

Dylan Thomas's "In the White Giant's Thigh": A Wild Love of Art Song

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ABSTRACT

In the poem "In the White Giant's Thigh," Dylan Thomas projects the contemporary poets' wild passion for Eliotian amoral art song and their suffering and the contradistinction of his own occasional love of Yeatsian Grecian altruistic art song and his delight. The poem is at bottom optimistic as it offers the metaphysical and the metempirical wild lovers an alternative process of art song and also carries salvation to transcend their sorrowful failure. It is Thomas's faith in the Yeatsian process of transfiguration and transformation, the possibility of deliverance from the bondage of experience and ignorance that assures him of success and appeal in his art songs, that Auden repudiates in his metaphysical process of transgression and transmigration and his immortal vision of aesthetic amoral art song. The poem implies that Auden, as a result of his continual ignorance of the human reality of life and death, his stoic love of metaphysical art and reality, loses his grandeur and literary reputation and stoops to the level of a common man susceptible to hatred and indignation, violence and vengeance like the victims of his art songs, the political, the war and the Movement poets who remain equally ignorant of the metaphysical process and the reality of breath and death.

INTRODUCTION

Dylan Thomas's last poem *In Country Sleep* and even much of the poetry of preceding phases fall into a pattern as seen in the light of the formulations set forth in the early poem *18 Poems* addressed to the lamenting contemporary political poets in ignorance. He perceives that the time-conscious poets, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice, suffer the aftermath of their conflicting approach to socio-political pity and immortal art:

I see that from these boys shall men of nothing

Stature by seedy shifting,

Or lame the air with leaping from its hearts;

There from their hearts the dogdayed pulse

Of love and light bursts in their throats.

O see the pulse of summer in the ice. (*Poems* 71)

W.H. Auden sees that political poets fail to comply with the metaphysical vision of impersonal art, "the boys of summer in their autumn ... lay the gold tithings barren ... setting no store by harvest, freeze the soils" as they are ignorant of the metaphysical process, as they could not free themselves from the physical pleasures of the world, "their in their heat the winter floods ... of frozen loves they fetch

their girls ... and drown the cargoed apples in their tides" (*Poems*).

Thomas's *18 Poems* celebrates, in a sense, the advent of human suffering and co-existence, innate reality and moral disinterestedness under the influences of Thomas Hardy singing of, "the spell ... of inner themes and inner poetries" (Hardy 140), his process of endurance and endearment, "his homely Northern breast and brain ... grow up a Southern tree" (80) in defiance of the metaphysical process of patience and peace, "a process blows the moon into the sun ... pulls down the shabby curtains of the skin ... and the heart gives up its dead" and W.B. Yeats who sings of his introspective process of individuation and integration, his mortal Grecian vision of vicarious impersonal art, "the clouds of the sky ... when the horizon fades ... or a bird's sleepy cry among the deepening shades," as an alternative to the political poets' dream of death and life and Auden's metaphysical vision of impersonal art, "the death of friends, or death ... of every brilliant eye ... that made a catch in the breath" (*Collected Poems* 168), their self-contradicting and self-extinguishing process, "a process in the weather of the world ... turns ghost to ghost; each mothered child ... sits in their double shade." He explains:

A process in the weather of the heart
Turns damp to dry; the golden shot
Storms in the freezing tomb.

A weather in the quarter of the veins
Turns night to day; blood in their suns
Lights up the living worms. (*Poems* 17)

Apart from the discovery of the Yeatsian technique that makes poetic images, individual myths, the process of discovering his own identity and his fellow-being's identity, the art of turning personal memories of life and death into pagan altruistic impersonality in contrast to Auden's Eliotian metaphysical process of crucifixion of personality and resurrection of impersonality, his aesthetic amoral impersonal art, Thomas could distinguish the Yeatsian mortal vision of generous impersonalization, "light breaks on secret lots ... on tips of thought where thoughts smell in the rain," from Auden's Eliotian metaphysical vision of aesthetic amoral depersonalization:

Light breaks where no sun shines;
Where no sea runs, the waters of the heart
Push in their tides;
And, broken ghosts with glow-worms in their heads,
The things of light
File through the flesh where no flesh decks the bones.
(*Poems* 94)

Similar to Auden's choice, Thomas chooses human suffering as the theme of his early poem and gains the tragic rejoice, the Yeatsian pagan altruistic impersonal art through metaphorical and metamorphical process dissimilar to Auden's Eliotian aesthetic amoral impersonal art through the metaphysical Eliotian process of historical knowledge and historical suffering, "always good luck, praised the finned in the feather ... bird after dark and the laughing fish ... as the sails drank up the hail of thunder ... and the long-tailed lightning lit his catch" (*Poems* 37). Kathleen Raine underlines that it is the dissimilar *modus operandi* that achieves the dissimilar *modus vivendi* although the main thrust of human predicament is identical, "at the focus of thought there is no face ... the focus of the sun is in crystal with no shadow ... death of the victim is the power of the god" (*Modern Verse* 373).

The Grecian philanthropic vision of art song, the process of reconciliation and redemption as demonstrated in the song "Sailing to Byzantium" serves as a link between the later Yeats and the early Thomas whose early art song shows signs of Yeatsian impact. Yeats sings of the process of transfiguring and transforming the contemporary poets' romantic and metaphysical vision of immortal art song into mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, the process of alchemizing the tragic vision of art song into tragi-comic vision of art song:

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, present, or to come. (*YCP* 163)

In the early art song "Altarwise by Owl-light," Thomas transmutes the tragic suffering of the political poets as lovers of Auden's pure art into tragic joy and offers them the cyclical process of breath and death, the paradoxical vision of noble art song "green as beginning, let the garden diving ... soar, with its two bark towers, to that Day ... when the worm builds with the gold straws of venom ... my nest of mercies in the rude, red tree" (Thomas, *Collected Poems* 38). Thomas's mortal vision of pagan humanistic art song as an alternative to the political poets' romantic vision of rapturous art song and to Auden's Eliotian immortal vision of metaphysical art song is made as reality due to his emulous process of Yeats's mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his paradoxical sensibility, "hurried through the smooth and rough ... and through the fertile and waste ... protecting, till the danger past ... with human love" (*YCP* 180).

