleeca

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: A CLARION CALL

Since the literary artist presents an imaginative interpretation of human experience which provides a dimension deeper than actual life, he should be granted his choice of subject and appraised for the manner in which he handles the subject. If he is true to the integrity of his own creative imagination, the end-product will be an organic whole in which are discernible both truth and beauty. Morality is inevitably an inextricable quality in such an art-piece. Henry James defends this position thus:

There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer. In proportion as that intelligence is fine will the novel, [the poem] the picture, the statue partake of the substance of beauty and truth. To be constituted of such elements¹ is, to my vision, to have purpose enough.

It is sadly ironic that no artist has suffered more from the general lack of respect for this principle than its principal nineteenth century proponent, the great literary virtuoso Algernon Charles Swinburne. In his case, the pendulum of criticism has swung only from the stigma of moral depravity, in his own day, to the image of his being only an ingenious artificer, in our times. Most of the criticism of Swinburne which has accrued over the past one hundred and two years offers a combination of biography and literary evaluation with too much proneness to read into the poetry itself preponderant biographical implications. In addition, many of the critical biographers of Swinburne exhibit psychologically slanted prejudices and descant upon Meredith's early position that Swinburne "lacked an internal center." Ironically, Meredith's later attitudes are, for the most part, ignored by such critics of Swinburne. The title-page inscription in William Rossetti's Swinburne's Poems and Ballads: A Criticism, sets forth succinctly the prevailing tenor of the critical attitude toward Swinburne:

Let us for a moment stoop to the arbitration of popular breath. Let us assume that Homer was a drunkard, that Virgil was a flatterer, that Horace was a coward, that Tasso was a madman. Observe in what a ludicrous chaos the imputations of real or fictitious crime has been confused in the contemporary calumnies against poetry and poets.

--Shelley

Too long the critical legacy bequeathed to posterity regarding Swinburne has remained negatively prejudiced. He appears as a naughty, sophomoric rebel, a Victorian psychedelic who delighted in shocking the "delicate" sensibility of the Establishment. Or he appears as a sexually frustrated sado-masochist who was insufficiently physically virile for a conventionally masculine philosophy of life and art. Or as a slavish hero-worshipper with no moral fiber of his own. Or as a lyricist in the particularized sense of having extraordinary powers of achieving incantatory hypnosis by the musical monotony of his verse. Or as a servile imitator and parodist, an expert at assembling pastiche, with little originality. Or as one who knew life vicariously only, through steeping his mind in the great literary masters rather than involving himself in actual life.

Before 1900, the major criticism of Swinburne the poet was presented by John Morley and William Michael Rossetti, 1866; James Russell Lowell, 1871; Robert Buchanan, 1872; Edmund Stedman, 1875; Amy Sharp, 1891; George Saintsbury, 1895; George Meredith, 1861-1899; and John Ruskin. After the appearance of Poems and Ballads, first series, 1866, John Morley, a supposedly intelligent and influential critic, issued anonymously an overemotionalized review which condemns Swinburne for the pervasive use of the theme of eroticism, a perverse revivification

of pagan joy, and the generally unedifying nature of the volume. He concludes that Swinburne is "either the vindictive and scornful apostle of a crushing ironshod despair, or else he is the libidinous laureate of a pack of satyrs."² In short, Swinburne stood condemned for using subject-matter which was offensive to the Victorian taste. Morley's attitude is characteristic of much of the entire corpus of criticism of Swinburne the poet. As a result of the misreading of Swinburne's first published volume of poetry the atmosphere of criticism which still surrounds his poetry is heavily laden with erroneous conceptions. Poems and Ballads: A Criticism, 1866, by William Rossetti, friend and critic, presents a more sympathetic attitude toward Swinburne the poet. His general estimate is that "Algernon Swinburne is one of that rare and electest class -- the writers whom contemporaries, even the well-affected among them, are likely to praise too little rather than too much."³ This proved to be the understatement of the decade, for, in 1872 another scathing critical attack was made upon Swinburne by Robert Buchanan in The Fleshly School of Poetry. Buchanan is appropriately called by William Rossetti, "a poor and pretentious poetaster who stirs storms and teapots." Buchanan initiates the pro-Tennyson-anti-French attitude which permeates the Victorian Era. On one hand, Buchanan extols Tennyson's poetic art as epitomizing all that was excellent;

on the other hand he condemns Swinburne, steeped in French literary tradition, as having prostituted his birthright as poet. Buchanan sees only one means of redemption:

Then let Mr. Swinburne burn all his French books, go forth into the world, look men and women in the face -- try to seek some nobler inspiration than the smile of harlotry and the shriek of atheism -- and there will be hope for him. Thus far he has given us nothing but borrowed rubbish -- His own voice may be worth hearing when he chooses once and forever to abandon the falsetto.

In 1871, James Russell Lowell displayed a critical attitude toward Swinburne closely akin to that of English critics in indicating that Swinburne's art obscures thought. Even in this misdirected evaluation, however, Lowell exhibits a vestige of optimism. He says of Atalanta in Calydon:

Atalanta shows that poverty of thought and profusion of imagery which are at once the defect and compensation of youthful poetry, even Shakespeare's... But Atalanta is hopefully distinguished in a rather remarkable way, from most early attempts, by a sense of form and proportion, which is seconded by a reasonable impinging of other faculties, as we may fairly expect, gives promise of rare achievement hereafter.⁵

In 1875, Edmund Stedman set forth an impassioned laudatory critical opinion of Swinburne, which is uncharacteristic of the Victorian way: "Some years have passed since this poet took the critical outposts by storm, and with a single volume gained a laurel crown of which no public envy, nor any lesser action of his own thenceforth could dispossess him."⁶ But Stedman was one of the too

few critical voices to denounce the violent attacks on Poems and Ballads, first series. As he says, "Without fair consideration, this volume was taken as a new and studied work of the mature poet, and there was much astonishment over its contents."⁷

The general trend was evident in the 1891 evaluation of Amy Sharp. Sharp's survey extends through Tristram of Lyonesse. She displays the characteristic Victorian temper toward morals and art; her critical attitude is suggested by the conspicuous absence of any mention of Poems and Ballads, first series. Also, she joins the heinous ranks of a majority of critics who do not perceive ideas in Swinburne's poetry: "yet in these poems we perceive his weakness as well as strength, the slightness of actual meaning."⁸ One does not seek logical but rather symbolic meaning in Swinburne's poetry.

Another kind of critical attitude is revealed in commentary of a younger contemporary of Swinburne's, George Saintsbury, who recounts the gleeful delight felt by other Oxonians and himself as they read aloud Swinburne's Poems and Ballads, first series. Saintsbury, however, in his inordinate emphasis upon Swinburne's virtuosity in the use of language and meter foreshadows the prevailing emphasis in criticism of Swinburne down through 1967. He avers, "What he [Swinburne] is first of all is an absolutely consummate artist in word-music of the current and

tempestuous kind, and an unfailing player on those moods of passion or thought which are akin to his own."⁹

The foremost art critic of the Victorian Era, John Ruskin, can at least be credited with appreciation of Swinburne's genius, but Ruskin's philosophy of a moral aesthetic would not permit him to laud what Swinburne does but only how he does it. He refers to Swinburne as being "plague-struck" and imbued with the corruption which is peculiar to the genius of modern days. Further, he accuses Swinburne of forgetting, at times, to treat symbols as symbols, and of lapsing into a vague celebration of brotherly love and liberty after Poems and Ballads, first series.¹⁰

Among Swinburne's contemporaries, George Meredith¹¹ presents a unique critical anomaly. Although his remark of 1861 that "I don't see any internal center from which springs anything he [Swinburne] does" has influenced critical appraisal of Swinburne throughout the one hundred and six years which followed, Meredith's later remarks are sympathetic. It can be objected only that, characteristic of his time, Meredith was too literal-minded regarding the poems of Swinburne which evolved from the theme of eroticism.

The decades from 1900 to 1920 produced several book-length critiques of Swinburne. Theodore Wratislaw's Swinburne, 1900, was the first of these. Wratislaw

re-enforces the image of Swinburne as an artificer in poetic utterance and perpetuates the distorted view of Poems and Ballads, first series, begun by Morley. Subsequent criticism worthy of mention is to be found in George Woodberry's Swinburne, 1905; Edward Thomas' Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1912; John Drinkwater's Swinburne: An Estimate, 1913; Edmund Gosse's Life, 1917; Mrs. Disney Leith's Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1917; W. B. D. Henderson's Swinburne and Landor, 1918; and Coulson Kernahan's Swinburne as I Knew Him, 1919. The last three exhibit essentially a biographical approach. Woodberry and Drinkwater are pioneers in discerning the presence of emerging patterns of thought in Swinburne's poetry, patterns which reveal a logical progression in Swinburne's poetic vision. Woodberry says, in this regard, speaking of Songs before Sunrise:

The original idea of adverse fate has faded in his mind, it would appear, to that of the immanence, the unknown in nature, indifferent and kindless to man, but not consciously cruel and deliberately scornful like the old gods; and this in turn yields to the prominence in his later thought of the essential necessity that mankind is under to know no god except his own spirit, to advance that spirit in the life of the race itself, and to find the conscious law of righteousness in its bosom age₁₂ after age, its only oracle and guide to destiny.

The brilliance of Swinburne's art still obliterates his message for modern critics. They fail to recognize the organic nature of Swinburne's art in which form and

thought are integral aspects of his method. This method is derived from Swinburne's "ingenium" for harmony.

Thomas anticipates the critical emphasis on Swinburne of the 1950's and 1960's by highlighting Swinburne's stylistic idiosyncracies in the use of sound. He prejudicially minimizes thought in the poetry thus:

"It is not thought set to music, but music which has absorbed thought." Drinkwater, too, attests to Swinburne's use of verbal artistry to reflect a vision of life. He predicts: "The work by which he will live is the use of his metrical cunning to express an attitude towards life that was consistent, and bravely eager...an adventurous and intensely realized philosophy of life."¹³ Unfortunately, however, Drinkwater's optimistic prognosis regarding the future of critical attitudes toward Swinburne has not materialized to any appreciable degree.

Mrs. Leith's account is that of a devoted cousin who projects an image of "Cousin Hadji" as a gay companion of her youth. Her emphasis upon Swinburne's passion for the sea and for horseback riding makes understandable the artistically syntonic (having the power to harmonize contrarieties) force which the sea symbolizes in his poetry.

Henderson emphasizes the impact of a "great spiritual force" upon the life and art of Swinburne. This spiritual force was Walter Savage Landor, who bequeathed

"through his writings truths about life and man's duty in it"¹⁴ which were in accord with Swinburne's own thinking. However, Henderson overemphasizes the image of the spiritual father relationship of Landor and Swinburne. It is true that Swinburne admired traits and thought in others which were in accord with his own spiritual fiber, but I do not believe that the basic fiber of Swinburne's soul was altered by his proneness to hero-worship. He simply sought spiritual affinity with temperaments similar to his own. Kernahan's account is thoroughly unilluminating. He perpetuates the distorted image, fallacious in its assumptions, of a Swinburne who never made a transition from youth to age, thus: "...and yet, none the less, an immortal youth, a Peter Pan of poetry who never grew old, but remained in love with Love, and in love with Song to his life's end."¹⁵ In 1917, Edmund Gosse's Algernon Charles Swinburne showed the discrimination of a friend-critic who selected with care certain details of a life to be incorporated into a biography. Although Gosse uses too many verbal accounts of others for his book to have the objectivity one desires, he is aware of the difficulties of such a task: "Only those who have never adventured on the biography of an elder contemporary, and especially one who lives in great retirement, will underestimate the difficulties of obtaining exact particulars." One of these "particulars" is Meredith's charge of "no internal

center." However, subsequent biographers found it expedient to use Gosse as a basic source. More important, for our purposes, Gosse recognizes Swinburne as poet-thinker in a manner which very few subsequent critics have done, as is illustrated by his statement of the poet's concept of the nobility of man: "The only independence that Man can prove, the only dignity that he can show, is, during the brief interval between life and death, to live according to the guidance of the inward light and defy the Moira."¹⁶

The decades of 1920 to 1940 are, perhaps, the most prolifically productive of book-length critiques of Swinburne, along with studies which treat Swinburne as a substantial phase of a larger problem. Some of the most wholesomely perceptive studies of Swinburne the poet appear during these years. From this group will be taken a major part of the substantiating material for the text of this study. Most of these evaluations of Swinburne are combined biography and criticism such as persist into the 1960's. There remains a dogged insistence upon reading into Swinburne's poetry too many biographical, or even spuriously biographical, significances and far too much psychological implication. Both approaches have obvious shortcomings which are prohibitive of objective evaluation. Notable among the volumes of this period are Clara Watts-Dunton's The Home Life of Swinburne, 1922; Paul de Reul's

L'Oeuvre de Swinburne, 1922; Harold Nicolson's Swinburne, A Literary Biography, 1926; T. E. Welby's A Study of Swinburne, 1926; Ezra Pound's essay, Swinburne and His Biographers, 1928; H. J. C. Grierson's Lyrical Poetry from Blake to Hardy, 1928; Samuel C. Chew's Swinburne, 1929; Arthur Symons' Studies in Strange Souls, 1929; T. S. Eliot's The Sacred Wood, 1932; and Baudelaire in Our Time, 1936; Georges Lafourcades' Swinburne: A Literary Biography, 1932; Clyde Kenneth Hyder's Swinburne's Literary Career and Fame, 1933; Mario Praz' The Romantic Agony, 1933; Douglas Bush's Mythology and the Romantic Tradition, 1937; E. K. Brown's Swinburne: A Centenary Estimate, 1937. Mrs. Watts-Dunton presents a highly idealized account of Swinburne the man in which she attacks the image of other critics of Swinburne as a man of nervous irritability. Paul de Reul indicates that Swinburne's superior ability in revealing a poetic vision enables him to create a sublimer universe than we could do ourselves, imaginatively. Ezra Pound gives an iconoclastic rhetorical lashing to Swinburne's critical biographers for their inability to perceive vision in Swinburne's poetry. Pound maintains that Swinburne's tragic vision of life does not desert him, even in Putney. However, Pound neglects to make the important point that this vision is modified during the Putney years. Harold Nicolson attempts to defend Swinburne against Meredith's charge of "no internal center". There

are some interesting contradictions in Nicolson's attitude which will be dealt with later. Like many so-called outstanding critics of Swinburne, Nicolson relies too heavily upon the psychologically aberrational approach to be able to present a defensible position. Although Welby points to two significant aspects of Swinburne's vision, the mutability of all things and man's as the supreme intelligence operative within the universe, he underestimates Swinburne's complexity as a poet and concludes that he is "an intoxicant for adolescence, rapidly outgrown." Chew's is, on the whole, by far the most satisfactorily perceptive critical attitude for purposes of this study. He recognizes the symbolic nature of the dominant images and sees Swinburne's vision of life as being "at one with the main movement of the later nineteenth century" -- a concern for the brevity of life. "His survey of life immeasurable and immanent love, the natural forces of the spirit and sense, that expands and reveals itself in all nature culminates in a vision well-nigh mystical in intensity." Grierson praises the musical virtuosity of Swinburne but questions his power of vision: "If he had only had a little more that was rememberable to say, given fresh worth to some aspect of our experience as all the greatest poets have done." Symons praises Swinburne for being poetically incomparable in an "arduous fullness of intricate harmony around which the waves of

melody flow, foam and scatter like the waves of the sea about a rock," As for Thomas Stearns Eliot, one of the deans of modern criticism, I cannot accept his stricture that "what he gives is not images and ideas and music, it is one thing with a curious mixture or suggestion of all three." Neither can I accept Eliot's indictment of diffuseness in Swinburne's poetry. This technique becomes a symbol for Swinburne's own cultural milieu. The era itself was basically one of diffuse activity and interest. He demonstrates the emergence of the man-poet within context of total culture. Neither do I agree with Eliot that Swinburne exploited Evil or Sin for the fun of it. However, I daresay that Eliot's positions have influenced subsequent criticism, not because of their wisdom and objectivity but because of the literary stature of the man, Thomas Stearns Eliot. By consensus, the Lafourcade biography is the best of its kind. He makes excellent use of material preceding his own study, beginning with Gosse's. He is one of the few critics to perceive the basic symbolic signification in most of Swinburne's poems, even in the specifically occasional or topical ones. Hyder's book is especially valuable as a chronological source-book for presenting Swinburne in relationship to his critical contemporaries and in defending him against conventional criticism which is unwilling to accord the poet "depth of thought and moral influence." Praz explores the symbol

of the "fatal woman" in Swinburne's poetry, ascribing an exaggerated dependence of Swinburne upon Baudelaire and de Sade which has helped to establish the myth of Swinburne's epitomizing the "English vice algolania." Douglas Bush joins the ranks of those critics who erroneously see in Swinburne no "philosophic center and no capacity for growth." I agree with Bush on only one significant point, that Swinburne is a mid-Victorian romantic. In addition, Bush fittingly states that Swinburne's assimilation of evolutionary ideas reenforces a "highly poetical vocabulary suitable for rendering what is for him the spiritual gift of evolution, its bearing upon human conduct and destiny." What a spiritual relief to the student of Swinburne to find in Brown a critical attitude, one of a very few, which, on a whole, is worthy of Swinburne the poet. Not only does Brown give a succinct condensation of one hundred years of criticism of Swinburne, but, most important for our purposes, he defends the supreme organic method of the poet which makes Swinburne a superb artist-thinker. The following statement made by Brown might serve well as one of the guiding principles in this investigation: "His ideas are intellectually respectable...At his best between his thought and art there is perfect harmony."

The 1940's and 1950's show a decline in profusion of full length studies of Swinburne. However, the basic critical attitudes are closely akin to those of Swinburne's

contemporaries. H. J. C. Grierson and J. C. Smith, in a Critical History of English Poetry, 1946, present a distortedly fragmented image of Swinburne the poet: "His intense but limited sensibility had two poles -- sensuous passion and hero worship." Both of these manifestations in Swinburne are phases of one basic quality in Swinburne's temperament -- fervid responsiveness to experience of basic importance. F. L. Lucas, in Ten Victorian Poets, 1948, sets a negative tone by opening the section of his book on Swinburne by recounting a so-called famous violent temper-tantrum scene at Eton. Many children might react in this manner. Hence, Lucas' entire attitude is epitomized in one statement about Swinburne the poet: "The eternal child in him remained as incompetent as ever to cope with the world, from which only the music in his poetry redeemed him."

C. M. Bowra in the Romantic Imagination, 1949, is critically perceptive in the exploration of Atalanta in Calydon for evidences of Swinburne's unique imaginative creativity. However, the image is distorted by the pervasive inherited fallacy, which by this time had become a kind of critical cliché, regarding Swinburne's style and the "lack of any internal center." Humphrey Hare, in Swinburne: A Critical Biography, 1949, unsuccessfully combines literary criticism with slanted biography, permeated with a belief in the crucial impact of de Sade upon the life and art of Swinburne. Hare's tracing of many of the basic philosophical influences

upon Swinburne's poetry only partially redeems the book, critically. Jerome Buckley,¹⁷ in The Victorian Temper, 1951, demonstrates the rare quality searched for by the student of Swinburne of actually returning to the primary source, the text of the poetry, to assess the artist-thinker. Regarding Swinburne, the artist, Buckley says:

"With all his diffuseness, he rapidly achieved a technical virtuosity by which he could channel his exuberance."

Of Swinburne the thinker, Buckley remarks, "By whatever symbol it might be represented the process of Spiritual New Birth involved the crucial insight into a reality, human or divine, beyond the old self-chambered life."

Randolph Hughes epitomizes another kind of critical attitude, that of the "critic on the critics". In a "new" critical edition of Swinburne's Lesbia Brandon, 1952, Hughes produces voluminous commentaries in invective language upon the ineptness of all biographers and/or critics of Swinburne who preceded himself. Hughes is an excellent object lesson on a negative approach to other critics.¹⁸

Ruth Temple, in The Critic's Alchemy, 1953, makes a critically significant statement regarding Swinburne, the artist-thinker. She reenforces the conception of Swinburne's ability to envision life through diffuseness in a way which other critics have not expressed. She says:

In Swinburne's poetry, the rapid meter and verbal abundance give an effect of ceaseless change and motion, shifting scenes and vague contours -- Magic of suggestion. For this quality Swinburne is called a visionary -- seeing with an "inward eye."¹⁹

Clyde K. Hyder, in The Victorian Poets, edited by Frederic Faverty, 1956, belongs in a special critical triad with Jerome Buckley and C. Y. Lang for pointing the direction toward a more liberal criticism of Swinburne the poet rooted in a return to the text of his poetry. Such criticism would reveal evidences of the stature of the thinker as well as the artist. The image is that of a serious-minded artist of intricate complexity and not that of the childlike simplicity projected by the majority of critics of Swinburne. Hyder defends Swinburne thus:

Swinburne's relations to his contemporaries and his use of contemporary ideas were complex for a poet sometimes said to have lived in isolation...By a curiosity of criticism the poet who mainly grounded his views in what he considered fundamental realities has been charged with lacking an "internal center"; it is ironical that Meredith's phrase, applied to Swinburne before he had written any of his greater works, should have become fashionable, for Meredith's outlook is remarkably similar to Swinburne's.²⁰

Finally, in terms of the basic assumptions of this study, a third clarion call ensues from C. Y. Lang, in an introduction to his classic edition of The Swinburne Letters, 1959. Lang states that Swinburne was the most learned poet in the history of England, with the possible exception of John Milton. Most significantly, for this study, Lang

uniquely points the way to a new critical approach to Swinburne by suggesting the symbolic nature of Swinburne's poetry and by asserting the necessity of returning to the text of the poetry for logical critical evaluation. Lang defends his position thus:

Swinburne was a thinker. Tennyson, describing him as a "reed through which all things blow into music," failed to point out that in the best poems all things blow into meaning. These poems nearly always embody "fundamental brain-work," as Rossetti called it, and it is inaccurate and unjust to say that in them the sound obscures the sense.²¹ ...No other poet has sung with such consistent and persistent melancholy of the pain of existence. His outlook has a Greek or even Oriental quality. All his great themes and symbols, birth and death, growth and decay, pleasure and pain, unity and division, the mother-son relationship, the seasons, water, roses, birds, dreams are rooted in this preoccupation, and his imagery and symbolism will reward investigation as amply as any poet in the language, for in them is the very substance of the man and the poet.²²

Only two years remain in the critical sixties; yet, to date, no critic has followed the path suggested by Jerome Buckley, Clyde K. Hyder, and Cecil Y. Lang to present a full-length critical evaluation of Swinburne the poet-thinker as revealed through imagery as symbol in his poetry. Four poems from the Swinburne canon remain the most popular for isolated critical study; (Atalanta in Calydon, Hertha, Thalassius, and Tristram of Lyonesse) one from each of the three major phases of Swinburne's development as poet-thinker is represented here. It is far past time that these phases should be brought together

to reveal the whole vision of Swinburne the poet from the impact of one individualized reading.

In Edith Sitwell's primary critical concern with Swinburne's magnificent mastery of sound in poetry expressed in Swinburne: A Selection, 1960, lies the implication that a tragic vision of life evolves through his art. She says:

Although Swinburne also had the intense sensation of life with its lights and colours, coming and going in the head; he was on fire with passion, was, in himself, as much a fire as was that brand that ended Meleager's life. But the brand that was Swinburne, had light, did not crumble into ash. He was a supreme technician, with an unbelievable mastery of soul, and he was a great tragic poet.²³

Yet in 1960 also, Enid Starkie descants critically on an old tune, in From Gautier to Eliot: "Swinburne had been, in his most significant period, a figure of revolt, an iconolast, arousing repulsion and hatred."²⁴ Graham Hough, 1961, perpetuates the distorted image of Swinburne the artist, as artificer without thought, thus:

Swinburne is read as a virtuoso on the English metrical keyboard much of whose significance lies in his versification for its own sake. The dash and vitality of his best verse is at the service of a rather monotonous range of ideas, and his best effects are as a rule merely verbal. He hardly ever succeeds in tying up his eccentric emotional patterns with the general experience of mankind, and his hymns to pain, passion, death and the gods remain the expression of a sensibility that is more or less detraque, not comments on the human situation...He remains a naively rebellious asserter of romantic liberty with specialized sexual tastes.²⁵

In exploring the symbolic nature of the Victorian Wasteland, Curtis Dahl, in 1961, opens another vista for investigation in Swinburne the poet. Although I do not subscribe to Dahl's theory that the values in Swinburne's Wasteland are empty, at least his theory stimulates thought in a fresh direction and it motivates a desire to return to the text of the poetry. Dahl sets forth his attitude thus:

Like Eliot, Swinburne finds the inner essential truth of existence hidden seed-like in the dry ground of a waste garden. However, the truth he finds is not the saving grace of Christianity; instead; it is merely the empty comfort that all things are inevitable swept away by the tides of fate. This very insistence on the foreordained destruction of even the thorns of life by the blind forces of change gives a dignity to Swinburne's wasteland that much of the modern wasteland lacks.²⁶

Morse Peckham, in 1962, makes a significant observation about the relationship of form and matter in Swinburne's poetry. He says, "The peculiar character of Swinburne's poetry is the contrast between the beauty of the aesthetic surface and the material from the world of experience which is the subject-matter."²⁷ This artistic quality reenforces one of the basic ideas in Swinburne, that of the irreconcilable opposites which are woven into the fabric of life. On the other hand, Peckham's over-psychologized commentary on Swinburne's symbolic use of the sea, leaves much to be desired. Finally, perhaps the most often quoted full-length criticism of Swinburne of the sixties is that of John A. Cassidy, 1964. Cassidy

presents a critical inconsistency by stating in the preface to his study a primary interest in the text of Swinburne's writings as a basis for his investigation, and then, with the characteristic critical effrontery which remains pervasive in Swinburnean criticism, proceeding to weave preponderant biographical signification into the works of the artist, especially the thread of sexual aberration which is an echo from the Victorian Era. Hence, the pendulum of criticism of Swinburne the poet has returned to its original position. Consequently, it is time for modern scholarship to literally return to the primary source, the text of the poetry, to explore, to describe, to evaluate, and to vindicate the vision of life as it emerges therefrom. When that is done, a colossally significant contribution will have been made to the corpus of criticism of Swinburne, for he can take his rightful place among the major poets of the world who remain universal in their significance and appeal through that artistic synthesis of beauty and truth which gives life itself its richest dimension, the imaginative.

To return to the text of Swinburne's poetry, however, presents a problem which has been the subject of predominantly negative criticism from 1904 to 1967. The first collected edition of Swinburne's poetry appeared in 1904. It is significant for the Dedicatory Epistle to Theodore Watts-Dunton, which contains Swinburne's poetic

credo in retrospect. A six-volume edition of the poems was issued by William Heinemann Limited, London, 1917. A subsequent two volume edition was also issued by Heinemann in 1924. This edition contains the dedicatory epistle also. However, despite the aura of forgery which enveloped Thomas J. Wise,²⁸ the Edmund Gosse-T. J. Wise Bonchurch Edition of The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne, in twenty volumes, published by Heinemann in 1925 through 1927, remains the standard edition. Although it is a pioneering, monumental work, the word "complete" should not be taken literally. In some bibliographies, such as the Wright-Templeman, the edition is referred to as "collected works." It is significant that the Russell and Russell Publishing Company of New York City is now in the process of reprinting the Gosse-Wise twenty-volume edition to be available early in 1968.²⁹ Hence this is the edition which this study will make primary use of, although others are consulted as well.

In accordance with the clarion call indicating an acute need for changing the critical image of Swinburne the poet-thinker, this study is concerned primarily with exploring the canon of Swinburnean lyric poetry on a selected basis, excluding translations, folk-type ballads, and parodies. The focal point is the emergence of a poetic vision of life through a pattern of plant, sun, wind, and sea imagery. Throughout the lyric poetry of Swinburne

the emphasis upon these images as symbols shifts until the sea becomes the major synthesizing one of the group as a potent syntonic force in Swinburne's poetry. The sun becomes the major ideological image.

The next chapter will set forth the major affective influences upon the Swinburnean vision and will explain the nature of the synthesis which evolved from the impact of these transformational forces.

CHAPTER II

THE SWINBURNEAN VISION

The Victorian Milieu

"All Coherence Gone"

When religious philosophies of life are disturbed in their efficacy as unifying cultural forces by the impact of science and technology, doubt and scepticism ensue which lead to the passionate seeking of an alternative frame of reference for reorientation and reunification of sensibility. Arnold Toynbee, speaking of divided sensibility in the contemporary world, explains the inevitability of such periods in terms of the cyclical nature of human history, thus:

When great religions break down, tension results between individualism and nationalism in the shaping force of a larger orientation, technology, in the lives of men. Only two avenues then remain open, change or suicide, as technology collides with nationalism. The former symbolizes the head, the latter the heart of man.

The Victorian Era was one such "transition" period. Walter Houghton states the problem thus:

The circle comes round, though the ends do not meet. First, men believe sincerely in the

established truths. Then, as those truths are undermined by new knowledge or new political forces, the conservatives pretend to believe the old creeds and evade the difficulties: doubt and "hypocrisy" are born together. Next comes the reaction. The champions of new truths demand intellectual candor -- that a man deal honestly with others. But those who remain in doubt, and still more those who come to doubt the mind itself, demand personal sincerity²-- that a man can deal honestly with himself.

The first part of the Victorian Era was characterized by a wide-spread feeling of large scale, radical, inevitable, irreversible change in total outlook. G. M. Young gives an illuminating description of this development in terms of historic perspective. He sees the Victorian Age as a counterpart of a secular movement -- the new world of Francis Bacon where nothing need remain unknown, a world of organized thought. Modern man is only the rudiments of what man might be. The responses of John S. Mill and Thomas Carlyle epitomize the character of the cultural awareness of the time. The revolutionary changes on the continent and the Romantic revolution in literature were symptoms, then, of a larger development, the causes and effects of which no one, at the time, was sure. However, the Victorian attitude may be distinguished from the Romantic one in terms of greater awareness of a complexity of forces at work in the world. This carries with it the acceptance of the fact that change will come in an evolutionary rather than in a revolutionary way. Mill and Carlyle recognize the nature of the time but offer different

solutions to man's problem. Mill, in The Spirit of the Age,³ 1831, states that the nineteenth century will be known to posterity as an era of great revolutions in the human mind and in the whole constitution of human society. Mankind has outgrown old institutions and doctrines but new ones are not yet developed. Although Mill does not admit to any significant growth of human understanding, he does perceive an increase in discussion, which, by eliminating error, will lead to the discovery of new truth. Also in 1831, Thomas Carlyle perceived an increase in intellectual speculation and a new passion for knowledge indicating that a new order was in the making. However, Carlyle disagrees with Mill's view that science can provide the basis for a new moral order.⁴ The rationalistic approach of Mill by contrast with the transcendental (intuitive) approach of Carlyle epitomizes the characteristic conflict of the time. One of the pervasive characteristics of the age was the diffusion of knowledge, educating the people, all people.

Affective Influences

Like his contemporaries, Swinburne as a poet was deeply aware of the disunification of the sensibility in his time. There was no structured order of ideas indigenous to the cultural milieu which the literary artist could use as authority for his individualized imaginative interpretation of human experience. Indeed, ideologically and

artistically "all coherence was gone." Only staunch pioneers with a true heroic spirit dared to explore the contemporary scene, aware of the colossal paradoxes interwoven therein in search of an ordering force for creative expression. Perhaps this contradictory state of affairs helps to explain the fact that the Victorian Age is remembered primarily as an age of prose rather than poetry. The pressures of Cultural fragmentation seemed to aggravate a tendency in Swinburne toward spiritual instability.

Critics agree that the major affective influences upon Swinburne's life and art prior to the 1860's were Nature, literature, people, Anglicanism, Republicanism, and Pre-Raphaelitism. From early childhood Swinburne enjoyed an emotional abandonment to the beauties of Nature, especially while swimming, riding and strolling along the seashore. The polar relationship between East Dene and Northumberland furnished a foundation for his recognition of paradox as basic in the texture of life.

Swinburne felt early the tension between the sunlit South at East Dene and the Northumbrian atmosphere with its silver grey sea shining in the distance...Swinburne's early experience with Nature may be found at root of many essential factors in his inspiration: love of beauty and rhythm, the identification of the divine with the beautiful aspects of Nature, the cruelty of the gods, the necessity and acceptance of pain.⁵

This ambivalent character of Nature Swinburne eventually identified with the antinomic quality of life generally.

This quality will be revealed by this study through the exploration of selected poetry.

Literarily, Swinburne became an early devotee of Biblical style. Further, Nicolson attests, "With Eton came Sophocles, Sappho, Aristophanes, Catullus, the Elizabethans, Landor, Hugo, and Mary Queen of Scots."⁶ In addition, Lafourcade states, "he did extensive reading in the five great literatures of the world" (Greek, Roman, Italian, French, and English). The ideological and artistic aspects of these influences are fused into the brilliant Swinburnean art.

Among personal influences, Swinburne's mother was preeminent during his early life. She encouraged his literary proclivity by helping to cultivate his interest in French and Italian literature. Further, she sanctioned his fancy that he belonged to the company of the elect. She arranged for him to meet the elder Wordsworth and Rogers in his youth, and both poets acclaimed the creative promise in the youth. Basic temperamental differences were responsible for an unbridgeable spiritual chasm between father and son. Swinburne's proneness to hero-worship and republicanism is traceable to his relationship with his grandfather, John Swinburne, who symbolized the radical-spirited hero whom the young Swinburne idealized. Swinburne's idealization of noble human traits becomes a significant factor in the evolving vision of man, the

focus of this study. Other personal influences are perceivable in the Trevelyan, especially Lady Trevelyan; Morris, the Rossettis, and Jowett.

Swinburne was reared within the context of an Anglican orientation. Thus he recognized the basic human yearning for order symbolized by societal organization. But Higher Criticism and Tractarianism were shattering the unifying quality of Anglicanism. When Swinburne matriculated at Oxford in 1856, he felt the impact of the spiritual void there. Chew describes the changing atmosphere at Oxford thus:

At Oxford the religious atmosphere was in transition. Trust in dogma was yielding place to a consciousness of the ethical significance of Christianity...The rise of science and scientism in prestige fosters a rationalistic approach to scripture through Higher Criticism. This provided atmosphere for the anti-metaphysical philosophy of Comte, Positivism, the Religion of Humanity.⁷

Such sundering of cultural orientation will be perceived in this study of Swinburne's poetry as the quest of the human spirit for a new order of ideas. The free-thinking young republican society, Old Mortality, under the leadership of John Nichol, gained dominance as the most powerful ideological influence upon Swinburne the young Oxonian. Hegelian philosophy became the bible of the young republicans. Political liberty became Swinburne's passion. Thus he identified himself spiritually with Shelley, Landor and Hugo. This republicanism became the basis for the man-

centered vision of life which this study reveals. It makes possible the fusion of philosophies of Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Darwin, Bergson, and Comte.

In 1857, Swinburne was introduced to the second group of Pre-Raphaelites, under the leadership of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. This association came about while Rossetti and his compeers were painting murals on the walls and ceiling of the Union at Oxford. Swinburne was endowed with a very impressionable temperament. Thus he was influenced by contact with such a strong dramatic personality as D. Rossetti. In his personal life, this early relationship led to dissolute behavior on the part of Swinburne. In his art, it inspired a tendency toward an aestheticism for which he was not yet spiritually ready. Many critics agree that the Rossettian Pre-Raphaelitism was in essence a decadent modification of the earlier Millais-Hunt version which incorporated a philosophy of high morality. Cassidy assesses Rossettian Pre-Raphaelitism thus:

Hunt's insistence upon a moral purpose in theme and upon fidelity to truth in treatment meant nothing to Rossetti, who, as a complete Romantic in character and disposition, eschewed any form of discipline in life or painting. Much more fascinated was he with the emphasis of the Pre-Raphaelites upon the medieval scene and material which had come about through their absorption in the artists before Raphael, their adulation of Keats....A further departure from Pre-Raphaelitism came from Rossetti's almost psychotic sensuality....By 1857, when Rossetti came to Oxford, he had added the idea that art had nothing to do with

moral didacticism and should be evaluated only on its merits as art.

The relationship with the Rossettian Pre-Raphaelites made possible Swinburne's later receptiveness to Gautier and Baudelaire.

The dynamic quality of Swinburne's mind is revealed in the passionately intense and enthusiastic manner in which he absorbed all intellectual and artistic ideas to which he was exposed. Swinburne works within the tradition of the Romantic poet who spiritually isolates himself from society in order to find for himself an ordered unity. This quest is climaxed in a magnificent synthesis which perceives the essential unity of all Being. Thus even the apparently divisively affective influences were transformed by Swinburne's evolving vision of the basic condition of man.

The Swinburnean Synthesis

"We are the sun's, the wind's and the sea's."
--Landor

Swinburne's evolving vision is that of the spiritual state of man within context of time and mutability. This state is a universal phenomenon. J. Hillis Miller makes the following commentary about the state of the human spirit in the throes of opposing forces in life:

Man hungers for unity, for totality. His exploration of the world leads to the discovery that this need must be frustrated....The antinomies can never be reconciled and man is condemned to the either/or of the exploded world.

However, Swinburne does harmonize these antinomies artistically. The magnificent synthesis which evolves from man's quest through the imaginative world of Swinburne's poetry follows the path of the archetypal myth of rebirth.

Buckley's comment regarding the pattern of conversion in Swinburne's poetry perceptively sets forth the place of the myth in terms of the assumptions of this study:

The process of spiritual New-Birth involved the crucial insight into reality, human or divine, beyond the old self-absorbed life. Through an intense intuition the soul attained its "at-oneness" with objective truth of earth and heavenBut the great revelation, the great epiphany of experience which illuminated the purposes of all living, came as no arbitrary resolution to man's despair; it presupposes always the willingness of the dry soul to obey the call of a death-in-life, the irresistible summons of the sea. All conversion depended ultimately upon some faith in the immanence of spirit, whether the fullness of realization lay in "one far-off divine event" or in the imperishable dignity of man. The Victorian faith could cling to the dogma of free will essential to his moral action. By faith he could accept the tragedy of pain and death as prerequisite to a nobler spiritual evolution, the necessary discord in an all-embracing harmony.¹⁰

In Swinburne's final vision, internal and external reality are fused and there is no sharp line of distinction between the symbolic uses of the four images isolated for emphasis in this study. Rooted in elemental physical forces, these symbols are all a part of one unity of Being. Yet each has its own set of ambivalences. Thus the use of each symbol reflects Swinburne's awareness of the paradoxical character of some of our deepest intuitions.