Originally, Thomas desires to envision his art song in line with Auden's metaphysical vision of immortal art song, but later on alters his plan and accepts the Yeatsian mortal vision of art song, "all that shapes from the caul and suckle ... stroke of mechanical flesh on mine ... square in these worlds the mortal circle" (*Poems* 26). While contradicting the Yeatsian process of transfiguration and transformation, the pagan altruistic art song that recalls the paradoxical process of his early poem *18 Poems*, "man of my flesh, the jawbone riven ... know now the flesh's lock and vice ... and the cage for the scythe-eyed raver" (*Poems*), from Auden's intellectual process of historical suffering and historical art, modernism and musical avant-gardism, "the jointed lever," the articulate voice of his ancestors, "out of the sea, the drive of oil ... socket and grave, the brassy blood," evoking the aesthetic amoral art of his early poem, *Poems*. Thomas himself outlines in a nutshell the Yeatsian introspective process of reconciliation and regeneration, the mythopoeic functioning, the mortal vision of magnanimous modest impersonal art as the motif of his early art song, "the people's fusion ... O light in zenith, the coupled bud ... and the flame in the flesh's vision" (*Poems*). Raine distinguishes Thomas's organic process of birth and death, his life and love-centric Yeatsian mortal vision of pagan humanistic art song from Auden's metaphysical process of death and life, his death and distance-centric Eliotian immortal vision of aesthetic amoral art song and the fallen political poets' romantic process of ecstatic life and art song, "out of the eyes is the focus of love ... the face of love is the sun, that all see ... the skull of the victim is the temple of sight" (*MV*).

MacNeice's comments on the *modus operandi* and the *modus vivendi* of Thomas's early art song "Altarwise by Owl-light" are also relevant to *18 Poems*. He commends Thomas for his involvement in a crusade for the freedom of man and another man, individuation and co-existence in contrast to Auden's logocentric art song and his metaphysical coldness:

And now the searchlights
Play their firemen' hoses,
Evil their purport
Though their practice lovely,

Defence and death being always
Collateral, coaeval. (*Collected Poems* 111)

In the transitional art song "After the Funeral," Thomas's makes it very clear that the motif of his occasional art song is in no way connected with the rhetoric of war against Auden but closely related to the process of making poetic images of gentle impersonal art and transforming the prodigal pre-war poets:

Now in the cloud's big breast lie quiet countries,
Delivered seas my love from her proud place
Walks with no wound, nor lightning in her face,
A calm wind blows that raised the trees like hair
Once where the soft snow's blood was turned to ice.
(*Poems* 70)

The transitional Thomas's leit-motif of magnanimous impersonal art corresponds to that of his early poem and paradoxical art song, "composite" and to that of Yeats's song "A Bronze Head" in *Last Poems*, "in a breath ... a mouthful held the extreme of life and death," his poetic process of life and death vis-à-vis the metaphysical process of death and life, "no dark tomb-haunter once; her form all full ... as though with magnanimity of light ... yet a most gentle woman; who can tell ... which of her forms has shown her substance right..." (*YCP* 289).

In "After the Funeral," Thomas directs the meandering insensitive pre-war Wordsworthian poets, "you see yourself spilling across the border ... of nice convention" to avoid making "private notes, thumbing and doubling," to bid goodbye to the romantic process of self-expression, the metaphysical rhetoric of Auden and the pity of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen and adopt the Yeatsian introspective process of individuation and integration, mythopoeic functioning to create poetry and art song as great, influential and popular as his early poem and art song, "a small boy twined in bracken and sprance ... like any goatfoot faun to propagate disorder" (*MCP* 269). The pre-war romantic poets, Roy Fuller, Alan Rook, Keidrych Rhys, F.T. Prince, Alun Lewis, and Sidney Keyes record their immediate impressions of personal experiences, dreams and nostalgia without being sensitive to the warring atmosphere in and around them. They feel that the Wordsworthian romantic process, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility" ("Preface" 180), could annihilate all sense of time and space and resolve all the antinomies, the paradoxical process of Auden and Thomas that have so long disturbed and perplexed them. Only from such experience of sublimity, they think, could great poetry be born. That the vision of terror and horror, the reality of cruel war in the poems of Sassoon and Owen is in tension with the Wordsworthian vision of natural beauty and harmony, and they feel the presence of a mysterious, benign power interpenetrating earthly phenomena. Thomas recasts their inarticulate sounds through aural, oral, visual and static images:

After the funeral, mule praises, brays,
Windshake of sailshaped ears, muffle-toed tap
Tap happily of on peg in the thick
Grave's foot, blinds down the lids, the teeth in black,
The spittled eyes, the salt ponds in the sleeves,

Morning smack of the spade that wakes up sleep,
Shakes a desolate boy who slits his throat

In the dark of the coffin and sheds dry leaves.... (*Poems* 25)

The transitional art song indicates the evolutionary process of Thomas's early poem and his early art song that have assured him of his identity as a poet and an artist of success and influence and also concentrates on the romantic war poets' love of self-expression, their wild passion for the eternity of Wordsworthian greatness signifying the state of painful ignorance that necessarily precedes final realization, "strange they could tell a mere child how hearts may beat in ... the self-same tune for the once-possessed ... and the unpossessed" (Day Lewis, *Collected Poems* 216). He describes the redemptive process bearing the blessings of his godhead Yeats:

Her flesh was meek as milk, but that skyward statue
With the wild breast and blessed and giant skull
Is carved from her in a room with a wet window
In a fiercely mourning house in a crooked year. (*Poems*)

Auden's *Another Time* renders the Rilkean harmonic principle of existential art that the poem *Look Stranger!* has augured well for the bright future, "and the wish to wound has the power. And to-morrow ... comes. It's a world. It's a way," and hinted at the diminishing of his popularity and influence, "the river is alone and the trampled flower ... and through years' of absolute cold" (*Look Stranger!* 68), among the contemporary poets with the emergence of Thomas as a popular and influential poet and an artist as well. In the transitional art song, Thomas attains to his vision of Grecian noble impersonal art and art song of tragic rejoice through his own continuous exploration, his rejection of Auden's wild passion for Eliotian metaphysical art and immortal art song, through the grace of Yeats. Raine commends Thomas for his ascent from a mortal prototype of the immortal god to the plane of divination himself, "the eyes of the victim are the crystal of divination ... sun clears the colours of life ... the crystal of the skull is the work of the sun" (*MV*). The transitional art song extends the area of his mortal vision of pagan altruistic art song and anticipates his ascendancy in the later art songs over the contemporary poets of war time of the forties, their intense love of art song and immortality.

The later art song "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London" contradistinguishes Thomas's commitment to his functioning as a poet and an artist of Yeatsian empathy, moral disinterestedness from the non-committed functioning of the poets of war time, Auden, Day Lewis, Spender, MacNeice, Fuller, Rook, Rhys, Prince, Lewis, and Keyes, their personal concerns of immortality, mortality and survival:

Deep with the first dead lies London's daughter,
Robed in the long friends,
The grains beyond age, the dark veins of her mother,
Secret by the unmourning water
Of the riding Thames.

After the first death, there is no other death. (*Poems* 18)

The allusion to "death," a favourite symbol of Auden, helps to contrast Thomas's imaginative process of life-in-death, transfiguration and transformation, his Yeatsian mortal

vision of Grecian altruistic art song with Auden's metaphysical process of death-in-life, transgression and transmigration, his Eliotian aesthetic amoral art and the political and the war poet's process of personal sentiments, their insensibility. In this later song, Thomas's functioning is linked with his functioning in the early poem and the early and the transitional art songs and with Yeats's with his threefold concern for self-image, self-improvement and self-advancement in the poem "A Prayer for My Daughter" which suggests his vicarious impersonal art, "from a glad kindness he cannot take his eyes," his prudent and benevolent functioning and the contemporary poets' association with their early poems of ignorance and dreams of musical art song:

And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound,
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,
Nor but in merriment a quarrel,
O may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place. (*YCP* 160)

This later song implies that Thomas's deification does not alienate him from the ignorant fellow-beings; his art song mediates between his mortal vision of vicarious impersonal art and the contemporary poets' dreams of immortal art and draws them together in his paradoxical sensibility.

In "Poem in October," the images and ideas presented in the first six stanzas are amplified and resolved into unity in the seventh concluding stanza:

It was my thirtieth
Year to heaven there then in the summer noon
Though the town below lay leaved with October blood.
O may my heart's truth
Still be sung
On this high hill in a year's turning. (*Poems* 116)

The ignorance of the political and the war poets and the miracle of Auden's transcendent vision stand as sharp contrast to Thomas's exemplary pragmatic truth of his asocial, apolitical and ahistorical functioning analogous to that of his early poem, his early and transitional art songs and Yeats's universal truth in the song "A Prayer for My Daughter" in which he sings of his self-advancing mind, his disinterested goodness and action during the time of socio-political-historical crises:

My mind, because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have disapproved,
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf. (*YCP*)

Thomas's sober and sagacious functioning, his moral disinterestedness, the impassive war poets' sudden transformation, their acceptance of Thomas's poetic process of life-in-death and his empathic impersonal art, their rejection of Auden's artistic process of death-in-life and his aesthetic amoral disinterestedness are in contradistinction to Auden's passivity, his existential ironic functioning, the active war poets' ignorance, their choice of death for the eternity of pity,

Prince's deliberate ignorance of the world of war, his divided functioning between Word-centric art and world-centric love and the pity-conscious political poets' indifference to the reality of war, their sudden censure of Thomas's later art song, "A Refusal to Mourn..." as deviating from the motif of his early poem and his early and transitional art songs, deflecting from his Yeatsian mortal vision of pagan humanistic art. The truth is both terrifying and assuring according to Thomas, "and there could I marvel my birthday ... away but the weather turned around. And the true ... joy of the long dead child sang burning ... in the sun" (*Poems*).

The later art song "Fern Hill" projects the passive war poet Prince as lost in the abysmal ignorance of Auden's metaphysical process of self-annihilation. Despite Auden's assurance that there is light on the shores of ignorance or passivity, that eternal suffering followed by eternal art takes away much of the horror of the process and reconciles the explorer, Prince stands bewildered between the process of death-in-life and the immediate predicament of romantic love. Thomas explains the dilemmatic Prince's experience divided between the concerns of aesthetic amoral impersonal art and personal love:

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would
take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my
hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless
land. (*Poems* 55)

Thomas perceives that the agony of ignorance, the terror of the metaphysical process of self-crucifixion and resurrection, and the torturing uncertainties of Prince are real as he himself has undergone such experiences before he liberates himself and emulates the alternative Yeatsian process of life and death, transfiguration and transformation and cheerful impersonal art in his early poem, "Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means ... Time held me green and dying ... though I sang in my chains like the sea" (*Poems*). He sees that Prince's ignorance of the purgatorial experience as a necessary intermediary stage as he has learnt from Yeats who sings, "it's certain that fine women eat ... a crazy salad with their meat ... whereby the Horn of plenty is undone ... in courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned" (*YCP* 159).

The later art songs underscore that Thomas's evolutionary process in the later art songs is more emphatic in affirming the regenerative poetical character, the main motif of his early poem and his early and transitional art songs that drive "all hatred" and recover "radical innocence," equanimity and magnanimity, and evokes his Yeatsian introspective process of self-discovery, self-advancement and self-preservation, "that it is self-delighting ... self-appeasing, self-affrighting ... and that its own sweet will is Heaven's will." In terms of allegory, it may be said that the social love, the political pity, and the historical peace of the contemporary poets of war time and their dream of immortality are all due to their ignorance of the reality of life and death, their extreme love and

hatred of self and another self, "though every face should scowl ... and every windy quarter howl ... or every bellows burst, be happy Still" (*YCP*). Raine brings out Thomas's contraposition distinct from the contemporary poets of war time, "the stone of my destruction casts no shadow ... the sun kills perfectly with the stroke of noon ... the clarity of the crystal is the atonement of the god" (*MV*). In the later art songs, Thomas ascends to a much higher plane of realization and enjoys paradisaical felicity. His Yeatsian paradoxical vision of pragmatic, empathic functioning as an asocial apolitical and ahistorical poet and an atypical artist has a clarity denied to the existential sufferer Auden suggesting his resplendence and his immortal vision of immortal art in contrast to the gleaming gloom of the political and the war poets according to Raine, "the perfection of man is the pride of death ... the crystal skull is the perpetuity of life ... the power of the god is the taking of love" (*MV*).