Water manifests itself primarily in the image of the sea. The sea is the most complexly ambivalent as well as the most flexible of the four images. It is a symbol of liberty for the human spirit. It is the first cause, mother, and final home, death. It is power. It is potential for ordering. It is an analogue-life. Most significantly, for this study, it is the source of conversion, of rebirth for the soul of man sundered by the contending forces of the battle of life.

Fire is associated with the channeling or focusing of energy. The energy of fire as the sun symbolizes the universal impulse toward order. In its identification with the mythological god, Apollo, the sun is the abstract idea of structure, harmony, and vision. Light is love, insight, and reason. The sun mates with the sea to produce man (the poet) as a symbol of creative order.

Air manifests itself as the wind of time and change, working in both a constructive and destructive way. It is also Fate and Chance in time. It is ambivalently the warm wind of inspiration and the cold wind of death.

Earth symbolizes the mother of man as plant, organic part of organic whole. Earth as land, however, is set in symbolic opposition to the sea, and is representative of static, stifling social forms.

Other images function in their relationship to the four major ones. High places, such as towers, temples,

cliffs, and downs, are related to the sun and the stars as means of insight into transcendent reality. The bird appears as the soul of man; it is a symbol of spiritual rebirth as the Phoenix and a symbol of the capacity to transcend mundane reality as the sea-mew and nightingale. Religious imagery appears principally in god and altar. These are associated with fire and light imagery to suggest sacrifice, rebirth, and salvation. Typically, traditional religious values are juxtaposed to Swinburne's religion of man.

The images and symbols in this study work together to symbolize universal spiritual forces which shape the evolving soul of man in the totality of his being. They tend to coalesce. One symbol may usurp the function of the other. This is a part of Swinburne's organic unity. The images are unified spatially. Thus they are logical symbols for revealing Swinburne's vision. The land and the sea unify horizontal space, in which the wind moves. The sea and the sun unify vertical space.

In the body of poetry explored herein, the vision unfolds in a slow labyrinthine manner, as does the soul within the context of time and change. The life-experience of the soul extends from the imaginative symbolic creation of life in Genesis to the paradise within, the "internal heaven" of the Altar of Righteousness. It is so fraught with frustration, conflict, and reversals that in one aspect it can be fitly symbolized as a battle.

Thalassius: a Sampler

In its mythical revelation of the making of man as poet, Thalassius represents a brilliant synthesis of the four images of this study. As a spiritual autobiography of the poet, it is a synopsis of and interpretive commentary upon the preceding works viewed as an organic whole. Thus it seems wise to examine Thalassius before proceeding to the separate phases of the emerging larger vision. The basic theme of the poem is the organic evolutionary emergence of the unified human spirit. One of the most recent and illuminating essays on Thalassius is that by Richard McGhee, "Thalassius: Swinburne's Poetic Myth."¹¹ On a whole, I agree with McGhee's interpretation of the symbolic patterns of imagery in the poem. One amplification, however, seems logical. McGhee states:

The processes of natural elements, the sea, the sun, and the wind operate through the world of poetry; they are personified as divine agents. The image of the dread lady is at the sterile center of the poem; it is the shrine to which the poet's imagination is temporarily bound.

In terms of the quadruple strand of imagery of this study, the lady is the red, fiery rose of eroticism. She is the Dolores of Poems and Ballads, first series, the "fatal muse whose music makes mad." She is an objectification of art derived from a too passionate involvement with the unliberated self. If the other three symbols, the sun, the sea, and the wind, are divine agents, perhaps the dread lady is

a satanic agent in her divisively destructive impact upon the human soul. Indeed, in keeping with Swinburne's proneness to deal in opposites, the soul has both divine and satanic propensities for development, both the white and the black seed.

The primary theme in Thalassius is the making of a poet. In the first line the "flowery forefront of the year," April, Swinburne's natal month, establishes the plant image as one of the major symbols in the poem, especially in the larger signification of growth and development. In a state of innocence, Thalassius, the son of the sea-nymph, Cymothoe, and the mythological sun-god, Apollo, is nurtured by a foster father, the ideal poet. Many critics identify this figure as Walter Savage Landor. Although Landor surely influenced the image, the ideal poet-figure here results from Swinburne's synthesis of all the ideal qualities in the generic poet who evolves throughout all eternity: "From his grave lips the boy would gather fine honey of song -- notes goldener than gold." Honey, song, and gold symbolically identify the ideal poet as a son of Apollo. At first, the flower is the symbol for the boy. But as poet-figure, Thalassius is identified with the sea-mew. As a "fosterling on earth" the boy loved best the "high song", the poetic strain. Lyric poetry appealed to the boy's basic spiritual yearning because of its quintessential beauty and its message of freedom of soul.

High things the high song taught him
 Yea, one thing.
 One thing stronger and more high than God,
 - - - - -

But all of all that is,
 Were one man free in body and soul, were his.

The growing-up of the boy follows the way of the plant, symbolizing his affinity with the earth as elemental formative force. He is a sea-flower which takes nurture from the soil and from the sea. The boy's choice of the "high song" represents a significant aspect of thought in Swinburne's evolving vision. It suggests the importance of the voluntary individual will in making choices and in assuming the responsibility of necessary discipline and restraint demanded by a particular choice. Thus Swinburne's concept of the yearning for freedom on the part of the human spirit is by no means a theory of anarchy.

The educational process, with emphasis upon the high song, has a liberalizing impact upon the boy's mind. It provides him with general concepts regarding life. These concepts are symbolized by four basic human passions, love, hate, fear, and hope. These pairs of opposing emotions symbolize the ambivalent nature of human experience in the quest of man for integrity of soul. Henderson gives the following elucidation of the four passions in Thalassius. These passions become precepts of life, which are taught to the boy through the "high song":

Love that turns God's heart manward, man's Godward,
 love that gives meaning and substance to life and
 death from the first breath to the final suspiration.
 It is greater than body or soul, and should live,
 not wholly made nothing even if body and soul were
 dead, its elements perpetuating their separate
 selves in the large heart as such men, dying,
 perpetuate themselves.

Hate of everything that brings or holds thralldom,
 either bodily or spiritually, man's holy body and
 sacred soul, which were free-born before God
 began. And it taught that hatred should be set
 there most inexorably wherever there was a curse,
 or a chain, or despotism, moulded out of the pain
 of poor men, until there should be no more the
 semblance of a king anywhere.

Hope the keen eye of the soul into the impenetrable
 that discovers in man's future the birth of good
 and the inevitable and infinite death of evil; the
 stormy twilight of all gods and the sundawn of the
 spirit that was man.

Fear to be unworthy of the dear love of the wind
 and the sea that had bred the boy fearless, and
 fear to be unworthy of the heaven when young life
 surged in his veins like wine or music.

So clothed with love and perfect fear, and armed
 with hope and hate, he set forth on the ways of
 his life's glad spring.¹²

Since the passion of love is recognized by Swin-
 burne as the most elemental in human experience, this
 encounter is presented first. The first experience with
 love in Thalassius is presented in ambivalent symbolic
 imagery. The image is outlined vaguely as that of a
 serpentine figure of masculine visage who identifies
 himself as death. This image reenforces the symbolic
 suggestion of eroticism as self-involvement. Here, one
 is reminded of the satanic force operative in human

experience. This disturbing encounter produces "Only the saddest smile of all things sweet,/ Only the sweetest smile of all things sad." The boy's soul is left tortured and seared. This is the potential wasteland which results from looking inward too intensely. At first, the boy can find no solace for this chaotic condition of spirit, neither in the sea, nor from the sun, nor the wind:

And earth was bitter, and heaven and even the sea
Sorrowful even as he.
And the wind helped not, and the sun was dumb;
His heart grew sear and numb.

When the youth's spirit sinks to its lowest ebb, another experience comes in the symbol of a violent storm. It is active between the space of land and sea. Its nature is enigmatic. It is an objectification of the chaos within the soul of the youth. Here, the wind is the principal image. It is ambivalent in its connotation of activating a violent storm which is literally silent in its inspiriting impact upon the soul of the poet-potential. Too, the storm is an objectification of the arduous process of the birth of a poet, a process not without regressive stages. The natural storm has all the clamorous violence of the natural elements. Yet it is not what it seems, as the "shapes began/ From all ways round to move in on the man,/ Clamorous against him silent; and their feet/ Were as the wind's are fleet,/ And their shrill songs were as wild birds' are sweet." This is one in a series of epiphanies

in the experience of the birth of a poet. When he is startled out of his trance-like state, he can hear "only the music which makes mad," and now he has an encounter with a fatal muse, eroticism, Dolores as Erigone. His submission to Erigone thwarts his mother's symbolic weaving of his poetic laurel. In his enthrallment to Erigone, they rode:

By many a vine-leaved, many a rose-hung road,
Exalt with exultation; many a night
Set all its stars upon them as for spies
On many a moon-bewildering mountain height
Where he rode on by the fiercer light
Of his dread lady's hot sweet hungering eyes.

Again, the image of the wind is used to symbolize the violent impact of the encounter with the fatal muse upon the soul of the poet-potential. This time, however, the poet potential is an active recipient of the stormy passion symbolized by Erigone. Thus a bond of reciprocity is established between subject and object. This is the Swinburnean means for perceiving unity in Being. This is the first step toward salvation.

When winter comes, the youth seems to have matured beyond the Erigone experience, for "He let the vine-bit on the panther's lip/ Slide and the green rein slip,/ And set his eyes seaward./ Against the sea-rock lying, aslant the steep,/ Fell after many sleepless dreams on sleep." At this point, the sea as symbol takes on one of its two greatest significations in Swinburne. In proximity to the sea Thalassius dies symbolically as he dreams literally,

and he is purged of the tempestuous passion from the earlier experience with Erigone. He awakes in an epiphanic moment "on fire." This is the fire of poetic fervor related to the sun. A catharsis of the old ways has prepared the way for a new birth, a new self, an integrated identity; now he is ready to become the poet-figure. "The yearnings of old years" is closely akin to the Wordsworthian idea of the "spark of divinity" from childhood's innocence which redeems the man and saves the poet:

Pure as one purged of pain that passions bare,
 - - - - -

Thence in his heart the great same joy began
 Of child that made him man.
 - - - - -

And like sea-winds upon loud waters ran
 His days and dreams together, till the joy
 Burned in him of the boy.

The sea now takes on the symbolic signification of God the Creator breathing life into the soul of Thalassius. The wind becomes particularly inspiriting as the poet-figure is resurrected thus:

Now was not spirit of strength in blast and breeze
 To exalt again the sun's child and the sea's.
 For as wild mares in Thessaly grew great
 With child of ravishing winds that violate
 Even so the spirit in him, when winds grew strong,
 Grew great with child of song.

This is the Correspondent Breeze of Abrams, alluded to by McGhee. The poet-figure is filled, impregnated with song. This image adumbrates the pervasive image of organic growth in Swinburne. In the total submission of Thalassius to

his mother, the sea, she becomes an all-embracing source of inspiration in song. Thalassius imbibes the song so deeply into his soul that he is fused with it. He is song. The song symbolizes the power to reconcile the contrarities in life into a unified whole. It is the power of creative ordering for which the soul of the artist yearns. Thus here the sea symbolizes the subconscious inspiration of the poet. Although Thalassius imbibes rhythm and rhyme from the waves of the sea, he is unable to release the song. Apollo becomes the sole agent for this release. Since Apollo is the mythological god of the sun, of music, and of lyric poetry, he is a unique symbol of the medium through which the poet's song is released.

The poem ends with a laudatory and benedictory speech by the divine father, Apollo, to Thalassius. The father commends the son for his nobility of aspiration which carried him through the chastening experiences of life. These experiences are necessary for full self-realization. Thalassius has maintained the spiritual integrity of the artist who understands and courageously accepts the necessity of alienating himself from society in order to find a greater self. Further, he accepts the responsibility of development in accordance with the demands of the uniqueness of the principle of his being, his law of self-sufficiency, the internal light, the altar of righteousness. For this superior quality of the dedication

of Thalassius to his art, Apollo acclaims him as his own son. This is highly reminiscent of the Biblical account of God's acclaiming Jesus of Nazareth when he was baptized of John the Baptist in "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." When Apollo released Thalassius's song, Apollo exhorts him in terms closely akin to Biblical rhetoric, as in the parable of the talents, thus:

Because thou hast kept in those world-wandering eyes
The light that makes me music of the skies;
Because thou has heard with world-unwearied ears
The music that puts light into the spheres;
Have therefore in thine heart and in thine mouth
The sound of song that mingles north and south,
The song of all the winds that sing of me
And in thy soul the sense of all the sea.

Indeed, now the concept of the "high song" is functionalized in the soul of the poet. This symbolizes the poet's seeking the purest form of expression. It is suggestive of a desire for aesthetic transcendence. Thalassius becomes a symbol of every man within the context of the evolutionary process. This is not evolution as blind chance. It is the Swinburnean concept of evolution in accordance with the working of the will under the control of the creative imagination.

Thus, in Thalassius the major symbol of the sea is a complex one. It is a reservoir of structurable energy (matter) for song. Further, it is a dissolving, liberating force that makes for rebirth. The sun, symbolic father of the poet, is the agent for releasing the poet's power of song. Also the sun is a symbol of the source of insight,

transcendent truth, but is given an ambivalent quality by its relation to "fiercer light" in the dread lady's eyes. Thus the sun is even related to the panther, symbol of a relatively subhuman state. There is no absolute separation of forces. Fire, related to the sun, is like the sea, the means of catharsis, just as the sea as well as the sun figures in new creation. It is creative energy as well as the destructive energy of eroticism. The wind is not only a symbol of the inspiriting force but of the devastating force which sunders the soul in its encounter with erotic love. Thus by association the wind is also related to the sun and the sea. Further, the wind is a symbol of the passing of time and of mutability. Also, the wind image is a symbol of a unifying force in human experience, for it is "the sound of song which mingles north and south." The plant, sea-flower, symbolizes the boy in his organic nature as an earth-bound creature.

Other images reenforce the thematic involvement of the making of a poet through connotation and overtone. They are all related to the sea either directly or indirectly. The panther symbolizes erotic love. It is related to the red rose as the Venus symbol. Venus was born of the sea. Also, the panther as volatile energy, "the fiercer light," is related to the sun from which all light derives. The bird, the sea-mew, symbolizes the poet in his yearning for aesthetic transcendence. The intricate pattern of

crosscurrents discernible in the quadruple strand of imagery of this study is brilliantly rendered in Thalassius. No single image works in isolation in the poem, not even the controlling one, the sea. All are interrelated so that life is symbolized as a unity of ambivalent forces. There are no absolutes. Each aspect of life is related to every other aspect either directly, indirectly, or logically. Swinburne's additional characteristic devices of synesthesia, alliteration, and assonance function to unify form and idea in Thalassius so that the pervading ideological atmosphere in the poem is the essential unity of all things. The stanzaic patterning of rhyming couplets reenforces the unity of form and idea.

McGhee corroborates my assumption regarding the sea-light (sun) imagery in the poem:

The myth in Thalassius is an attempt to integrate the experiences described in Poems and Ballads [first series] into a broader vision of life, of a life created by the poet. The integration is accomplished by discovering the source of true value to be within the poet's self, as symbolized by the "sun within" and "deep sea-pulses dealt/ Through nerve and jubilant vein," by discovering the joy that overcomes death and mixes heaven and earth....And the agent or vehicle for achieving the integration of all experiences into an eternal unit is the secret breath of song.¹³

Thus the poet is a law unto himself, the only god. This is an extension of the concepts of the Life-Force and Immanentism applied to the making of a poet. This application has singular significance in this study, for

the poet is Swinburne's symbol of the ideal god-man who is guided by the eternal internal light from his own soul.

Chew upholds this view:

Thalassius, Swinburne's spiritual autobiography should be read, first, in terms of the poet's kinship with elemental forces emphasized, and second, in terms of the poet's¹⁴ concept of divine endowment with gift of song.

Buckley makes the following illuminating commentary upon

Thalassius and the water symbol in Swinburne generally:

He [Thalassius] learned from his ageless mother the sacred love of liberty. But in the bitter world of man's experience he met Sorrow, whose name was Death, and felt the disillusion that left the heart "sear and numb." Vainly he sought to escape his desolating fear in the orgies of self-indulgence; but neither in the fleshly "femme fatale" or the Bacchanalian music was there real help or comfort. Only by a return to his great sea mother's home did he find his lost peace.

To Swinburne water is a symbol of life and dying unto life, of the everlasting peace and the eternal process of regeneration. In addition, it is the expression of an overwhelming energy, the spirit itself of the highest freedom.¹⁵

One of the few negatively critical attitudes toward

Thalassius is uttered by Harold Nicolson:

It may seem merely fantastic for any man to represent himself as anadyomanos, as a sexless, ageless, earthless emanation of the sun and the sea; as something potential rather than potent; as something impervious to rules of growth and development; as a manchild with an ungrown God's desire.¹⁶

One can only regret the lack of perceptivity of critics who share this attitude. Swinburne's poetry is essentially symbolic in its nature. The symbolic vision of the making

of man is perfectly logical, imaginatively. The vision in Thalassius is simply a synthesis of the threads spun from Atalanta to Thalassius. The idea of sexless art is reminiscent of Shelley's Witch of Atlas and is intellectually and emotionally satisfying. The organic growth and development of the poet is engrained within the very fabric of the poem. Lastly, even the most orthodox fundamentalist Christian believes in a doctrine of incarnation, in a god-man. One expects that poetic truth would be larger than life so as to give an added depth-dimension to the meaning of life. Nicolson remains an object lesson in what criticism of Swinburne the poet as thinker should not be.

In its relationship to the entire corpus of Swinburne's lyric poetry, Thalassius occupies a position analogous to that of the seed to the plant. In terms of the four symbolic images of this study, all the elements of the expanded vision are imbedded in Thalassius. The canon may be read as a complexly wrought protraction of the composite vision of man in Thalassius. This vision reveals the attitudes of a serious thinking poet who is deeply concerned with the profound meanings of life.

The aim of this study is to reveal Swinburne's vision of the life of man as it emerges in the imaginative world of his poetry. The process is that of the soul's yearning for and courageously striving toward paradise. The dominant experience in this process is the symbolic

battle which fashions the soul of the warrior who is capable of seeing the conflict as necessary involvement for the emerging greater stature of the soul. The basic concern of this study is the manner in which Swinburne uses images from elemental physical forces to express his vision. The four subsequent chapters will explore selected poetry, predominantly lyric, for reflections of the larger Swinburnean vision of the life of man. The general procedure in each chapter will comprise four stages: 1. giving general commentary upon major ideas in each phase of the vision, citing poems which encompass these ideas, 2. explicating one poem which seems to be typical of each general phase in terms of the use of the four images of the study, 3. citing examples of other poems which make effective use of one or another of the four images, and 4. citing examples of other images which work in connection with the four focal ones. The general framework for revealing the vision will be an investigation of the ~~evaluation~~ evaluation of the soul of man in life in terms of his relationship to the self, to others, and to god and nature.

The next chapter will explore Swinburne's vision of the soul of man in the throes of eroticism in a yearning for fullness of development through love, the most elemental and all-encompassing human passion.

CHAPTER III

FROM EROTICISM TO NIHILISM: A YEARNING FOR HARMONIOUS EXPANSION

The previous chapter revealed the need for a new order of ideas for the reunification of the sundered sensibility of man under the impact of the Victorian milieu. This chapter will be concerned with exploring Swinburne's initial efforts to find such an orientation through the imaginative world of his poetry. The first part of the first phase of this quest is logically rooted in the theoretical source of the societally-oriented order of ideas in the Western world, ancient Greece. The basic aspects of the universal human condition symbolized in ancient Greek culture are reflected in the relationships of man and god, man and nature, man and man (family and society), and man and the self. When the external sanctions in society are found ineffective, the human soul turns inward upon itself to find a potential source of unity. Atalanta in Calydon¹ and Poems and Ballads, first series, may be read to reveal the first phase of Swinburne's

vision of the life of man. This phase symbolizes the basic human condition of the soul's yearning for harmonious expansion through love. Since sexual love is the most elemental human passion, it is logical that the evolution of the vision should begin at this point.

Bush reflects the consensus of Swinburnean criticism in his comments regarding sources of Atalanta:

For the main outline of the fable, and many details, Swinburne used Apollodorus. Ovid was the source next in importance, in general and notably in the description of the hunt, though Apollodorus was the chief source for this also. Swinburne's Meleager does not, as in the Greek versions, have a wife, but is a young man untouched by love until he sees Atalanta; this change, so much in harmony with the romantic and lyrical spirit² of the drama, may have been suggested by Ovid.

Ideologically, Atalanta may be read as a commentary upon the failure of the two most cherished Victorian institutions, the home and the church, to provide a symbol of authority for the harmonious ordering of the life of man. The theme of the play is the yearning for developing harmony of soul. Meleager is generic man seeking harmonious expansion through love. Althaea and Atalanta represent two aspects of the female principle, two manifestations of the spiritual force of love, in their impact upon the emerging soul of man. They are fatal maternal and erotic love respectively. Meleager strives for development within context of societal sanctions. The society is a religion-oriented one. Hare corroborates my attitude regarding Althaea, Atalanta, and Meleager, thus:

Atalanta is a philosophical lament for our earthly state. The personages are symbols representing the forces of nature. Althaea is the earth-mother, fecund and fatal. Atalanta is love, pleasure, pain and death [eroticism]. Meleager is suffering humanity -- the helpless victim, accepting his destiny with passive fatalism.

Swinburne seems to identify with Meleager. This identification is conceivable in terms of Swinburne's seeing himself in perspective, in time past when he had not accumulated the knowledge of the present self. It is rather a rudimentary self which must explore life for a cohesive order of ideas.

The societal or cultural sanctions within the context of which Meleager strives to develop are symbolized by Althaea as earth-mother with whom a whole complex of relationships is associated. The nature of the impaired vision derived from a god-oriented society is expressed thus:

Althaea: The gods are heavy on me and all the fates
Shed fire across my eyelids mixed with night
And burn me blind and disilluminate my sense
Of seeing, and my perspicuous soul
Darkens with vision. (Vol. 7, p. 277)

She is primarily a symbol of the principle of destruction within herself: "For all my sleep is turned into a fire./ And all my dreams to stuff that kindles it." From Althaea's sermonically impassioned lengthy speech about the natural law of love (Vol. 7, pp.286-89) evolves the basic ideas in the cultural framework within which Meleager develops. The first emphasis is upon the Divine Imperative to man to

keep the law of god in deeds, "not only with lips." He is admonished to recognize the god-spirit within: "Be man at one with equal minded gods,/ So shall he prosper." An important part of the natural law of love of which Althaea speaks is choosing to marry within one's own culture. A woman such as Atalanta "armed makes war upon herself./ Unwomanlike, and treads down use and wont." Men should keep faith with their own societal orientation by giving "praise to the earth that bare them and the day that bred/ Home friends and far-off hospitalities." This is the only way for the soul to emerge harmoniously and honorably. After such a life well-spent, one can long for the Happy Isles: "Through splendid life and death desirable/ To the clear seat and remote throne of souls,/ Land indiscoverable in the unheard of west." Only sorrow comes from embracing an alien love. It proves to be sterile and destructive. It produces no ripe fruit: "But from the light and the fiery dreams of love [Atalanta]/ Spring heavy sorrow and a sleepless life;..../And swift death/ Crushes with sterile feet the unripening ear/ Treads out the timeless vintage." Such an unproductive life can be transmuted into a gloriously fecund one if man would but "set thine eyes and heart on hopes high-born/ And divine deeds and abstinence divine./ So shalt thou be toward all men all thy days/ As light and night communicable."

Althaea is almost a personification of forces associated with earth, land, society, religion -- the whole cultural structure. It is inevitable that she should turn against her offspring. She represents a society in bondage to man-created gods. She tries to accept the rule of the gods, but she becomes the same as the gods: "Give place unto me; I am as any of you [gods] To give life and to take life." As principle of destruction, she portrays herself in cannibalistic terms, thus: "Behold me with what lips upon what food/ I feed and fill my body; even with flesh/ Made of my body. (Vol. 7, p. 335) The Chorus rationalizes the destructive principle symbolized by Althaea by identifying it with evil Fate:

The daughter of doom, the mother of death,
a lifelong weight
 That no man's fate lighteneth
 Nor any god can lighten fate

- - - - -

An evil sceptre, an evil stay,
 Wrought for a staff, wrought for a rod,
 The bitter jealousy of God. (Vol. 7, p. 332)

Both gods and society divide man's soul and destroy him. Society's complaint against the tyranny of the gods is rendered thus: "They mock us with a little piteousness,/ And we say prayers and weep; but at the last,/ Sparing awhile they smite and spare no whit." (Vol. 7, p. 279) To add to the tragic stature of the emerging soul of man, the gods are presented as having created a dual-natured man and placed him within a context of ambivalent forces:

Before the beginning of years
 There came to the making of man
 Time with a gift of tears;
 Grief with a glass that ran;

 And love and a space for delight,

His speech in a burning fire

In his heart is a burning desire,
 In his eyes foreknowledge of death;

His life is a watch or a vision
 Between a sleep and a sleep. (Vol. 7, pp. 280-81)

The society which emerges from such divisive principles has a profoundly disordering impact upon the evolving soul of man. The social relationships and the relationship of man to god are made known through language, a gift from the gods, which is itself ambivalent in nature: "For in the word his life is and his breath./ And in the word his death." (Vo. 7, p. 304) Peckham says, "Through language God is the source of order and disorder, of social creativity and social destruction."⁴ The impassioned ideologically central lament for the chaotic human condition is given by the Chorus. It begins, "Who hath given man speech?" It recounts the essentially divisive quality of enigmatic life. Man's experience in this life is conditioned by the gods who "set men to labour and give them guerdons,/ Death and great darkness after death." The source of society, the family, has a texture of pleasure-pain from the beginning: "Put [of the gods] moans into the bridal

measure/ And on the woolls a stain." Such gods seem capricious indeed, for they manipulate man for their own amusement: "The bubbling bitterness of life and death/.... hold it to our lips and laugh." The chaotic nature of the family is logically extended to larger society as seen in misunderstandings which result and "let fall sin and wind words and many a winged woe/ And wars among us...." This attitude is reenforced by the symbolic implication of the interpersonal relationships, in which "word is opposed to deed" to precipitate all the experiences which lead to death. Thus society becomes a kind of inhuman thing which brings death to man, who is unavoidably embroiled in the bitter battle of life, and the anguished soul of man can but cry aloud in lamentation of his fate, "The supreme evil, God..../ All we are against thee, O God most high."

The other divisive spiritual force in the life of man in Atalanta is erotic love. This is symbolized by Atalanta. Atalanta's self-concept, however, is diametrically opposed to the image which others have of her. She is a devotee of Artemis. Thus she is a symbol of chastity. She is a determined virgin, a "manlike creature", an aggressive warrior. Thus she is the principle of unnatural womanhood. She avows:

I a maid.
Hallowed, and huntress holy as whom I serve,
- - - - -

Stand girt as they [warriors] toward hunting
 - - - - -

I shall have no man's love
 For ever, and no faces of children born....
 (Vol. 7, pp. 298, 302)

The unnaturalness of Atalanta as a woman is articulated by the Chorus thus: "She is pure iron, fashioned for a sword; and man/ She loves not; What should one such do with love?" Later, Althaea and the Chorus identify Atalanta with erotic love. In the famous, magnificent hymn to Venus as Love which begins "We have seen thee, O Love," Swinburne substitutes Atalanta (Artemis) for Venus. The love symbolized is sterile and destructive. It is this love which destroys culture: "And breaking of city by city/ The dividing of friend against friend/ The severing of brother and brother." Mario Praz suggests that this and Althaea's (also society's) conception of Atalanta identifies her with "the fatal woman" of the Romantics: "She is the woman with the terrible eyes. Meleager is spent like the fatal torch, a woman's offering, 'the strange woman -- She is the flower, the sword/ Red from spilt blood, a mortal flower to men, adorable and detestable.'"⁵

Meleager as man symbolizes the soul warped by the taut tension of societal forces which are symbolized by Althaea and the principle of love which he believes Atalanta to embody. He is man who accepts the religious

orientation of his culture. He trusts in natural law. He identifies cultural values with natural law as it is represented by the working of the gods. He trusts god's law:

I, too, doing justly and reverencing the gods,
Shall not want wit to see what things be right....
For whom they love and whom reject, being gods,
There is no man but seeth and in good time submits
himself

Time and the fruitful hour are more than we,
And these lay hold upon us; but thou, God
Zeus the sole steersman of the helm of things,
Father
Help

The Divine Imperative from Zeus to give man meaningful purpose for existence is "not only to live but lighten and lift up higher..../ Things gained are gone but great things done endure." Meleager emphasizes the importance of god and love in the life of man. Of his uncles as warrior-heroes, he says, "Yea, all things they have save the gods and love." Later, however, Meleager realizes that man cannot propitiate the gods either by word or deed: "The gods wax angry and weary of praise." At first, Meleager accepts the principle of the spiritual force of his mother as guidance and wisdom for youth: "O mother, I am not fain to strive in speech/ Nor set my mouth against thee, who are wise/ Even as they say and full of sacred words." (Vol. 7, p. 287) Later, however, he sees Althaea as the destructive principle in his life: "Thou, too, the bitter mother and mother-plague/ Of this my

weary body -- thou, too, queen,/ The source and end, the sower and the scythe." I would thou hadst let me live." (Vol. 7, pp. 348,349) In the end, Meleager seems reluctant to admit that his death has been caused by the "fatal seedland" of the mother principle, the home, society, culture. He says of Althaea:

....me too thou has loved, and I
Thee; but this death was mixed with all my life,
Mine end with my beginning: and this law,
This only slays me, and not my mother at all.
(Vol. 7, p. 349)

Yet, here, the maternal principle as the life-force, the law of life, is what produces death. Thus, Fate, God, and Culture symbolized in the maternal principle are responsible for the chaos in life and the ultimate destruction of man.

As for the other female principle as a spiritual force in the evolving life of Meleager as man, he resists the idea that his love for Atalanta separates him from family, society, and the gods. He identifies Atalanta with the gods. He compares her to Aphrodite as the principle of harmonious growth through love. In this context, Atalanta would be the principle of love which saves. He says that she is "a light lit at the hands of the gods." He wants to see his first reaching out to love as being compatible with the whole structure of social-cultural relationships. Love, at first, is not an act of defiance on his part. Here, he is the soul seeking expansion through the relationship with love. Thus, he

becomes a worshipper at the altar of the goddess of love.

He says of Atalanta:

Most fair and fearful, feminine, a god,
Faultless; whom I that love not being unlike,
Fear and give honour, and choose from all the gods.
(Vol. 7, p. 290)

Yet the imaginative effort symbolized by this love sets the self in opposition to society and has a divisive effect upon both. The social division symbolized by Meleager's slaying of his mother's brothers leads to the total sundering of cultural order -- aptly symbolized by the murder of the son by his mother.⁶ "By their own kindred are they fallen, in peace,/ After much peril, friendless among friends." (Vol. 7, p. 325) Meleager pathetically pleads for Atalanta's participation in a symbolic ritual for the purification and consequent redemption of his soul from the time-aura of meeting his death "through female fingers." He entreats Atalanta: "But thou, dear, touch me with thou rose-like hands..../ Me who have loved thee...." (Vol. 7, pp. 350-351) However, Atalanta cannot participate in this symbolic act of salvation through love. It is opposed to the law of her life as a devotee to Artemis. She is not natural love as woman. She is chastity. She is virginity. Also, She is identified with the boar in a singular manner. She participates in the slaying of the boar. She is too self-contained. The love-principle that she represents is, though "natural" in a sense, illusory,

sterile, and destructive. Thus, the two spiritual forces which Meleager earlier extolled as vital principles in the harmonious growth of the soul, love and god, do not provide this kind of development for him. They do not save man from destruction. For the gods "have wrought life, and desire of life,/ Heart's love and heart's division." (Vol. 7, p. 279) Hence, Meleager yearns to be united in death with the sea, the female principle from which he came. He yearns for the "golden silence" of which Atalanta spoke. Death is the inevitably longed-for solace for the soul which is enthralled to erotic love.

Thus, in Atalanta the family is rendered ineffective as a symbol of authority for an order of ideas for the evolving soul of man. By extension, society becomes a force for tyrannizing and ultimately destroying its constituency. The impasse is symbolized by the idea of inscrutably inimical deities as Peckham affirms:

Man, as the Chorus chants its final utterance, is helpless before his gods, the powers that determine the character of his experience; he can neither placate them nor destroy them.⁷

Among the four images of this study, in Atalanta, the sun and the plant are the principal ones. The sun is associated with both harmony and energy, the plant with organic growth, here mysteriously limited. Apollo, the god of the sun, is the god of life as harmonious growth: "O fair-faced sun, Killing the stars and dewes and dreams and desolation of the night!/. . . . And thine eyes fill the

world/ And thy lips kindle with swift beams; let earth/
 Laugh..../" Meleager as man is endowed with the dual
 qualities of the sun. He has some of the insight of its
 light, the warmth of its energy for growth, and its destruc-
 tive fire. Thus his life-principle is also his death
 principle. This ambivalent nature of man reenforces a
 pervasive attitude in Swinburne that all of Life is ambiva-
 lent in its essence. As the life principle, "Meleager
 [is] like a sun in spring that strikes/ Branch into leaf
 and bloom into the world,/ A glory among men meaner." The
 moon and the stars function as lesser luminaries of insight
 by contrast to the sun. Also, Meleager as man is the
 firebrand controlled by Althaea: "Meleager, a fire
 enkindled of mine hands/ And of mine hands extinguished;
 this is he." (Vol. 7, p. 335) After the encounter with
 fatal love, Meleager is the fire of self-destruction:
 "The flesh of my body is molten, the limbs of it molten as
 lead..../ My heart is within me/ As an ash in the fire."
 He represents his own chaotic disintegration thus: "And
 all this body a broken barren tree/ That was so strong, and
 all this flower of life/ Disbranched and descrated miserab-
 ly..../ And all myne ashen life burns down." The organic
 process of life-unfoldment generally is suggested in the
 seasonal cycle thus: "The faint fresh flame of the young
 year flushes/ From leaf to flower and flower to fruit." Of
 singular singificance in Atalanta is the emergence of the

image of the red rose of erotic love, which anticipates the dominance of the red rose as symbol in Poems and Ballads, first series. In the beautiful choral hymn to love which begins "We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair," love is an "evil blossom born of sea foam and the frothing of blood." This is the bitter rootless love which is symbolized by the "perilous goddess," Venus. Here, Venus is identified with Atalanta. The general ambivalent nature of man is symbolized as "black flowers and white, that perish.... / A little fruit a little while is ours." Earth is associated with the plant as first cause, Mother, the controlling principle in the development of man. Paradoxically, this seems to be the principle of self-destruction also: "Thou, old earth, / That hast made man and unmade; thou whose mouth / Looks red from the eaten fruits of thine own womb." Meleager recognizes this principle in referring to Althaea as the "fatal seedland." The wind appears principally in its relationship to the sea to symbolize change, divisiveness, and death: "Love a thwart sea-wind full of rain and foam;" "Thy speech turns toward Arcadia like a blown wind;" "Death blew charred ash into thy breast;" "Wind blows till night;" "Wind baffles the foam and beats straight back the ripples;" "Old winds cease not blowing;" "Winds that divide the streams of the sea," and "Winds that wax ravenous and roam as wolves."

The sea is a minor motif in *Atalanta*. It appears either as a symbol of an alien experience or a divisive or soul-sundering force in human life. Althaea sees the sea as alien experience: "cold gulf," "men strive with the sea," "violent seas," "spears against us like the sea" are typical phrases. *Atalanta* recognizes the sea as difficulty; "straits of the running sea." Meleager's references to the sea associate it with chaotic experience and with venturing into alien territory, "sundering foam," "Medea deadlier than the sea," "intolerable wave," and as death wish in "That the sea-waves might be my raiment." Generally, in *Atalanta*, the sea is in the background. References to it are scattered and are associated with disharmony and strife (battle): "wandering wave," "labouring sea," "clashing of streams in the sea," "clamour of currents and foam," "grievous sea," "constrains us in the shallows of the sea," and "cleaving of the sea." The sea here is wild and strange. It is a symbol of disorder and mutability. It is also connected with the myth of Venus coming out of the sea. There is just a hint here of a movement toward a realization that there is something more fundamental, a deeper ground of being, than the earth-mother. This becomes the sea in later works.

Harold Nicolson provides the following succinct comment regarding the organic art in *Atalanta*:

Atalanta represents an ordered adjustment, a symphonic blending of the impulses of light, of rhythm, and of music....The experiences (sun, air, light, Greece, adolescence, virginity, courage, revolt, submission), the images which these provoke, are fused by the poet's imagination and discrimination into a single ordered whole; the emotions of the reader being stirred and loosened culminate in an acute tension between the impulses of pity and terror....For Atalanta is an event of the mind.⁸

Thus, in Atalanta, heroic love of man for woman leads to conflict, confusion, frustration and death. The implications of the rather cryptic love-symbolism of Atalanta are extensively explored in Poems and Ballads, first series.⁹ Because of the aura of objectionable meaning which envelops the word "eroticism," it is essential to put the term as a philosophical-literary concept in a context that will provide meaningful perspective. Since the basic assumption of this study is that the basic philosophies of all major world cultures are essentially religious in their nature, the relationship of eroticism to religion seems to be a logical framework for understanding the term as a literary motif in Swinburne. Denis de Rougemont traces the concept of love from Plato's Phaedrus and Symposium. The latter dialogue posits the theory that "Erotic passion at its highest is a delight in beauty of every kind, so that the lover who has ascended high enough will descry the supreme, eternal, selfsame, and perfect beauty, the reality and substance of that in which everything else called beauty is a participant."