Thomas's finding in the last art song "Over Sir John's Hill" is that Auden's lack of awareness of the negative aspects of his metaphysical process and his aesthetic amoral art song must have caused his much pain, his loss of success, influence and popularity, his motif of hatred and anger, violence and revenge, war cry and war mongering in collaboration with his well-wishers. But Auden's ignorance or passivity also helps him to concentrate all his efforts on the Eliotian metaphysical *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* and sharpen his powers of perceptions, "stands for my historical share of care ... for a lying self-made city ... afraid of our living task, the dying ... which the coming day will ask" (*Nones* 10). Thomas compares and contrasts his own tragi-comic vision of animate art song, his ignorance of the hostile environs and Auden's tragic vision of inanimate immortal art song, his condescending to cry for the death of the fellow-poet: "Only a hoot owl/Hollows, a grassblade blown in cupped hands, in the looted elms/And no green cocks or hens/Shout" (*Poems* 114). Auden's continuous ignorance of the reality of life of birth and death, his continual love of metaphysical process of immortal art, his harping on the motif of an avenger is analogous to the ignorance and intention of the berated political and the bereaved Movement poets: "For, oh, my soul found a sunday wife/in the coal black sky and she bore angels!/Harpies around me out of the womb!" (*Poems* 92). The song "Over Sir John's Hill" that renders Thomas's Yeatsian range of comprehension of self-awarding, self-rewarding, self-guarding process, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his paradoxical sensibility and his noble poetical culture that he finally gains, that gives him an exalted position analogous to his functioning in the early poem, the early and the transitional art songs is reminiscent of Yeats's singing in the art song "Byzantium":

Marbles of the dancing floor
Break bitter furies of complexity,
Those images that yet
Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea. (*YCP* 210)

The spectacle of art songs in which Thomas sees himself as a mortal poet realizing, through human suffering and

through concentrated application of mental faculties, a god-like power of apprehension shows the infinite possibilities of the human mind, and in spite of dark hues in the early poem the picture is optimistic in its final impression, "and I who hear the tune of slow ... wear-willow river, grave ... before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken ... stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds sailing" (*Poems*). The tragic mystery of art song that Thomas emulates from Yeats does not alienate him from fellow-mortals; it only deepens his human sympathies. Thomas's consistent functioning as a magnanimous modest artist comforting the affected political poets, the affective war poets and the afflicted Auden reveals his being fused and integrated with Yeats's mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song and his broad-minded culture: "I am no more with life and death ... my heart upon his heart warm heart lies ... my breath is mixed into his breath" (*YCP* 48). Raine perceives that Thomas's self-revealing life-centric constructive role stands contrary to Auden's self-annihilating logo-centric symbolic role, the Movement poets' existential warring role and the political and the war poets' self-regarding world-centric romantic role, "the perfection of light is the destruction of the world ... death and love turn the faces of day and night ... the illumination of the skull is the joy of the god" (*MV*).

Auden's perception of intellectual soul and wise passivity, his metaphysical process of pure being and pure art is presented as the prototype of his immortal ancestors of immortal art song. In the early poem *Poems* (1928), he dreams of the process of self-annihilation and immortal art song, "a cloud blown from the cut-throat North ... suddenly hid Love's moon away," while glorifying the metaphysical poet de la Mare, "believing every word I said ... I praised her body and her mind ... till pride had made her eyes grow bright" and scornful of the ignorant romantic contemporary poets dreaming of sublime art, "a burning cloud" and life of pleasures, "and pleasure made her cheeks grow red ... and vanity her footfall light" (*YCP* 100). In *Poems* (1930), Auden's knowledge of the metaphysical process of immortal art song learnt from Eliot's intellectual poem, *The Waste Land*, "Passion has often worn our wandering hearts ... the woods were round them, and the yellow leaves ... fell like faint meteors in the gloom, and once ... a rabbit old and lame limped down the path," makes him an Eliotian artist of aesthetic amoral song, "turning, he saw that she had thrust dead leaves ... gathered in silence, dewy as her eyes ... in bosom and hair," a believer of Eliotian immortal vision of self-extinction and double immortality in contrast to the contemporary poets' love of "ephemera," their conflicting dreams of political activism and sublime beauty, "that we are tired, for other loves await us ... hate on and love through unripening hours ... before us lies eternity; our souls ... are love, and a continual farewell" (*YCP* 11). In *Look Stranger!* Auden as godhead of art song, "white woman that passion has worn ... as the tide wears the dove-grey sands" is sarcastic of Thomas's vicarious impersonal art in *18 Poems*, "white woman with numberless dreams ... I bring you my passionate rhyme" as wild, immature and "passionate rhyme" written under the influence of "his beloved" sceptical Yeats to trans-

late the political poets' tragic failure into tragic happiness, "and with heart more old than the horn ... that is brimmed from the pale ire of time" (*YCP* 50).

In the transitional poem *Another Time*, Auden senses "that there is great danger" to his grandeur as the supreme ruler among the contemporary poets and adopts Rilke's existential art identical with his metaphysical art, "and all his sacred company ... imagined bodies all their days ... by the lagoon you love so much" to retain his power and pride, popularity and appeal, "for proud, soft, ceremonious proof ... that all must come and touch." In the poems of the middle phase, *New Year Letter* and *For the Time Being*, Auden "is perplexed" of his "wretched" status compared to the most popular status of Thomas as paradoxical artist of pagan philanthropic art songs during the time of war, "that all blest souls are not composite ... and that all beautiful women may live in uncomposite blessedness" (*YCP* 149). He proposes de la Mare's faith in God and his metaphysical process of intensity, his laws of poetic justice, "rule by supernatural right" as a way out for the ignorant romantic war poets, as a contrast to Thomas's Yeatsian organic process, his poetic licence, "but who can talk of give and take ... what should be and what not ... while those dead men are loitering there ... to stir the boiling pot..." (154).

In the last phase Auden, "after long silence" amid the adverse situation, "all other lovers being estranged or dead ... unfriendly lamplight hid under its shade ... the curtains drawn upon unfriendly night," returns to the existential vision of art song of Eliot, "that we descant and yet again descant ... under the supreme theme of Art and Song" (*YCP* 226), whose influence has made him godhead and an artist of grandeur and reputation in the early phase. Auden's emulation of Eliot's architectural song *Four Quartets*, "anodyne for his love" and his concern for double immortality, "two thoughts were so mixed up I could not tell ... whether of her or God he thought the most" in contrast to the contemporary poets' dreaming of pagan romantic beauty, "a gold-fish swimming in a bowl" is, in the deepest sense of the word, in the nature of a pilgrimage, and yet it is a pilgrimage that ends in uncertainty. It is this quality of doubt, this courage to face uncertainties, this faith in "All Souls' Night" and the Word-centric structure, "wild with divinity ... had so lit up the whole ... immense miraculous house ... the Bible promised us" (*YCP* 193) that gives his quest for double immortality and communion with historical souls strange intensity and determines the texture and thought of his poems in the last phase. In the poem *Nones*, he sings:

But things to hand, this ready flesh
No honest equal but my accomplice now
My assassin to be and my name
Stands for my historical share of care
For a lying self-made city,
Afraid of our living task, the dying
Which the coming day will ask. (10)

The leit-motif of Auden's art songs in the last phase has been double immortality, the communion of his soul with all souls of immortal things, immortal ancestors of eternal suffering and eternal art and the communion with the

existing souls, the immortality of his art songs among the contemporary poets or readers and this is in communion with his singing in the early phase telling his contemporary poets, "converting number from vague to certain ... bring joy, bring day of his returning... lucky with day approaching, with leaning dawn" (*Poems* 43). Auden's passion for "double immortality" is analogous to Eliot's grand passion. Yeats presents Eliot's theory of impersonality, his seeking of communion with the weak contemporary poets, "nothing can stay my glance ... until that glance run in the world's despite ... to where damned have howled away their hearts and where the blessed dance..." (*YCP*) and his communion with the immortal soul of Dante, "that of Christ," "the chief imagination of Christendom ... Dante Alighieri, so utterly found himself ... that he has made that hollow face of his ... more plain to the mind's eye than any face" (*YCP*). In *Nones*, Auden aspires to blessedness, and he himself assures the Movement poet that he, too, may achieve the same blessedness in contrast to Thomas's choice of Yeatsian magnanimous modesty and the political and the war poets' choice of limitless freedom:

The blessed will not care what angle they are regarded from,

Having nothing to hide. Dear, I know nothing of
Either, but when I try to imagine a faultless love

Or the life to come, what I hear is the murmur

Of underground streams what I see is a limestone landscape. (*Nones* 13)

Yeats perceives that the metaphysical poet's aesthetic sensibility, "his elements have grown so fine ... the fume of muscatel ... can give his sharpened palate ecstasy ... no living man can drink from the whole wine" is invariably in pursuit of double immortality, "midnight has come, and the great Christ Church Bell ... and may a lesser bell sound through the room" (*YCP* 196) and "it is All Souls' Night ... and two long glasses brimmed with muscatel ... bubble upon the table" (193). His perception corresponds to Keats's definition of "Bards of Passion" who "double-lived in regions new" communing "with your souls on earth" and "souls in heaven too," the immortal vision of immortality, communing "with spheres of sun and moon ... with the noise of fountains wond'rous ... and the parle of voices thund'rous" and with the souls of the ignorant contemporary poets, "divine melodious truth ... philosophic numbers smooth ... tales and golden histories ... of heaven and its mysteries" (Keats 412).

Auden's grand and gigantic passion for the architectural art song of Eliot, the communion with the immortal ancestral beauty of the intellectual giant Eliot finds an objective correlative in the eighteenth century poet John Gay's song "The Ballad of Molly Mog" in which the lover who pines and whines for "the fair maid of the inn" in whom "Juno, Venus and Pallas's merit ... unite" describes his passive, aesthetic love, "I feel I am in love to distraction ... my senses are lost in the fog ... and nothing can give satisfaction ... but thinking of sweet Molly Mog." When others think of her "clog" and their "pleasure ... like a hog," he is a connoisseur of pure beauty and pure being, "all the sea cannot give so good measure ... of joys as my sweet Molly Mog" (Gay, Wikipedia). The political,

the war and the Movement poets' wild love and dream of the Eliotian Auden's pure immortal art song and their mortal life of physical pleasures, "and this day's sun leapt up the sky out of her thighs ... was miraculous virginity old as loaves and fishes" (*Poems* 106), their woeful experience is comparable to the fanciful mortal lover, "the knight-at-arms" enthralled in love for the immortal lady in John Keats's ballad, "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*," "And there she lulled me asleep./ And there I dreamed – ah! woe betide!/The latest dream I ever dreamed/On the cold hill side" (292).

Auden's metaphysical aesthetic amoral sensibility has been ignorant of life of birth and death, the reality of man's suffering and joy as he intensely involves himself in the pursuit of immortal art and unification of his aesthetic amoral soul with the immortal ethical soul of the Dantean Eliot, "Pedant in passion, learned in old courtesies ... vehement and witty she had seemed" and the harmonization and immortalization of his own soul with the political, the war and the Movement poets who have been equally ignorant of the process of life and death while dreaming of immortal art, "we have given the world our passion ... we have naught for death but toys" (*YCP* 132). The contemporary poet's "vacillation," their wild passionate aspiration and ambition to be immortal artist is an instance of unnatural and unrealistic extremism, "between extremities ... man runs his course ... a brand, or flaming breath" that "comes to destroy ... all those antinomies ... of day and night" in contrast to Thomas's sober and sagacious Yeatsian tragi-comic vision of Grecian altruistic art song, "and he that Attis' image hangs between ... that staring fury and the blind lush leaf ... may know not what he knows, but he knows not grief" (*YCP* 212). Thomas's poem "In the White Giant's Thigh," is a free play of contrasts between immortal vision of death-centric musical extravaganza, "work of intellect or faith" and mortal vision of heart-centric "rich estate," between Word-centric proud poet "proud, open-eyed and laughing to the tomb" and world-centric self-indulgent poet, "extravagance of breath" (212), between a poet of ironic sensibility, "storm-scattered intricacy" and a poet of paradoxical sensibility, "simplicity of fire." It is a *locus classicus* of Thomas's main poetry and his art songs, his metaphorical and metamorphical process of warm impersonal art, his mythopoetic functioning as a poet of moral disinterestedness and an artist of Grecian altruistic vision in contrast to the contemporary poets' *locus standi*, Auden as an artist of metaphysical process of historical art song and immortality and the political, the war and the Movement poets as stragglers in the self-contradicting process of comfortable existence and immortal art song.

The poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" included in the last poem, *In Country Sleep* projects Thomas's Yeatsian "double vision" of paradoxical sensibility in the art songs. His polygonal sensibility, his love of Yeatsian sceptic magnanimous impersonal art, "Homer is my example and his unchristened heart" (213) reconciles himself to Auden's metaphysical motif of "pre-destined part," his Eliotian love of immortal art song and immortality, the Movement and the inactive war poets' self-delusive unsound motif of pleasant life and eternal beauty, the "half all glittering flame and half

all green ... abounding foliage moistened with the dew," the dilemmatic passive war poet's self-deceiving half-hearted motif of pleasures and eternal beauty analogous to that of the political poets, "and half is half and yet is all the scene" and the active war poets' self-destroying political motif of patriotism and nationalism and immortalization of the pity of war "and half and half consume what they renew" and regenerates his own Yeatsian introspective process of life and death, self-discovery, self-advancement and self-preservation, his Yeatsian vision of Grecian altruistic art song, "get all the gold and silver that you can ... satisfy ambition, animate ... the trivial days and ram them with the sun" as the central focus of his poem "In the White Giant's Thigh." The title of the poem suggests the contradistinction between Auden's grand passion for Eliot's immortal art song that is as wild as the political, the war and the Movement poets' passion for the Eliotian Auden's immortal art song and Thomas's occasional love of Yeatsian introspective process of pagan humanistic art song, "and everything that your own hands have wrought" (*YCP*). The contemporary poets' megalomania for immortal art song is identically sentimental and tragic, metaphysical and romantic, self-deceptive and self-indulgent in reality in contrast to Thomas's occasional love of art song offering hope for mortal vision of vicarious art song and promising prospective future to the hopeless, inactive contemporary poets, "the blind clawed stare is cold as sleet ... the tempter under the eyelid ... who shows to the selves asleep... mast-high moon-white women naked" (*Poems*). Yeats, while explaining his introspective process of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation, his kind impersonal art and the contemporary poets' fanciful vision of immortality, sings of the "double vision" of his polygonal functioning:

I call to the mysterious one who yet
Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream
And look most like me, being indeed my double,
And prove of all imaginable things
The most unlike, being my anti-self,
And, standing by these characters, disclose
All that I seek.... (148)

The poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" renders Thomas's journey from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, from challenges to success, from obscurity to popularity, from immortal vision of modernism and musical avant-gardism, aesthetic amoral disinterestedness to mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, soundless moral disinterestedness:

Walking in wishes and lovely for shame
Is dumb and gone with his flame of brides.
Susannah's drowned in the bearded stream
And no-one stirs at Sheba's side.... (*Poems* 36)

Thomas demonstrates the Yeatsian process of becoming, the mortal vision of pagan warm art song, the nature of journey that the tumultuous, metaphysical Auden and the romantic contemporary poets too will have to undergo to regain their lost love and status.

Auden's art songs have been defensive of Eliotian metaphysical process, the laws of poetic justice and offensive of

the ignorant lovers of his art song. His choice of perfection of work of art, while underlining the difference between his Eliotian conception of impersonality, his phono-centric art song and Thomas's Yeatsian choice of perfect life, his introspective process of transfiguration and transformation of personality, his grapho-centric Grecian altruistic impersonal art, "whose family have taught him ... to set against the large and dumb ... the timeless and the rooted ... his money and his time," focuses on the atmosphere of conflicting cold war, rivalry and challenge:

Wrapped in a yielding air, beside
The flower's soundless hunger,
Close to the tree's clandestine tide,
Close to the bird's high fever,
Loud in his hope and anger,
Erect about his skeleton,
Stands the expressive lover,
Stands the deliberate man. (*AT* 15)

In contradistinction, Thomas's Yeatsian Grecian altruistic art songs, while defending and redeeming the suffering, ignorant lovers of metaphysical art song, have been offering the Yeatsian process of transfiguration and transformation, the mortal vision of soundless art song as an alternative to Auden's immortal vision of phono-centric art song, pure art and pure being:

Chastity prays for me, piety sings,
Innocence sweetens my last black breath,
Modesty hides my thighs in her wings,
And all the deadly virtues plague my death! (*Poems* 92)

Thomas's last poem *In Country Sleep*, especially his poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" brings out the continuous presence of the underlying motif of his main poetry and his art songs, his mortal vision of pagan philanthropic, benevolent and beneficent art song in contrast to the contemporary poets' intellectual and impulsive vision of passionate and wild, malignant and malevolent, revengeful and dreadful art song.

Yeats, contradistinguishing his own mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, "blossoming dreams have never bent ... under the fruit of evil and of good," from the romantic poet's dream of immortal beauty, "the wayward twilight companies ... who sigh with mingled sorrow and content," and the metaphysical poet's eternal vision of aesthetic amoral beauty, "talked of the dark folk who live in souls ... of passionate men," explains:

And of the embattled flaming multitude
Who rise, wing above wing, flame above flame,
And, like a storm, cry the Ineffable Name,
And with the clashing of their sword-blades make
A rapturous music, till the morning break
And the white hush end all but the loud beat
Of their long wings, the flash of their white feet. (*YCP* 40)

Moreover, Thomas's Yeatsian "double vision" of paradoxical sensibility, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song is analogous to Keats's tragi-comic vision of tragic mirth. Keats sings of the "bards of mirth":

Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;

Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen, and what maim. (Keats).

Thomas's Yeatsian impersonal art of tragic gladness offers him a sudden glimpse into the nature of pure, unalloyed bliss of Auden that the fallen political poets Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice, the war poet Prince and the Movement poet Larkin could never afford. His Yeatsian mortal vision of paradoxical sensibility, free play and free love, life and love-centric culture has assured him of self-fulfilment and self-contentment, "gold-sewn silk on the sword-blade ... beauty and fool together laid," in contraposition to the contemporary poets' wild love of immortal art song and immortality, their awful and abysmal ignorance of human reality that is the cause of their woes, pining and whining, their hatred and indignation, violence and avenge, war mongering and war cry, "a storm beaten old watch-tower ... a blind hermit rings the hour ... all-destroying sword-blade still ... carried by the wandering fool" (*YCP* 203).