De Rougemont defines eroticism thus:

Eros is complete Desire, luminous Aspiration, the primitive religious soaring carried to its loftiest pitch, to the extreme exigency of Unity. But absolute unity must be the negation of the present human being in his suffering multiplicity. The supreme soaring of desire ends in nondesire. The erotic process introduces into life an element foreign to the diastole and systole of sexual attraction -- a desire that never relapses, that nothing can satisfy, that even rejects and flees the temptation to obtain its fulfillment in the world, because its demand is to embrace no less than All. It is infinite transcendence, man's rise into his god. And this rise is without return.¹⁰

Historical perspective for the doctrine of love is educible through the following sources: Iranianism, Orphism, Platonism, neo-Platonism through Plotinus, and Celtism. In the central doctrine of the survival of the soul the Celts are akin to the Greeks. Celtic gods formed two opposites, Light and Dark. On this point, the Iranian, Gnostic, and Hindu myths converge upon the basic religion of Europe. In the eyes of the Celtic druids, Woman was a divine and prophetic being. Eros is embodied in Woman and symbolizes both the other world and the nostalgia which makes man despise earthly joys. But the symbol is ambiguous since it seems to mingle sexual attraction with eternal desire. The yearning for Light was symbolized by the nocturnal attraction of sex. In the third century, Manichaeism synthesized the myths of Night and Day found in the earlier Persian, Gnostic, and Orphic sects. The fundamental dogma of Manichaeism is that the soul is divine

or angelic and is imprisoned in created forms -- in terrestrial matter, which is Night. After a lover has been possessed by a yearning for Light, Venus wants him to remain within dark matter. Hence there follows the struggle between sexual love and Love. It is a struggle which displays the anguish felt by fallen angels while they are confined in bodies all too human. A second attitude regarding Manichaeism makes it important for our purposes. The structure of its faith was essentially lyrical. It could not be explained through the rational, impersonal, or objective processes. It had to be felt, to be experienced. This experience was one of dread and enthusiasm, of invasion by the divine, which is essentially poetic. Eros, as the object of man's supreme desire, intensifies all of man's desires only to offer them up as a sacrifice. The fulfillment of Love is the denial of a particular terrestrial love, and its bliss of any particular terrestrial bliss. From the standpoint of life, then, this Love is absolute woe.

Through the god Eros desires are intensified and sublimated by being embraced in a single desire whereby they are abolished. The final goal of the process is death of the body. Salvation for man comes only through the cessation of life, by being "lost in the bosom of the divine." Christianity inverts this process through the incarnation of Christ in Jesus. Here, Death is a re-creation

of life repossessed by the spirit of God. The symbol of Love is no longer infinite passion of the soul in quest of light, but the marriage of the Church and Christ. Thus human love is hallowed by means of marriage. But in the West, in the twelfth century, marriage became an object of contempt and passion was glorified precisely because it is preposterous, causes its victims to suffer, or wreak havoc in both the world and the self. Thus the cultivation of passionate love began in Europe as a reaction to Christianity. This is Courtly Love. Here Amor becomes the supreme Eros. This is the soul's transport upward to eventual union with light, something far beyond any love attainable in this life.

According to Denis de Rougemont, eroticism appeared on the periphery of the medieval unconscious in myth and symbol which animated literature since the Romania of the troubadours. However, eroticism reaches the level of Western consciousness only at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the discovery of the Romantics of the lyricism of the troubadours and several dimensions of religious truth. Kierkegaard, Baudelaire, and Wagner were the first to confront this revolution with their whole being. By philosophical analysis, poetry and music, Either/Or, Les Fleurs du Mal, and Tristan reveal a renewed cognizance of relations between human love, the life of the soul and the spiritual quest. The post-Romantics sought

to solve the problem which their predecessors the classicists eliminated, how to integrate human love with a religious conception of existence. All conceptions of love are related to a spiritual attitude. Thus, sexuality, finally recognized as something other than a base instinct or a simple physiological function, finds itself justified by the mind, required by the soul, dialectically related to the soul's spiritual goals. Kierkegaard shows how Christianity, by bringing into the world the 'positive principle of the Spirit,' which excludes the sensual, has thereby established the sensual as a 'spiritual category.' Christianity, then, has raised the sexual problem which produced eroticism.

In terms of the place of love in Victorian life, Houghton¹¹ suggests that the Industrial Revolution influenced the moral code of the times. The rise of cities created an impersonal society in which wealth became a requirement as well as a sanction for marriage. Prostitution increased, and effected a protective movement in morals and censorship, a code of purity and prudery and an effort to idealize love and woman. This idealization exalted the feminine nature in an effort to find a "divinity" in love. Only within this kind of context can be understood the emergence of the Tennysonian image of the "high born lady" and the Swinburnean "femme fatale."

In the Victorian Era, the "femme fatale" was the image which symbolized the ambivalent nature of erotic love, its attractiveness, its pleasure, and its destructiveness. Praz¹² elucidates the symbol of eroticism as an integral part of the art of the exoticist who transports himself in imaginative endeavor outside the actualities of time and space and thinks that he sees in whatever is past and remote from him the ideal atmosphere for the contentment of the senses. The exoticist confirms the world of the senses. The magical metaphysical meaning which Keats found in the song of the nightingale was applied by the aesthetes, from Gautier downward, to female beauty. Keats suggests this in La Belle Dame Sans Merci. The "fatal woman" of the later nineteenth century replaces the "fatal man," the "Byronic hero" of the former part of the century. At first, the male tended toward sadism, later toward masochism. Both suggest the consuming energy of erotic love. The fatal woman is successively incarnate in all lands and ages as an archetype which unites all forms of seduction, all vices, and all delights. According to Praz, further, Gautier is the true and genuine founder of exotic aestheticism. His *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835-36) stands as the figure of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. Cleopatra influenced Gautier; she was one of the first Romantic conceptions of the fatal woman with a taste for algolagnia and sexual cannibalism. The ancient myths, such as that

of the Sphinx, Venus and Adonis, Diana and Endymion, were called in to illustrate the erotic relationship, which was to be insistently restated in the second half of the nineteenth century. Moreover, Praz insists that this motif is not solely a literary convention, but reflects to some extent aspects of contemporary life. He adds that the parable of the sexes during the nineteenth century displays an obsession for the androgyne type toward the end of the century. This serves to indicate the cultural confusion of function and ideal.

Swinburne works within the framework of the traditional perspective summarized above. For him, eroticism is a symbol of total desire or elemental love in the life of the evolving soul of man questing for harmonious expansion of the self. Woman is the objectification of that desire. She is the "mystical rose of the mire" of Dolores. Praz identifies the type of fatal woman in Swinburne as "Venus who was the world's delight, now fallen in Christian times to the level of a sinister vampire, she whom the poet invoked again later in the ode on the death of Baudelaire, Ave Atque Vale."¹³ This image establishes "Venus of the Hollow Hill" as the symbol of erotic love in Swinburne's poetry. That Swinburne was aware of the total philosophical-religious aura which surrounded the evolution of the symbol of Venus from saving to damning love is demonstrated in his poem entitled Eros:

Eros, a fire of heart untamed,
 A light of spirit in sense that glows,
 Flames heavenward still ere earth defamed
 Eros.

 Above those heavens which passion claimed
 Shines, veiled by change that ebbs and flows,
 The soul in all things born or framed,
 Eros.

Further, Swinburne's use of eroticism to symbolize chaotic life-experience supports two basic assumptions of this study: first, that all major world cultures are essentially religious in their orientation, second, that man's identity is a product of the culture from which it derives. As suggested in Atalanta, Swinburne believed that his own milieu did not produce an inspiring order of ideas for the artist's manipulation. Instead, it produced frustrating experiences which are characteristic of the kind of transitional period which the era was. These experiences sundered the soul which yearned for freedom of harmonious expansion. The confused effort to turn from society to the self by means of exclusive love results in degrees of fragmentation of the soul. The inevitable end is a total destruction which demands a new creation. This destruction is the theme of Poems and Ballads, first series. It suggests the failure of eroticism as a way of life.

Peckham¹⁴ elucidates the problem of Swinburne's use of eroticism much more perceptively than any other modern critic of Swinburne the poet. Peckham credits Swinburne, along with some other nineteenth century English writers,

Carlyle, Browning, and even Tennyson, with some awareness of the problems explored by modern existentialism. He notes that the peculiar character of Swinburne's poetry is the contrast between the beauty of the aesthetic surface and the material from the world of experience which is the subject matter; and that beauty of surface has brought very positive but varying reactions from various readers: one finds it irresistible in itself; another finds it monotonous; a third sees what is there but objects that it is non-functional -- inexpressive of the emotions presented by the structure of the poem's meanings.

The third kind of reader is the most perceptive, but he "misses the point":

To Swinburne, as a stylist, the emotion of situations is inseparable both from society and personality, while the self (the individual's deepest sense of identity) is not the personality but antithetical to it. The capacity of the self to create a world of order, meaning and value, that is, beauty, is symbolized by style, the consistency of aesthetic surface. Everything that the self experiences, however, is meaningless, chaotic, and without value. What the poem refers to outside of itself¹⁵ is highly disturbing and intensely emotional.

I agree that the ideological-artistic fusion of opposites in Swinburne can be interpreted as symbolizing the basic fabric of the culture of the times. It points up the chaotic experiences at the heart of culture. The only kind of beauty or order is that which is created by the artist. Hence, the appropriateness of the contrast gives a kind of awful harmony or symmetry to the poet's

vision. It is magnificently executed in Swinburne's best poems. Also, it is true that many of the experiences which comprise the substance of Swinburne's poetry are disturbing emotionally and are chaotic in their impact upon the human spirit. However, I do not agree that these experiences are meaningless or without value. They are meaningful in that they provide the arena for the struggle of the human spirit to realize its fullest potential. They are valuable in that they symbolize the hell, the anguish, the fire through which the human soul must go in order to be purified, to be strengthened, to be converted, to be saved, to enjoy "paradise." They serve as a mandatory catharsis in the transition from innocence to experience. They are a necessary "evil" to allow a "greater good" to evolve in the transformation of the soul of man, a refinement of spirit which could never be wrought without the active confrontation of the soul with these chaotic experiences. The "fit" will survive. The "unfit" will perish in the fire. Humphrey Hare comments thus on the paradox of joy and suffering in Swinburne:

The paradox of joy and suffering is not limited to Swinburne's theory of love....Ruin and destruction are the great principles upon which the universe is founded: ¹⁶to create is to destroy, to live is to suffer.

Thus Swinburne has a deep sense of the contradictory nature of life or reality, as conceived of in ordinary terms, and of its consequent emotional painfulness. And he finds both

refuge and a source of strength in the power to create purely formal harmony. Passion is transmuted into beauty, and if the beauty seems to be divorced from emotion it is because the only feeling it does express is the joy of not being destroyed by reality, the happy sense that there is a creative force of some kind that can resist both the chaos and the hardness of given reality. This force is what Peckham calls the self. It must be distinguished from the usual concept of selfhood, personality, because personality is inseparable from nature and society; it is an aspect of them, and therefore an aspect of hell -- because both can be shown to be random, accidental. This, he says, is what is symbolized by the formal structure of Swinburne's poetry.

Although Peckham does not mention the fact, Swinburne, in his Thalassius, his spiritual autobiography, after describing at length his unhappy encounter with deadly love, speaks of his recovery in such terms: he is charmed, he says, from his own soul's separate sense "With infinite and invasive influence/ That made strength sweet in him and sweetness strong/ Being now no more a singer but a song." And again, "Because thou hast set thine heart to sing, and sold/ Life and life's love for Song, god's living gold."

What Peckham emphasizes as being significant in Swinburne is his modern sense of the negative side of self-

realization, the necessity not only of breaking old orientations but of refusing to equate reality with any orientation, the recognition that the drive toward orientation is always opposed by the drive toward new perception, which brings a sense of chaos -- from which there is no refuge except in the sense of the power of orientation. According to Peckham,

Swinburne had a greater power than Baudelaire to admit the existence within the natural world, within society and within the personality of horrors which most people were unable to face at all. They were unable to face the fact, for example, that eroticism has sadistic and masochistic elements -- that it is an excuse for violation and self-violation. They preferred to believe, like Morley, that passion, being natural, could be 'vindicated,' but only within the framework of "current notions of decency and dignity and social duty" -- otherwise it was "unnatural."

This is about as far as Peckham goes into the symbolism of the poems except for Atalanta; and except for the support it receives from Thalassius, his inference about the symbolic value of the style remains conjectural. One needs to look a little further into the meanings of the poems to see if they seem to support Peckham's analysis of Swinburne's own orientation. One finds, of course, that the meanings are presented by implication, by the mythic mode, and the use of dramatic monologue, which in some cases complicates matters somewhat, but not greatly, since ideas rather than personalities are dominant.

In Poems and Ballads, first series, the main theme is the perversity, the cruelty, the frustration, and futility of erotic love. It is apparent also that love is to be associated with a general attitude toward life, for it is represented as taking the form of worship of, or, at least submission to divine or demonic control, as is seen in such poems as Laus Veneris, Hymn to Proserpine, Faustine, Dolores, and the later Ave Atque Vale. Eroticism is represented as determining general response to life, as in Itylus, The Triumph of Time, Hesperia, and Sapphics.

Love is powerfully attractive but proves to be a hellish thing. At the beginning of the soul's encounter with it, it is aptly symbolized by the lovely figure of Venus, the rose of passion and foam, the epitome of the beauty of the natural existing order of things. Then it became the fire of passion, the sinister aspect of what the sun represents. This transformation follows the path outlined in the introductory section of this chapter. The general symbol that most completely incorporates the pre-occupations and attitudes informing the poems is, as has been noted, the "obscure Venus of the Hollow hill" [from Ave Atque Vale]:

That thing Transformed which was the Cytherean
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine
Long since, and free no more called Erycine [goddess
of heavenly love]
A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.

To the spirit of Baudelaire, he says:

Thee also with fair flesh and singing spell
Did she, a sad and second prey [The first was Tann-
hauser]

Compel into the footless places once more trod
And shadows hot from hell.

And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom
No choral salutation lure to light....
There is no help for these things; none to mend
And none to mar: not all our songs, O friend
Will make death clear or make life durable.

Venus, then, who rose from the sea "Clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment, and fair as the foam, and fleeter than kindled fire, and a goddess and mother of Rome" degenerates, like a fallen angel, into the Venus of the hollow hill, into Dolores, our Lady of Pain, into Faustine. The principle of harmonious growth has gone out of things. The spirit can no longer define itself through erotic love. It becomes destructive both as complete submission or domination. Both impulses are signs that the possibility of harmonious relationship is no longer in existence. In the most pessimistic version of the transformation, the goddess ceases to be a saving deity; yet does not become a real devil, an inhuman agency. She is a personal deity which separates the soul from all else. She simply becomes the essence of the human spirit, tormented by its own desire. With all her perversity, she becomes the principle of life, opposable only by death. In the symbolism of Christianity Swinburne can see only a dedication of life to death, a pitiful contradiction, a foreshadowing of the end of all religions.

There is no meaningful concept of rebirth. With the concept of the fallen angel, then, is associated the Gotterdammerung myth, the Twilight of the Gods. The very idea of deity paradoxically merges with the idea of death, non-being, the cessation of desire, of consciousness itself. The last goddess is Proserpina, who is more than a god: "For there is no god found stronger than death; and death is a sleep."

Love, then, a form of the primal life-urge, as Swinburne sees it, is first a movement toward beauty and joy and freedom. But it reduces to an insatiable self-defeating desire to possess or to be possessed. Perhaps one can say, with Peckham, that the complication is that the spirit cannot be content with personality; it is always trying to break free by submission to or by the violation of others. Thus, Peckham adds, eroticism by its very nature produces a frustration which can be gratified only with destruction or self-destruction, torture and murder, or self-laceration and suicide. These are horrors of the eroticized personality. Eroticism is revealed as something inseparable from emotional and physical torture. It is destructive illusion. It is, in Swinburne, a symbol of the necessary frustration of the spirit which succumbs to the intensity of uncontrolled Desire. Thus the kind of desire for freedom symbolized by eroticism is simply sterile and destructive; life preys upon itself. Society,

in Swinburne's view, either is an instrument of this perversity of spirit, producing tyrants whose sole mad aim is to subjugate or destroy, or it merely provides a means of disguising or minimizing desire, a way of rendering life tepid and tasteless: "We shift and bedeck and bedrape us," he says in Dolores. "Thou are noble and nude and antique"; and again,

Time turns the old days to derision
Our love into corpses and wives;
And marriage and death and division
Make barren our lives.

But willful abandonment is only a conscious, as prudery is an unconscious, acknowledgment of the cruelty of love. "Give me place in thy train," he says to Dolores:

For the crown of our life is as it closes
In darkness, the fruit there of dust:
No thorns go as deep as the rose's
And love is more cruel than death.

So in The Triumph of Time, Swinburne speaks of the "lives that lie;/ The souls and lips that are bought and sold/ The smiles of silver and kisses of gold,/ The lapdog lovers that whine as they chew/ The little lovers that curse and cry." These are the civilized ways of buying the life or will of others with material substitutes for self-possession -- and of selling life for such substitutes. In this poem Swinburne still is associating love with fulfillment, with beauty and joy, with expression: "I shall never be friends again with roses;/ I shall loathe the sweet tunes..." Yet he is inclined to think of pure love in terms of

complete self-abandonment, and in any case he feels that he was fated not to know but only to dream of the glory of love. It is not at all clear, moreover, who has known it or ever will -- except perhaps Geoffrey Rudel, the queen-worshiper.

In twenty-two poems (based upon Cassidy's listing)¹⁷ in this volume, progressive stages of degenerative disintegration are perceivable in the soul which is a devotee to eroticism. It involves a mixture of self-alienation and self-involvement in a search for unity, manifested in the ambivalent submission to and violation of others. The stages from involvement through fragmentation to the chaos of the spiritual wasteland are perceivable in Laus Veneris, Dolores, Hermaphroditus, Fragoletta, and the Leper, sequentially. Dolores epitomizes the cruelty of love which is "more cruel than lust." The yearning for a wholesomely unifying love for possible escape from Dolores is discernible in Hesperia. It is a kind of compassionate love. However, the only absolute escape comes in time through death, actual death, as in the Garden of Proserpine, or symbolic death as in the Triumph of Time.

Thus Swinburne can find no refuge in religion, in society, in ideal love -- or, we may add, in nature -- in nothing, indeed, but death. In the Garden of Proserpine he writes:

From too much love of living
 From hope and fear set free
 We thank with brief thanksgiving
 Whatever gods may be
 That no life lives forever:
 That dead men rise up never
 That even the weariest river
 Winds somewhere safe to sea.

In terms of the four images of this study and of the pervasive secondary symbols of the warrior and the battle of life, Laus Veneris¹⁸ is typical in its treatment of the movement from eroticism to nihilism. According to Gosse, in 1862, a "few copies of Laus Veneris were issued as a 'test' publication to ascertain public taste and forbearance."¹⁹ It was included in the 1866 edition of Poems and Ballads, first series. The myth of Venus and Adonis is sanctioned by consensus of criticism as being the greatest single influence upon the erotic symbol in Laus Veneris. One is reminded of the Platonic notion of love, the thread of which is perceivable in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, as the desire to unite with beauty in order to create beauty. For Swinburne, love had lost this power of creative expression. Chew says of Laus Veneris:

In the poem the fallen Venus is the theme. The general theme of the fallen Olympians, "grown diabolic among ages that would not accept them as divine," was in the air. Heine had written his "Gods in Exile," Merimee his "Venus d'Ille," and a little later the subject was to exercise a morbid attraction upon the imagination of Walter Pater.²⁰

Bush makes the following statement regarding the fatal woman in Laus Veneris:

Venus is the supreme type of the fatal woman, and in Laus Veneris Swinburne handles the Tannhauser legend 'with all the resources of a grim and satanic Pre-Raphaelite-medievalism.' [from Praz] An outlawed deity in the Christian world, Venus has become the symbol of pagan beauty, passion and cruelty: "Lo, she was thus when her clear limbs enticed/ All lips that now grow sad with kissing Christ."²¹

The theme is the quest of the warrior-hero for unity of spirit through love. At this point, love represents the sense of dynamic harmony within the spirit seeking expression by what seems to be the natural order of things. The exploration focuses upon the ambivalent characteristics of love; salvation or damnation -- Swinburne seems not quite sure which it is. The spirit finds in love only the tantalizing torment of partial expression of its needs. The principle of harmonious growth beckons and eludes; its failure is symbolized by the dry staff, a version of one of Swinburne's major images. In Laus Veneris, Swinburne uses a first person persona of a medieval knight who is torn between the love of Christ and that of Venus. This tension reflects the perspective summarized at the beginning of this chapter. Also, the knight may be seen as a poet-figure in search of a unifying force of beauty and order for his art. As a medieval knight he is involved in battles defending a traditional religion that for him seems to have lost its vitality, the saving power of love through the Christ. The knight withdraws from the society of his fellow-warriors to seek answers commensurate

with his own soul's yearning. A companion theme is death; the corresponding symbolism centers in the sea but extends to other aspects of nature. The theme of spiritual conflict is reflected in actual combat, in the tension between the ideologies of the Christ and Venus, and in the torn soul of the warrior-poet. The sundering battle of life-experience is felt in the juxtaposing of traditional values to those symbolized by Venus as the knight describes the Fatal Venus in unforgettable concrete religious imagery. Pervasive in this description is the use of blood, which suggests the life-death-life myth of the Christ and the life-death myth of Venus:

....for her neck
 Kissed over close, wears yet a purple speck
 Wherein the pained blood falters and goes out;
 Soft, and stung softly -- fairer for a fleck....
 Lo, she was thus when her fair limbs enticed
 All lips that now grow sad with kissing Christ,
 Stained with blood fallen from the feet of God,
 The feet and hands whereat our souls were priced.

It seems ideologically and artistically appropriate that Venus, having come from the sea, should be identified with the sea as bringing death to the lover. Stanza ten presents a vivid picture of the sea as death as the lover contrasts the love of Christ with that of Venus. Neither has the power to save; both are sterile as ways of life:

Love wan as foam blown up the salt burnt sands....
 Hot as the brackish waifs of yellow spume
 That shift and steam in loose clots of arid fume
 From the sea's panting mouth of dry desire
 There stands he like one labouring at a loom.

The crucified Christ is presented "hanging asleep" as a weaver at a loom of life from which his "web reels off, curls and goes out like steam." The symbol of the sea as death is extended to other forces in nature to emphasize destruction awaiting one who embraces the Venus of the hollow hill as a means of harmonious self-expansion. Hence Nature herself becomes a place where "tides of grass break into foam of flowers,/ Or where the wind's feet shine along the sea." The whole universe seems to be disordered, to be destructive, death-producing.

The general theme in Swinburne of the "little soul of man" is given specific treatment here as the lover strives for full self-realization through his "space of years." His desire, passion, (suffering) evolves into the inevitable death-wise as he longs for oblivion: "As bones of men under the deep sharp sea." The idea of the sharpness of the sea, its capacity to choke, to stifle, and the pervasiveness of the destructiveness in other aspects of nature are continued throughout the poem in phrases such as "chokes as a sandy sea," "caught-up choked dry laughter," "sharp wind shaking the grass and vine," "sound of sharp spears," "faint with fumes of the barren bowers," and "like a jagged shell's lips." All of these images graphically emphasize the sterility of a life given to eroticism. These images recur as rhythmically as the rippling waves of the literal sea, up to the point at which

the knight realizes the empty futility of his consuming passion for Venus of the hollow hill. Then he joins other pilgrims seeking salvation through a pardon from the Pope. Now the knight realizes that he is "chosen of God" and desires to reestablish the love-bond with the Christ. But, alas, the Pope denies this pardon in the ironic metaphor of the dead staff. The knight has committed the unpardonable sin. He is cast forever out of the presence of God. This is the state of the soul of man which is symbolized by the Faustian hell. This dilemma highlights the anguish of a frustrated "Soul torn between two worlds." He cannot stay in a state of suspension. Consequently, he renews his commitment to Venus of the hollow hill with excessive fervor. Again, one sees the vivid identification of Venus with the sea as an all-consuming fire. The narrator (poet) tries in vain to invest the myth with its pre-Christian meaning as providing natural love through which one could grow harmoniously by making the image of Venus symbolize his personal deity. Ultimately, he has to recognize the erotic experience as the hell-fire of the life of the soul of man:

Fair still, but fair to no man saving me,
 As when she came out of the naked sea
 Making the foam whereon she trod,
 As the inner flower of fire she was.

- - - - -

I see the marvelous mouth whereby there fell
 Cities and people whom the gods loved well,
 Yet for her sake on them the fire got hold,
 And for their sakes on her the fire of hell.

The agony and ecstasy of eroticism is contrasted to the sterility of love of the Christ, and the knight concludes by positing a searching question regarding whether or not persons ascending to the barren "high heaven," who have not been enthralled to eroticism in life, will know such bliss as he has had.

As a poet-figure, for ten years the narrator has shared the lot of other "beautiful mailed men," but now the constraining conventionality of an aesthetic shared by all is no longer efficacious for him. He must seek, alone, another unifying force demanded by his own urge for harmonious emergence. He reflects:

Let me think yet a little; I know
 These things were sweet, but sweet such years ago,
 Their savour is all turned now into tears;
 Yea, ten years since, where the blue ripples blow,

- - - - -

I felt the sharp wind shaking grass and vine
 Touch my blood and sting me with delight
 Through all this waste and weary body of mine.

- - - - -

I rode alone.
 And heard the chiming bridle smite and smite,
 And gave each rhyme thereof some rhyme again,
 Till my song shifted to that iron one.

In the past, the poet sang of a love which he never experienced, one which he only dreamed of, a love which now he seeks of "Blinded eyelids that expand again.... / Love draws them open with those lips of his.... / I sang these things long since and knew them not." The ordinary praise which the poet received in the past no longer

suffices to inspire him: "The dust of praise that is blown everywhere/ In all men's faces with the common air;/ The bay-leaf that wants chafing to be sweet/ Before they wind it in a singer's hair." The poet-figure identifies himself with the dry staff used by the Pope to symbolize the irreparable damage to the soul by the sin of one, chose of God, who renounces this calling and embraces Venus: "There should not grow sweet leaves on this dead stem,/ This waste wan body and shaken soul of me." The poet-figure submits irrevocably to the fallen Venus, the fatal muse which subjugates, enslaves, burns, and destroys: "And lo my love, mine own soul's heart, more dear/ Than mine own soul, more beautiful than God,/ Who hath my being between the hands of her." The poet cannot escape this love of beauty. He assumes the pose of a worshipper at the altar of a divine, diabolical control which induces a kind of passionately hypnotic intoxication; "Strange spice and flower, strange savour of crushed fruit,/ And perfume that swart kings tread underfoot/ For pleasure when their minds wax amorous/ Charred frankincense and grated sandal-root."

Fire is the dominant symbolic image in the poem. By implication, through connotative overtones, the sunlight is connected with insight, partly through references to the eyes of the narrator. The narrator's insight is obscured by his letting his eyes "have all their will"

of Venus in the Horsel. Fire symbolizes erotic love, which gives pleasure and pain. It is also the altar fire which consumes to chasten and purify. Most emphatically, it symbolizes the fire of the hell within the soul of man in the throes of erotic love as a way of life. The other images of this study are related to the image of the sun by their association with fire. The sea is the fiery foam through which Venus emerged and to which man returns in death. The plant, the red rose of erotic love, Venus, has come from the sea. It manifests itself in connection with the fire of passion which brings ambivalent bliss -- for a "bitter-sweet thing it is." The passion of love is identified with blood and the grape also. Both are ambivalent in their signification of life and death, of joy and sorrow. Also, fire as energy of passion is symbolized by the panther in the fierceness and intensity of its power to destroy. The wind symbolizes the moving fingers of time which play the tunes of the sorrow of erotic love. The wind also carries the "dust that chokes" of the evolving spiritual wasteland. Time brings the hellfire of the spiritual wasteland, which is objectified in the white "cursed hills like outer skirts of hell." This image becomes identified with the Faustian soul of man who is banished forever from the sight of God. Thus, through connotation and suggestive overtones, images of the plant, sea, and wind reenforce the symbolic implications of the

dominant images, the fire and light (here obscured) of the sun. The vivid images of blood, red flower, and wine press serve as effective modes of contrast in the deathlike atmosphere of the evolving spiritual wasteland which pervades the poem. But even the images which symbolize life have the ambivalent nature of suggesting death, thereby suggesting also the paradoxical, ironic nature of life itself.

As has been pointed out by many critics, in Laus Veneris Swinburne uses the same stanzaic pattern as is found in Fitzgerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. There is artistic and ideological significance in the end rhyme. In the use of the quatrain as the stanzaic pattern, the end rhymes of lines one, two, and four are the same. The third is odd. Hence, a kind of disorder-in-order is suggested by the form as well as by the pervasive idea of the divisive impact of erotic love, and by extension of life itself, upon the human spirit. The rhythm seems to demand a rather slow tempo in reading, a shifting back and forth of accent in keeping with the undulating rhythm of the waves of the sea. Thus erotic love cannot provide a means through which the soul of man can grow to harmoniously ordered stature.

In Poems and Ballads, first series, generally, fire manifests itself primarily as the consuming energy of erotic love. As such, it is a pervasive symbolic image in

the volume. In Hermaphroditus, it is the flame of the eyes of love. It is also the consuming intensity of self-love. In The Leper, the flame of love has created a spiritual wasteland in both the lover and the beloved. In Anactoria, it is burning passion which elicits the death-wish on the part of the anguishing soul of man. Fire as the symbol of the intense ambivalence of eroticism receives its most memorable rendering in Laus Veneris and Dolores. In the former, it is the "heat of hell waxed seven times hot"; in the latter, it is the "live torch" of the all-encompassing flame of eroticism. As such, it is a "house of unquenchable fire" which produces sterility and the wasteland. In this volume, the image of the sun in its loftier manifestation appears only nominally. In Anactoria, it functions with the sea and the wind to fashion the poet. In Hesperia, the warm compassionate love which might save grows without the direct rays of the energizing sun.

The wind is associated principally with time and change, as in Dolores, Anactoria, and especially in The Triumph of Time. In the last listed, the wind envelops the human scene with the music which "makes mad." In Anactoria and Hesperia, it is poetic inspiration. In Laus Veneris, it is the activating force for the evolving spiritual wasteland.

The plant, as the red flower of eroticism, is the dominant image in the volume. In The Triumph of Time it

is the "Violent delights" which emerge from the maddening eroticism. Here, also, it is the "ruined bloodlike blossom" which yields "dull fruit." In Hesperia, it is the paler rose of compassionate love, a possible means of salvation from the red rose of eroticism. In the Garden of Proserpine it is the red poppy of longed-for sleep in death. Dolores concretizes the image as "rootless flower of love." This image emerged in Atalanta. In Dolores, it is a "mystical rose of the mire," and a "flower of flame." In Hymn to Proserpine, it is the rose of both Mary and Venus. It is ambivalent in its nature, for while it promises and provides intensely intoxicating beauty and pleasure, this joy is transitory; moreover, it is mixed with and subdued by pain, suffering, and death. In a general discussion of the "Romantic Heritage" in The Symbolic Rose, Miss Seward notes that Swinburne's use of the rose is in the general tradition of Horace, Lorris and de Meun, Dante, Spenser, Baudelaire, Mallarme, and Morris.

In Dolores he related the rose to the sacriligious sadistic theme, setting up his 'mystical rose of the mire' as an anti-Virgin and finding the 'raptures and roses of vice' the more alluring for²² their contrast with the traditional rose of grace.

The consensus of critical opinion indicates that the Dantean "sunlit rose" (the combining of the sun and the rose in the Paradiso to suggest the incomprehensible power and glory of God) has had the most far-reaching impact on the symbolism of subsequent literature than any other

single writer. Miss Seward substantiates this attitude thus:

Dante's traditional symbolic method had given order, detachment, and universality to his private emotions of love and faith. And in contemporary society the need for bridging the gulf between private emotions and a now frequently alien world has been deeply felt....They [modern symbolists] have learned from his method a good deal about ways and means of uniting personal with public values in a single multi-leveled symbol. Accordingly, when seeking to express a comprehensive vision of their complicated age, they have often returned to the medieval poet who was able to encompass all time and eternity in a sunlit rose.²³

Although the sea is not the dominant image in Poems and Ballads, first series, when it does appear its symbolic suggestiveness is ambivalently complex indeed. In Laus Veneris (as has been shown) it is the source of life, love, pain, joy, and death. In Dolores and Hesperia, it is the fluid mutability and rhythmical continuity of the passing of time. In Anactoria, it is a source of poetic inspiration and haven of immortality. In the Hymn to Proserpina, the sea is Fate "without a shore." The Triumph of Time presents the most extended and complex rendering of the sea as symbol in this volume. In this poem, the sea is the dominant image. It is a source of inspiration for meditative reflection upon the meaning of love in the life of man. It is the swift and pervasively sad passing of time. It is an analogue of a life in which man swims in the sight of the unconquerable "great third wave." It is ambivalently the mother who fosters "unfaithful love"

and a potential source of salvation. As mother-image, it is a kind of sublime reservoir which seems to hold the secret of the riddle of human experience, generally, for it is at once "bitter-sweet," "cruel-kind," "life-giving and destroying." Thus the sea is compositely first cause, love, life, mutability, permanence, death, and immortality. This complexity in symbolic suggestion indicates a step forward from Atalanta in the direction of Swinburne's later use of the sea to suggest profound meaning in life, brought to fruition in the period of Thalassius. In Atalanta, the sea is associated with mutability and disharmony. In Thalassius, it is symbolic of harmony and rebirth.

In Poems and Ballads, first series, significantly, the sea functions, along with song, as one of two tentative images of transcendence. In the complex and contradictory sea as "great sweet mother," the poet asks in The Triumph of Time:

Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine
Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

He adds, "thou art strong for death and fruitful for birth." The sea offers sleep; yet it is the symbol of vital freedom:

This woven raiment of nights and days,
Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
Alive and aware of thy ways and thee.

Neither can one forget that Venus in her fairest form, the smiling blue-eyed Aphrodite, emerges from the sea.

It has been suggested that the sea symbolizes, in Thalassius, at least, the unconscious. Even in The Triumph of Time it seems to embody the idea of some kind of unfathomed, unconstrained life-force. It is connected with the idea of death because it cannot be contained in any of the forms which one normally associates with existence, not even the bare concepts of time and space. It is love, yes, but it is love undefined by an object.

Peckham observes that "in nature Swinburne finds but one positive symbol, the sea--and with him the sea changes its traditional nineteenth century symbolic significance. Heretofore, it had symbolized an area of personality in which the self might be found." But to Swinburne, he says, "the sea makes possible a separation from society and personality; it destroys both, and leaves only the ultimate sense of identity." With Swinburne, he thinks, this connected with the body-image, which is brought to consciousness by the thought of swimming, and is for Swinburne "the profoundest symbolization of the sense of identity."

Until Thalassius, song as symbol is used only tentatively for the most part. Peckham equates the concept with style and maintains that style is symbolic of self as the capacity to create order. He concludes his discussion

of the sea symbolism by observing that in Swinburne's imagery the sea performs "precisely the same function that in his poetry is fulfilled by his style; it opposes antithetically the self and the personality, and beyond personality, society and the world of nature, womb, and tomb, where man finds his uneasy and bitter home." The relationship is indeed a close one, but the larger perspective provided by this study shows that it is simply identity of meaning; the song-Apollo-sun equation must also be considered. In any case in Poems and Ballads the transfiguration described in Thalassius appears, if at all, only in something like that implicit symbolism of style that Morse Peckham speaks of. One does see hints of it before, for example, in that passage in The Triumph of Time which describes the effect of song:

. . .where a note grown strong
Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes
As a wave of the sea turned back by song.
There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire
Face to face with its own desire:
A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes.

Here, the meaning is, apparently, that through perfect expression desire becomes pure delight, a delight that rebels -- that is, attains independence, through expression, of the object of desire -- so that desire is freed and reposes. Here, certainly, is the germ of the idea elaborated in Thalassius.

Religious and serpentine imagery appears in a polar relationship which provides a substantial portion of the major tension in Poems and Ballads, first series. All of the ritualistic paraphernalia of orthodox religion pervade the scene, the altar with its fire of sacrifice, the eucharistic chalice, the devotee kneeling in worship. However, the orthodox God is replaced by Dolores, Our Lady of Pain. In the poem Dolores this phrase (Our Lady of Pain) becomes a litanic refrain which emphasizes the nature of Dolores and reenforces the attitude of worship. She has the aspects of a vampire for she thrives on the "blood of their [devotees'] bodies" from which she has "grown red." Thus the goddess of eroticism subdues to destroy. She is a satanic rather than a saving deity. Thus she is identified with the serpent, with the satanic force in human experience. In the Hymn to Proserpina the wave of the sea of time is "serpentine and curled." Imagery from the sea and the flower combines to give signification to the basic serpentine quality of eroticism in Dolores:

The foam of a serpentine tongue,
The froth of the serpents of pleasure,
More salt than the foam of the sea....
Thou shalt touch and make redder his roses
But not of fruit nor of bud.

This is the symbolic redness of the flame of the destructively chaotic passion of eroticism. The ambivalence of serpentine imagery is heightened when one recalls that the serpent is identified with Satan in the Christian myth and

has been worshipped as a god in other myths. Bulfinch identifies the image as Medusa with the hair of "hissing serpents." She had the diabolic power to metamorphose to stone any man who but looked upon her. Dolores is identified with Medusa for her hair is "hissing serpents."