Reviews, Methods and Objectives

In the last poem *In Country Sleep*, W.T. Moynihan observes, "Blake's influence looms large in Thomas's attempt to find symbols for the old forms of Chapel and country" (33). W.Y. Tindall explains that "in the house at Laugharne, Thomas has read his daughter to sleep with folk and fairy tales. However terrible these tales, he says fear no more. Have no bad dreams of wolves, pigs, ganders, or witches; for these are natural or fictive" (275). C. Munro states that in the last poem Thomas "has given meaning to the human predicament, by imposing on it an all-containing form" and "the form of the poem may be taken as a miniature of the whole pattern of existence" (27). E. Yeoman perceives "a unified overall poetic vision emerging, one which exists in its own right – without translation" (105). To Walford Davies, the poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" is the poet's "celebration of vitality in the face of mortality" (86). However, a metaphorical study of the poem abounding in functional imagery of his own art songs as well as the art songs of the contemporary poets suggests that Thomas's Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his introspective process of individuation and integration, paradoxical sensibility and benevolent culture ensures his success, appeal and popularity in contrast to Auden's immortal vision of metaphysical process of intensity and immortal art that deprives him of his grandeur, influence and popularity which, in turn, makes him and the Movement poets, the wild lovers of his art song, malevolent and violent, aversive and aggressive towards Thomas whom they consider as an enemy of his greatness and the political and the war poets' malformation of Auden's metaphysical process and their malfunctioning, their ignorance of Thomas's motif in the art songs and their malcontentment. This paper, focusing on the contrary leit-motif of the contemporary poets concerned and their contra-functioning, their wild love of art song and immortality, their ignorance of the cause of their whimpering end, purposes to reveal the distinctive position of the dying Thomas and his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In the early poem *18 Poems*, Thomas recognizes his own ignorance, his inability to comprehend the mystery of impersonal art of the metaphysical poet John Donne and the intellectual poet Auden whose early poem *Poems* represents Eliot's metaphysical process of art song and his bewilderment is equal to the bafflement of the political poets in their wild love of impersonal art, "there in the sun the frigid threads ... of doubt and dark they feed their nerves ... the signal moon is zero in their voids" (*Poems* 71). In the opening lines of the poem "In the White Giant's Thigh," Thomas remembers:

Through throats where many rivers meet, the curlews cry,
Under the conceiving moon, on the high chalk hill,
And there this night I walk in the white giant's thigh
Where barren as boulders women lie longing still....
(*Poems* 84)

The epithet "giant" gives this ignorance a purposiveness. Here ignorance is synonymous with wise passivity of Eliot whose mind disengages itself from the active world and through solitary meditations conditions itself for the quest of the pilgrim. But the word also carries the pain of bafflement, and the mental state is analogous to Auden's metaphysical pursuit of pure being and pure art. Auden subsequently achieves Eliotian historical consciousness and attained to divinity, "to labour and love though lay down long ago."

As Thomas approaches Yeats's *The Tower* where the Grecian altruistic artist is born, he experiences an eager expectancy as witnessed in the first stanza of the poem "Especially When the October Wind." The tragedy and the grandeur of Auden's early poem *Poems* suddenly overwhelm the young Thomas's consciousness, and in this trance-like state he feels an acute physical sensation which, in its intensity, becomes akin to pain:

Especially when the October wind
With frosty fingers punishes my hair,
Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire
And cast a shadow crab upon the land,
By the sea's side, hearing the noise of birds,
Hearing the raven cough in winter sticks,
My busy heart who shudders as she talks
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words. (*Poems* 53)

The image of "the crabbing sun" is immediately replaced by the images of "the shadow crab," "the sea's side," and "winter sticks" suggesting the weariness and travail of the pilgrimage; the words "frosty," "cough," and "shudders" also indicate the consuming nature of the pilgrim's experience. His inward convulsions are projected in external nature. The last two lines describe the pleasure of visiting a holy place.

Thomas's terror and his exultation attendant on the new discovery are conveyed in the opening poem of *18 Poems*:

We summer boys in this four-winded spinning,
Green of the seaweeds' iron,
Hold up the noisy sea and drop her birds,
Pick the world's bail of wave and froth
To choke the deserts with her tides,
And comb the country gardens for a wreath. (*Poems*)

Yeats's mortal vision of Grecian altruistic impersonal art is compared to a shrine in the midst of a desert, and in this

sense the tragi-comic vision of impersonal art is a significant achievement, "stripping my loin of promise ... he promises a secret heat," the consummation of a long, sometimes arid and fearful, journey, "my hero bares my side and sees his heart ... tread; like a naked Venus ... the beach of flesh, and wind her bloodred plait" (*Poems* 97).

Thomas's *18 Poems* relies fully upon Yeats's introspective process of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation, his tragi-comic vision of warm impersonal art for the purpose of discovering his identity as a noble impersonal poet offering promising future to the fallen political poets, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice, "I dreamed my genesis in sweat of death, fallen twice in the feeding sea, grown ... stale of Adam's brine until, vision ... of new man strength, I seek the sun," in contrast to Auden's death-centric metaphysical process of transgression and transmigration and the political poets' process of love and pity, "and power was contagious in my birth, second ... rise of the skeleton and ... robbing of the naked ghost. Manhood ... spat up from the resuffered pain" (*Poems* 66). Yeats is the giver of light to Thomas's kind impersonal poem *18 Poems* that offers hope for poetry to the woeful political poets, the lost depressed lovers of time-consciousness and political activism, "always good-bye, cried the voices through the shell ... good-bye always, for the flesh is cast ... and the fisherman winds his reel ... with no more desire than a ghost" (36-37).