Thus the central symbol in Poems and Ballads, first series, is the fatal muse, the dread lady, symbolic of the involvement of beauty with erotic love, the inability of art to free itself of personality -- and the inability of personality to escape the lure of beauty, which promises freedom from constraint. This fatal goddess of Swinburne's is a version of the femme fatale image of art -- the pathological aspect of that image -- showing a beauty not quite human and not quite godlike or transcendent -- at once too personal and subjective, and too impersonal and objective. Praz isolates Pater's Monna Lisa as the culmination of thousands of years of accreted symbolism with which the feminine ideal was invested. He says:

The family likeness between this portrait [Pater's] and the Fatal Woman of Gautier, Flaubert, and Swinburne strikes one immediately. Monna Lisa, like Swinburne's Faustine, is a vampire; she, too like Dolores, Cleopatra, and the anonymous figure drawn by Michelangelo, has accumulated in herself all the experiences of the world; and there are details of comparison which prove her Swinburnian origin. For instance, the passage 'and all this had been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes' is reminiscent of Laus Veneris, 'the languor in her ears of lyres.' Pater's description popularized the Fatal Woman type with its perspective in time and space and its Gioconda smile to such an extent that, during

the years around 1880, it became the fashion among the allymeuses in Paris to affect the enigmatic smile.²⁴

Contrary to much critical opinion, therefore, Poems and Ballads, first series, is not a study in the idealization of the sado-masochistic qualities in erotic love. It is, rather, a brilliant symbolic rendering of the nihilism and spiritual waste which emerge from such an encounter. However, the encounter itself is a natural result of the fundamental human yearning for assertive self-expansion through love, the most elemental human passion. The soul in its nihilistic rejection of tyrannical social sanctions succumbs to a more devastating tyranny, that of self-indulgence and self-absorption. It is tyranny which leads to self-annihilation. Peckham supports my attitude that these poems are an exposure of eroticism as a way of life.²⁵

The art of Atalanta and Poems and Ballads, first series, is a result of the combined working of several influences. Principal among these are Greek mythology and drama, French poetry and literary theory through Gautier and Baudelaire; Rossettian Pre-Raphaelitism, and tendencies in Swinburne's own personality enhanced by his reading of de Sade. This art is especially characterized by a refusal to accept any restraint on the content of poetry, a rejection of avowed didacticism generally in art,²⁶ and an insistence upon form as the only valid critical standard.

This is the pervasive spirit of aestheticism in Swinburne at this point. The poetic self rejects compromise. It attempts to find in beauty freedom from the repression and painful experience of ordinary existence. Thus Swinburne carried on the exploration of life's disorder and an exploration of the relation between formal artistic order and the general problems of orientation in life and culture. Grierson makes the following statement regarding Poems and Ballads, first series:

Poems and Ballads was for lovers of poetry as great an event as the Origin of Species for biologists and theologians. It was not alone the new and resounding rhythms....What shocked and outraged some critics was just what delighted younger readers, the splendid audacity with which the poet challenged conventions and asserted the right of poetry to express all the desires and joys and sorrows of the human spirit, the perennially recurring reaction of the nature of man against his self-imposed repressions.... 'Thou hast conquered, O Galilian, etc.' and "And the roses grew rosier and blue, etc." -- These were the strains that swept us off our feet, not necessarily from any deep sympathy with illicit passion or anti-Christian sentiment but because they provided so satisfying a catharsis²⁷ for moods that will haunt the heart of youth.

The crucial significance of the individual versus society is dramatized when one reflects, with Peckham, that a pervasive thought in the nineteenth century, and I daresay for all time, was that man's identity is derived from culture. In Atalanta, culture reduced Meleager as mankind to ashes, the symbolic wasteland. In Poems and Ballads, first series, a descent into the self discovers

a fiery chaos, a hell, which lays waste the soul. Thus, again, a spiritual wasteland results. Hence, the poet moves outward from internalized personal exploration to exploration of a new external scene. The failure of love necessitates a movement from solitude to involvement in a new community of mankind in search for freedom from tyranny of soul. The exploration of this phase of the Swinburnean vision of the evolving soul of man is the focus of emphasis in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER IV

REPUBLICANISM: AN ALTERNATIVE WAY--A NEW COSMOLOGY

The preceding chapter explored Swinburne's poetic vision of the soul's quest for integrity, first, through societal sanctions symbolized in the home and in religion and, second, through the love experience, which symbolizes a basic yearning for fulfillment through relationship. The gods are found to be tyrannical and remote, and erotic love is found to be sterile. When these two media fail to provide experiences conducive to harmonious expansion, man turns inward and this descent into the self leads inevitably to a spiritual wasteland. Although Swinburne suggests that eroticism has its place in the totality of life-experience, the soul yearns for a nobler existence than to enjoy transitory pleasures which entice only to destroy. This chapter will explore the soul's identification with a new external community which is devoted to a passionate search for freedom from tyranny, symbolized by Church and State. This is the yearning of the soul which is opposed to the tyranny of materialism and of sanctions derived from a stultifying supernaturalism. This

phase of Swinburne's evolving vision will be explored in the Song of Italy (1867), Songs before Sunrise (1871), Songs of Two Nations (1875), and Poems and Ballads, second series, (1878). Here, the questing soul envisions a new cosmic order within the context of which a free spirit might evolve.

In this phase of the vision, Swinburne's attitude is essentially republican in nature. Basically, it is a republicanism which is rooted in the natural law of the human spirit which yearns for freedom of growth in accord with its own organic principle which is revealed by the light of the mind. Swinburne's republicanism is eclectic in nature. It reflects ideas traceable to Plato, Aristotle, Milton, Shelley, Hegel, Mill, Hugo, Landor, Comte, and Darwin. All of these philosophies reflect an essentially similar attitude toward freedom for the development of the soul of man. Man must be free to explore himself and his world without restrictive tyranny of any authority, past or present. He demands the right to do so because he feels an inner compulsion. Freedom to act requires freedom to think.

Swinburne's basic concept of liberty is in the tradition of John Stuart Mill, whose works he referred to as his Bible.¹ Two aspects of Mill's attitude toward liberty seem to epitomize his influence on Swinburne's concept. The first is the Humboldtian idea of Humanism,

and the second is the concept of the organic nature of man. Mill writes of the first:

The 'end of man, or that which is prescribed by the eternal or immutable dictates of reason, and not suggested by vague and transient desires, is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole,' that, therefore, the object 'towards which every human being must ceaselessly direct his efforts, and on which especially those who design to influence their fellow men must ever keep their eyes, is the individuality of power and development'; and that from the union of these arise 'individual vigour and manifold diversity,' which combine themselves in 'originality.'.... But it is the privilege and proper condition of human being, arrived at the maturity of this faculties, to use and interpret experience in his own way.

Of the organic nature of man, Mill says:

Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing.³

Mill's religion was the Religion of Humanity.

Swinburne's Religion of Humanity is also in the tradition of Auguste Comte as interpreted by Guiseppe Mazzini and his compeers.⁴ Comte was inspired by the spirit-sundering impact of the French Revolution upon the lives of men to create a new synthesis, a new religion, for he felt that traditional religion was dead and that the human spirit was thus in dire need of a new orientation. He claims to have made sociology a "positive" science through his discovery of the law of three necessary stages in the evolution of human opinion and so of society:

Theological, Metaphysical, and Positive. The last listed is the only one which needs to concern us here. According to Comte, in the Positive Stage of society:

The metaphysical entities have followed the gods into twilight. Foreswearing as fruitless all inquiries into first or final causes, men now explain all facts in relation simply to each other, and in relation to more general facts, and social phenomena are studied exactly the same way as those of chemistry or physics.

Comte insisted that Positivistic philosophy would create a new synthesis by transcending the old philosophical antitheses. A harmonious unification of past and present could be accomplished by recognizing the fundamental law of human development as a part of the general necessity of evolution. His Positive Religion was designed to supersede Christianity. It theoretically "comprises all that was wise and true in the 'partial' or 'special' religions, without the associated errors and superstitions." Man is conceived of as being both the product and the "changer" of his environment. The poet's place in the new religion is to add the dimensions of beauty and grandeur to human life by inspiring a deeper sense of our relation to Humanity. Thus Comte's passion for unity and his recognition of the law of human growth are reflected in similar qualities in Swinburne.

Swinburne's attitude toward the organic nature of the emerging soul within context of time and space incorporates also many aspects of the general Darwinian

Theory of Evolution.⁴ The traumatic intellectual impact of the revelations of astronomy, geology, and biology necessitated new schema of relationships between man and the cosmos. The developing awareness of the continuity of history revealed that Christianity was only one manifestation of the human need for a spiritually unifying orientation. In the 1860's, the Non-christian creeds assumed a measure of respectability. For the poets, the result of the evolutionary theory was the supplanting of the idea of permanence by the idea of relativity. The world view enlarged to staggering proportions, and man became aware of his own insignificance in the universal scheme of things. The theory of a special act of creation was replaced by the theory of long natural processes. Life forces were identified with a mechanically functioning fate. Thus a struggle was precipitated between man's mental faculties and irrational external forces. Swinburne creates a new creed in which man is deified as the highest manifestation of nature, as in The Hymn of Man. Here God represents the collective soul of man. Man's mind is free to comprehend the law of the universe in terms of the Heraclitan theory of movement, the "flux" of life. Darwin's theory of physical evolution combined with the mystical religions of the Orient in a concept of a universal soul and a spiritual evolution by means of reincarnation. This new synthesis was especially influential

upon the minds of Victorian poets. It gave rise to the enunciation of theories of progress and became a lamp to the melancholy spirit confronting the divisive forces of change. Man must be his own salvation, his own god. There is no other.

By critical consensus, Hymn of Man and Hertha are the pivotal Swinburnean poems which embody evolutionary ideas.⁵ Here Swinburne's new creed is a pantheistic one in which man is idealized as the highest manifestation of nature. In the former poem, Swinburne denounces the orthodox creed for its selfish tyranny. He posits a concept of god who is the collective sum of mankind. Thus man is the ultimate result of the creative evolutionary process. Hence he is the most perfect symbol of the life-force. Man appears as a helpless victim of time through change. He has wrought shackles for himself in the creation of an external God symbolized in tyrannical dogma of the Church. This symbolizes an oppressive force which prohibits the full harmonious development of the soul. Man's mind must be free to explore and understand the laws of the universe for the anthropomorphic God is dead: "Glory to man in the highest: For man is the master of things."

In the latter poem, the colossal force of growth is external. Man is exhorted to continue to grow by maintaining his independence for Hertha says, "The lives of my children made perfect with freedom of soul were my

fruits." Thus man is at one with the universal spirit from which he emerged. Science had freed man's mind to explore unlimited space. This reenforced the Swinburnean theory of the magnitude of the possibilities for the developing soul of man.

Georges Lafourcade makes the following comment with regard to Swinburne's spiritual affinity with science:

Swinburne's reaction to Professor Tyndall's address to the British Association in Belfast shows that his mind, though untrained to science and probably unfit for such a training, was perhaps more closely akin to the scientific spirit of the age than either Browning's or Tennyson's.

Songs before Sunrise, 1871, is Swinburne's passionate attestation to the basic yearning of the human soul. This yearning is for freedom of self-expansion to the fullest harmoniously evolved stature possible. Swinburne said of the volume:

I have written a book of verse which from beginning to end is devoted to the expression and inculcation of principle and faith, a book which above all others will incur the contemptuous condemnation of those actual or imaginary creatures who affirm that poetry must never be moral or didactic -- that the poet must put off his singing robes when he aspires to become a preacher or prophet. Be that as it may: I have not done this. (Collected Poetical Works, pp. VIII-IX).

The historical fact that the Mazzinian ideal for Italy was never realized in no way diminishes the brilliant poetic articulation of Swinburne of what that ideal symbolized. The symbol is not limited to Italy but it is expanded to the human spirit everywhere yearning to be

free to develop in accordance with the organic principle of its own being. It reveals a vision which the poet expands to universal proportions and evolves a cosmos infused with the vitality of the Life-Force, the essence of Being, which urges, inspires, and demands such development. It is unfortunate for the "lingering Victorian shadow" of the image of Swinburne the poet that his critics have not felt the impact of the essentially symbolic nature of his profound vision.

I do not agree with the prevailing critical attitude that the Songs makes a sharp departure from Swinburne's basic vision in the 1866 volume. The difference is in subject-matter, the kinds of experiences used for expressing the vision. The theme is essentially the same. It is the pervasiveness of the eternal law of suffering in human experience for the soul that dares to thrust forward in a courageous attempt at freedom of self-expansion. In the Songs, the experiences reflect the chastening effect of the battle of life upon the heroic soul which dares to strive for the supreme light of the sun. Life is fraught with currents and crosscurrents of sharply divisive forces.

Early evidences of republicanism in Swinburne's poetry are found in the Ode to Mazzini and the Temple of Janus. These were written when Swinburne was an Oxonian. Songs before Sunrise are hymns of praise and impassioned exhortations to the concept of Liberty. In the Songs, the

goddess of Liberty replaces the goddess of Eroticism. In Song of Italy, the image of Liberty which pervades Songs is a lovely lady who embodies the attributes of love, hope, joy, and truth. Her "lordlier light.... / Made the world's future fair." Devotion to Liberty, too, subjects the soul to divisive anguish and suffering, as in Song of Italy, Tenebrae, The Pilgrims, Messidor, and Mater Dolorosa. This is the meaning of the stigmata of the Passion of the Christ. The travail of the soul devoted to Liberty is a means through which the spirit is transformed to greater nobility of stature. The Prelude, The Halt before Rome, Mentana: First Anniversary, Blessed among Women, Ode on the Insurrection at Candia, Song of the Standard, and the Ride from Milan all show the chastening and purifying effect of this great battle of life. Swinburne concretizes in Church and State the forces which tyrannize man's soul. He traces the roots of ideal liberty to the Greek world. He suggests that devotion to materialism has impaired the State's vision, and devotion to sterile creed and dogma has divested the Church of its spiritual efficacy. He insists on the worth to the community and the universe of unshackled souls which can evolve freely to their maximum capacity. Principal among the poems incorporating these ideas are the Song of Italy, Ode on the Insurrection in Candia, To Walt Whitman in America, An Appeal, In Perinde ac Cadaver, Before a Crucifix, and Christmas Antiphonies.

In both Song of Italy and Songs, the Italian struggle for unity, the Risorgimento, furnished Swinburne with the framework for elaborating upon his major theme. Samuel Chew rightly vindicates Swinburne's symbolic use of Italy:

Enthusiasm for Italy had been part of the endowment of nearly all later English poets: her romantic past and present desolation, her glorious aspirations and noble struggle, her splendid literature and consummate art -- these combined with her natural loveliness to form an appeal of unequalled force.

From the topicality of Italian struggles for freedom from tyranny evolves Swinburne's vision of spiritual liberty for the human soul. In Mater Dolorosa, liberty is represented as being the mother of man; in On the Downs and Tiresias, liberty is the "new Dawn": in A Year's Burden, liberty is Faith; and in Genesis, Hymn of Man, and Hertha, liberty is the very soul of man. (Based on Nicolson's Categories.)

Specific laments for the Italian plight and, by extension, the universal human condition, are found in Super Flumina Babylonis, Siena, Song of the Standard, and "Non Dolet." Particular historic incidents concretize the image of the soul's struggle for freedom for harmonious expansion in The Halt before Rome, Mentana: First Anniversary, Blessed among Women, Ode on the Insurrection at Candia, and the Ride from Milan. An appeal for the infusion of world culture with a spirit of revolution for

liberating the human soul is passionately made in the Eve of Revolution, A Watch in the Night, Litany of Nations, Quia Multum Amavit, and A Marching Song. The image of "capitolian Rome" becomes a unifying symbol for joining the Greek concept of liberty with that of the Italian in Song of Italy.

John Drinkwater suggests that the pervasive themes in the Songs are Freedom and the hero. The idea of the heroic soul which is courageous enough to actively confront disastrously divisive forces in life is embodied in historic personages. These figures symbolize the ideal Swinburnean hero, the republican soul, the stalwart warrior-poet, the god-man. They are men capable of projecting challenging ideas and of actively prosecuting those concepts within the arena of the battle of life. They are Mazzini, Garibaldi, Milton, Shelley, Landor, and Hugo. Anti-heroes appear in Napoleon and the Russian Czar. Welby states that the experience of reading Hugo's Les Chatiments when he was sixteen years old conditioned Swinburne's political opinions in the future. Other critics concur with Welby's opinion. In a letter to his mother on March 31, 1867, Swinburne writes of Mazzini, "It [Mazzini's face] is literally full of light....He is clearly the man to create a nation -- to bid the dead bones live and rise." In Mazzini's Italy he saw the symbol of the "Republic of the world made white."

After having objectified his concept of Liberty in phenomena drawn from the world situation, Swinburne extended his ideas to encompass the entire universe by positing a new cosmology.⁸ This new creation is rooted in the essential unity of Being, symbolized by Hertha as the Life-Force, the composite Oversoul: God "with the world inwound whose clay to his feet clings." This vision is rooted in a theory of emergent evolution. Thus Swinburne seems to suggest that desirable change is wrought through "evolution" rather than "revolution." In Genesis, life evolves from "the sad shapeless horror increate." All life is ambivalent in nature. In Hertha, the questing soul seeks to understand ultimate Reality. It is represented as the Life-Force from which all Being derives and which remains an integral part of the unfolding spirit. According to Drinkwater, the Hertha poems show the eternal aspects of Nature under the impact of the mind of man. Mater Triumphalis praises the heroic stature of man under the influence of the Immanentism of the Oversoul. Men are the "Multiform flower." They are aspects of generic Man. The collective soul of man endures forever. The following excerpt is from a letter sent by Swinburne and W. Rossetti to the Riccardian anti-Catholic Council in Rome, October, 1869, the attitudes therein vivify the concept of liberty which is encompassed in the Hymn of Man and which permeates the poems in the Hertha group:

"The liberty we believe in is one and indivisible: without free thought there can be no free life. That democracy of the spirit without which the body, personal or social, can enjoy but a false freedom, must, by the very law of its being confront a man-made theocracy to destroy it. Ideal or actual, the Church or priests, and the Republic are natural and, internecine enemies. Freedom which comes by the life of the law of man, flame of his spirit, root and heart and blood and muscle of his manhood -- can take no truce with the creeds or miscreeds which inflict, not (as some kings of our past) upon the flesh, but upon the souls of man, the hideous and two-fold penalty of blindness and enervation. She expects no non-natural message from above or from without, but passes in contagious revelation from spirit again to spirit without authority and without sign. Truth, Right, Freedom, are self-sufficiency and clarion service for the soul that suffices unto itself."

Swinburne's lofty concept of liberty for the yearning soul of man appears in Prelude, Epilogue, Litany of Nations, and Hertha. Edmund Gosse sets forth the following attitudes as the dominant ones found in Swinburne. Ideal freedom is that condition in which the spirit of man acts with noblest ethical propriety. Man's spirit is symbolized by Epictetus' "little soul." When the "little soul" is least enthralled by the "corpse," human nature evolves to its greatest harmonious stature. Swinburne uses "Liberty" as the name of the soul when it has emerged successfully from obstacles which tend to thwart its development. This emergence takes the form of an organic action. It results from the noble blending of the excellence in humanity. Liberty is identified also with Hertha, the Mother of Life, who reveals herself in the

noble works of Man. Gosse utters the following acclamation of Swinburne's concept of Liberty:

The emotion of the poet in the presence of the supreme and eternal characteristics of the universe gave to the noblest parts of the Songs an intensity unique in English literature, and probably to be compared with nothing else written since the Greeks produced cosmological hymns in the fifth century B.C.⁹

On the Downs presents a vision of the poet's understanding of the nature of Reality as "one forceful nature increate." Man, animal, and plant are integral parts of the Life. Here the idea of the man-god emerges as the only means of salvation. Man must expect no external help for "There is no God, O son,/ If thou be none." W. K. Clifford, a boon to criticism of the philosophical Swinburne, maintains that Swinburne's theories in the Hertha poems reenforce his own theories regarding organicism:

The character of an organic action, then, is freedom -- that is to say, action from within. The action which has its immediate antecedents within the organism, has a tendency, in so far as it alters the organism, to make it more organic, or to raise it in the scale. The action which is determined by foreign causes is one in regard to which the organism acts as if inorganic, and in so far as the action tends to alter it, it tends to lower it in the scale.¹⁰

Professor Buckley vindicates Swinburne's theory of the Life-Force thus:

If his [Swinburne's] will to believe had once seemed thoroughly frustrated by the godless advance of science, he now looked resolutely to Darwinian evolution as a "spiritual necessity," the essential basis for a philosophy which could reconcile him to the higher purposes of man.

And his new-found faith in a primordial life-force, whatever its limitations, as a substitute for the old religion preserved him in his maturity from the despair that was slowly driving lesser poets into a remote aesthetic retreat.¹¹

Attitudes toward the anti-hero are presented in Songs of Two Nations. The seventeen sonnets entitled Dirae are intensely executed vituperative denunciations of tyranny as it is symbolized in the images of Church and State. Napoleon Bonaparte epitomizes tyranny in a ruler. Gosse makes the following comment regarding the poet's attitude toward Napoleon:

Swinburne's hatred of Napoleon dated back to his childhood and was no doubt connected with the Coup d'Etat of 1851, the results of which impressed his schoolboy imagination at Eton. To Swinburne, Napoleon was not a man but a symbol of tyranny.¹²

The republican soul recognizes the irreversible natural law of Heraclitan mutability. The attitude which emerges is ambivalent. Time, through change, both lacerates and heals the spirit. Death brings release to eternal sleep in the reabsorption into the Oversoul.

Professor Rosenberg states that the dominant theme of Poems and Ballads, second series, is "the triumph of time over life, love and generative powers of earth." It reflects the soul's yearning for the past, for a haven of safety. After the "Sturm and Dang" of the warrior-hero's experiences amid the divisive forces in the battle of life in the earlier poems, the tone of Poems and Ballads, second series, is serene and wistful. The pervasive

atmosphere is one of quiet dignity, almost dreamlike at points. This provides a fitting background for serious meditation upon what happens to the human spirit both within the context of time and change and after it is released from life in the mundane sphere of existence. In The Last Oracle, the concept of the mutability of other gods is contrasted with the transcendence of Apollo. The Phoenix-like Apollo is presented within the context of the frame of the orthodox God who re-establishes his kingdom on earth in the hearts of men as the only means of salvation for the human soul. The unobtrusive nature of change upon physical nature and the soul is the theme of A Forsaken Garden, Relics, Sestina, A Ballad of Dreamland, Pastiche, At a Month's End, and the Year of the Rose. The place of Death in human experience is considered in Ex-Voto, A Vision of Spring in Winter, and Choriambics.

Immortality of the soul is the theme of Age and Song and of Ave Atque Vale. In the latter, Baudelaire, who as poet is a Swinburnean symbol of the warrior-hero par excellence, the poet is given special exhortation in death. He is assured that death has released him from the divisive turmoil of the battle of life. Thus he should enjoy the eternal peace of the death-sleep unincumbered by the heaviness of change, for "There lies not any troublous thing before./ Nor sight nor soul to war against thee more,/ For whom all winds are quiet as the sun/ All waters as the shore."

Thus this phase of Swinburne's vision of life ends the quest of the human spirit's search for an order of ideas. These are encompassed in the Life-Force and Immanentism.

Hertha typifies Swinburne's use of his major images in the Republican phase of his evolving vision of life. The poem sets forth a theory of progress which places it in the mainstream of Victorian thought. Significantly, here Swinburne uses as persona Hertha speaking in first person. Her speech is directed to man. In the first stanza, Hertha proclaims herself to be the Great I Am. She is also the world soul, both transcendent and immanent in its manifestation. In addition, "out of me" suggests that she is the primary matter from which life comes and the principle of the vast process of evolution of the world soul. She is the essence of the Life-Force from which all other life evolves. She is essentially one unity, "all of one nature." The World-Soul is set forth as the only immutable aspect of Being:

I am that which began;
 Out of me the years roll;
 Out of me God and man;
 I am equal and whole;
 God changes and man, and the form of them bodily;
 I am the soul. (Stanza 1)

In stanzas two through six, Hertha secures historic perspective by asserting that the Oversoul as essence of all life existed before any tangible life was observable as creation. Thus man's soul, as an integral part of the

Oversoul, has in a sense always been in existence as well. Life emerging in time follows the process of natural evolution. As a symbol of the unity of Being, Hertha contains all of the contrarities within life. She is both subject and object. She is both the "black and the white seed." Beach attests: "Everything is in nature, good and evil, body and spirit, objective and subjective, the fact and the judgment passed upon the fact, man and man's God." Hertha represents her own ambivalent nature thus:

First life on my sources
 First drifted and swam;
 Out of me are the forces
 That save it or damn;
 Out of me man and woman; and wild-beast and bird;
 Before God was, I am. (Stanza 3)

I am that which unloves me and loves;
 I am stricken, and I am the blow. (From Stanza 4)

The search and the sought, and the
 Seeker, the soul and the body that is. (From Stanza 5)

Here, the Miltonic "light increate" becomes the Life-Force with "hands uncreate."

In reply to man's quest for and understanding of himself in terms of his relationship to God, Hertha identifies herself as the earth-mother, the principle of growth, the source of man's being and the medium through which his growth is nurtured. Beach has pointed out the main implications of the earth-goddess symbolism:

In thus choosing to celebrate the earth as the guide and origin of human life, Swinburne is issuing his manifesto in favor of the natural interpretation of man and man's spirit as opposed to the supernatural. It is from earth, from nature, that man derives his being, his mind, his aspirations, his morality. Instead of coming "out of the deep," or "from God, who is our home," man is a parcel of the same vital energy that rolls in the sea, that flies with the bird, that opens with the bud....His earth, his nature is not so much a goddess indulging in the act of creation as a root-stock out of which spring and blossom the flowers of life; a force animating all activities; a fount out of which flow all streams of energy. (Beach, p. 459).

In stanza seven, Hertha emphasizes the unity of man and god: "I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him; find thou but thyself, thou art I."

Stanza eight specifically symbolizes the nature of Hertha in terms of the plant which grows from seed implanted in "plough-cloven clod." Thus man is also the plant, for he grows, evolves through change in time.

Stanzas nine through thirteen emphasize the evolutionary development of man by contrast to the orthodoxy of special creation. The use of images of "fire," "iron," and "water" clearly indicates Swinburne's thinking in terms of geological process. Furthermore, they are an echo of Blake. Hertha, in compliance with man's seeking, raises a series of questions with regard to the source of man's insight into the nature of the origin of himself and god. She asks if his light as insight has been derived from communion with the sea, the night, the winds, the stars, or the sun. She insists that these aspects of the

natural order cannot provide insight into the origin of life. Only Hertha, the earth-goddess, the Life-Force itself, is capable of giving true illumination to the mind of man in explanation of his being. Hertha represents herself as the mother who was "born, and not made." Thus man emerged as a phase of the overall process of evolution of life from the primary substance of earth. And thus, by implication, the creation story is invalidated. In stanzas fourteen and fifteen, Hertha suggests that society's God has produced the tyranny of a sterile-creed ("A creed is a rod.") and perverted insight in the state ("A crown is of night"). Thus she exhorts man "To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy life as the light." This is the light of insight from Immanentism: "I am in thee to save thee./ As my soul in thee saith." Hertha's Divine Imperative is that man act nobly in accordance with his special endowment to live fully. Such an ideally evolved life will be known by "Green leaves of thy labour, white flowers of thy thought, and red fruit of thy death." Hertha does not promise an easy life. It is life motivated by natural law. The triadic colors used here are reminiscent of the colors of the Italian Republican Flag.

In stanzas seventeen through nineteen, Hertha speaks of man's light as insight. Here, the sun symbolizes ultimate Reality in its power of "overshining the shadows and stars overpast." The sterile creeds of society prevent

man's perception of transcendent reality. The "shadow of God," of Hertha, is the moon which provides only partial insight, for its light is derived from the sun. The moon guides man through the night of the soul until "the morning of manhood is risen, and the shadowless soul is in sight." This is the soul under the impact of the bright light of the sun. Here one is reminded of the thematic motif of the sunrise in this volume. Man's soul cannot achieve this nobility of stature in his societal relationship of "servant to lord, nor as master to slave." Man's soul must be free of all tyranny so that it can achieve maximum spiritual stature through its innate yearning for expansion, derived from the immanent Life-Force.

Stanzas twenty through thirty-one explore the relationship of man to god in the image of the Yggdrasil tree. Critics are in agreement that this is the climactic section of the poem. It is both artistically and ideologically significant that this climax occurs at the exact mid-point in the poem. It begins with stanza twenty in the forty-stanza poem. Tillyard explains the image of the Yggdrasil tree thus:

The "tree many-rooted" is Yggdrasil, the Teutonic world-tree. Yggdrasil represents all nature, the power holding heaven, earth and hell together. At its foot is Niflheim or hell, a region of darkness, where a dragon gnaws at the roots. Above is an eagle; and a squirrel runs between dragon and eagle inciting them to battle. (Tillyard, p. 88)

The tree suggests a kind of scale of Being on which all aspects of life are represented. It is the "life-tree." Man is the bud which gets its vitality, its life-force, from the "sap of My [Hertha's] leaves." Hertha speaks of other gods who are wrought by man. They die in time, for they are to Hertha as "worms that are bred in the bark that falls off; they shall die and not live." The world-soul's superior vitality has the power to heal itself. Even the stars are represented as transitory symbols of insight until the glory of the sunrise which will obliterate all partial truths. The wave of the sea as the passing of time is echoed in the sound of the clashing boughs of the tree. Time is also symbolized as a powerful bird which rustles the foliage on the branches of the tree. The dead leaves fall under his tread. Time as mutability is symbolized in a triadic image of the wind. Each manifestation affects life: "The storm winds of ages/ Blow through me and cease,/ The war-wind that rages,/ The spring wind of peace." The wind of change is ambivalent in its impact upon the tree and upon the soul of man. It is filled with both constructive and destructive energy, for it contains "shadows and lights," "mountain ranges and stream-riven heights," "All life and all death," "all reigns and all ruins." However, the impact of these contrary winds leaves the tree still standing as they "drop through me as sands." Hertha accepts her self-imperative to "grow" even amidst

devastating winds of time and change. She admits that maximum growth is difficult, for she is circumscribed by negative forces of "lightnings above" and "deathworms below." The vitality of the Life-Force of the world soul as symbolized in "fire is at the heart of me" and "sap" in this tree remains inimical to all opposing forces. The one "clear call," guerdon, is "only to grow." In keeping with the evolutionary process of the growth of the plant, when May (Spring) comes, the blossoms of manhood burst forth in their innate yearning for life-involvement. The spirit of Hertha is infused into the soul of man as "rays" of light. This light is the only assurance of freedom of soul. Men as buds on the tree become the fruits of the pride of Mother-Earth.

In stanzas thirty-two through thirty-eight, Hertha gives a magnificent exhortation to man to maintain his freedom of soul so that he can develop to the fullest possible stature. The Oversoul suggests that the only way that man's soul can be free is by emptying his mind of the restrictive, sterile religious creeds which he has fabricated for himself. Since "In me only the root is that blooms in your boughs," man must assume the responsibility for making choices which determine the quality of his growth. In the total process of evolution the false concepts of god are replaced by the true one. Thus the old gods fear their extinction: "God trembles in heaven,

and his angels are white with the terror of God." Here Swinburne uses the myth of the Twilight of the Gods to suggest the emergence of a new order, a unified soul.¹² Thought made god and breaks him. The old gods are to be replaced by the Cometeian-Mazzinian Religion of Humanity in "This new thing [Time] gives,/ Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives."

In stanzas thirty-nine and forty Hertha proclaims truth as the essence of dynamic living. It is the only force which can provide the soul of man with a guide for harmonious expansion. It is "man's polestar and pole." "Truth" here means primarily the capacity to accept data that break down existing orientations. The fullest possible development of the human spirit is the only stricture which Hertha places upon the most significant aspect of her Being, "Man pulse of my centre, and fruit of my body and seed of my soul." In the scale of Being symbolized in the Yggdrasil tree, man is the supreme manifestation. He is equal to and an integral part of the World-Soul, Hertha, for he is "one top-most blossom/ That scales the sky;/ Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I." Thus the soul which expands to its fullest stature symbolizes the god-man whose life evolves harmoniously through the light of the Life-Force and Immanentism of the god-within. This is man's only means of salvation. There is no other! There is no other god!

Beach defends Swinburne's god-man in Hertha thus:

So earth sends forth man with no light but her light in his mind, no strength but her strength in his spirit, and bids him confront unsupported the forces of darkness and disillusion. Swinburne is well aware of the weaknesses to which man is liable, the treacheries and surrenders, the cruelties and futilities which have made up human history. And he is obliged to summon to his aid the thought of men like Mazzini and Garibaldi for assurance of the potential stoutness of the human soul. He is obliged to set up the ideal of a soul capable of standing indomitable amid the treacheries of men and the lapse of faiths. It is to this potential strength of soul in men that he looks for bringing in the dawn of man's hopes, when he shall be, as in Shelley's vision, "free, boundless, fearless, perfect, one." If this dawn is never to break, then he is willing that "Man's world die like worlds of old." But meantime he can only set up the ideal of liberty as a strengthener of men's souls -- of man's soul.... And, when man is disheartened and cannot see for himself "the sounds and sights of liberty" he takes courage in the recognition of souls that conform to this ideal. (Beach, pp. 468-69)

In a letter to William Rossetti, January 8, 1870,

Swinburne himself commented:

The essential thought of the poem is that Hertha, the principle of growth, prefers liberty to bondage, Mazzini to Bonaparte, and is a good republican because in liberty only can man's soul reach its fullest stature and growth.... This much, I think, may be reasonably supposed and said, without incurring the (to me) most hateful charge of optimism -- a creed¹³ which I despise as much as ever did Voltaire.

Critics generally acclaim E. M. W. Tillyard's explication of Hertha as critique par excellence. However, although I concur on the whole with Tillyard's attitudes, I disagree with him on the following stricture regarding the concept of individualism in the poem:

Swinburne, though nominally a fierce individualist, does in Hertha express the very principle that makes individualism impossible in the mass and this mass swept in a necessary (if right) direction by the tide of events. A man, in Hertha, is no longer the possessor of a soul, the value of which evades all earthly standards, but one of a vast number of units, not specifically differentiated, whose value lies in the sum they compose. (Tillyard, p. 101)

Hertha develops the idea of the birth of man. As the "topmost blossom" on the tree of life, man's soul is rooted in the universal primary substance. However, he must choose individually the way of his soul's development as the internal light inspires him to do. The supreme admonition to man is "To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and/ Live out thy life as the light." The light image necessarily places the responsibility of the developing soul upon the individual. Swinburne's concept no more denies individualism than the general idea of organicism that dominates Romantic thought. Just as Hertha grows despite constant threats of destruction, she exhorts man to do likewise. Since his soul is derived from her life-force, it is logical to assume that man would have the spiritual fiber to do so. Each soul is free to choose its way of development. Thus Swinburne is still an apostle of staunch individualism.

In Hertha, of course, earth imagery assumes special significance and is not to be regarded as representing an element comparable to those represented by the sea, the sun, or the wind. The latter images, in the symbolic

structure of this poem, are subsumed by the plant image; and since the term earth denotes all being the earth image does not function symbolically at all. There is a hint of Swinburne's usual symbolic use of the sea in "First life on my sources/ First drifted and swam." The moon and the stars represent transitory foci of insight which are obliterated by the coming of the sunrise at dawn, which symbolizes full awareness of the god-spirit within. Fire suggests the primal energy which gives the initial impetus to the thrust into life, and is related to the light of the sun and lesser astronomical bodies. Darkness suggests impaired insight. In Hertha, also, the image of fruit, related to the plant and blossom, is used to symbolize the results of the striving of the evolving soul. The wind image is used to suggest the passing of time and of mutability in the evolutionary process. Worms symbolize evil as necessary irritation for the emergence of greater stature of the soul. Blood suggests the indomitable vitality of the life-force.

In keeping with the suggestion of the title, light appears as a dominant image in many of the poems of Songs before Sunrise. In the Prelude the epiphanic moment of insight for the evolving soul is symbolized by sunrise imagery: "At the sun's hour of morning song,/ Known of souls only, and those souls free,/ The sacred spaces of the sea." The light of the sun stands for a force that is at once illuminating, unifying, and creative:

Yea, the whole air of life
 Is set on fire of strife,
 Till change unmake things made and love remake;
 Reason and love, whose names are one,
 Seeing reason is the sunlight shed from love of the sun.
 (The Eve of Revolution)

Of special significance in this volume is the poet's association of the sun with freedom. In The Halt before Rome, the city of Rome is a symbol of the resurrected light of liberty: "Italia was risen,/ And risen her light upon Rome." In Blessed among Women, Signora Cairoli is a symbol of the light of liberty showing the way to freedom for all mankind. It is a light of love which is resurrected as the Phoenix and consummated in the light from the capitolian dome of Rome: "sink, then spring up rekindled from thy flame;/ Fade, then reflower." Here fire and flower participate in the symbolic creation of the light of liberty. In Siena, Italy is beseeched, as the light of freedom: "Let there be light....for feet falter in the night." In the Song of the Standard, the red, white and green flag of the Italian Republic symbolizes a beacon on earth lifted to the beacon of heaven, the sun. In Beyond the Church, the sun as the generative power symbolizes man's insight: "And when light is none/ Saving the sun,/ All men shall have light." In Eve of Revolution, the republicanism of John Milton symbolizes enlightenment:

By those eyes blinded and that heavenly head
 And the secluded soul adorable,
 O Milton's land, what ails thee to be dead?
 Thine ears are yet sonorous with his shell

That all the songs of all thy sea-line fed
 With motive sounds of spring-tides at mid swell,
 And through thine heart his thought as
 blood is shed.
 Requickening thee with wisdom to do well.

In The Litany of Nations, the way to freedom is illuminated:
 "By the star that Milton's soul for Shelley's lighted,
 Whose rays insphere us;/ By the beacon-bright Republic
 far-off sighted." In A Marching Song, the poets-republican
 show the way to salvation through freedom: "We [the poets]
 bring the morning star;/ Freedom's good things we bring
 you, whence all good things are." In Tiresias, the parable
 of the blind prophet at the grave of Antigone as the
 agonizing soul of liberty (Dante at the grave of Italia)
 is extended to suggest the magnificence of Mazzinian
 insight (light of the soul) for resurrecting the soul of
 Italy. This saving power results from the fusion of the
 spiritual insights of apostles of freedom, such as
 Michelangelo, Dante, and Mazzini:

For in the daybreak now that night was dead
 The light, the shadow, the delight, the pain,
 The purpose and the passion of those twain,
 Seemed gathered on that third prophetic head,
 And all their crowns were as one crown, and one
 His face with her face in the living sun.

In Mater Triumphalis, the light of Liberty is the triumphant
 First Cause (Mother) of Man: "O Mother, O light where
 through the darkness is a light." In the Dirae series,
 darkness is associated with the satanic forces of evil
 which abhor the light. Napoleon is used to symbolize
 this evil. In the Descent into Hell, from this series upon

the death of the tyrant, Swinburne writes: "Hell yawns on him whose life was as a word/ Uttered by death in hate of heaven and light./ A curse now dumb upon the lips of night." In Ave Atque Vale, the Apollonian light is associated with creative energy (fire) to symbolize the ambivalent nature of the poet's power of song: "Yet fully from his hand thy soul's food came,/ The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame/ Was lighted and thine hungering heart he fed/ Who feeds our hearts with fame."

Among the forty poems in Songs, twenty-nine make use of light-fire imagery as a major symbol. The image follows the gradations in the pattern of the evolving day -- from sunrise through twilight to darkness. It is either the light of the sun as insight, as freedom, or as inspiration. Or it is the fire of creativity or purification through chastening.

The plant (as Man) is associated with earth and sun in its organic emergence toward a harmoniously ordered life. In the Prelude, plant imagery sets forth stages in poetic development and in the evolving soul: "Between the green bud and the red/ Youth sat and sang by Time and shed/ From eyes and tresses, flowers and tears." In Mentana: First Anniversary, the passion for freedom is symbolized by the plant in its yearning, its thrust into life: "And the seed of my earth in her womb/ Moves as the heart of a bud/ Beating with blood." In Before a

Crucifix, the tree is used both as a symbol of restrictive, artificial, makeshift creeds and as the symbol of free human development:

Set not thine hand unto their cross.
 Give not thy soul up sacrificed.
 Change not the gold of faith for dress
 Of Christian creeds that spit on Christ.
 Let not thy tree of freedom be
 Regrafted from that rotting tree.

 The tree of faith ingrafted by priests
 Puts its foul foliage out above thee
 And round it feed man-eating beasts
 Because of whom we dare not love thee
 Though hearts reach back and memories ache
 We cannot praise thee for their sake.

Plant imagery is used in Genesis to describe the organic and ambivalent nature of life:

But chiefliest in the spirit (beast or man,
 Planet of heaven or blossom of earth or sea)
 The divine contraries of life began.

 For in each man each year that is born
 Are sown the twin seeds of
 the strong twin powers;
 The white seed of the fruitful helpful morn,
 The black seed of the barren
 hurtful hours.

In most instances, the wind and sea images appear together in this phase of the vision to suggest fluidity, the mutability of life. In A Song to Walt Whitman in America, for example, the wind and sea combine as sources for transmission of the poet's song: "Send us a song over-seas.... / With the van of the storming sea, / With the worldwide wind." In the Hymn of Man, time and change are

identified with the sea and the wind: "In the sea whereof centuries are waves the live God plunges and swims.... / Storm-worn, since being began, with the wind and the thunder of things." In On the Downs, sea, wind, and sun images are characteristically fused in the representation of the fated stirring of forces that will revitalize human life:

And the sun smote the clouds and slew,
 And from the sun the sea's breath blew,
 And white waves laughed and twined and fled
 The long green heaving sea-field through,
 And on them overhead
 The sky burnt red.

Like a furled flag that wind sets free,
 On the swift summer-colored sea
 Shook out the red lines of the light
 The live sun's standard blown to lee
 Across the live sea's white
 And green delight.

In addition to the four images of this study, in this phase of the vision Swinburne makes use of several other poetic devices which critics regard as his artistic hallmarks -- alliteration, assonance, anapests, and an infinite variety of stanzaic patterns which include the rhyming couplet and other lengths to a nine line stanza and the sonnet. Examples from Hertha will serve for illustrative purposes. Typical of the use of alliteration are the following: "The search and the sought, and the seeker, and the soul," "the deed and the doer," "the seed and the sower," "Of what stuff wast thou shapen and shown," "straight in the strength of thy spirit," "live out thy life as the light," "morning of manhood is risen, and

the shadowless soul is in sight," "rings round him and rustles," "sounds and secrets of infinite lands and seas," "seed of my soul," and "Man equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I." The pattern of assonance is used to suggest the idea of organic change. This device vivifies the organic nature of Swinburne's art, the unification of idea and word, Swinburne's "spirit and sense." The principal pattern is rooted in birth and growth and utilizes this kind of cluster: roll, forms, hair, grass, tree, fruit, branch, first, source, drift, bird, breath, art, create, grain, furrow, sower, fire, wrought, iron, water, heart, breast, spirit, star, creed, stirs, labour, strength, green, flower, free, risen, morning, rooted, frondage, bred, bark, worship, spread, rustle, tread, storm, spring, war, increase, world, ruin, guerdon, burden, sore, part, warmth, fair, sword, wrath, and truth.

About verse in Hertha, Tillyard makes the following comment regarding the artistry of Hertha:

It is eminent for the energy of metrical movement and the fecundity of rhyme. These together express a fine mental exuberance and confidence. The verse is held tightly in and compressed in the four short rhymed lines of each stanza and then breaks out and spills itself into the long fifth line, to be saved from mere waste by the closing rhyme. It is easy and delightful on the muscles of speech: excellent for reading aloud and declaiming.¹⁴

Most critics agree that the art of Swinburne's poetry which reveals the evolving soul under the impact of

republicanism involves a true synthesis of the artistic and ideological forces. Georges Lafourcade calls this phase of Swinburne's poetry "Art for life's sake."

Swinburne himself defends an equal concern for idea and song as indicated on page seven of this chapter. Connolly comments upon the art of this phase thus:

The following quotation represents the most crucial point in the crystallization of Swinburne's theory of poetry, the reconciliation of political enthusiasm with admiration of form:
 'No work of art has any worth or life in it that is not done on the absolute terms of art.... We admit then that the worth of a poem has properly nothing to do with its moral meaning or design....But on the other hand we refuse to admit that art of the highest may not ally itself with moral or religious passion, with the ethics or politics of a nation or an age.... In a word, the doctrine of art for art is true in the positive sense, false in the negative; sound as an affirmation, unsound as a prohibition.'

Connolly emphasizes the fact that the theory of Swinburnean art reflected in this excerpt is a direct result of the influence of Hugo.¹⁵

Thus the concepts of the Life-Force and Immanentism provide the fundamental ideological frame of reference ideas for the evolving soul of man. He is inspired by the Life-Force to accept the challenge of an active thrust into the arena of the battle of life. He is responsible for his own choices, but is moved by the Immanent spirit to act nobly in accordance with his law of self-sufficiency, which demands that he recognize the active functioning of the same law in others. Further, these principles imply

that no life is ever finalized in its pattern. Rather, life becomes a series of Phoenix-like, Hindu-like, Christ-like, deaths and rebirths. The principle of Immanentism (light of the soul) evokes the noblest principles of action on the part of the Swinburnean warrior-hero. At the end of the struggle, the enlightened will passes the torch to succeeding generations for illumination of the path of the eternal evolution of Man.

The succeeding chapter will explore the quest of the emerging soul for a medium of creative expression. It is a yearning for the ideas of the Life-Force and Immanentism as workable principles of life. This will be a way of creative ordering for the soul of the Swinburnean god-man who seeks harmonious expansion of his being. This is the way to paradise.

CHAPTER V

CREATIVE ORDERING: TOWARD PARADISE

In the preceding chapter, an exploration was made of the natural law of republicanism and the evolving soul of man. In that phase of Swinburne's poetic vision of life, man seeks harmonious growth through identification with a society which is striving through revolution for freedom from tyranny of spirit. A particularized concept of liberty rooted in the Italian political scene is enlarged in the Hertha poems to encompass a cosmic vision. Thus Swinburne's vision moved from a revolutionary to an evolutionary concept of change, growth, and progress of the soul. A concept of transcendent liberty evolves which is rooted in the principles of the Life-Force and Immanentism. Hertha becomes the symbol of "everlastingness," of permanence. The ideas derived through the quest of the republican spirit of man symbolize an "order of ideas" for Swinburne the poet and by extension for generic man as well. This chapter will explore the soul's quest for a satisfactory means of giving expression to this order of ideas in

individual life. This is the phase of the vision of man in which the soul obtains its "at-oneness" with objective reality of earth and heaven. The god-spirit within man feels a bond of sympathy with the pantheistic god-spirit in nature. Thus objects in the manifold become symbols of God. Nature is spiritualized, animated, infused with the life-force of the universal Oversoul. This is the Carlylean "Nature as the garment of God." Here, worship of the conceptual goddess of Liberty which was transmuted to Hertha in Songs evolves into worship of the liberating force of the goddess of the sea under the inspiration of the sun. The sun is identified with Apollo as a symbol of Transcendent Reality, the source of life, love, reason, and song. He is the god-spirit which inspires the soul to evolve to its noblest stature. Here, also, the sea is contrasted to the land as a symbol of the most potently formative influence in shaping the soul of man. This is the period during which Thalassius was wrought (see Chapter II, pages twelve and following). Here, the soul yearns for, strives for, and achieves freedom of harmonious expansion through creative expression.

Major critics of Swinburne agree that the dominant influences which precipitated a transition in the poet's life and art were the death of Mazzini, the infamously notorious aura which enveloped Swinburne from the Buchanan controversy,¹ and the "rescue" by Watts-Dunton.² By 1873,

the historic personalities and events which had served as artistic stimuli in Swinburne's republican period had vanished. The proclamation of the French Republic in 1870, the completion of Italian unification in the same year, the deaths of Mazzini in 1872 and of Napoleon III in 1873, left Swinburne without a cause to serve, a leader to follow, or a political tyrant to denounce. Old friendships waned and new ones resulted in notorious publicity and led to chronic dissipation which impaired Swinburne's physical health. In 1879, Watts-Dunton, who was his legal advisor in the "Fleshly School" lawsuit, rescued him from a path leading to complete physical debilitation.

Much too preponderant is the negative criticism of the influence of Theodore Watts-Dunton upon Swinburne the poet during the last thirty years (1879-1909) of the poet's life when the two, along with Clara Watts-Dunton, shared residence at the Pines, Putney. Watts-Dunton emerges as a kind of hero-worshipper himself who seems intent upon protecting the poet from the divisive forces active upon his personal life. These forces threatened to shorten Swinburne's years of literary productivity. Quite early in his life Swinburne developed a reputation for being oblivious to mandatory routine matters connected with daily living. Hence, Watts-Dunton saw and took advantage of an opportunity to save the poet by saving the man. Among critics of Swinburne, Georges Lafourcade presents the most logical interpretation of this relationship:

Once Watts had saved Swinburne's life, he does not seem to have had any set plan for diverting the poet's inspiration in one special direction, although, being human and somewhat willful, his personal prejudices and idiosyncracies were bound to affect his friend in isolated instances. Watts had one purpose, which arose from his practical instincts: he was determined that England's greatest living poet, after being too long the dupe of unscrupulous friends and publishers...should be turned from a financial failure into a commercial success. But Swinburne's inner poetic spirit was beyond his reach, and he may have known it; though no longer the 'master of his fate,' Swinburne remained to a great extent the 'captain of his soul.' It was, of course, in the province of the poet's₃ social life that Watts' tyranny was felt.

Thus, released from the stress of concern with life's trivia, the poet's sensibility evolved to a point of magnificent synthesizing of the myriad eclectic influences which had been active in his life. Both artistically and ideologically this fusion may well be called the Swinburnean Golden Synthesis.

The idyllic setting at Putney provided an atmosphere which was ideally conducive to meditative reflection, a dominant attitude in Swinburne's poetry of the last thirty years of his life. It is a period which is characterized by a muted enthusiasm in contrast to the intensity of the "white heat" of the passion of the periods of eroticism and republicanism. Thus it is a period which is also characterized by an analytical and introspective turn of mind indicative of the thinking man and poet. Critics refer to these years, many times disparagingly, as ones which reflect a

growing conservatism and blandness in terms of the lack of contact with and interest in the concerns in the main current of the life of the times. The conservative turn of mind is a natural stage in the evolution of life itself. Swinburne remained interested in the basically profound problems which suggest the fascinating mystery of life.

It is logical to find that Swinburne, with time to meditate, became absorbed in the problem of Time and its meaning for the evolving soul of man. Such a concern places Swinburne in the main current of the philosophical stream of Victorian self-conscious preoccupation with striving to evolve a meaningful philosophy of history. Jerome Buckley⁴ gives a thoroughly perceptive account of this uniquely Victorian frame of mind. The basic concern with the ambivalent quality of Time to create and to destroy has a singular significance for the symbolic ambivalences of the images of this study. The great ideas in the age were opposites, Progress and Decadence. Buckley affirms that the idea of history is the great discovery of the Victorian mind. John Stuart Mill was one of the first to assert that the Victorian Era had an unprecedented awareness of time. Time itself had a twofold signification, "public time" and "private time." Buckley describes "public time" as Mill conceived of the attitudes of society as a living changing whole, the Zeitgeist. It reflects a general preoccupation with the upward or downward movement

of the "times," and the commitment to the contemporary. On the other hand, Buckley maintains that "private time" is the subjective experience of the individual, his memories of a personal past, his will to accept or oppose the demands of the public present. The human spirit yearns for permanence; thus a primary concern in the concept of "private time" is with the individual's efforts to conquer time, to escape from the tyranny of the manifest in the world, and to find beyond the flux of things some token of stability. This basic quest for permanence is a major motif in nineteenth century poetry from Wordsworth through the Victorians. The poetic emphasis on "private time" is symbolized as a constant indivisible flow in which life will be a continuous, enduring unity of change, and the consciousness, by memory and desire, will completely merge any given moment of a present with the whole personal past and future. Such attitudes have persisted since the beginning of time: Zeno, Heraclitus, St. John, Renaissance poets, Hume (the self as function rather than substance), Kant (a consistency and continuity of the self in its passage through time), Carlyle (time as the great deluder), and the geological orientation of Lyell (influencing Darwin). The new element in the nineteenth century concept of time or history was that of time as the medium of organic growth and fundamental change rather than simply additive succession. Such a concern

with time is seen in Pater's attitude toward the "gemlike flame" of life lived intensely and the "perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves."

Thus in this phase of Swinburne's emerging vision of life, we shall explore the soul's seeking a means for creative expression of the order of ideas which emerged in the poetry considered in the previous chapter. Here Swinburne exhibits a mood of meditative contemplation of the theme of man's striving soul under the impact of time and change. Cecil Lang states that Swinburne's pervasive theme is the pain of human experience: "No other poet has sung with such consistent and persistent melancholy of the pain of existence."⁵ This is experience under the impact of transforming change. Here the soul seeks some means for integrating the "four faces of time: past, present, future, and eternity." Swinburne remains faithful to a belief in the possibility of achieving integrity of the self. Thus he is able to confront the past with understanding sympathy and mature acceptance. Through this kind of perspective, Swinburne's god-man can accept the challenge of his present state in anticipation of the emerging harmony of soul. Buckley states, "The meaning of the past remembered lay in its power to enhance the quality of life in the all-demanding present."⁶

Thus in Songs of the Springtides and in Studies in Song, the developing soul confronts the dilemma of human

destiny in close communion with Nature. This is the phase of the Swinburnean vision of life which seeks meaningful application of the principles of the Life-Force and Immanentism which emerged in the way of the republican spirit's apocalyptic cosmic vision in Chapter IV. Here the solitary soul withdraws from the community to find a means for expressing creatively the impressions made upon the soul by the experiences of life. The four long meditative poems in Songs of the Springtides treat the theme of the making of the soul as poet-figure. Thalassius (the sampler of Swinburne's vision, treated in Chapter II, pages 36-48) explores the full development of the harmoniously evolved soul which has the spiritual fortitude to remain a "fosterling on earth," to withdraw from societal communion to derive a moral code from the concept of Immanentism. This is a vision of the soul revealed through the myth of the process by which the self expands harmoniously to its fullest realization. This ordered expansion is possible only through the spiritually sympathetic bond which man intuitively between the natural order in which his soul is rooted and his own being. The educative process of growth to which Thalassius is subjected develops within him the philosophic mind. The ideal poet is the spiritual father who guides the organic growth of the "flower" of youth. The older poet is symbolized as a warrior. This image has singular significance in epitomizing one of the basic

theses of this study, that Swinburne's concept of the ideal man is that of a mature warrior-hero-poet-figure, who has courageously confronted his destiny in the battle of life-experience. In Thalassius, he is "Free-born as winds and stars and waves are free;/ A warrior grey with glories more than years." In On the Cliffs, the soul feels its "at-oneness" with the natural order. In Sappho's suicidal leap, the spirit of her song was incarnated in the nightingale, the cliffs, and most particularly the sea. Thus the poet-figure imbibes the "one sweet word" from objects from the manifold. He hears the universal harmony of life by this imaginative identification with the Immanent Spirit within the world: "A song wherein all earth and heaven and sea/ Were molten in one music made of thee/ To enforce us...." Hence, paradoxically, the disruption of natural harmony by Sappho's death eventuates in the legacy of her song of love which unifies all antinomies in life and which immortalizes the poet. Understandably, then, Swinburne writes in Notes on Poems and Reviews, "I write as other poets/ On Sunium's height." In the Garden of Cymodoche, the theme is the necessity of the poet's alienating himself from society so as to find resources adequate for the reunification of his sensibility which has been sundered by the divisive forces of a disoriented social order. In his mystical communion in the rarefied atmosphere of the garden, the narrator perceives the

ambivalent interrelatedness of life in terms of such opposites as life and death, pleasure and pain, beauty and ugliness. Thus the poetic imagination through communion with natural forces can discover a satisfactory medium for creative expression. This is expression which is basic in the human condition. The poet's mind enfolds the objective manifold and transforms it through his imaginative creativity into a new synthesis, a new object: "We, with heart-enkindled eye/ Upwondering, search the music-moulded sky/ Sphere by sweet sphere, concordant as it blends."

The Birthday Ode for the Anniversary Festival of Victor Hugo is appropriately included in Songs of the Springtides. Hugo symbolized the evolved poetic ideal which is in process in the other three poems. He is the artistic power which transforms the hearts of men by diverting them from tyranny. He is the ideal warrior-poet-hero. Hugo's was "one hand appointed to shake the reddening scourge of song."

In Studies in Song, Swinburne carries on his exploration of the process by which the warrior-hero-poet evolves to his fullest stature. In the major poems of the volume, Off Shore, Evening on the Broads, and By the North Sea, the basic theme is the impact of time upon the natural order and the philosophical implications of this kind of process for the spiritually-unified soul of man. This theme is explored through the juxtaposing of the values of

the land and those of the sea. The atmospheric context symbolizes the unification of spatial relations suggested in Chapter II, Swinburne's Synthesis. Off Shore deals with the tension between shoreline values, land versus sea, as they are perceived by the creative imagination. The agitated motion of the shore flowers by contrast to the stasis of the submerged flowers suggests two attitudes toward the nature of art and life, the organic and the static. At the same time, it objectifies the idea of dynamism of change in time. Thus through mutability time brings life, suffering, joy and death. In Evening on the Broads, the soul is caught in suspension between the fascination of a life of freedom of individualized expression and the conventionalized, secure though restrictive, values of society. The soul yearns for insight to choose the right way for harmonious expansion of soul. In By the North Sea, the values of society versus the sea are intensified and expanded, thereby reenforcing the necessity of choice on the part of the emerging soul. The cyclical nature of life under the impact of time is suggested, for "Earth and man, and all their gods wax humble/ Here, where Time brings pasture to the sea." The essential ambiguity of all things is suggested here also. Man is identified with the spirit of the universe from which he is derived. Thus, in these poems, Nature becomes the norm for the moral code of man.

In Tristram of Lyonesse, Swinburne presents a studied exploration of the theme of the anguishing soul of the warrior-hero-poet-god-man in the throes of life-experience. It is the soul which uses Nature as norm. It is a vision of life as a series of births and deaths which provides necessary patterns of spiritual restoration which equip the soul for its encounters in the continual battle of life. Other poems in the Tristram volume carry on the basic theme of the impact of time and change upon the evolving soul of man. The several poems on the child serve as a means through which Swinburne unifies the "four faces of time -- past, present, future, and eternity." Additional poems on poets reenforce the Swinburnean concept of the god-man, immortality, and permanence through artistic expression. In the Sonnets on the English Dramatic Poets, 1590-1650, Shakespeare is the symbol of the poet as ideal god-man; he is "God because he is." This is closely akin to the Coleridgean concept of the great I Am. Thus the poems in the Tristram volume reveal a poetic vision which encompasses the total symbolic experiential continuum, from innocence to experience, from maturity to death, and immortality.

In A Century of Roundels (1883), the theme is change through time in the continuum from childhood to death and beyond. Here the soul of man ponders the meaning of the entire life-experience in context of eternity. The

infant and small child symbolize the man in miniature. He is in a state of innocence, before the battle scars of life are discernible. In Benediction, the child symbolizes a perpetual state of blessed grace. The Etude Realiste, he is the rosebud awaiting its own organic thrust into the full-blown flowerhood of life. In The First Footsteps, the small child is identified with Spring. In a Ninth Birthday, he begins to feel the impact of the winds of time to indicate that he is growing older. In A Baby's Death, his nature is "too heavenly for earth's cares." Hence, the infant and the child logically symbolize a state of innocence, uncorrupted by time, experience and change. It is the state of Beulah for Blake. For Wordsworth, it is "the child as father of the man." For all three, it is the "spark of divinity" (Immanentism) which saves the man, for there is no other god!

Buckley explains the place of the child and the past generally in Victorian poetry as integral factors in the process of the unification of the soul under the impact of potentially divisive change in time:

Memories of the lad that was gone, the childhood that was and was not, the days enjoyed and the days lost, the vivid sense impression, the far country -- all these could help "fix the wavering balance" of one's mind and perhaps act as spurs "to honorable toil," or at least give the brief preemptory moment some semblance of perspective, extension, and solidity. The meaning of the past remembered lay in its power to enhance the quality of life in the all-demanding present.⁷

The human soul suffers repeated birth- and death-throes in its evolution. In Eros, erotic love is a symbol of the basic pattern of suffering which pervades human experience as "veiled by change that ebbs and flows,/ The soul in all things born or formed,/ Eros." As a manifestation of this idea in Sorrow, all things pass (change) in the world except Sorrow. In Lute and the Lyre, deep desire finds expression in song, in satisfactory creative ordering as the only means of salvation for man. In Time and Life, the sorrow engrained within the texture of human existence impels the soul upon a quest, a yearning for rest from the heaviness of time. In Discord, change is "harsh time's imperious child." In Guernsey, the potent question is raised regarding time's power to obliterate natural beauty. In Past Days, the cliffs and downs only "seem" everlasting, but they, too, are subject to change. Here, death is identified as having a blasting breath. This symbol of death recurs in this volume and is reminiscent of the concept of the "blast of the breath of god" from Atalanta.

Although a poetic attitude or mood cannot be identified as an absolute personal conviction of the poet, such expressions do indicate ideas emanating from a realm of poetic imagination. They suggest ideological alternatives to the reader. After Sunset presents such an alternative. The theme of the poem is life after death. Here

the soul retains its identity after death, thereby rendering a concept of immortality in familiar terms:

So shall the soul seen be the self-same one
That looked and spake with even such lips and eyes
As love should doubt not then to recognize,
And all bright thoughts and smiles of all time past
Revived, transfigured, but in spirit and sense
None other than we knew, for evidence
That love's last mortal word was not his last.

In A Dialogue, the speaker questions the reality of death.

In Plus Ultra, beyond death the great unknown baffles

thought. In At Sea, life is a state of suspension between

birth and death. In A Dead Friend and in Autumn and Winter,

the love of man for man can immortalize man through memory,

for the death of a friend is "like a setting star." Swin-

burne gives evidence of his concern about life after death

in a letter to W. B. Scott, April 17, 1882: "I do now, on

the whole, strongly incline to believe in the survival of

life -- individual and conscious -- after the dissolution

of the body." This kind of speculation is a logical

development in the growth of a religious philosophy which

begins with the concept of God as "Supreme Evil," later

stresses indifferent Fate, and finally perceives the god-

spirit within man, which reenforces the idea of the

persistence of conscious life of the spirit after the death

of the body. The idea of a life-continuum remained vital

in Swinburne's thinking throughout his life. It is artis-

tically significant that in the Putney years he had time

to meditate upon the beginning and ending of life in a

manner which was impossible when he was actively involved in life. Significantly, too, Swinburne's life and art evolve as his flower symbol of man. Thus in Putney the entire cycle of life is completed, indicating an awareness of all its contradictory manifestations.

In A Midsummer Holiday (1884), Swinburne explores the basic theme of the Passion (Suffering) in the soul of man. He presents man as actively confronting his destiny in the organic evolving process of life. Within this context he explores the continuum of life from innocence to experience, from maturity to decline, and from death to immortality. Thus the paradoxical cycle of life symbolized in the "changeless whirl of change" becomes a focal point in the imaginative exploration of the transforming impact of time upon the human spirit. The poem which gives the volume its title is a magnificently beautiful art-piece. It is the pivotal point in the volume, concerned with change as permanence, "cyclical change which draws all things deathward." A colossal pall-like silence pervades the atmosphere as the narrator ponders the problem of life after death, ending with a question to which only silence is a reply: "Friend, who knows if death indeed have life or life death for goal?/ Silence answering only strikes response reverberate on the soul/ From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea."

A special kind of attitude is exhibited regarding the inability of time and change to obliterate the immortality of the artist as symbolized by Victor Hugo in A New Year Ode and in On the Bicentenary of Corneille. In the Ode, life is presented as being filled with contrarities. Man himself is a grand study in contradiction, for his soul contains both the "black and the white seed" (Songs before Sunrise):

Clad with light and darkness; weak and strong,
Free; fair and foul, sin-stained,
And sinless, crowned and chained;
Girt round with love and hate of right and wrong;
Proud and sore fear made havoc of his pride of life.

Les Casquats presents a graphically symbolic account of a point in arrested time and its impact upon the creative spirit, reminiscent of the problem in Tennyson's Lady of Shalott. The confusion in society is the "dust of the wheels of revolving life,/ Pain, labour, change, and fierce illusion/ Of a strife" had a divisive impact upon the poet figure's spirit, for "her heart within her was vexed and dizzy/ The sense of her soul was as a wheel that whirled./ Home she fared on the smooth wind's wings...." Thus the poetic spirit can evolve as a unified sensibility by withdrawal from society and by communion with Nature.

Several poems were inspired by Tennyson's acceptance of a post in the House of Lords. They explore the theme of the decay in principle and in practice of the State as symbolized in the House of Lords. Contrary to

the consensus of criticism, these poems have a logical place here, for they simply apply to an actual situation ideas found in other poems in the volume. The basic theme is the inevitability of the transfiguring impact of time and change in human experience. In the Twilight of the Lords, time renders the Lords' rule ineffective. In Clear the Way, time and change have corrupted the Lords. Hence, they should clear the way for more effective rule. In A Word to the Country, the English philistine emphasis upon materialism is symbolized by the Lords portrayed as having grown rich at the expense of the laboring poor. In A Word from the Psalmist, an exhortation is given, in Old Testament style, such as a prophet (the poet) would give to the people. Its basic theme is that time has come full tide, to the crest, the most propitious moment for change.

Mrs. Watts-Dunton gives interesting insight into Swinburne's continued interest in babies and in the problems of life after death. According to her, Swinburne kept on his desk "a miniature figure of a new born baby emerging from an eggshell of the tint of terracotta, with an ugly face..., mounted on a wire and wobbles when touched." Of his concern with immortality, she writes:

After Swinburne's death a drawing of Rossetti's was found on the bed: The Question, which represents a young man in the prime of life gazing resolutely into the impenetrable face of the Sphinx.

A youth on the threshold of manhood has fallen
 on his knees by the wayside, bent on solving
 the great riddle, whilst an old man, leaning on
 his staff, is advancing from right, with feeble
 gait to ask^o the Sphinx the great question,
 "Whither?"

Tristram of Lyonesse (1882) is a magnificent sample of the phase of the emerging vision of life in which creative ordering is seen as the way to paradise, to achieving harmonious expansion of soul. Here, the four images of this study are brilliantly used to symbolize the confrontation of the mature Swinburnean hero, the warrior-poet, with his destiny.

In modern scholarship concerned with Tristram, John R. Reed⁹ performs the most brilliantly critical feat on Swinburne's major images as symbols, especially the sun and the plant (flower). On a whole, I agree with Reed's critical appraisal of the poem. However, his view needs amending in three significant ways so as to provide a fuller perspective of Swinburne's wholeness of vision. Thus my view, as will be discernible from the explication of Tristram which follows, provides a logical supplement to Reed's. First, except for his view of the essential transitoriness of life and his passing comment on the death-life tension in experience, Reed minimizes the contradictory aspect of life-involvement on the part of the emerging soul. I believe that Swinburne shows an equal concern for both the positive and the negative sides of experience, for the beauty and the ugliness, for the joy

and the pain -- the black and the white seed -- which make the whole of life. Swinburne's major images symbolize his awareness of the basically ambivalent quality of life.

Second, in Reed's view, Tristram as man is exclusively poet-lover.¹⁰ His equal (if not superior) role as warrior-hero is alluded to only once, in an incidental manner, as an example of Tristram's insight by contrast to Urgan's. We recall Swinburne's own warrior symbol of the ideal man as poet in Thalassius as a "warrior grey with glories more than years" (see page 145). Swinburne's major images reveal his cognizance of the intricate complexity of the emerging soul of Tristram.

Third, although Reed's magnificent elucidation of the function of the sun and the plant (flower) is unsurpassed in modern criticism, it reduces the major symbol in the poem, the sea, to a point of near-inconsequentiality. At this point in Swinburne's poetic development, the sea is his major symbol. Chew and Rosenberg corroborate this view. The sun is the symbol of Transcendent Reality, the Supreme Power and Force of Intelligence affecting that emerging soul of man. Yet again, in terms of Swinburne's view of the essential interrelatedness of Being, the sea and the sun combine to symbolize the basic formative spiritual force in the harmoniously evolving soul. Furthermore, of special importance in Swinburne, Reed does not deal with the symbolic function of the sea as rebirth at all.

The poem is a magnificent synthesis of the myriad ideological and artistic influences exerted upon Swinburne's creative imagination from Atalanta to this point. It is, further, an excellent example of Swinburne's preoccupation during the Putney years, the attempt to gain by retrospection a panoramic perspective on the life-continuum. Contrary to critical consensus, Swinburne makes no attempt to tell a story, although the narrative outline is perceivable. The medieval legend of Tristram and Iseult has remained a popular one for artistic manipulation. Indeed, two of Swinburne's illustrious contemporaries gave poetic renderings of the legend of the "star-crossed lovers," Tennyson in The Last Tournament and Arnold in Tristram and Iseult. A more recent handling is Edward Arlington Robinson's Tristram. Samuel Chew explains the provenance of Swinburne's poem:

Swinburne seems to have made no direct use of either Eilhart or Gottfried, a fact that consorts with his lack of interest in German literature. The Anglo-Norman version he seems to have known. He wisely rejects the Malory-Tennyson form of the death scene in favor of the earlier accounts, but he follows Malory in including the Tale within the general Arthurian theme and from him he borrows several details. The Middle English "Sir Tristram" in Sir Walter Scott's edition was his primary source. In his final treatment of this sublime subject, Swinburne touches sublimity more effectively than either Arnold or Tennyson.

Swinburne himself explains the rationale of Tristram:

My aim was simply to present that story, not diluted and debased as it had been in our time

by other hands, but undefaced by improvement and undeformed by transformation, as it is known to the age of Dante wherever the chronicles of romance found hearing, from Ercildoune to Florence: and not in the epic or romantic form of sustained or continuous narrative, but mainly through a succession of dramatic scenes or pictures with descriptive backgrounds: the scenes being of the simplest construction, dialogue or monologue, without so much as the classically permissive intervention of a third or fourth person. A more plausible objection was brought to bear against 'Tristram of Lyonesse' than that of failure in an enterprise which I never thought of undertaking: the objection of the irreconcilable incongruity between the incidents of the old legend and the meditations on man and nature, life and death, chance and destiny, assigned to a typical hero of chivalrous romance. And this objection might be unanswerable if the slightest attempt had been made to treat the legend as in any possible sense historical or capable of either rational or ideal association with history, such as would assimilate the name and fame of Arthur to the name and fame of any actual and indisputable Alfred or Albert of the future. But the age when these romances actually lived and flourished side by side with the reviving legends of Thebes and Troy, not in the crude bloodless forms of Celtic and archaic fancy but in the ampler and manlier developments of Teutonic and Medieval imagination, was the age of Dante and Chaucer; an age in which men were only too prone to waste their time on the twin sciences of astrology and theology, to expend their energies in the jungles of pseudosophy or the morass of metaphysics. There is surely nothing more incongruous or anachronic in the soliloquy of Tristram after his separation from Iseult than in the lecture of Theseus after the obsequies of Arcite. Both heroes belong to the same impossible age of an imaginary world: and each has an equal right, should it so please his chroniclers, to reason in the pauses of action and philosophise in the intervals of adventure. After all, the active men of the actual age of chivalry were not all of them muscular machines for martial or pacific exercise of their physical functions or abilities.¹²

Denis de Rougemont comments on the general significance of the Tristram myth in Western Culture:

The outstanding find made by European poets, what distinguishes them first and foremost among the writers of the world, what most profoundly expresses the European obsession by suffering as a way to understanding, is the secret of the Tristram myth; passionate love at once shared and fought against, anxious for a happiness it rejects, and magnified in its own disaster -- unhappy mutual love.¹³
(See also Chapter III, especially pages 69-71.)

Artistically, in Tristram, Swinburne remains an exquisitely skillful organicist. All the threads woven into the poem are spun from the Prelude. The four-part pattern of imagery under consideration in this study is used magnificently to create poetic commentary upon the transforming quality of experience in the life of man, symbolized by erotic love. Reed's attitude to the contrary, the sea is the dominant image and unifying symbol throughout the piece. The major scenes are all cast in the presence of the ubiquitous sea. Reed sees the sea primarily as a symbol of death surrounding life and, secondarily, as a symbol of life itself. Not only does the sea serve as an analogue of life, it also symbolizes a force for restoring order (a source of rebirth) after sundering experiences have taken their toll. The sea is a potent character in the poem. It is divisive and restorative. It is the resource for creative ordering. As such, through it the paradoxes of life are resolved into a unified whole. John Rosenberg substantiates my views

concerning artistic synthesis in Tristram and the symbolic use of the theme of eroticism therein:

All that Swinburne learned in composing these [referring to earlier poems] in verbal color he put to much later and more ambitious use in Tristram of Lyonesse (1882)...one of the great erotic poems in English....There are no striking images in Tristram that are not repeated as leit-motifs and thus reabsorbed into the enveloping texture of the verse....From its opening lines to the close, Tristram of Lyonesse is about four lips that become one "burning mouth...." The association of love with death is the underlying theme of almost all Swinburne's major poetry....In this central legend symbolizing the lovesickness of the Western world, Swinburne¹⁴ creates by far his healthiest love poetry.

The Prelude is a paean to love as both a unifying force and as a divisive one. It is a force which permeates all of life. The sun symbolizes the light of First Cause (Love) which stimulated the birth and growth of all things:

Love that is first and last of all things made,
The light that has the living world for shade,
Love that is blood within the veins of time;
That wrought the whole world without strokes of hand,
And with the pulse and motion of his breath
Through the great heart of earth strikes life and death,
The sweet twain chords that make the sweet tune live
Through day and night of things alternative.

The cyclical, paradoxical nature of love and life is suggested through the catalogue of stellarized lovers, each of which represents one of the months in the year, arranged in Western chronological order, from "the rose-red sign of Helen," [January] through the "last love-light and last love-song of the year's [December]/ Gleams like a glorious emerald, Guenevere's." Thus the divisive quality of erotic

love is graphically established in the mind of the reader. The natural cycle of day and night is used to symbolize the passionate involvement in erotic love and the consequent agony of this love.

John R. Reed corroborates my view that in Tristram Love is the pervasively motivating force in the world:

All earthly things are moved by the same primeval force that, whether it be referred to as Fate or God, inevitably proves to be the Love of the "Prelude," the single motive force....Being agents of Love, the lovers are in harmony with the natural powers of generation and are accordingly associated not only with the abstract flame of love, but the real natural sunrise, spring, season, and every-¹⁵ thing indicating the joy [and sadness] of life.

Part I, The Sailing of the Swallow, establishes the motif of the ironic working of Fate through studies in love from the Arthurian legends. Tristram is depicted as a warrior-hero and lover. Iseult is identified with the red-rose of erotic love whose passion is motivated by the energy of the sun:

And her heart sprang in Iseult and she drew
With all her spirit and life the sunrise through,
And through her lips the keen triumphant air
Sea-scented, sweeter than land roses were,
And through her eyes the whole rejoicing east
Sun satisfied.....
So as a fire the mighty morning smote
Throughout her, and incensed with the influent hour
Her whole soul in one great mystical red flower
Burst, and the bud of her sweet spirit broke
Rose-fashion; and the strong spring at a stroke
Thrilled and was cloven, and from the full sheath came
The whole rose of the woman red as flame.

Alas, capricious Fate produces a violent natural storm through which Tristram rows strenuously to avert

catastrophe. This natural, violent agony on the sea may be read as a symbol foreshadowing the violently dissevering impact of the love-draught which follows. Innocently, Iseult offers the drink to Tristram to provide respite from his arduous striving through the storm. She partakes of the drink first. Utter calm following the storm is the atmospheric symbol for impending doom. It is the aura which envelops the sharing of the potion. The artistically effective repetition of the phrase, "for the last time," gives an ominous, yet harmoniously appropriate, tone to the transition from innocence to experience. After Tristram and Iseult share the potion, their eyes reflect the storm in their souls:

And all their life changed in them for they quaffed
Death;

- - - - -

And shuddering with eyes full of fear and fire
And heart-stung with a serpentine desire
He turned and saw the terror in her eyes

- - - - -

Their Galahault was the cup...
And they saw dark, though still the unsunken sun
Far through fine rain shot fire into the south;
And their four lips became one burning mouth.

Here one is reminded of the hell within and of the Cup of the Christ which becomes everyman's cup of dole. In addition, Swinburne still possesses all the passionate artistic intensity of the poet of Poems and Ballads, first series. In "the cup" and the "burning mouth" one is reminded of the Venus-Dolores myth as a symbol of the

consuming fire of erotic love. Here the fire is a darker manifestation of the light of the sun.

In Part II, The Queen's Pleasance, the love-bond between Tristram and Iseult takes on additional tragic dimensions. This is achieved through the portrayal of King Mark as being spiritually and emotionally unsuited for the red rose of love symbolized by Iseult. His world is presented as a twilight one:

Yet little fire there burnt upon the brand,
And way-worn seemed he with life's wayfaring.
So between shade and sunlight stood the king,
And his face changed nor yearned not for his bride;
But fixed between mild hope and patient pride
Abode what gift of rare or lesser worth
This day might bring to all his days on earth.

One of the most graphically appropriate scenes in Tristram appears in this part. It is the bower of bliss as a setting for solace through love after Tristram rescues Iseult from the minstrel Palamede. The natural interwoven lattice which forms the bower is reminiscent of both Spencer's Bower of Acrasia and Milton's Bower in Paradise Lost. The structure of the bower itself symbolizes the crosscurrents in the sea of life. Since, at this point, the love-bond of Tristram and Iseult symbolizes a most elemental kind of love relationship, it is appropriate that Nature, made fruitful by the love of the sun, provides a haven for the expression of this love. This is reminiscent of some of the agricultural myths: "And each day blessed them out of heaven above,/ And each night crowned

them with the crown of love." All of Nature seems electrified in harmonious attestation to the vibrance of this love:

The heaven of night waxed fiery with their love,
Or earth beneath were moved at heart and root
To burn as they, to burn and bring forth fruit.

- - - - -

And all that hour unheard the nightingales
Clamoured, and all the woodland soul was stirred,

- - - - -

And the soft sea thrilled with blind hope of light.

Also, in Part II, in the utterance of Tristram which becomes the springboard for his serious meditation upon life and love, Swinburne uses his favorite combination of sun-sea imagery as symbol of the Tristram-Iseult love-bond. This utterance prepares for the reflective, philosophic mood in Part III:

And with the lovely laugh of love that takes
The whole soul prisoner ere the whole sense wakes,
Her lips for love's sake bade love's will be done.
And all the sea lay subject to the sun.

Reed says of this passage:

It not only verifies the association of Tristram and Iseult with daylight, sun, and dawn, but also stipulates the irrevocable progress of change and fate in the world, which leads on from fiery youth to the twilight and silver of a less passionate age.¹⁶

In part III, Tristram has withdrawn from society for communion with Nature, symbolized by the sea, where he soliloquizes upon the meaning of life and the place of love in the experience of man. He reflects upon the cyclical nature of life which brings death after a series

of births and deaths in the experiential continuum. Since Tristram is first a warrior, he has been able to sporadically sublimate the erotic experience. But now, at sundawn, he is symbolized by the plant yearning for freedom of growth: "Yet his strength in leaf/ And all the rose of his sweet spirit in flower." The sea becomes an analogue for a life which is permeated by divisive forces. Yet the indomitable spirit of man presses onward:

Ah, and ye
 Light washing weeds, blind waifs of a dull sea,
 Do ye so thirst and hunger and aspire,
 Are ye so moved with such long strong desire
 In the ebb and flow of your sad life, and strive
 Still toward some end ye shall not see alive?

The anguishing soul of Tristram seeks solace in the transcendent spirit within the universe as he cries out, "O strong sun! O sea!" in his recognition of irreversible natural law. It is law which is not subject to modification for the convenience and comfort of individual man:

How should the skies change and the stars and time
 Break the large concord of the years that chime,
 Answering, as wave to wave beneath the moon
 That draws them shoreward mar the whole tide's tune
 For the instant foam's sake on one turning wave --
 For man's sake that is grass upon a grave?

As the inspiriting wind blows gently over the sea, it reflects the azure purity of the heaven, and Tristram is purged of old griefs through spiritual rebirth. He has no regrets for the divisive impact of life upon his soul. Rather, he accepts the essentially paradoxical nature of life for its chastening of the human soul. Thus imbibing

strength of spirit and developing resolute will from his communion with the sea, Tristram seems in harmony with all Nature:

So seemed all things to love him, and his heart
In all their joy of life to take such part,
That with the live earth and the living sea
He was as one that communed mutually.

Thus spiritually fortified for the renewed battle of life, Tristram sails to Brittainy where Iseult of the white hands is bedazzled by him:

And lo, the man's face burned upon her eyes
As though she had turned them on the naked sun:
And through her limbs she felt sweet passion run
As fire that flowed from her face and beat
Soft through stirred veins on even to her hands and feet
As all her body were one heart of flame
Athrob with love and wonder and sweet shame.

The ironic impact of the name "Iseult" upon the heart of Tristram transforms his sad expression to one of enigmatically flushed animation. Iseult erroneously attributes this to "this name of mine was worn by one long dead/ Some sister therewithal...." The sense of irony deepens as Tristram sings of his love for another Iseult. The magnetic magic of the moment precipitates an impulsive act (reminiscent of Atalanta) which is followed by his marriage to this Iseult:

On her fragrant hand his lips were fire,
And their two hearts were as a trembling lyre
Touched by the keen wind's kiss with brief desire
And music shuddering at its own delight.

Alas, the capriciousness of Fate once more activates the crosscurrents of life in the epiphanic scene of Tristram's

ring sliding to the floor, as omen of broken faith. Consequently, the marriage of Tristram and Iseult of the white hands is never consummated. This is a symbol of the violation of Natural law which inevitably results in disorder. Time hastens the disorder in the transformation of the virgin-wife into the embodiment of diabolical hate. She prays to become the instrument of God's revenge by destroying Tristram. She becomes a symbol of incarnate evil, a perversion of the earlier love-fire within. Thus Iseult violates, further, the natural law of her being as a woman and wife.

Reprieve from the impending outcome of the cross-currents now operative within life is provided in Part V, the lament of Iseult of Tintagel for her estranged lover. In a blasphemous prayer she deprecates herself, exalts Tristram, and beseeches God to accept her soul as a sacrifice to mitigate Tristram's share in their sin against God and society:

Out of thy sight in the unseen hell where I [another
Go gladly, going alone, so thou on high echo of
Lift up his soul and love him -- Ah, Lord, Lord, the
Shalt thou love as I love him? Faust legend]

Artistically, this section is one of the most magnificently rendered in the entire poem. As Iseult's soliloquy continues, Swinburne uses wind-sea imagery to emphasize the chaotically divisive impact of erotic love upon the soul of man. In Iseult's lament, a two-line varied refrain highlights through pathetic fallacy the symbol of universal

disordering: "And as a full field charging was the sea,/ And as the cry of slain men was the wind." In this refrain, God is always identified with the sea, and man with the wind. The sea becomes a symbol for disruptive ambiguities in life. Man's soul anguishes under the heaviness of time and circumstance:

This stormy strand of life, ere soil were set,
Had haply felt love's arms about it yet
Yea, ere death's bark put off to seaward night
With many a grief have brought me one delight.

- - - - -

And as man's anguish clamouring cried the wind,
And as God's anger answering rang the sea.

Iseult expresses her love for Tristram in sea-wind imagery:

"I loved him as the sea-wind loves the sea/ To rend and ruin it only and waste, but he,/ As the sea loves a sea-bird loved he me."

Unlike Tristram, who seems to accept the inevitability of the workings of universal law, Iseult prays for reunion with Tristram: "Let all else, all thy wilt of evil be/ But no doom, none dividing him and me." With this momentous request, nature reflects her chaotic state of soul:

By this was heaven stirred eastward and there came
Up through the ripple, a labouring light-like flame;
And dawn trembling still and grey with fear,
Looked hardly forth, a face of heavier cheer
Then one which grief or dread yet half enshrouds,
Wild-eyed and wan across the cleaving clouds.

As Iseult turns from the sea, her eyes are riveted on Tristram's dog, Hodoun, and she bursts forth in anguishing

tears. The spiritual renewal which she seeks is not as thoroughgoing as Tristram's, for "the night passed from her as a chain might fall/ But yet the heart within her, half undone,/ Wailed, and was loth to let her see the sun." By contrast, ironically, the dog symbolizes fidelity in love for Iseult whereas the ring symbolizes broken faith for Tristram.

In Part VI, following the seasonal cycle as Spring evolves into Summer, the last encounter with love is experienced by Tristram and Iseult. Picking up the threads spun in the Prelude, the setting for this encounter, appropriately by the sea, is in Camelot. The sensuous delights which are the focus of emphasis here are intensified in their signification by the repetition of the word "sense." All of Nature seems to join in a song of beauteous harmony as Tristram and Iseult give themselves to love at Joyous Gard by the sea:

Day by day
 The mighty moorlands and the sea walls grey,
 The brown bright waters of green fells that sing
 One song to rocks and flowers and bird on wing,
 Beheld the joy and glory that they had,
 Passing, and how the whole world made them glad,
 And their great love was mixed with all things great,
 As life being lovely, and yet being strong like fate.

The catharses of previous separations have endowed Tristram and Iseult with spiritual stamina which enables them to accept the prospect of divisive forces in their lives. Thus in Joyous Gard is reflected the mythical symbol of the withdrawal of the hero and his subsequent re-emergence as

a stronger character. The lovers are no longer troubled by the knowledge of the inevitability of change. Peace of soul comes as they imbibe the essence of the spirit of the sea. Here the sea is a symbol of life itself, with all its fascinating yet spirit-sundering profundities and ambiguities:

They, watching till the day should wholly die,
Saw the far sea sweep to the far grey sky,
Saw the long sands sweep to the long grey sea,
And night made one sweet mist of moor and lea,
And only far off shore the foam gave light,
And life in them sank silent as the night.

This quiet change from day to night symbolizes the transfigured souls of the lovers. They are now serene. This atmosphere magnificently foreshadows the ending of the poem.

In Part VII, The Wife's Vigil, by contrast to the serene ending of the previous section, Iseult in Brittainy exhibits a spirit torn by strife between love and hate. This is the first step in the transmutation of Iseult's sweet innocence into prideful wrath. It is self-conceived wrath as the only fit instrument for wreaking God's vengeance against Tristram:

For that sweet spirit of old which made her sweet
Was parched with blasts of thought as flowers with heat
But scorched her soul with yearning keen as hate
And dreams that left her wrath disconsolate.

By contrast to the earlier quiet emergence of night from day, here the day and the night slay each other with brute force. Here, too, Nature reflects the spirit of the

tortured soul of the rejected wife in her vision of Joyous Gard:

As though God's wrath should burn up sin with shame,
The incensed red God of deepening heaven grew flame;
The sweet green spaces of the soft low sky
Faded as fields that withering wind leaves dry:
The sea's was like a doomsman's blasting breath
From lips afoam with ravenous lust of death.

By contrast to Iseult the beloved's prayer for Tristram's salvation through her self-sacrifice, Iseult the rejected prays that she might be the instrument of revenge. Thus, she has alienated herself from the community of humanity by emptying her soul of all sympathetic compassion and understanding. Indeed, she becomes a fit ironic symbol of death in her conception of her relationship to Tristram:

But this mine hour I look for is thy last.

- - - - -

And like the sea's heart waxed her heart that heard
the wind
Strong, dark and bitter, till the keen wind's word
Seemed of her own soul spoken, and the breath
All round her not of darkness but of death.

In Part VIII, The Last Pilgrimage, the refrain, "the last time," set in motion in Part I, appears here as a leitmotif in emphasizing the last days of the lovers at Joyous Gard and in foreshadowing their death. King Mark's physical gloom reflects spiritual turmoil: "...and his eyes/ Were cloudier than the gradual wintering skies/ That closed about the wan wild land and sea.../ And his life grew a smouldering flame." Mark and Iseult of the white hands are both identified with the flame of evil.

Separated from Iseult the beloved, Tristram turns thoughts to combat with the hardiness of the ideal warrior-hero projected in Part I:

Blithe waxed his hope toward battle, and high desire
 To pluck once more as out of circling fire
 Fame, the broad flower whose breath makes death more
 sweet
 Than roses crushed by love's receding feet.

Now Tristram is spiritually equipped for the victorious encounter with Urgan, who seems to symbolize universal evil. His eyes were "night and flame" whereas Tristram's were "like the fiery dawn." The subduing of Urgan invests Tristram with the stature of a savior, for "the Cliffs reverberate from his monstrous fall/ Rang, and the land by Tristram's grace was free." (This image of Tristram as warrior-hero reenforces my view regarding Reed's reading.) Characteristic of the cyclical nature of life, however, as Tristram sails, his spiritual being is thrown into tumult. His gazing into the sea provides no relief. Suddenly an alter-ego (in name only) appears soliciting aid from the renowned warrior. However, before Tristram is spiritually equipped for this task, he plunges into the sea for new insight, for spiritual rebirth commensurate to the feat at hand. The magnetic, fascinating sea fills him with a sense of absolute freedom. Only here can he feel the unity of life (symbolized in the mating of the sea and the sun) in all things, which gives his spirit the needed cohesiveness for the next challenge. His soul is attuned to universal harmony:

And all the life that moved him seemed to aspire,
 As all the sea's life toward the sun...
 ...till each glad limb became
 A note of rapture in the tune of life.

- - - - -
 And like the sun his heart rejoiced in him
 - - - - -

And passion of a new begotten son
 Between the live sea and the living sun.

The refrain, "for the last time," appears in this part also.

Its use increases the mood of melancholia foreshadowing
 the approaching tragic twin deaths of Tristram and Iseult.

Part IX, The Sailing of the Swan, emphasizes the
 working out of the universal law of Fate. Fate is manifest
 through the crosscurrents of life which are experienced in
 a series of lives and deaths:

But all things fain alike to die and live
 In pulse and lapse of tides alternative

- - - - -
 Till birth and death be one in sight of life;
 - - - - -

Fate whose law shall live when life bids earth farewell,
 Whose justice hath for shadows heaven and hell
 Whose judgement into no god's hand is given.

In the long vigil of awaiting the return of the
Swan, Tristram's anguishing soul languishes between hope and
 despair. Iseult the rejected, watching his agony, exults
 in her power of revenge. She perverts the symbolic meaning
 of the black and white flags, and Tristram dies from des-
 pair as she calls out: "'Ay, the ship comes surely; but
 her sail is black' / And darkness closed as iron round his
 head! / And smitten through the heart lay Tristram dead."

The symbolic kiss of death from Part I is actualized here. As Iseult the beloved stoops to kiss Tristram: "Their four lips become one silent mouth." This is in marked contrast to the first kiss, which ignited the flame of their love as their "four lips became one burning mouth." This flame symbolizes the consuming fire of erotic love.

At last the lovers are free from human bondage, of enslavement to sensuous experience, symbolizing passionate involvement in life generally. They are released from the whirling wheel of time in the peace of death in the sepulchre of the sea. The ironic capstone of the piece is seen in the revelation of the truth concerning the precipitation of the erotic love experience between Tristram and Iseult. This revelation comes after the twin deaths of the lovers. They were "playthings" of capricious Fate. King Mark makes symbolic redress for the tragedy in the erection of a chapel for their tomb. Appropriately, the chapel overlooks the sea. The king has forgiven in the dead what he could not forgive in the living. In time, with the inevitable mutability of all things, the sea encroaches upon the land (as in The North Sea) and draws the chapel into her enigmatically profound depths. At last the lovers find eternal peace:

But peace they have that none may gain who live,
And rest above them that no love can give,
And over them, while death and life shall be,
The light and sound and darkness of the sea.

John Rosenberg gives the following elucidation of the ending:

Swinburne concluded Tristram of Lyonesse with a final verse paragraph that, to my knowledge, has no precedent in any version of the legend. King Mark builds the lovers a stone chapel by the sea's edge, and in their death the lovers undergo a second doom. For the waves shatter the chapel and the sea closes over their uncoffined bones. Fulfilled love¹⁷ in Swinburne pays the penalty of double death.

I accept Rosenberg's view only partially. One must be ever mindful of Swinburne's awareness of the paradoxical nature of all existence. Consequently, the shattering of the chapel may be read as a symbol of the release of the lovers to immortal freedom in the sea, the freedom for which the human soul yearns.

Thus, at first the sea symbolizes the source of life and love. Later it is a source of spiritual rebirth in the cyclical life continuum. Finally, it is a symbol of man's final home, a sublimely "sweet sepulchre." Also, the sea is a symbol of order at least partially restored in Nature after the tragedy of Tristram and Iseult evolves to its inevitable conclusion. Chew says of the closing of the poem: "Swinburne's quiet close suggests beautifully the restoration of the poise and norm of nature when the tragedy has worked itself out."¹⁸

In Tristram, Swinburne exhibits the qualities of the mature artist indeed. The artistry is discernible in the magnificent synthesis of ideological and artistic

influences affecting Swinburne the poet (treated in Chapter II of this study). In the use of the sea as resonant force, Swinburne is magnificent! All the major themes are here, from eroticism in Atalanta and in Poems and Ballads, first series, through Tristram's exploration of life as a series of births and deaths (using the archetypal myth of rebirth) until the final release in death where "death is dead." Further, Tristram dramatizes the basic theme of the suffering soul that actively accepts the challenge of life. This is the soul which retains or regains heroic stature as did Tristram in his periodic (cyclical) withdrawals from society, communion with the sea for chastening and for spiritual rebirth, and a subsequent reentry into the arena of the battle of life.

The life-experience in Tristram is explored to the rhapsodic accompaniment of the fascinating yet enigmatic sea, "the confluence and refluence of the sea." The musical structure of the poem is the organically informing principle of the art therein. The principal artistic technique is that of contrast, in mood, character, situation, and of rhythmically recurrent motifs. In the poem, Life itself is symbolized by Love, a form of music. Tristram is a musician who celebrates the harmony of expansion through love as a significant aspiration of man. Reed attests to this view of the art of Tristram:

Swinburne's music is the harmony of the natural world engendered by the omnific power of Love.... Swinburne, having composed an elaborate song to love in which the creation, its contradictions and joys, is seen as a supreme music, and in which love's hero is a consummate musician, who not only sang, but lived and was that music, hoped that he, too, by assuming the role of the hero's poet-lover, would through him, share in his ultimate immortality. By yielding out his life "to make this dead life live/ Some days of [his] own," Swinburne, like Merlin, hearing in his heart the mystic song of nature sung by Nimue, aspired perhaps through his own song to be

made for love's sake as a part
Of that far singing, and the life thereof
Part of that life that feeds the world with love.

In addition, Reed states: "Recurrent words are an adjunct technique to convey the philosophical import of the poem. The real unity of the poem resides in its intellectual pattern."²⁰ This view is reminiscent of Nicolson's estimate of Atalanta.

One of the principal tensions which create the tragic situation in the poem is that between the symbol of erotic love as spiritual necessity and the opposition of this kind of love to social sanctions, symbolized by the Church and the Chivalric code. Society, symbolized by Mark and Iseult of Brittainy, separates the lovers and stultifies this kind of intensity of involvement, whereas Nature, especially the sea, seems to sympathize with the erotic spiritual need. Thus, again, one sees the famous Swinburnean contrast of the values of society and the sea. The freedom to express the love of Tristram and Iseult of

Tintagel is always placed in a setting in close proximity to the sea. As a symbol of the transfiguring effect of such love upon the soul, de Rougemont says:

The ending of the myth shows that passion in an askesis [religious preparation and training], and that as such it is all the more effectively in opposition to earthly life,²¹ and that, as desire, it simulates fatality.

John Cassidy's 1964 reading of Tristram reveals a flagrant disregard for what emerges from the text of the poem. Ironically, he implies a contradiction of his first assumption, in his concluding remark:

The most serious flaw in Tristram lies in the fact that the love passion appears to be purely sensual. The lovers desire each other's physical being, nothing more. There is no tenderness, no deep sympathy, no delight in companionship -- nothing of the spiritual grandeur that raises the love of man and woman to the sublime. Of course, Swinburne could have excused this fault on the ground that the love was caused by the philter, which inspired Tristram and Iseult with insatiable physical longing for each other. But the events of the story imply that this was a love beyond the senses. It was more than sensual love that impelled a dying Tristram to ask Iseult to come to him; it was certainly more than sensual love that brought her over the sea to his deathbed.²²

One must recognize that the purpose of the potion was to insure conjugal bliss for Mark and Iseult. He is portrayed to symbolize this need. Thus the first logical manifestation of love between Tristram and Iseult is one which reveals the erotic potency of the potion. Too, artistically logical are the settings for this manifestation of love, amidst the generative fecundity of Nature. However, nowhere

in Swinburne is erotic love an act significant in itself. It is always a complex, symbolic act. The relationship between Tristram and Iseult constantly reminds one of the complex nature of Tristram as warrior-hero, minstrel-philosopher, and lover. He is continually concerned with exploring deeper meanings in life, the philosophy of which Iseult "drank lightly deep." Even in the physical union, as in The Queen's Pleasance and in Joyous Gard, one is aware that more than physical nature is involved: "Each hung on each with panting lips, and felt/ Sense into sense and spirit into spirit melt." And Iseult anguishes thus: "O thou my soul and spirit and breath to me,/ O light, life, love!" Within the three years of separation, the lengthy plaintive laments of Tristram and Iseult present their souls in the throes of emotional catharses in which Tristram thinks of himself primarily as a warrior-hero. Iseult, on the other hand, conceives of herself as an atonement sufficient to mitigate Tristram's sin. In Tristram, then, Swinburne explores his basic theme of the transfiguring impact of time and change upon the anguishing soul of man. The tension between the physical and the spiritual attributes of man symbolized in the images of the sea, the wind, and the sun creates a synthesis of contrarities in human nature, a reunifying of all forces in life. Thus the yearning in the final scenes are of both flesh and spirit -- they are one, the wholeness of man, Swinburne's "sense and spirit."

The dominant image in Tristram is the sea. It is a symbol in its own right and also works in combination with the wind, the sun, and the flower. It is intricately complex in its symbolic signification. It is the medium of periodic spiritual rebirth for the torn soul of man. It is the source of structurable matter for the artist. It is an analogue of life with its unifying and divisive forces. It is man's final home. Additional images are related to the sea in amplifying the unfolding poetic vision of life. Yet each has symbolic functions of its own as well, thereby emphasizing further the extremely complex and essentially paradoxical nature of life. The sun is the life-giving force, the love-inspiring force in man and Nature. This is dramatically highlighted in the images of the passionate yearning of the sea for the sun and reflects the impact of erotic love upon the life of man. Also, by association with the year, the cyclical nature of life is also symbolized in the catalogue of stellarized lovers. The alternating pattern of life, the recurrent life-death-rebirth pattern, suggested by the seasonal cycle reenforces the concept of the ambiguous nature of life reflected in the rhythmical alternation of situations, studies and moods. The poem begins with love's vitality at sea. It ends with rest from the agonies of love, in the sea. Thus the sea symbol unifies the other symbols, which work through the image of love in life to

death and immortality. Iseult of Tintagel is symbolized as the red rose of erotic love. Iseult of Brittainy is hate as the dark side of erotic love. The fire of the consuming passion of love is related to the sun as giver of life, energy, and inspirer of love. It is the fire of love in *Tristram* and Iseult of Tintagel. It is hate in Mark and Iseult of Brittainy. The sea and the sun unify as transcendent symbols for reordering the sundered human soul. The sun is also the power for releasing the song of the poet. The wind symbolizes mutability under the impact of time. It suggests the constant shift from pleasure to pain, from joy to sorrow, from life to death. It brings the storm and the gentle breeze of inspiration. The wind and the sea also combine to symbolize the chaotic effect of experience upon the spirit of man. Thus the symbols have ambiguous symbolic function here. This ambivalence is justified since the principal technique is the unfolding of the vision of life through contrasting studies in the basic human passions. Thus the mutability of the symbols suggests strikingly the mutability of life itself. Such a method reenforces the essentially organic nature of Swinburne's art.

In addition to his elucidation of two of Swinburne's major images as symbols, Reed significantly isolates the clothes image in *Tristram*. This accords with my view (see pages 137-138) that in this phase of the Swinburnean vision

the universe may be equated with the Carlylean "Nature as the garment of god." Reed says:

The suggestion that Tristram and Iseult are incarnations of Love, "clothed" or "veiled" with human forms, that they are immortal spirits clad in flesh, could be simply a variation upon a traditional Christian concept, but Swinburne has provided a clearer explanation of the nature of the spirit which they embody....All the material world is merely raiment, a veil covering that ~~some~~ omnific power, and all the natural world is a melodious song of love characterized by Nimue in her variety of forms.²³

The sea is the pervasively central symbol in the poetry indigenous to this phase of Swinburne's vision of the life of man. Here, the sea becomes and remains the definitive symbol of structurable matter. Thus it is a composite symbol for all of life. Swinburne revels in the discovery of the sea as the primary symbol for creative ordering unique unto his own poetic sensibility. The sea is a complex, ambivalent symbol here and elsewhere in Swinburne's poetry. However, from Thalassius onward it serves as a primary reservoir of unstructured matter, energy, from which the poet creates his vision of life. On the other hand, the sea remains a symbol of ideas and attitudes toward life as it unites with the sun, the plant, and the wind to unfold a unified vision. Too, the sea is pervasively a symbol of liberty for the human spirit in Swinburne. In On the Cliffs, it is "the sea that sings and breathes." In the Garden of Cymodoche, it is the Mother image, a symbol of the essence of being of the poetic

spirit. It is hailed as the first love of the poet-figure through whose grace he imbibes the "sense of all the sea." This suggests the essential unity of life. In By the North Sea, the sea symbolizes the ambivalent nature of life and of man, for "hers [the sea's] is the pulse of our veins." In her saving capacity, at a distance, "She is pure...;/ And her sweetness endureth forever." In her devastating capacity, the sea "hath spoiled and devoured, and her honor/ Is this, to be shamed by her spoil." In Tristram, the life-experience is set against the background of the sea. It is the source of spiritual conversion for the restoration of the torn soul of man. In A Midsummer Holiday, the sea is a haven of eternal solace from the divisive forces of life, a solace for which the anguishing soul yearns: "For here is the presence adored of me/ Here my desire is at rest and at home."

The plant generally symbolizes the organic evolving of the poetic soul and a source of inspiration to the poet. The former function is seen in The Song for the Centenary of Walter Savage Landor. The latter symbolic function is perceivable in the Garden of Cymodoche as the "secret flower" of poetic inspiration, "the loveliest thing that shines against the sun." In the Dark Month, the flower is the child as "heaven around us."

The wind is ambivalently the inspiriting force of song and the blast of death. In On the Cliffs, the wind

wafts the Sapphic song into the heart of the poet. In the Garden of Cymodoche, "Here of all thy windy ways the wildest/ With deaths enmeshed all round." In A Midsummer Holiday, the ambivalent mutability of life is suggested in "winds that shape and lift and shift."

The sun is the symbol of the supreme intelligence in the universe as source of life, love, and insight, both in the form of reason and of creative expression. In On the Cliffs, the poetic spirit is identified with the sun, for it is one "whose body and soul are parcel of the sun." Also, here the sun symbolizes the transcendent power for releasing the poet's song: "Man's live breath/ Put all the light of life and love and death...." In the Garden of Cymodoche, man gets his inspiration and vision for harmonious development from the sun, for "concordant as it blends.../ ...sound of clear light in me." In Off Shore, all the earth yearns for the inspiriting, cohesive power of the sun's love, "in the sense of the spirit/ That breathes from his [the sun's] heart." In Evening on the Broads, the sunset symbolizes the state of suspension of the divided soul whose world is a "prison-like wall." A sunless world, here, is a world bereft of love and of vision. In this atmosphere, the sea cannot inspire, for "there is no transparent rapture, a molten music of colour;/ No translucent love taken and given of the day."

The four images unite to symbolize universal forces which inspire creative expression and which insure harmonious evolvment to the Swinburnean god-man who can feel his at-oneness with the physical order. This attitude is suggested in Part VIII of A Midsummer Holiday: "Wind that shapes and lifts and shifts them [hearts] bids perpetual memory play/ Over dreams and in and out of deeds and thoughts which seem to wear/ Light that leaps and runs and revels through the spraying flames of spray." In Movement IV of By the North Sea, "We are the wind's and the sun's and the water's/ Elect of the Sea."

Of the many symbolic contexts in this phase of Swinburne's vision of life, in which the four images are fused in their functions as forces which fashion the soul of man, none is more effectively handled artistically than the combination which is used to contrast the values of the land to those of the sea. At this point in Swinburne's vision, the right choice of values is a pivotal concern. Man has found the ideas and the means of expressing them creatively. The land (earth as mother of the flower) is identified with society. On the one hand, society offers security and conventionalized concepts through institutions, external sanctions. On the other hand, these sanctions restrain, constrict, and quell the freedom of emergence for which the human soul yearns. The sea is a mother image also (mother of the seaflower). Although she offers

freedom of development for the soul attuned to the pulse of the Universal Soul, she alienates man from the community of other human beings. Thus a choice or a compromise is imminent for the soul which courageously confronts his destiny as symbolized by the battle of experience in life. In On the Cliffs, the disruption of universal harmony by Sappho's suicidal leap has left the land unfruitful as, "Fiercely the gaunt woods to the grim soil cling." It is an earth (society) which provided Sappho with a "sleepless burning life" which she escaped by a plunge into the eternal solace of the sea. In Evening on the Broads, the sea offers an active, dynamic, creative way of life. The land offers a passive, constricting way. In By the North Sea, the land is metaphorically personified as the face of man: "Pale and troubled still with change of cares." The "rich green lawns" inland are contrasted to the ghostlike appearance of the sea-torn shore: "But the grasp of the sea is as iron;/ Laid hard on the land." Yet in her fascinating allurements she is as pure "as the wind and the sun." The sea is deceptive, for she has "spoiled and devoured." In A Midsummer Holiday, the earth is a symbol of man's protection "in winter," in the strife of life. The song of the sea lures man to rest in her bosom in the image of a mother singing a lullaby to her infant. One is reminded here of Whitman's Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking. Les Casquets provides a resolution to

the dilemma of the attraction of the land (society) versus the sea in favor of the sea and its place in creative expression. The divisiveness of a society whose whirring wheels of confusion rent the soul was rejected for a return to the sea: "Where only the heart may receive in it only/ The love of the sea."

Several additional images related to the four major ones are used in this phase of the vision to reveal the way of the soul to paradise through creative expression. The bird, like the nightingale and the sea-mew, both symbols of the poetic soul and the yearning for transcendence, is related to the sea and the sun. Fire as a manifestation of energy from the sun is used to symbolize the passion of creativity and the sword to suggest insight of poetic utterance. Rock, cave and tower imagery suggests faith, imaginative creativity, and transcendent insight. Religious imagery is used to suggest Immanentism and the cyclical nature of life in the myth of rebirth. In On the Cliffs, Sappho is called "Song's priestess, Love's priestess." In Birthday Ode for the Anniversary Festival of Victor Hugo, the poet is "rearsen upon us now,/ The glory given thee for grace to give." In Songs for the Centenary of Walter Savage Landor, the poet "bade the spirit of man regenerate." Thus the resurrected soul symbolizes the means of redemption for the human spirit.

Thus in the process of creative expression as a path to paradise man must become the creator-god who goes to the primeval energy as substance of the universe to create an harmonious order. He must feel a sympathetic bond of reciprocity between the Immanent god-spirit, within his own soul and in the manifold as well. He must feel his "at-oneness" with Nature. This feeling of unity amidst diversity provides a sense of stability, of permanence, within context of time and change. This kind of imaginative identification with the Oversoul provides a means for reunifying a sensibility fragmented by the divisive forces within society. Thus man must become his own redeemer. There is no other. Salvation for the soul of man comes only through the synthesizing power of the way of the creative imagination. This is the way to paradise! The internal paradise which is man's only means of salvation is the subject of the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER VI

A PARADISE WITHIN -- THE WAY OF THE STOIC

The preceding chapter explored the path of creative expression as a means through which the evolving soul of man might grow to its fullest potential. This stage in Swinburne's unfolding vision of man confronting the eternal battle of life culminated the phase of exploration, discovery, and analysis of life on the part of the questing soul. This chapter will explore the final phase of the Swinburnean vision of life. It is a stage in which the thinking man evaluates the earlier discoveries and accepts his "painful existence" as a necessary stage in the evolving nobler stature of his soul. It is the regenerative process necessary for salvation. In creating a paradise within, the principle of "at-oneness" with nature remains a unifying principle in this final phase of development. Swinburne's vision here gains perspective through his ability to synthesize Buckley's four faces of Time: past, present, future, and eternity. Indeed, the continuity of history is symbolized in the evolution of the soul of

man from innocence to experience and finally to mature wisdom in accepting the Divine Imperative according to the principle of his nature. Swinburne's vision reveals the innocence of the soul symbolized by the child. The experience of the soul is symbolized by the courageous warrior who joyfully confronts the challenge of the battle of life. The ideally evolved soul is symbolized by the poet who has the capacity to create an imaginative world whose values transcend those of frustratingly divisive mundane existence. The quality of acceptance of duty on the part of Swinburne's warrior-hero determines the nature of the legacy inherited by future generations. For the ideal Swinburnean god-man, death brings solace through release from the "pain of existence" to eternal peace through reabsorption into Hertha, the universal soul. For such a harmoniously evolved spirit, immortality is achieved through the indestructible creativity of his expression of life.

Swinburne's final vision reflects the major aspects of Stoicism:¹ It reveals a vivid realization of the universe as a whole, a system consisting of interrelated and mutually necessary parts. It reflects deep sympathy with Nature, and clear insight into Nature's workings and processes. The "reign of law" in Nature which science postulates is the very keystone of Stoicism. It unwearily insists upon Character as the supreme concern for man.

'Let men see and witness a true man, a life conformed to nature.' It recognized that human nature demanded some kind of religion, a belief in some kind of god. The Stoics oscillated between pantheism and monotheism and seemed not to feel the need of an absolutely definite conception. The idea had for them ethical or moral, as well as intellectual content, so that the nature of man that craved for or demanded a Deity was his whole nature. Stoicism displays a high estimate of human nature as partaking of the divine. 'Each man's mind is god, an efflux of deity.' The noble utterances of Epictetus exhort man to his duty as a rational being to live in conscious union with the Supreme and to joyfully serve Him. For Swinburne the God-spirit is immanent within man and within nature. Only in proportion as the mind can imaginatively perceive the unity of Being symbolized by the self and nature can the soul expand harmoniously to its highest potential.

Swinburne's vision uses Nature as norm for moral and aesthetic purposes.² Basically, Swinburne's attitude toward Nature reflects the tradition of Shaftsburian enthusiasm for nature as revealed in the famous "Rhapsody" from the Moralists:

O glorious Nature!....O
Mighty Nature! Wise Substitute
Of Providence! Impowered Creativeness!
O Thou empowering Deity, Supreme
Creator! Thee I invoke, and Thee
alone adore...being convinced
that 'tis a real Self, drawn out,

and copy'd from another principal
 and original Self I endeavor to be really
 one with it, and comfortable
 to it....All Nature's wonders
 serve to excite and perfect this
 Idea of their Author....Forms of
 Deity seem to present themselves
 and appear more manifest in these
 sacred Silvan Scenes.³

However, Swinburne's concept of the immanence of Divinity (Hertha) enfolds both beauty and ugliness, life and death, the great ambivalences, ambiguities and contrarities in life. These antinomies in life are the "worms" in the bark of the tree Yggdrasil. They are the "pain of existence," the "redemptive suffering" (the charismatic mystique of Martin Luther King), the necessary friction for the emergence of the nobler stature of the soul of man. Thus Swinburne's philosophy seems more realistic than that of Shaftsbury. Yet it may logically be assigned to the general Shaftsburian tradition for the enthusiastic embracing of Nature as Norm. W. K. Clifford's concept of the place of Nature in the life of man is appropriately applicable to Swinburne's theory that affinity with Nature promotes harmonious emergence of the soul of man. Of Nature in nineteenth century poetry, Clifford states:

Nature is represented as the hierophant, the guiding priest by whom the faithful were initiated into the divine secrets one by one. The History of mankind is conceived as such a mystic progress under the guidance of divine Nature.

Swinburne insists that if the soul would be capable of creating its internal paradise and thereby securing its

salvation, it must maintain its integral spiritual bond with Nature, with the Universal soul (Hertha) from which it derived, in which it is perennially rooted and to which it will return. Joseph Beach comments perceptively upon the place of Nature in the Swinburnean vision. This place makes possible the creation of the paradise within. Man must redeem himself. He is his own God! There is no other! Beach says:

Swinburne is even severer than Wordsworth in his desire to draw from elemental things no false comfort but the strength that comes from fronting actualities....In nature there is no special privilege, no intervention in favor of one creature at the expense of another, but all the elements and creatures are subject alike to "the actual earth's equalities"....It is with something like enthusiasm that he embraces the world of actuality....He recognizes the soul as that in man's being which has the most enduring reality and significance. But he does not conceive the soul as an entity capable of existence independently of material conditions. The individual soul has its definition by reference to the cause of humanity and the "lamp-lit race" of those who forward this cause through the generations. But, while he rejoices in the encouragement we may give one another, this poet lays great stress on the need for any soul that is to serve the cause effectually to be a light unto himself....In thus choosing to celebrate the earth as the guide and origin of human life, Swinburne is issuing his manifesto in favor of the natural interpretation of man and man's spirit as opposed to the supernatural. It is from earth, from nature, that man derives his being, his mind, his aspirations, his morality. Instead of coming "out of the deep, my child, out of the deep," or from "God who is our home," man is parcel of the same vital energy that rolls in the sea, that flies with the bird, that opens with the bud.⁵

Of singular significance in this final phase of Swinburne's vision of life in which the warrior-poet-hero

has developed the capacity to live creatively is the suggestion that this capacity is based upon the postulate of Nature as the source of morality. The ability to create a paradise within is possible only to the soul which perceives the essential unity of Being. In the Armada, the god-spirit (Reason controlling passion) within external Nature and man saves England whereas orthodoxy (Passion controlling reason) destroys Spain. In A Nymph-olept, the spirit of Pan immanent within Nature is a manifestation of Apollo's "immanent presence, the pulse of the heart's life." Pan is a symbol of the ambivalence of life, of good and evil, of the grotesque and the beautiful. Thus the narrator's vision is permeated with paradoxical intimations, with hope and fear, with love and terror. These intimations give insight into the essential ambiguity of Life itself. The narrator recognizes the limitations of man's knowledge of god. Even the Poet Laureate recognized that "knowledge is of things we see..../ And yet we hope it comes from thee." The things which the narrator sees are perceivable to the senses which inform the mind:

Bloom, fervor and perfume of groves and
flowers aglow....
The silence thrills with the whisper of
secret streams
That well from the heart of the woodland
there I know!
Earth bore them, heaven sustained them with
showers and beams.

In The Palace of Pan, the poet-figure at the forest shrine of Pan feels the need of a greater inspiring force in September. This is suggested in the forest image void of the fecundity revelatory of the immanence of god. The shrine reflects, instead, the impact of "Dim centuries with darkling inscrutable hands/ [which] Have reared and secluded the shrine/ For gods that we know not." Yet the recollection of the epiphany at noon in Nympholept fills the narrator's mind with "Things loftier than life and serener than death,/ Triumphant and silent as time."

Douglas Bush provides the following questionable commentary upon Swinburne's attitude in A Nympholept and The Palace of Pan:

Swinburne's perception of a divinity in nature brings less of ecstasy than of a troubled feeling of mystery and fear, and instead of rising to belief in and rapturous communion with "some unseen Power," he shrinks back upon himself.... "An earth-born dreamer, constrained by the bonds of birth...May⁶ hear not surely the fall of immortal feet.

Contrary to Bush's assumption, the narrator's sense is filled with ecstatic rapture whose source is stated ambivalently as "my spirit or thine" [the unknown "sweet spirit" of the seasons in Nature which reveals the mind of god at work in the Universe.] / Which fills my sense with a rapture that casts out fear?" Since Swinburne believed that the only reality is that perceived by the mind of man, he must say of the vision, "Earth-born I know thee," but he adds "heaven is about me here." There is no fear here.

There is, however, ecstatic communion with the only transcendent god that Swinburne could know, Apollo, Apollo's love infuses Nature with meaning for man's creative expression. All life becomes one unity through the cohesiveness of the love and insight which man imbibes from the immanence of the god-spirit within his soul. This spirit permits the poet-narrator to commune with the god-spirit within Nature. It is true that Swinburne is aware of the essential limitations of man as an "earth-born dreamer, constrained by the bonds of birth," who "May hear not surely the fall of immortal feet,/ May feel not surely, if heaven upon earth be sweet." Since no absolute knowledge of god is possible for man, he must perceive him within Nature and himself. This is the basis for Swinburne's hope: "And here is my sense fulfilled of the joys of earth,/ Lights, silence, bloom, shade, nurmurs of leaves that meet." Spirit and sense have singular artistic and ideological significance in this volume. They unify man's being, Reason and Passion, into one cohesive whole, thereby, again, vivifying Swinburne's idea of the unity in all things, "All in all."

The power of the soul to create a paradise within stems from one's ability to view life in total perspective. Each phase has vital meaning as an integral part of the developing soul. In this final phase of the development of the Swinburnean vision, he reveals this perspective by

developing themes derived from the idea of the evolving soul as a basic phenomenon. These themes are the child, the warrior-hero-poet, death, and immortality. All of these are explored within the context of the larger pervasive theme of the Swinburnean canon, the impact of time and change upon the soul which yearns for freedom for self-expansion. It is a yearning which necessitates suffering, "the pain of experience," as inevitable friction (evil) in the development of a greater good. In this phase of the vision, Swinburne emphasizes an opposite quality to the "evil" of time, in the "good" which time brings for the noble, courageous soul which affronts its destiny unflinchingly. This awareness reenforces Swinburne's basic attitude toward the essential ambiguity, the Janus-faced quality, of life. It is permeated by multitudinous antinomies, alternatives, and paradoxes, with the "black and the white seed" as potentials for growth.

The theme of time's goodness is explored graphically in the poems about England "Elect of time," as in Astraea Victrix. The idealization of England here is a logical extension of the ideal man indigenous to England found in the panegyrics to the Commonwealth. England is an anguishing soul which evolves organically to symbolize the ideal republic. The goodness of time is opposed by the pain of existence in the problems of internal strife based upon political tension of the unionist controversy in The

Commonweal and The Question. Internal strife is contrasted with problems derivative of the Napoleonic and Boer Wars, explored in Trafalgar Day and the Battle of the Nile. Swinburne shows his concern with the continuity of time as, gyre-like, England returns to a golden age in Victoria's reign when "Europe saw no glory left in her sky save one."

In the time-perspective, the child symbolizes the stage of purity, of "heaven around us," of the innocence of nature before the impact of corrupting, divisive change is felt upon the human spirit. A Moss Rose, To a Baby Kinswoman, At a Dog's Grave, Three Weeks Old, and A Clasp of Hands are typical in suggesting Swinburne's use of the child as a symbol of the ambivalence of life: on the one hand, the child is a symbol of the freedom of the bliss of heaven in his "flower-soft face"; on the other hand, he is the constraining force of the hell of life as "a velvet vice with springs of steel." Generally, the child is a symbol of potential growth. He is a source for creative ordering through wholesome spiritual nurture. When the attributes of the child are transferred to man, he symbolizes, as in the Altar of Righteousness, the faith of Saint Theresa, on the one hand, and the naive pride and fear of the child-man who created the orthodox God, on the other. This is the god who tyrannizes the spirit of man, "the dark old god who had slain him [Christ] and grew one with the Christ he had slain." Most especially, the

child is a symbol of the infectious, cohesive quality of love. It is love which unifies man and nature, man and family, man and friends. It is love which secures immortality for the nobly evolved soul. In the Dedication to Poems and Ballads, third series (1889), it is "Love,/ More strong than death or than doubt may be..../ One landmark never can change remove.../ Love." Thus the strength of love is impervious to the impact of time. It is love which links the living and the dead through memory. In High Oaks and Barking Hall, A Year After, it is the power of transcendent love which is a restorative to the soul thus:

His fiery spirit of sight
Endures no curb of change or darkling time
Even earth and transient things of earth
Even here to him bear witness not of death
but Birth.

For the poet-figure, it is love which determines the redemptive quality of his song. In The Afterglow of Shakespeare, it is the "understanding heart" of the poet. In Astrophel, it is the poet whose soul is the fount of love. In Nympholept, it is love which makes possible the soul's achieving "at-oneness" with Nature and thereby perceiving the essential unity of Being. It provides a vision of reality in terms of what is "felt,/ Seen and heard of the spirit within the sense." This kind of spiritual perception provides the means through which the soul can create its own paradise within. Such capacity is

demanded by the divisive impact of the battle of life upon the warrior-hero! He must provide his own salvation! Thus love of nature provides the necessary spiritual conversion, restoration, or redemption for harmonious expansion of soul.

The impact of the battle of experience upon the soul of man is symbolized by the warrior-hero, the poet-figure, and England. In terms of an evolutionary process in the enlightenment of the mind and spirit, the poet is a spiritual descendent of the warrior. Both symbolize the capacity to redeem mankind in their "hatred of wrong... by sword or by song." One is reminded of the figure of the warrior-poet in Atalanta. The image of Meleager is reenforced by the image of the seer in a kind of reversal of the poet-warrior symbol in these final volumes. This new synthesis of poet-warrior anticipates the many poems here on the poet and on England as symbols of the energizing light of freedom from tyranny of the human spirit. Poetic truth is the only transcendent kind, for "Time casts [it] not away." The pervasive attitude is that suffering (evil) in life is inescapable. To live is to be enfolded in evil. However, the soul is chastened, purified, "redeemed" by such experience, although the stigmata of such an encounter remain. Balen muses upon the essential ambiguity of life thus: "Mused in many-minded mood/ If life or death were evil or good..../ If

sorrow or joy be far or near/ For time to hurt or heal."

The tension between the external sanctions of society, symbolized in Christianity and the Chivalric code, and man's (Balen's) internal principle creates experiences which are indeed spirit-sundering. Only in approaching death is Balen able, philosophically, to resolve the ambivalent quality of life. He gains perspective by reflecting upon the place of each phase of life in the total evolving pattern. He reflects that a joyous boyhood evolved into an anguishing adulthood which is followed by the peace of death. Death releases man from the battle of life. Thus Balen "looked on life and death and slept." Time eradicated the aura of dishonor which enveloped Balen's name at his death. The "goodness" of time and change immortalized the hero for having striven to live according to the law of his own nature amid antithetical forces in society. In the Sea-Mew, the life of man as poet is enmeshed within the net of human experience which keeps him earth-bound. In the Interpreters, poets symbolize the endurance of "sweetness and light" through song and thought. In Pan and Thalassius, Swinburne indicates a preference for the transcendent quality in the Thalassian ideal to the earth-bound one of Pan. Bush makes the following detracting statement about the poem: "Pan and Thalassius are decorative mouthpieces for arguing the claims of land and sea; Thalassius of course refuses to

bow to Pan."⁷ On the contrary, Pan and Thalassius are not simply artifacts for the manipulation of the poet. They are symbols of types of poetic spirit. Pan symbolizes the Arcadian strain inspired primarily by earth and secondarily by Apollo. The grotesqueness of Pan symbolizes the duality in man's nature. Also, he symbolizes a kind of earthiness which is transcended in Thalassius. Thalassius symbolizes an ideal synthesis of Reason and Passion, thereby suggesting the Swinburnean concept of the ideal man, the lyric poet. This idea is concretized in Swinburne's attitude toward English poets, especially those indigenous to the Renaissance period. In Astrophel, Sidney is the ideal warrior-hero-poet. He is a poet who achieves immortality through creative song which "feels the flame of thy quenchless name with light that lightens the rayless years." In the Afterglow of Shakespeare, Shakespeare alone is the "man above men, whose breath/ Transfigured life with speech that lightens death." He is "lord of all souls alive on the earth."

In connection with a preeminent concern with time and change in this final phase of his vision, Swinburne gives emphasis to the theme of death and immortality. In the Recall, the yearning soul gallantly goes from shore toward "heights of heaven above the sway of stars that eyes discern." In By Twilight, reason dispels the fear-inducing dream of death. In In Memory of John William

Inchbold, life is represented cyclically as a series of deaths and rebirths. Here the only perceivable permanence is in change. In the elegy on Burton, death frees the soul from the "pain of existence" of life. In the sonnets on Browning, life and death are but shadows cast by the immortal soul of man. In Sunset and Moonrise, death slays to save. In the Ballad of Melicertes, death illuminates the path by which the human soul is reabsorbed into the Oversoul. In Memory of Aurelio Saffi is reminiscent of the Miltonic idea that original sin negated man's ability to hear the music of the spheres. Here the hope is expressed that death reestablishes this spiritual bond between Man, God, and Nature. Here, too, appears the paradoxical notion that "in death, death is dead." In the Festival of Beatrice, death frees from bondage "earth-born and earth-bound creatures." The soul which achieves harmoniously evolved expansion of the self through creative expression is identified with the poet-figure. He is the artist who achieves immortality through creativity. In the Dedication to Channel Passage and Other Poems (1904), he has "enkindled and cherished art's vessel and luminous flame,/ That dies not when kingdoms have perished in storm or in shame."

Thus Swinburne meditates seriously upon the ideal man and how he can live best on earth and achieve immortality in the future. His ideal man is the poet-figure who

spiritually transcends the divisive pain of existence through the synthesizing power of his imagination. This is the dynamic creative potential for building a paradise within.

The Altar of Righteousness has special significance as a final focus of attention in Swinburne's vision of the life of man. It provides a symbol of generic man's capacity for creating a paradise within at his "mystic mid altar of righteousness." It may be looked upon as an ideological culmination of the attitudes in Balen and Astrophel, which presents specific types. Balen symbolizes the warrior-hero who courageously confronts his destiny in the battle of life. His yearning for freedom of harmonious expansion is frustrated by the divisive confrontation of his life-principle with societal sanctions of Christianity and the Chivalric code. Astrophel posits an image of the ideal poet, Sidney, who is literally a warrior. He maintains his integrity of soul through achieving "at-oneness" with Nature in perceiving the essential unity of Being through love. The Altar of Righteousness represents a final attitude toward the god-man, warrior-poet, suggested by the concept of natural law and the individual in Atalanta and brought to maturity in Songs before Sunrise. The theme here (in Altar) is the necessity of a guide to life for man's soul. The poem is typical of the manner in which Swinburne uses the

images isolated for emphasis in this study.

Part I sets forth the theme of man's need for a source of truth to withstand the devastation of change in time. This need is symbolized in the opposites of light and darkness, life and death, hope and fear, faith and doubt, visible and invisible. It is a need based upon the wave of time in the Hymn to Proserpina, which inundates all externalized concepts "till the might of change hath rent it with a rushing wind in twain." The wind symbolizes change. Swinburne uses the frame of orthodox religious imagery to suggest his attitude regarding the internal altar of "irony and truth" which is "the mystic mid altar, where worship is none but of thought." Man's thought survives the efficacy of orthodox religions. A catalogue surveying the concept of god, from Uranus through Jehovah to Mohammedanism and Judaism symbolizes this change. Such cyclicity produces alternating hope and fear in the mind of man. Yet of the "mystic mid altar" of the mind, the poet says, "strong as the sun is the sense of it shrined in the soul."

By contrast, Part II uses the image of darkness to symbolize man's worship of God for "about him was darkness, and under and over him darkness." The nature of the life which evolves therefrom is sheer perversity: "Cast forth and corrupt from birth by the crime of creation, they [men] stood/ Convicted of evil on earth by the grace of a God

found good." This makes man's life ironically tragic indeed. The soul of man rebels against the tyranny of enslavement to God.

Part III sets forth the image of Christ as an extension of the godhead on earth whose unifying power lay in the cohesive bonds of the light of love, thus: "A presence passed and abode but on earth a span,/ And love's own light as a river before him ran,/ And the name of God for a while upon earth was man."

In part IV, priests symbolize the corrupting effect of fear on the concept of Christ. St. Theresa becomes a martyr who symbolizes an effort to mitigate this evil as symbolized by her flaming heart, the stigmata of Christ. Significantly, Theresa is envisioned as a child. When one recalls the Swinburnean use of the child to symbolize "heaven around us," the ironic suggestion becomes more poignant indeed. Theresa becomes a "flower of the darkness, a star." Churches and creeds symbolize tyranny over man's soul, which blasts his hope. Thus the soul must evolve its own concept; "From the root that is man, from the soul in the body, the flower that is God."

Part V explores the theme of the immutability of the altar of the soul under the impact of time. Shifting opposites in images of light, night, day, cloud, sun, darkness, hope, and fear provide contrasts to the stability of the mystic mid altar.

Part VI vindicates the necessity of the soul-centered altar to mitigate the adverse impact of the God which man "made in his likeness, and bowed down to worship the Maker he made." This is an inversion of the Old Testament creation of man. Another image of the child-spirit, an opposite to that of St. Theresa, appears in this section. It is a symbol of the naive pride and fear of the child-man who created the orthodox God. The philosophic mind symbolized by Bruno and brought to full flower in Shakespeare becomes the ideal god-man, "For the light that lived in the sound of the song of his speech was one/ With the light of the wisdom that found earth's tune in the song of the sun." Swinburne uses the myths of Prometheus and Apollo to symbolize the ideal synthesis of wisdom and artistic insight, harmonized in Shakespeare in whom "wisdom and light were one."

Part VII extends the image of light from the mystic mid altar by permitting it to symbolize the ultimate power to cast out doubt and fear and to make man live without dread of time and change, life or death: "Far above all wars and gospels, all ebb and flow of time/ Lives the soul that speaks in silence...."/ "Not for a gain of heaven," the poem concludes, "may man put away the rule of right by the light of his own soul, his mystic mid altar and righteousness." Thus we return to the image with which the poem opened. It is the yearning of the human soul for

insight to withstand the ravages of time and change. Man becomes his own star, his only means of salvation, his only god. There is no other.

As is true of many of Swinburne's lyric poems, here the pervasive image is light contrasted to darkness through which the symbolic meaning is conveyed and through which ideological and artistic tension works to unify the poem into an organic whole. The poems of this last period are especially notable for the preeminence of the light image. In addition, images derived from mythology and orthodox religion emphasize the evolving stature of the symbol of the "internal altar" as the ideal source of insight for man. Here the light image almost totally eclipses the other three of this study. This is logical since the poem is concerned with insight, with the power of the mind to create a paradise within.

Many critics read The Altar of Righteousness as blasphemous invective against orthodox religion. They cite such phrases as "God, father of lies"; "God, son of perdition"; and "God, spirit of ill," to substantiate their assumptions. One must remember that invective is a literary device and not a statement of philosophy. I prefer to believe that Swinburne used this literary device within the context of the framework of orthodox religious imagery and concept so as to emphasize his own attitudes, not as a derisive attack on Christianity. Samuel Chew substantiates

my attitude by his statement that the "theme of the poem is the eternity and immutability of the moral order as compared with the fleet passage of rival religions."⁸

The artistic alternation of contrasting images, such as light and darkness, parallels the gyre of changing concepts of God throughout human history. This technique gives additional dimension to the unity of the poem. The poem moves from the transcendent, external, literal light of the sun to the immanent, internal, spiritual light of the soul. The ambivalent use of the child image highlights the necessity of man's assuming responsibility for his own choices. The child-man created a tyrannical God, an emotionalized irrational concept. The god-man finds a rational god within his own soul. This is the only means of salvation. Also, since this poem is considered Swinburne's final statement of philosophy (religion), the perspective which involves does so from the organic nature of Life under the impact of time. This is suggested in the poem by the sense of the particular merging into the general. Such artistic virtuosity immortalizes Algernon Charles Swinburne, the ideal god-man as lyric poet of magnificent stature.

In this final phase of the Swinburnean vision, the sun almost totally obliterates the symbolic functioning of the other images of concern here except the sea. In this phase, the Paradise Within, the sun manifests

itself principally as the light of freedom, insight, love, and poetic inspiration. As fire it is both the negative, destructive aspect of the sun and the chastening, purifying altar fire. The most memorable use of light-fire as insight and purification is symbolized in the Altar of Righteousness. In Astraea Victrix, the light of freedom of Songs before Sunrise is particularized in England (Astraea) as a symbol of the return of the golden age in human history. For Swinburne, the Renaissance milieu symbolized the coming of Promethean Light to England. This light becomes the force through which England emerges from the tyranny of the Middle Ages, symbolized in Church and State. Thus England is capable of producing the harmoniously evolved soul, Swinburne's ideal man. In The Commonweal, England is the light of freedom which becomes the beam suggested by the Capitolian dome of Rome in Songs. In Pan and Thalassius, the Apollonian light of inspiration suggests a realistic but imaginative orientation. In Astrophel, Sidney is the English poet who concretizes the Apollonian tradition: "O light of the land that adored thee.../ The light of the love of thee darkens/ The lights that arise and that set." In A Nympholept the vision at high noon symbolizes an epiphanic experience of insight into ultimate reality which is almost overwhelming for the sight of man "through the sun's imminent light,/ Unmerciful, steadfast, deeper than seas that swell,/ Pervades, invades,

appalls me with loveless light,/ With harsher awe than
 breathes in the breath of night." Here one is reminded of
 the symbolic suggestion of the sun in relation to Plato's
 man in a cave and of the all-enveloping light which Dante
 perceives as he approaches the realm of God in the Paradiso.
 The Monument of Giordano Bruno suggests the human capacity
 to create a paradise within: "Only from within,/ Comes,
 or can ever come upon as light/ Whereby the soul keeps
 over truth in sight.../ No truth.../ Save of his own soul's
 giving." In Balen, after the divisive impact of societal
 sanctions, the soul isolates itself from the community: "I
 ride alone and afar/ And follow but my soul for star."
 In the Lake of Gaube, the "sun of the soul" becomes "the
 saving grace for man." In The Afterglow of Shakespeare, a
 special trinity emerges in Dante, Marlowe, and Shakespeare,
 as a symbol of the poet as "man to match the sun." In
Astraea Victrix, Astraea suggests a general light of
 freedom "that earth shall see none like her born ere earth
 be dead." The star imagery of Astrophel symbolizes the
 light of the soul of the warrior-hero Balen, the light of
 the soul of the poet, and the light of immortality of the
 soul. Fire, related to the sun, appears principally as a
 constructive force in the Altar of Righteousness. Fire is
 also the creative energy (passion) of the poet. As a
 destructive force here, fire is a symbol of forces opposing
 the development of the soul and the ideally evolved country,

England, as in Astraea Victrix. The hell-fire of the forces opposing England is contrasted to her righteousness, which did not require justice for her enemies. She emerges "blood-red from the hell of black treason's hate/ Left over shame's foul brand/ Seared on an English hand."

The sea image functions chiefly as restorative for the soul sundered by the divisive encounter with the battle of life and as structurable matter for artistic ordering. It is also an analogue of life with its intricately flowing currents and crosscurrents. In the Armada, the sea is ambivalent in its suggestiveness. It is the source of life and death, of victory and defeat. In contrasting the source of Morality (the sea) of the English to that of the Spanish, in this particular context, Swinburne uses the sea to symbolize both positive and negative forces in human experience: "They [the Spanish] sink in the whelm of waters, as pebbles of children from shoreward hurled." England is "sweet as the sea that shields her, and pure as the sea from stain/As smiled." In Autumn Vision, Grace Darling, and Balen, the sea is spiritual "matter." In A Swimmer's Dream, it is the source of a vague, deep joy almost beyond expression. In Loch Torridon, it is spiritual restoration from the travail of life. It is also freedom and heaven: "Beneath us, sweet and strange as heaven may be,/ The sea, the very sea." In Balen, it is an analogue for the literal battle, and, by extension, for

the battle of life, and of death: As wave on wave shocks
and confounds.../ So steel on steel encountering sheer..../
As wave smites wave to death and dies." In the Dedication
to Channel Passage, the sea is ambivalently life and
death, which "abides not a pilot's forecasting,/ Foretells
not of peace or of strife."

Plant imagery appears principally in the "flower
child," symbol of innocence, cohesive love, and ensnaring
naivete. The hawthorn is the mature man, and earth (mother
of the plant) is the source of unity and love. Usually
the rose represents the child, as in A Moss Rose and
Three Weeks Old. In other poems, the child is simply a
"flower," or "flower of light and love," as in By the
Wayside, Olive, and A Clasp of Hands. The hawthorn
symbolizes the life of the mature man in terms of his
potential for bringing love and beauty into the world
although his life is as brief as the hawthorn's, as in
Hawthorn Dyke, The Promise of the Hawthorn, Hawthorn Tide,
and The Passing of the Hawthorn. In the penultimate poem
listed in this group, all of Nature rejoices in the beauty
of the hawthorn, "for the glory bestowed and beholden."
Earth as the mother of man the plant is objectified in
England. In the Barking Hall poems the soul of the poet's
mother (love) is reabsorbed into earth (England) which is
Nature infused with love and a source of solace to the
torn spirit of man. In Pan and Thalassius and The Palace

of Pan, the values of the sea are contrasted to those of the land (society). The sea provides freedom for expansion of the self while the earth is a constricting force upon the soul of man. As Harold Nicolson attests, Swinburne rejects the values of the land for those of the sea.⁹

The wind remains ambivalently a source of inspiration in song, a source of destruction; in general, it represents mutability. It is the inspiriting life-force of March: an Ode. Here, from the death-inducing March wind ensues the life-inspiriting Spring as "the sparks that enkindled fed it/ Were strewn from the hands of the gods of the winds of March." The ambivalent nature of the wind is suggested in the following poems: In A Word, "comes sharp and strange from inland sounds thy [wind's] bitter note of battle." In Neap-Tide, with the "wind's wings broken," there is a pervasive atmosphere of melancholic lifelessness. In An Autumn Vision, the warm southwest wind is the inspiriting, life-giving force. In Balen, the wind is the inspiriting force of Spring and the chaotic spirit of battle. In Astraea Victrix, the wind as strife symbolizes forces which oppose and try to thwart the glorious emergence of England: "Winds athwart it blew/ Storm, and the twilight grew/ Darkness awhile...."

In support of the presupposition in Chapter II concerning the tendency of the images to coalesce as symbols of spiritual forces in the life of man, the sun-sea-

wind fusion is noteworthy pervasive in the poetry illustrating the final phase of Swinburne's vision. In this particular coalescence, the images seem to symbolize the basic natural forces which promote the ideal growth of the soul that courageously confronts the battle of life. These are the forces which fashion the poet and save the man. In Channel Passage, they are "the rapture and radiances of battle, the life that abides in the fire of a word.../ The flames that were flowerlike and white." The sea-storm is the "war that is life and is joy for the soul to wage." In the Lake of Gaube, in the darkness of the water the wholeness of the soul is restored, and the swimmer emerges into the light of the sun, saved. In The Commonweal I, the Victorian Golden Age has evolved through the beneficent light of "Time, a wandering cloud,/ [which] Is sunshine on thy sea." In Armada, God is identified with this fusion: "God is one with the sea, the sun, the land that nursed us, the love that saves."

Other images which function symbolically here are principally the bird, the grove, music, and those related to orthodox Christianity. In the Altar of Righteousness, the altar symbolizes the capacity of the soul to resurrect itself. The mind is the lamp which illumines the path to the paradise within. The bird, principally the sea-mew, symbolizes man's desire for transcendence. It is also identified with the poet in his ability to achieve this

transcendence. In the Sea-Mew, man gets inspiration from the "bird's silent song of freedom, love and happiness." Here the poet-observer's spirit transcends the bonds of earth as he watches the sea-mew soar heavenward untouched by mundane care. One is reminded of Wordsworth's later Skylark. In the Barking Hall poems, the bird, symbolizing the wonders of love, assumes an ironic turn in the dove which symbolizes the mother and reminds the poet-observer of death: "These woods that watched her waking here where all things die." In Music: an Ode, the poet's song is inspired by the bird's singing at dawn. Wherever the myth of rebirth is suggested, whether by water or fire, one is reminded of the Phoenix as a symbol of the power of man's soul to resurrect itself, to become its own god, to build its own paradise within. Music appears in its relation to the poet's song and that of the bird as the power for unifying all of life into one harmonious entity. In Astrophel and in Afterglow of Shakespeare, music is one of the salient lyric qualities which justify Swinburne's hailing Sidney and Shakespeare as lyric poets par excellence. In Music: an Ode, music symbolizes the power to unify universal forces and to liberate the soul of man thereby: "Music smiled...and the thrall was free." The poetic device of synesthesia which fuses images of light, music and the bird provides a pervasive atmosphere of harmony throughout the poem.

The grove appears in A Nympholept, Pan and Thalassius, and Palace of Pan as an arcadian setting which inspires the poet. One is reminded of Sidney, who inspired many of the poems in this last phase of Swinburne's vision. Sidney's injunction to "look into your heart and write" might be symbolized by the grove as appropriate for meditation and introspection. The Barking Hall poems suggest this same function. In addition, they all suggest the need for the withdrawal of the hero from the community for renewed insights before his re-entry into the world. Also, the grove might symbolize the mind in a manner similar to Swinburne's earlier use of the cave.

Thus, although light emerges here as the dominant symbolic image, Swinburne makes effective use of the other three images of this study. All four function as spiritual forces which affect the evolving soul of man.

Thus, in the four phases of the evolving Swinburnean vision of life, shifts are perceivable in the emphasis upon the four images as symbols of spiritual forces. In the phase of the vision here called Eroticism, although the sun as Apollo appears, the manifestation of fire as the baser aspect of the sun as erotic love is preeminent. The fire of eroticism manifests itself principally as destruction. Here the red rose of Venus is the dominant image. In Republicanism, emphasis is placed upon light as the symbol of freedom from tyranny for which

the emerging soul yearns. It is also concretized as the life-force of Hertha, hence of man himself, as in the image of the tree Yggdrasil. The life-force combines with immanentism to produce the ideal god-man. In Creative Ordering, tension between images of land and sea is resolved in the acceptance of the sea as the ideal symbol of structurable matter for creative expression of the expanding, harmoniously evolving soul. The land symbolism is brought in through the land as source (mother) of the plant and through the spatial relationship which unites land and sea. The land and the sea are contrasting mother images. They become rival mothers for nurturing the soul of man. Man must choose his way for such nurture. The land (society) as a symbol of restricting external sanctions tyrannizes the soul by requiring its conformity to convention, to the establishment. The land stifles, reduces to a wasteland, kills, the soul of man. The sea symbolizes the liberating force which activates the creative imagination of man through its generative relationship with the sun. In Les Casquets, "The world of trouble, / [is] Too dense with noise of contentious things, / And shows less bright than the bright foam's bubble." Through song which results from the union of the sun and the sea, the soul achieves spiritual transcendence of mundane restrictions. The sea is the source of conversion, rebirth, and restoration to wholeness of being. In A

Paradise Within, the light image is used as the symbol of insight of the mind to create its internal heaven. Here, fire suggests the redemptive function of the mind's altar in regenerating the soul of man. Thus, in keeping with Swinburne's use of the myth of rebirth and the seasonal cycle, we have come full circle. In the Altar of Righteousness, we have returned to the self as a source of salvation. Yet this self is the unified sensibility of the harmoniously evolving soul which perceives its "at-oneness" with the universe and thereby the unity of Being of all life. It is a regenerate self. We have returned to the fire of the altar as in Atalanta. The fire is now a symbol of the purifying flame on the altar of the soul. Light becomes the principal ideological symbol in the Swinburnean vision. It is a magnificent vision, tragi-comic in its nature, of the life of man as warrior-poet, god-man, who courageously confronts the divisive impact of the battle of life in his yearning for freedom of expansion of a harmoniously evolved self. This is the savior of the self. The power of the unified self to resurrect itself invests the vision with the quality of a divine comedy. Thus man's mind can sustain him:

But well shall it be with us ever
 Who drive through the darkness here
 If the soul we live by never,
 For aught that a lie saith, fear. (Lake of Gaube)

Hence the image of the "transcendent external" physical sun evolves into a symbol of the sun as "immanent internal,"

spiritual light of the soul, man's inner altar. This is his only salvation, his only god! There is no other.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

THE TORCH ETERNAL

Beautiful words are the very peculiar light of the mind.

--Longinus

The Victorian Era was essentially one devoted to a search for faith. This search was motivated by the growing inefficacy of a cultural order of ideas rooted in an orthodox religious orientation. The general impact of science upon the minds of the philosophers and poets of the time was responsible for this general feeling of cultural disorientation. Since a yearning for unity is a basic tendency of the human soul, the great literature of the world is that which either reflects such order or reflects the search for it. All the major poets in the Victorian Era were engaged in this quest. Walter Houghton summarizes the basis of the Victorian search for faith:

The most meaningful expressions of the Victorian search for faith sprang up in response to important intellectual developments of the age....The Oxford Movement, led by Newman, undertook to combat Benthamite liberalism by re-establishing the spiritual sovereignty of the Church of

England. The Positivists sought to convert the findings of the historical critics into an argument for their Religion of Humanity. And Darwinism provoked by way of reaction various immanentist and vitalist declarations of faith in man's continuing evolutionary process.

The major Victorian poetic tetrad is rooted in a common awareness of a divided sensibility which resulted from the impact of the divisive artistic-ideological milieu of the era. This awareness makes understandable the melancholic spirit of much of the poetry. Further, the awareness is reflected in a return of the poetic mind upon itself, a refusal to recognize a community of interests, an order of ideas. Each of the major poets recognized the inevitability of suffering in order to evolve a new synthesis. Each had to explore the general problems of art and morality, authority and progress for himself. Such exploration had to be undertaken in terms of the unique needs of the individual artistic temperament. The common need was for a unifying force to harmonize the contrarities of life. Each poet was encumbered with the task of seeking and testing new beliefs or new approaches to old beliefs. As intellectual leaders, Shelleyan "moral legislators of the world," the Victorian poets were forced to become prophets for guidance of the masses from the wilderness to a paradise. Tennyson's "two voices," doubt and faith, embrace all thought. His synthesis evolves in terms of conventional religious morality. It involves faith in the "Son of God Immortal Love." It provides a larger hope for the world

through a vague insistence that unity of spirit is essentially an internal matter, an individual responsibility. Browning's new Law of Love (a kind of Christian Humanism) creates a bond of sympathy among men. The bond evolves from the metaphoric signification of each man, "the consummate cup," on the whirling, whirring wheel of time. J. Hillis Miller states Browning's conclusions after exploring human experience:

A man becomes universal not by the impossible attempt to live "all the ways," but by accepting wholeheartedly his limitation, for the particular is the universal, each man is Christ. Through this acceptance of limitation,² Browning, at last, both feels God and knows him.

Arnold, too, explored human experience, but he was unable to achieve the poetic unity of sensibility for which his soul yearned. In his own words he was a soul lost "between two worlds/ One dead, the other powerless to be born." Miller says of Arnold's dilemma:

Arnold's thought, both in its imagery and in its conceptual axes, is dominated by the theme of irreconcilable opposites, and the constant appearance of this theme is evidence of his inability to experience the world as other than broken and disintegrated.³

However, Arnold remained essentially an apostle of cultural unity. Thus he turned his attention to criticism for the propagation of his theories.

A major presupposition set forth in the introductory section of this study is that throughout human history major world cultures have been essentially god-

centered in their ideological orientation. Hence the poet seeks to interpret human experience through verbal concepts that relate God, Nature, and Man. The spiritual plight that results from the disturbance of this conceptual unity is described succinctly by Miller:

When the old system of symbols binding man to God has finally evaporated man finds himself alone and in spiritual poverty. Modern times begin when man confronts his isolation, his separation from everything outside himself....Modern thought has been increasingly dominated by his presupposition that each man is locked in the prison of his own consciousness. From Montaigne to Descartes and Locke, on down through associationism, idealism, and romanticism to the phenomenology and existentialism of today, the assumption has been that man must start₄ with the inner experience of the isolated self.

Thus we find Swinburne also "torn between two worlds" as he, with Rossetti, turned away from the Tennysonian conception of the professional artist's responsibility to society. Swinburne's exploration of experience begins in a kind of spiritual no-man's land, between traditionalism and aestheticism. Artistically, he is between Tennyson and Pater. He assumes the individual responsibility of searching for a new synthesizing order of ideas for reunifying the culture of man. He seeks to harmonize God, Nature, and Man through the linguistic world of poetry. Swinburne's basic theme reflects a primary concern of mankind throughout human history. It is the theme of the human soul in inevitable confrontation with the not-self. The striving of the soul for full development is explored

within the context of four-dimensional time: past, present, future, and eternity. It is the plight of the soul under the impact of mutability, constructive and destructive.

This basic theme is revealed through certain phrases which recur throughout the poetry: The following are pivotal ones: "the little soul of man," "man as firebrand," "man as god," "soul disembodied," "span of years," "the inevitable years," "disastrous years," "iron years," "heavy-footed years," "light increate," "nature uncreate," "iron sea," and "blast of the breath of death and/or God."⁵

The pattern of Swinburne's art follows the pattern of the vision of man which evolves therefrom. All man's experience in life is fraught with contrarieties, antinomies, ambiguities, and antitheses. Hence it is logical that in Swinburne's full exploration of the gamut of human experience the last phase should be characterized by serenity and acceptance as opposed to the violent action and self-assertion of the first phase.

The tension of experience which is pervasive in Swinburne's evolving vision of the life of man may be metaphorically represented as the battle of life. It is a battle fraught with rage and rapture, agony and ecstasy. Thus man evolves as a kind of warrior who must develop adequate spiritual fortitude to welcome the inevitable involvement in the battle. In Atalanta, Meleager stands for everyman as warrior-hero striving valiantly but

erringly to develop to his full stature in accordance with the principle of his own being. As in Swinburne's own day, the external sanctions in the society of Meleager have lost their effectiveness. Thus the hero is reduced to ashes. The Firebrand is consumed. Man in Poems and Ballads, first series, is the universal "I" as poet-figure. He isolates himself from a society unable to provide him with an order of ideas. His eyes turn inward to try to find a source of evolvment for the basic integrated self. This is the state of nihilistic rejection of established authority, a subsequent alienation from society and turning to a self-reflecting love for salvation. This phase is symbolized by the theme of eroticism. It suggests a blindly passionate desire for life-involvement. This desire is objectified in the yearning to possess and to be possessed. It leads inevitably to self-torment and a vision of death-in-life. The fragmented soul yearns for escape in time, in death. This is a state of soul and of art that feeds upon itself from the flame of its own intensity. Thus such a soul reduces itself to ashes. Consequently, a new source of order is demanded. Of singular significance in this phase of Swinburne's evolving vision is the use of fire imagery. It suggests the archetypal myth of rebirth which becomes the framework for Swinburne's creative vision. This is the Phoenix myth. Also, since Swinburne's vision is rooted in the relationship

of elemental forces and the human soul, philosophically, fire takes on added significance as the First Cause from which all things evolve.

Swinburne now turns outward to a larger involvement which is objectified in the Italian Risorgimento. Here Mazzini symbolizes the poet-figure who envisions an ideal community, "the republic made white," for the liberated soul of man. Garibaldi symbolizes the warrior whose sword effects the ideas of the poet-figure. The image of light is the dominant one here. With the failure of the Mazzinian dream to materialize, Swinburne's yearning demands a new creation for the evolving soul of man. Thus the poet goes backward in time beyond fifth century Greece to the point of primeval chaotic energy. In the Hertha poems Swinburne's new poetic cosmos evolves. The Yggdrasil tree symbolizes essential unity of being in Swinburne's vision. It establishes the organic image of the plant as the symbol of the evolving soul of man. Here, too, man is identified with the immanent god-spirit within the universe. Hence man is god. However, since man the plant is only rooted in the Universal Soul, he is responsible for his own choices through his voluntary will. Thus the light of immanentism combines with the life-force to symbolize the god-man. This is the state of a newly created soul. It is one which is rooted in the essence of Being. Thus it feels its "at-oneness" with the Universe.

In the subsequent phase of the evolving vision, the emerging soul achieves its unity with Nature through the creative imagination. The immanence within man communes with the immanence within Nature, and objects in the manifold become manifestations of the universal spirit of Being. These are the "sparks of divinity" which are discernible everywhere. The act of unifying subjective and objective reality provides an order of ideas within the context of which the soul of man can move toward paradise. The ideal man as poet evolves in Thalassius. Here the sea figures prominently as the structurable energy for the poet's creative ordering. Here, also, the sea becomes the symbol of the font of conversion for the battle-scarred soul of man. And here all of the elemental forces symbolized in the images of this study unify to affect the evolving unified soul of man, Thalassius. Tristram reveals a unification of all the threads, to this point, in Swinburne's vision of the warrior-hero, the counterpart of Thalassius. He evolves amidst the labyrinthine cross-currents of the sea of life. He is the battle-scarred warrior-poet who survives the wasteland of eroticism principally through his spiritual affinity with the sea. All the symbols reveal their magnificently ambivalent qualities here. This ambivalence is fully justified, since Swinburne's principal technique here is the unfolding of a vision of man through contrasting studies in the basic

human passions. Thus the mutability of the symbols suggests graphically the mutability of life itself. Such a method typifies the essentially organic quality of Swinburne's art. Tristram's essential integrity of soul is preserved in its evolvment by his spiritual affinity with the elemental universal forces, especially the sea. For him the sea remains consistently the source of spiritual rebirth and final haven of eternal rest. On the other hand, Balen's evolvment is thwarted and fragmented by the inefficacious symbols of external authority in society, the Church and the Chivalric code. Balen's soul is so torn by the divisiveness of the battle of life that he is unable to feel affinity with the universal soul until he lies dying. A journey through water for his final encounter symbolizes a spiritual conversion which gives him a feeling of "at-oneness" with the universe. Now he can "look on life and death and sleep." This phase is also marked by a culmination of the evolving image of the poet as symbolized in Astrophel. Philip Sidney is a true son of Apollo, whose song demonstrates the transfiguring power of love, which is one with complete insight. It is the ability for creative ordering which secures immortality for the poet as part of the ongoing process of the universal soul of man. When one recalls that Sidney was literally a poet-warrior figure, the image as Swinburnean hero takes on unique symbolic significance. Light is the dominant image in this

final phase of Swinburne's vision. It is the light of the creative mind which leads to imaginative idealizing. Thus Victorian England becomes a symbol of the return of Astraea and the golden age. The process of idealizing is realized through the poetic conception of the continuity of time. The Victorians were the inheritors of the Greek ideal of freedom through the Renaissance republican spirit. Both Greece and England are children of the sea. Thus the source of spiritual rebirth, the sea, protects the integrity of soul of the man who maintains his kinship with nature through imaginative identification. With the mature perspective gained from the creative synthesis of external and internal reality, man can accept the tragic experience of life as a necessary phase of development of the soul. This experience is an integral part of the universal evolutionary process. It is the Blakean Ulro.

Thus the emerging soul moves through the suffering of man and nation toward the internal altar of creativity. Full perspective in time is achieved, from the child (the flower) as innocence, "heaven around us," to the eternality of the sea in the Channel Passage volume. The mystic mid altar as source of a new spiritual creation completes the cycle of Swinburne's poetic vision, for we have returned to the fire of Atalanta. However, now the soul has strength to create its internal heaven rather than be consumed in the flame of self-sufficiency, its

internal hell. The god-man who has achieved paradise through his own mystic mid altar of righteousness has the ability to live creatively amidst the tragic confrontation of the soul with the battle of divisive life-experience. Only through the recognition of the essential unity of God, Nature, and Man is such creativity possible. Thus man is the creator of his own paradise. He is his own god. There is no other. This is a time of stoical repose and acceptance of man's place in the universal scheme of things. This acceptance is an active rather than a passive one, however. The sea is magnified as a unifying force in life. Life begins in the sea in Poems and Ballads, first series. Life ends in death in the sea in Channel Passage. Hence the sea symbolizes an eternal haven of repose, respite from the frustrating anguish of the battle of experience. Whatever death is, it is not tension-torn life.

Swinburne's artistic method is in the general tradition of a major thread in Western literature, the use of Nature as aesthetic norm. The manner in which Nature is used as norm is conditioned by the relationship between man and a god-spirit within the universe. In the history of English literature, the Renaissance period accepted Nature as a symbol of a great scale of being. Order and degree were manifest in man and in society according to perceivable natural correspondences. With the philosophical breaking of the circle of perfection, however, man was

separated from the benevolent God. Thus the eighteenth century God was removed from Nature, as symbolized by the image of God the Master Clock Maker. Nature as aesthetic norm became Nature as a source of order for society. Accordingly, all significant human capacity is represented in terms related to nature. A classic example of this kind of identification is perceivable in Alexander Pope's "Essay on Criticism" in a definition of basic human intelligence: "True wit is nature to advantage dressed." It was a kind of rectified Nature. It was Nature onto which man imposed his personal artificial standards of perfection. Subsequently, Wordsworthian Romanticism sought to vitalize Nature by finding an immanence inherent therein. The creative imagination became a lamp of the mind through which one saw intuitively into the structure of order of which the universe is a symbol. The world and the self have the same origin, the divine. The imagination closes the gap between man and the world, and the "divine spark" runs unhampered through the great trinity of God, Nature, and Man. This is the general literary tradition within the context of which Swinburne's vision evolves. In his use of the organic image and his discovery of a principle of dynamic emergence in all being, Swinburne may be logically identified with the Romantic Tradition. He exhibits the spiritual capacity to isolate himself from the community, in the Thalassian sense, and to devote his

imaginative energies to seeking poetic truth through devotion to the organic image in the manner suggested by Frank Kermode:

The Image is the reward of that agonizing difference: isolated in the city, the poet is a "seer." The image for all its concretion, precision and oneness, is desperately difficult to communicate, and has for that reason alone as much to do with the alienation of the seer as the necessity of his existing in the midst of a hostile society....The alienation of the artist and his despair at the decay of the world are two sides of the same coin....Hazlitt found in Godwin's St. Leon a magician who can stand for the modern artist: 'He is a limb torn from society. In possession of eternal youth and beauty he can feel no love; surrounded, tantalized and tormented by riches he can do no good. The faces of men pass before him as in a speculum; but he is attached to them by no common tie of sympathy, or suffering. He is thrown back into himself and his own thoughts. He lives in the solitude of his own breast, without wife, or child or friend or enemy in the whole world. He is the solitude of the soul, not of woods or trees or mountains -- but the desert of society -- the waste and oblivion of the heart. He is himself alone.'⁷

The fluid shifting back and forth of significations of images from universal physical forces emerges in Swinburne's art as a major symbol of the essential unity of Being despite its manifestations of ambivalence and ambiguity. George Woodberry corroborates my view of the functioning of natural imagery in Swinburne:

Fire, air, earth, and water are the four elements from which his [Swinburne's] vocabulary is made up; flame, wind and foam....The main fact is that in the sphere of natural imagery his mind tends constantly to escape from the limited and particular object⁸ into the more abstract primary elements of nature.

Meredith's 1861 statement that Swinburne's poetry reflected the lack of an "internal center" must be viewed in relationship to Arnold's insistence that the Victorian Era had no consistent order of ideas from which a unified poetic sensibility could evolve. In his innate spiritual passion, "rage," for harmony, Swinburne's emerging vision of Life reflects his quest for such an order. In this search, an implicit mythology, notably in terms of rebirth and the hero, is discernible in the symbolic natural imagery which developed in time through Swinburne's quest. Thus one perceives a kind of cyclical continuity in the emergence of Swinburne's order of ideas. The symbolic signification of his imagery remains relatively consistent despite his ideological development. This process in Swinburne reflects Peckham's view of Swinburne's ability, the ability of the self, to create order.

Swinburne's mature art reflects an eclectic selectivity from thought and art throughout Western culture, from Classical times through Pre-Raphaelitism, from French literary tradition, Positivism, and Vitalism, to his own synthesis in Victorian Stoicism. By manifest intention, at least, he is in the mainstream of the tradition of Homer, Virgil, Horace, Catullus, de Meun and Lorris, Dante, Chaucer, Sidney, Shakespeare, Milton, Poe, Gautier, Baudelaire, Whitman, Valery, Yeats, and Wallace Stevens. The tension between the beauty of surface and the chaotic

life experiences of man (treated in Chapter III from Peckham's commentary) in Swinburne's poetry foreshadows from the beginning his conceptual mode of reconciling the contrarities of life. His so-called conservatism seems to be a natural phase in the general evolutionary process of all life. It is essential to the dynamic emergence of the unified soul of man.

The multitudinous poetic devices in Swinburne's canon function to provide a synesthetic atmosphere for the evolving vision of the life of man. They dramatize the emphasis upon the infinite variety, diffusiveness and paradox within the larger unity of Being. In addition to images from Nature along with sensory fusion in synesthesia, major critics of Swinburne agree that the hallmarks of his art are assonance, alliteration, anapests, oxymoron, chiasmus, diffusiveness, classical and biblical allusion, and an infinite variety of stanzaic patterns. The imagery and other artistic devices underline the essential fluidity, the mutability, the dynamism always operative in Swinburne's poetic vision. Morse Peckham makes the following commentary upon the eclectic influences upon Swinburne's style, along with his own rigorous artistic discipline:

His study of traditional styles and the innumerable poetic exercises he wrote in them had but one aim: to discover the essence of their art, that is by stylistic standards, the peculiar structural devices to be found in each. By abstracting these structural devices and coordinating them in his own poetry -- poems, that is, which were not exercises --

he created his own style. It was then, at once traditional and individual, highly disciplined and unmistakably Swinburne's.

There is no device of poetic form which he does not master and incorporate: sound, relations, that is, rhyme, alliteration (Consonantal repetition), assonance (vowel repetition and similarity); stress relations, that is, rhythmical patterns and an extraordinary rapidity of rhythmical movement which makes the patterns of rhythm leap out at the reader so that he grasps them immediately; and syntax relations, long sentences of great syntactical complexity which are, however, given continuity and repetition of pattern by exploiting the possibilities of parallel syntactical structures.

Such abundance in Swinburne's art gives the impression both of a super-flux of energy and a self-generating creativity, which are, again, an essential part of the dynamically organic process of Swinburne's art. It is the basis for his poetic idiom.

Thus through his own unique "alchemy of the word," Swinburne becomes a "Keeper of the Lighthouse" in fulfillment of his childhood dream. For, indeed, "beautiful words are the very peculiar light of the mind." It is singularly significant, then, that the light image evolves in Swinburne's poetry as the major symbol of ideas in his evolving vision of the life of man. Swinburne's attitudes toward dynamic evolution and the god-man resolve, for him, the Victorian Dilemma regarding authority and progress.

The mid-twentieth century is strikingly similar to the mid-nineteenth in the pervasively chaotic state in which the human condition now founders. Contemporary

culture has lost its coherence. There is no order of ideas as a unified frame of reference for the evolving soul. Indeed the current prevailing nihilistic attitude can be symbolized appropriately by the Swinburnean image of the consuming fire of eroticism, for the dominant manifestation of nihilism today is in chaotic, irrational destruction. (A recent record by one of the most "far out" singing groups features a chanting recitation of a chorus from Atalanta.) The increasing violent protests on university campuses may well be a symbol of the moral depravity of the human spirit in the throes of battle with the divisiveness of a disordered and disordering society. The human soul still yearns for freedom of harmonious expansion through love, but such unifying love seems remote indeed. The central image of chaos in modern times seems to be fire. It is discernible in fiery self-immolation in reaction to rejected ideologies, the burning of draft cards in resentment of war; the looting and burning of cities, which are the symbols of cultural achievement, in protest against socio-economic inequity; and the exploitation of sex as a substitute for wholesome love. The fire and the violence are objectifications of the chaos in the soul of modern man. Stanley E. Rosen¹⁰ succinctly describes current nihilism as a "shadow cast by the erotic striving of the psyche for wholeness." He adds that "nihilism results from an imbalance in the psyche due to a state of

discontinuity." Thus modern man is confronted by the crisis pointed up by Toynbee (see Chapter II, page 25 of this study). What will the answer be? Change or suicide? Or, in Martin Luther King's query, Chaos or Community?

One plausible solution to the problem is inherent within John Stuart Mill's dictum¹¹ that discussion should be used periodically to reevaluate the current ideology, to restructure where necessary, in the light of total perspective in Western culture. Rosen reminds us of the ambivalent nature of thinking itself: "Thinking in its purest and deepest form is like fire -- it purifies but it also destroys." On the basis of the admonition to rethink ideologies, along with the recognition of the historic significance of religion as a unifying force in human life, churchmen are striving to articulate the basic needs of the human spirit today. Father William Sweeney¹² states that the modern church (Catholic) renders religion ineffective in our time by a dominant emphasis upon creed and dogma. Amos Wilder¹³ insists that the basic need in our time is to "bring the world back into theology and theology back into the world." He adds:

The present challenge to cultural stands began in the post World War I period of the 1920's when the mood was that 'older sanctions were being washed away' and that authority had been undermined.... Movements since then and the increasing alienation that has come over our modern man represent a new phase in the groping for a stabilizing frame of life.

Wilder suggests that one such stabilizing force might be realized through the cooperation of artists and churchmen to "give form where form has come to be broken down, and to find meaningful images for life today where the images of the past have lost their capacity to speak to men."

Two laymen who are seriously concerned about finding effective means for unifying the fragmented sensibility of modern man are James H. Billington¹⁴ and Roman Vishniac.¹⁵ Billington states that many people turn to unorthodox religions in search for an order of ideas for unity of spirit. He insists that "the humanistic heartbeat has stopped." He adds that the psychedelic need can be adequately met by a return to the humanistic development of the philosophic mind, developing the whole soul of man. Vishniac emphasizes studying the meaning of the ecological web, interrelatedness of all life, to develop a meaningful philosophy of human existence.

For the disoriented souls of our day, Swinburne remains a valid "Keeper of the Lighthouse." His deontology is rooted in the creative imagination, in the mystic mid altar of the mind, of "righteousness." Such morality rests upon man's ability to see the bond of vital immanence which unifies all things through love. It is a moral vision which combines the life-force with immanentism to create a unified order of ideas. The psychedelics of the mid-twentieth century reflect the soul of man in Swinburne's

Poems and Ballads, first series. They reflect the modes of "violation and submission" found here. They call themselves "flower children." In Swinburne's later poetry, the flower child is the symbol of unifying love. The soul of modern man is the self (ego) which feeds upon itself. If modern man could but accept Swinburne's vision as his "light" as the lamp of the soul, perhaps love could become a force through which he could evolve a new self which is capable of accepting chaotic experience in life as necessary friction for the evolution of greater stature of soul and of Universal Good. It must be love which permits freedom for harmonious expansion of soul through creativity, not love as cruelty and perversity, which induces chaotic disintegration and destruction through consumption. The imaginative truth of Swinburne's vision suggests freedom for the soul that accepts courageously the necessary discipline and restraint for the emergence of the best self, the revitalized, resurrected, unified identity -- the essence of one's being. As John Mill indicated, it is a "unified culture of the self." As long as man endures, God is not dead! For man is god! There is no other! This is the god-man rooted in the essence of Being, in the Universal Scheme of things, in Swinburne's Hertha as the World Soul. Swinburne's larger hope evolves from the Immanence within man in his relationship to the Immanence within Nature. Thus Swinburne's vision provided him with

peace of soul which neither Tennyson, Browning, nor Arnold ever found in their search for a stabilizing faith within the context of their disordered and spirit-sundering cultural milieu.

Thus, finally, the clarion call from Swinburne to this generation of men whose souls are anxiety-ridden is that man must save himself by a return to the mystic mid altar of righteousness of the mind. This is the only shrine at which the soul cannot be tyrannized by inefficacious creed and dogma, or be divided against itself by chaotic external culture. At this shrine, the soul can reestablish the unity of God, Man, and Nature. This is the only means of redemption. Swinburne provides the ETERNAL TORCH OF INSIGHT into the truth of such salvation:

A creed is a rod
 And a crown is night:
 But this thing [the soul] is God!
 To be man with all thy might,
 To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit
 and live out thy life as the light.

--Hertha

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

¹Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in American Literature, II, ed. by Joe Lee Davis, et al (Chicago: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 450.

²John Morley, "Mr. Swinburne's New Poems: Poems and Ballads," in Poetry and Poetics, ed. by G. Robert Stange (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), p. 385. In this review, Morley displays a common tendency among literary critics to impose their personal tastes onto a poet's work without trying to evaluate the work in terms of what the poet has done. In this regard, Morley's attitude toward the artist and the role of the critic is diametrically opposed to that of Henry James -- a point of view subscribed by the writer of this paper.

Morley states his position thus: "It is a mere waste of time, and shows a curiously mistaken conception of human character, to blame an artist of any kind for working at a certain set of subjects rather than at some other set which the critic may happen to prefer....If the character of his genius drives his poetry exclusively in the direction of libidinous song, we may be very sorry, but it is no use to preach to him....Mr. Swinburne is much too stoutly bent on taking his own course to pay any attention to critical monitions as to the duty of the poet, or any warnings of the worse than barrenness of the field which he has chosen to labour. He is so firmly and avowedly fixed in an attitude of revolt against the current notions of decency and dignity and social duty that to beg him to become a little more decent, to fly a little less gleefully and persistently to the animal side of human nature, is simply to beg him to be something different from Mr. Swinburne." p. 831. This entire attitude reverses the relative positions of poet and critic. The critic should not legislate for the poet. Rather, he should evaluate what the poet has done artistically with whatever subject-matter the poet decides to use.

³William Michael Rossetti, Swinburne's Poems and Ballads: A Criticism (London: John Camden Hotten, 1866), p. 8.

⁴Robert Buchanan, The Fleshy School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day (London: Strahan and Company, 1872), p. 30.

⁵James Russell Lowell, My Study Windows (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899), p. 215.

⁶Edmund Clarence Stedman, Victorian Poets (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1875), p. 379.

⁷Ibid., p. 389.

⁸Amy Sharp, Victorian Poets (London: Methuen and Company, 1891), p. 184. Since Miss Sharp's attitude epitomizes the Victorian taste, the following excerpt is offered in elucidation thereof. One is struck by the marked persistence in evaluating poetry as if it were life rather than an artistic rendering of some aspect of experience. Miss Sharp writes: "Mr. Swinburne began his poetic career in high revolt, against reigning principles in morals, religion, and politics; endowed with a boundless gift of utterance, and entrenched in a theory that poetry, being an art, was privileged to say what it pleased so long as the verses were good. The natural result was an immediate and sharp collision between himself and the many whose moral or religious sense he gave grievous offense. The battle, bitter on both sides, was fought out on the ground of Morals versus Art. Swinburne's position might perhaps have been turned more effectively and not less truly with the contention that as the artistic ideal must include meaning as well as form, to emphasize and cover with a glory of noble language ugly facts or ideas essentially degraded, is to set up an ideal as false artistically as it might be hurtful ethically. However, without recanting anything [Why should he?] Mr. Swinburne's later works have been cleared of all the elements which made his earlier poems offensive; and there the controversy may well rest. [Indeed not!], p. 178.

⁹George Saintsbury, Corrected Impressions: Essays on Victorian Writers (London: William Heinemann, 1895), p. 74.

¹⁰Since Ruskin occupies a singular position in Victorian aesthetics, the following excerpts are presented from his letters regarding Swinburne. One is amused by the apparent divided sensibility, characteristic of the times though it is, of the art-critic who defends and condemns:

To Mr. Rossetti, December 2, 1866:

"My dear Rossetti, --I don't often read criticisms (disliking my own as much or more than other peoples'), but I have read this [Rossetti's critique of Poems and Ballads] and like it much -- and entirely concur with you as far as you have carried it. But you have left the fearful and melancholy mystery untouched, it seems to me...the corruption which is peculiar to genius of modern days."

To Another: "September 14, 1866, He [Swinburne] is infinitely above me in all knowledge and power, and I should no more think of advising him than of venturing to do it to Turner if he were alive."

"September 17, 1866 -- As for Swinburne not being my superior, he is simply one of the mightiest scholars of his age in Europe -- knows Greek, Latin, and French as well as he knows English -- can write splendid verse with equal ease in any of the four languages as well as any I know -- well better than I know anything. And in power of imagination and understanding, simply sweeps me before him as a torrent does a pebble. I'm righter than he is -- so are the lambs and the swallows, but they're not his match."

E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, The Works of John Ruskin, Volume XXXVI, Letters (1827-69) (London: George Allen, 1907).

¹¹ Arthur Meredith, editor, Letters of George Meredith, Volume I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), pp. 183, 240, 634. The following are offered in amplification of the enigmatic nature of Meredith's attitude toward Swinburne. The characteristic Victorian attitude is discernible:

"To Swinburne, September, 1866: As to the Poems -- if they are not yet in the press, do be careful of getting your reputation firmly grounded; for I have heard "low Mutterings" already from the Lion of the British Prudery; and I, who love your verse, would play savagely with a knife among the proofs for the sake of your face, and because I want to see you take the first place as you may if you will." (p. 183)

"To Frederick Greenwood, January 1, 1873: I hope when Swinburne publishes his Tristram you will review him. Take him at his best, he is by far the best -- finest poet; truest artist of the young lot -- when he refrains from pointing the hand at the genitals. And I trust he has done so at this time." (p. 240)

To Watts-Dunton on the Death of Swinburne: "April 13, 1909

My Dear Theodore, --The blow was heavy on me....That brain of the vivid illumination is extinct. I can hardly realize it when I revolve the many times when at the starting of an idea the whole town was instantly ablaze with electric lights. Song was his natural voice. He was the greatest of our lyrical poets -- of the world, I could say, considering what a language he had to wield." (p. 634)

¹²George Edward Woodberry, Swinburne (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. 82.

¹³John Drinkwater, Swinburne: An Estimate (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1913), pp. 194-95.

¹⁴W. Brooks Drayton Henderson, Swinburne and Landor (London: Macmillan and Company, 1918), p. 2.

¹⁵Coulson Kernahan, Swinburne As I Knew Him (New York: John Lane Company, 1919).

¹⁶Edmund Gosse, The Life of Algernon Charles Swinburne (London: William Heinemann, 1917), p. 109.

¹⁷Jerome Hamilton Buckley, The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 105.

¹⁸Algernon Charles Swinburne, Lesbia Brandon, critically edited by Randolph Hughes (London: The Falcon Press, 1952).

The following excerpts demonstrate the poor taste of Hughes in his iconoclastic attacks on all critics and biographers of Swinburne preceding and contemporaneous with himself. All are reduced to the inglorious status of bungling idiocy. Of the inadequate treatment of the influence of Watts-Dunton upon Swinburne, Hughes says: "Watts-Dunton is a rather complex character, and so far no adequate portrait of him has been put forward. I shall attempt one in my Life of Swinburne developing certain suggestions I have thrown out in this volume. The absence of anything satisfactory in this direction is particularly marked in the work of the dim-witted ignoramuses, who, following Gosse, have grossly misrepresented Swinburne's life at the Pines." (p. 247)

"Gosse is sometimes a wobbly writer, but here [of Swinburne's poetic activity in 1868] it look as if the sequence were one of cause and effect...." One can

imagine that the grammatical gem so boldly displayed brought upon the head of the compositor a superlative bombast of invective from Hughes.

¹⁹Ruth Zabriskie Temple, The Critic's Alchemy (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1953), p. 114.

²⁰Clyde K. Hyder, "Algernon Charles Swinburne," in The Victorian Poets, a Guide to Research, edited by Frederic E. Faverty (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), pp. 153-154.

²¹Cecil Y. Lang, The Swinburne Letters, Volume I, 1854-69 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. xix.

²²Ibid., xxii-xxiii.

²³Dame Edith Sitwell, Swinburne: A Selection (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960), p. 5.

²⁴Enid Starkie, From Gautier to Eliot (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1960), p. 51.

²⁵Graham Hough, The Last Romantics (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), pp. 191-193.

²⁶Curtis Dahl, "The Victorian Wasteland" in Victorian Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism, edited by Austin Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 38.

²⁷Morse Peckham, Beyond the Tragic Vision (New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 312.

²⁸The following excerpts from Wilfred Partington, Forging Ahead: The Story of the Upward Progress of Thomas James Wise (New York: G. P. Putnams, 1939) amplify the general attitude toward the controversial nature of the moral integrity of Wise. However, Gosse remains a man of impeccable integrity, a younger contemporary of Swinburne's:

"When the Ashley Collection came to be checked for the purpose of negotiating its sale to the British Museum, it was discovered that over 200 books and manuscripts described in its eleven-volume catalogue were missing. Some of these naturally were of minor interest; but there were 47 of the first importance whose absence especially in one case could not be otherwise than disappointing and surprising to the British Museum officials responsible for the checking, removal, and safe custody of the

collection....Among other manuscripts lacking were eight by Joseph Conrad, four by Swinburne (including that of Laus Veneris) -- indexed but not described). (p. 274)

"Naturally when the library came to be checked by the British Museum officials, there was more interest regarding the fate of the Wise's condemned or suspected nineteenth century pamphlets. It was found that fourteen of them...one by Swinburne...were missing." (p. 274)

Partington offers the following appraisal as vindication of the character of Wise: "It is my carefully considered judgment that his basic motive of the long system of frauds was gain to which later, possibly, was added desire for the kudos of discovering the exciting rareties -- kudos dear to the vanity of the ambitious collector-dealer." (p. 280)

"Whether remembering the ruthlessness and vindictiveness that Wise's books reveal, the way he used and abused useful friends, his "wickedness" is regarded as "splendid", depends upon the individual's regard for truth and honesty and the sacredness of friendship. But that there were many "Excellencies" in his achievement as a Collector, that his Endowments had their own Brightness cannot be denied to Thomas James Wise, who staked for himself a three-fold claim in the annals of fame: as the builder of the Ashley Library, as the most prolific and interesting of British bibliographers, and as the forger of the Nineteenth Century pamphlets." (p. 281)

²⁹The text of the reply to Mrs. R. A. Hudson's [reference librarian at Bishop College] inquiry to Russell and Russell regarding the reprint of Works edited by Gosse and Wise is: "This title will be available early 1968. Probable price \$200.00"

The text of a note received from the Cokesbury Bookstore, Dallas, regarding an order placed for the reprinted Works is: "The publisher has just acknowledged your order for: 1 Twenty-Volume Set of the Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne, edited by Gosse and Wise. This publication has not, as yet, been published and is expected to be ready early in 1968." [The reprint was received in March, 1968. The price was \$225.00.]

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

¹Television Channel 13, Interview of Arnold Toynbee by John Day, Spring, 1967.

²Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 430

³Based on Emery Edward Neff, Carlyle and Mill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926).

⁴Ibid.

⁵Georges Lafourcade, Swinburne: A Literary Biography (William Morrow and Company, 1932), pp. 18, 27.

⁶Harold Nicolson, Swinburne, Literary Biography (New York: Macmillan Company, 1926), p. 9.

⁷Samuel Chew, Swinburne (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1929), pp. 15, 16, 17.

⁸John A. Cassidy, Algernon Charles Swinburne (New York: Twayne Publisher, Inc., 1964), pp. 41-43.

⁹J. Hillis Miller, The Disappearance of God (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 85.

¹⁰Jerome Buckley, The Victorian Temper (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 105-106.

¹¹Richard D. McGhee, "Thalassius: Swinburne's Poetic Myth" in Victorian Poetry, Summer, 1967, pp. 127-36.

¹²W. Brooks Drayton Henderson, Swinburne and Landor (London: Macmillan Company, 1918), pp. 58-59.

¹³Victorian Poetry, op. cit., p. 134.

¹⁴Chew, p. 169.

¹⁵Buckley, pp. 104, 105.

¹⁶Nicolson, p. 169.

CHAPTER III

FOOTNOTES

¹The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne reproduced from the Bonchurch Edition, edited by Sir Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise, first published in 1925, Volume 7, Tragedies I (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), pp. 269-356.

All quotations from Swinburne's poetry will be taken from this edition, hereafter referred to as Works. Atalanta in Calydon will be referred to hereafter as Atalanta.

²Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1937), p. 335.

³Humphrey Hare, Swinburne, A Biographical Approach (London: H. F. and G. Witherby Ltd., 1949), p. 98.

⁴Morse Peckham, Beyond the Tragic Vision (New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 320.

⁵Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 225.

⁶Peckham, comments regarding Meleager's attitude: "Meleager is sure that man should trust the world, that the gods wish him well, and the social order is the necessary result of going out of the family to find one's love. Meleager, however, loves Atalanta, who...is unattainable, for she has stripped herself of her social femininity." p. 320.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Harold Nicolson, Swinburne: A Literary Biography (New York: Macmillan Company, 1926), pp. 91-92.

⁹Works, Vol. 1.

¹⁰The ideas here are summarized from Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940) and Love Declared (New York: Pantheon Books of Random House, 1963); and Albert Mordell, The Erotic Motive in Literature (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919).

¹¹Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 393.

¹²Praz, Summary of ideas.

¹³Praz, p. 225.

¹⁴Peckham, a Summary.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 314.

¹⁶Hare, p. 98.

¹⁷John A. Cassidy, Algernon C. Swinburne (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964), p. 98.

¹⁸Works, Vol. I.

¹⁹Goose, Works, Vol. 19, Life, p. 131.

²⁰Samuel Chew, Swinburne (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1929), p. 89.

²¹Bush, p. 350.

²²Barbara Seward, The Symbolic Rose (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 199.

²³Ibid., p. 52.

²⁴Praz, p. 244.

²⁵Peckham, p. 316.

²⁶Swinburne's view of art must be placed within the context of the pervasive problem of Art versus Morality in the Victorian Era. Ruskin conceived of the mandatory quality of art as a "moral aesthetic." Tennyson exhibited a kind of missionary zeal in assuming the mantle of the poet as prophet-teacher of the masses. For Swinburne, at this point, if any morality is to be found in poetry, it is within the organic integrity of the poem (reminiscent of the Jamesian theory of art found in Chapter I, page 1, of this study). In retrospect, in Notes on Poems and

Reviews, Swinburne states "Laus Veneris, Faustine, Dolores, and Hermaphroditus are stages in the symbolic experiences of grand mortal souls in spiritual torment." His morality is innately interwoven within the texture of beauty of form; thus it is remote from general Victorian standards as these are symbolized by Ruskin and Tennyson. The recognition of truth and beauty as phases of an organic whole prepares for the Swinburnean attitude toward Songs before Sunrise, expressed on page 108 of this study.

Robert L. Peters makes the following comment on Swinburne and morality in poetry:

"Beauty first and then truth was Swinburne's principle, and ideal art was energetic fusion of both.... A corollary to Swinburne's moral design, implicit all along, is that the artist who loses his integrity commits one of the worst 'immoralities of all.'" (From Robert L. Peters, "Swinburne and the Moral Design of Art" in Victorian Poetry, Volume II, 1963, pp. 139, 149.)

²⁷H. J. C. Grierson, Lyrical Poetry from Blake to Hardy (London: Hogarth Press, 1928, 1950), pp. 112-13.

CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

¹Georges Lafourcade, Swinburne: A Literary Biography (New York: William Morrow, 1932), p. 61.

²On this point Brown writes: "It is instructive to consider Songs before Sunrise as the rendering in poetry of the substance of the essay On Liberty, of which Swinburne wrote some few years later: 'Ever since his Liberty came out it has been the textbook of my creed as to public morals and political faith.'

E. K. Brown, "Swinburne: A Centenary Estimate," Victorian Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism, p. 304.

³William E. Buckler, editor Prose of the Victorian Era (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1958), p. 274.

⁴Summarized from Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949), pp. 188-201.

⁵Based on Lionel Stevenson, Darwinism among the Poets (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), pp. 49-50.

⁶Lafourcade, p. 213.

⁷Samuel Chew, Swinburne (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1929), pp. 97, 99.

⁸Ifor Evans makes the following comment regarding this new system: "In Hertha, Genesis, Hymn of Man and less directly Mater Dolorosa and Mater Triumphalis Swinburne's philosophy is conveyed. The world, he suggests was first a chaos; it has developed by contraries of life, death and change, 'the rhythmic' anguish of growth. The creator and the created are one, and the spirit in them should live in

liberty. Man has made for his own torment a shadow, which he calls god, and to overthrow that god is the most powerful step towards man's spiritual regeneration. Liberty is the spiritual in man, and through that life of liberty man gains contact with the eternal. Ifor Evans, English Poetry in the Later Nineteenth Century (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., [1933] 1966), p. 79, Vol. 1.

⁹Edmund Gosse, Life of Swinburne (London: William Heineman, Ltd., 1917), pp. 179-180.

¹⁰W. K. Clifford, "Cosmic Emotion" in Lectures and Essays, Vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1901), pp. 290-291.

¹¹Jerome Buckley, The Victorian Temper (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 174.

¹²Gosse, pp. 192-93. Vol. 1.

¹³In Teutonic mythology this is the period known as Ragnarok. It involves the destruction of the universe in the conflict between the Aesir and the powers of Hel led by Loki. After this period, a new heaven and a new earth will arise out of the sea.

¹⁴C. Y. Lang, Swinburne's Letters, Vol. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).

¹⁵E. M. W. Tillyard, Five Poems, 1470-1870 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), pp. 91-92.

¹⁶Thomas E. Connolly, Swinburne's Theory of Poetry (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1964), p. 22.

CHAPTER V

FOOTNOTES

¹The controversy grew out of Buchanan's The Fleshly School of Poetry (commented upon on pages 3-4 of Chapter I of this study). The lawsuit which ensued against The Examiner in 1876 (see Hyder, pages 180-181) filled Swinburne with loathing for critics and publishers alike.

²General comments here are based on John A. Cassidy, Algernon C. Swinburne (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1964), Chapter 8, and Georges Lafourcade, Swinburne: A Literary Biography (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1932), Chapters VI and VII.

³Lafourcade, pp. 265-66.

⁴Jerome Buckley, The Triumph of Time (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1966), a summary of ideas.

⁵Cecil Y. Lang, Introduction to The Swinburne Letters, Volume 1, 1854-1869 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. xxii.

⁶Buckley, p. 115.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Clara Watts-Dunton, The Home-Life of Swinburne (London: Philpot, 1922), pp. 178-79.

⁹John R. Reed, "Swinburne's Tristram," Victorian Poetry, IV, 1966 (Morgantown: West Virginia University), pp. 99-121.

¹⁰Reed's poet-lover symbol oversimplifies the complexity of Swinburne's Tristram as a symbol of man.

Reed states his thesis, based on Kierkegaard: "In Fear and Trembling, Kierkegaard describes the poet as the hero's lover whose act of love is to sustain the memory and honor of the hero by his talent for song and thereby qualify himself for a share in the hero's immortality. Swinburne's Tristram of Lyonesse is, in a sense, such a song of praise for the lovers, Tristram and Iseult, but more for the lovers as manifestations of Love than as human lovers. In Swinburne's poem, the hero, Tristram, is himself a singer who states concisely what Swinburne develops in his amplified tribute." Thus, in Reed's treatment of the images as symbols in the poem, Tristram as poet-lover is rendered magnificently, but Tristram as warrior-hero is obliterated by the brilliance of Reed's reading of the poet-lover.

¹¹Samuel Chew, Swinburne (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1926), p. 169.

¹²Algernon Charles Swinburne, "Dedicatory Epistle," Swinburne's Collected Poetical Works, Volume I (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1924), xvii-xix.

¹³Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940), pp. 45-46.

¹⁴John D. Rosenberg, "Swinburne," Victorian Studies, Volume XII, number 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), pp. 155-57.

¹⁵Reed, p. 111.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁷Rosenberg, p. 157.

¹⁸Chew, p. 179.

¹⁹Reed, pp. 119-20.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹De Rougemont, p. 48.

²²Cassidy, p. 160.

²³Reed, p. 111.

CHAPTER VI

FOOTNOTES

¹Summarized from William L. Davidson, The Stoic Creed (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1907), pp. 237-54.

²E. O. Lovejoy, "'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm," Modern Language Notes, 1927, pp. 444-450.

³Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftsbury, "Apostrophe to Nature" from The Moralists in Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose, edited by Louis I. Bredvold, Alan D. McKillop, and Lois Whitney, Second edition (New York: The Ronald Press, 1956), pp. 329-30.

⁴W. K. Clifford, Lectures and Essays, Volume 2 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901), p. 271.

⁵Joseph Warren Beach, The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry (New York: Macmillan Company, 1936), pp. 456-59.

⁶Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1937), p. 354.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Samuel Chew, Swinburne (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1929), p. 288.

⁹Harold Nicolson, Swinburne (New York: Macmillan Company, 1926), p. 173.

CHAPTER VII

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¹Walter Houghton, The World of the Victorians (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963), p. 174.

²J. Hillis Miller, The Disappearance of God (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1963), p. 156.

³Ibid., p. 257.

⁴Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁵These phrases recur throughout the Swinburnean canon. They reflect the Victorian concern with Buckley's "four faces of time."

⁶Morse Peckham, Beyond the Tragic Vision (New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 117.

⁷Frank Kermode, The Romantic Image (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), pp. 5, 7, 10.

⁸George Woodberry, Swinburne (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), p. 84.

⁹Peckham, p. 313.

¹⁰Stanley E. Rosen, (Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania) Lecture on "Nihilism" at the University of Oklahoma, May 10, 1968.

¹¹Based on John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty" in Prose of the Victorian Period, edited by William E. Buckler (Boston Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), pp. 251-72.

¹²Father William Skeeahan (Assistant Pastor, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Norman), Sermon on Television, Channel 4, Norman through Oklahoma City, Sunday, March 10, 1968.

¹³The Oklahoma Daily, May 10, 1968, (Norman: The University of Oklahoma), p. 13.

¹⁴James H. Billington (Professor of History at Princeton University), "The Student Revolt" in Life, May 24, 1968.

¹⁵Roman Vishniac (Biologist), "The World of Biology" on Television, Channel 4, May 24, 1968.

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