In tune with the *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* of his early poem, Thomas in the early dramatic art song "Altar-wise by Owl-light" recaptures Yeats's process of transfiguration and transformation, his process of transmuting tragic sorrow into tragic joy in repudiation of Auden's Eliotian metaphysical ideas of death-like intensity and immortal art, aesthetic distance and diffusion, "the boat swims into the six-year weather ... a wind throws a shadow and it freezes fast ... see what the gold gut drags from under ... mountains and galleries to the crest..." (*Poems*). The political poets fail to realize their artistic love due to their ignorance of Auden's metaphysical process of self-crucifixion and eternal art, their eternal love for spacious freedom and infinite mortal concerns which conflict with Auden's concern for eternal suffering and eternal art, "and alone in the night's eternal, curving act ... they yearn with tongues of curlews for the unconceived ... and immemorial sons of the cudgeling, hacked ... hill" (*Poems*). While Auden's Eliotian art song relies on the passive metaphysical process of self-annihilation and immortal art, the structural sound pattern of amoral art song, "who once in gooseskin winter loved all ice leaved ... in the courters' lanes, or twined in the ox roasting sun ... in the wains tonned so high that the wisps of the hay ... clung to the pitching clouds" (*Poems*), Thomas's dramatic art song banks upon the Yeatsian mortal vision of pagan altruistic art song, the soundless individual myths or poetic images, "the labourer's hire ... the strength that gives our blood and state magnanimity of its own desire ... everything that is not God consumed with intellectual fire" (*YCP* 250) identical to the free play and free love, the Yeatsian cyclical process of life and death in his early poem, "or gay with any one ... young in the after milking moonlight lay ... under

the lighted shapes of faith and their moonshade ... petti-goats galed high" (*Poems*). He recasts in the poem "In White Giant's Thigh":

Through throats where many many rivers meet, the women pray,
Pleading in the waded bay for the seed to flow
Though the names on their weed grown stones are rained away... (*Poems*),

The framework of the early art song, while shying away from the political poets' world-centric theme and Auden's Word-centric theme, keeps the Yeatsian introspective process of reconciliation and regeneration, transfiguration and transformation, the mortal vision of pagan philanthropic art song as the theme in the foreground of the song with the Audenesque structure in the background, "or shy with the rough riding boys ... now clasp me to their grains in the gigantic glade ... who once, green countries since, were a hedgerow of joys" (*Poems*). The motif of Thomas's early art song is similar to that of his Yeatsian motif in the early poem and dissimilar to Auden's Eliotian immortal vision of metaphysical art song, his aesthetic amoral art, "then good-bye to the fishermanned ... boat with its anchor free and fast ... as a bird hooking over the sea ... high and dry by the top of the mast" (*Poems* 34). This is the *modus operandi* with which that Thomas has been functioning in his transitional, later and last art songs to drive home his *modus vivendi*, his Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, "and whisper it as though ... he were afraid the birds, who cry aloud ... their momentary cries before it is dawn ... would carry it away to blasphemous men" (*YCP*).

Thomas's early paradoxical song "Altarwise by Owl-light" points to several anticipatory contrasts between the Eliotian Auden and the Yeatsian Thomas, the process of transgression and transubstantiation, the process of self-annihilation and immortal art, the process of death-in-life, "hatched from the winy salvage on one leg ... scraped at my cradle in a walking word ... that night of time under the Christward shelter," "death is all metaphors, shape in one history," "the roots of nettles and of feathers ... over these groundworks thrusting through a pavement ... and hemlock-headed in the wood of weathers" (*TCP* 35), "and, Rip Van Winkle from a timeless cradle ... dipped me breast-deep in the descending bone" and the process of transfiguration and transformation, the process of endurance and tolerance, the cyclical process of life-in-death, "we rung our weathering changes on the ladder ... said the antipodes, and twice spring chimed" (36), "time is the tune my ladies lend their heartbreak ... from bald pavilions and the the house of bread ... time tracks the sound of shape on man and cloud ... on rose and icicle the ringing handprint," "and by this blowcock witness of the sun ... suffer the heaven's children through my heartbeat" (37), and "with priest and pharaoh bed my gentle wound ... world in the sand, on the triangle landscape ... with stones of odyssey for ash and garland ... and rivers of the dead around my back" (38).

In the art song "Altarwise by Owl-light," Thomas works on the mythopoeic imagination of Yeats, "master Venus," achieves the unification of opposites and disparate experi-

ences, the logocentric Biblical and the world-centric images syncretized with the inclusiveness of his early poem *18 Poems* and offers an alternative process of making warm art song, the process of alchemizing the tragic experiences into tragic happiness to the disgraced, ignorant lovers of Auden's musical pattern, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice. He explains:

A grief ago,
She who was who I hold, the fats and the flower,
Or, water-lammed, from the scythe-sided thorn,
Hell wind and sea,
A stem cementing, wrestled up the tower,
Rose maid and male,
Or, master Venus, through the paddler's bowl
Sailed up the sun.... (*Poems* 14)

The early dramatic song, apart from reinforcing the friendship between Thomas and the erstwhile friends of Auden, throwing challenge to the greatness of the unrivalled ruler Auden, "so cross her hand with their grave gypsy eyes ... and close her fist," lays Yeatsian stress on the process of cultivation "labour is blossoming or dancing where ... the body is not bruised to pleasure soul ... nor beauty born out of its own despair ... nor bleak-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil" in contrast to Auden's imperatives on the emblematic Biblical tradition, "O presences ... that passion, piety or affection knows ... and all that heavenly glory symbolise ... O self-born mockers of man's enterprise" (*YCP* 184). In the early dramatic song, Thomas functions as a giver of light and the god of art song and in the transitional art song, he is no longer an aspirant but a deity extending his domain over the Wordsworthian war poets.

In the transitional art song "After the Funeral," Thomas directs the ignorant Wordsworthian pre-war poets, Fuller, Rook, Rhys, Prince, Lewis and Keyes to transfigure their personal experiences as impersonal images, to get their personal poetry transformed as soft impersonal art, "or rippling soft in the spinney moon as the silk ... and ducked and draked white lake that harps to a hail stone" (*Poems*). He pays his homage to Yeats, the bard of tragi-comic vision of art song and reminds the romantic war poets of the metaphorical and metamorphical process that Yeats tells the young poets "that we must labour to be beautiful" and "it's certain there is no fine thing ... since Adam's fall but needs much labouring" (*YCP* 64) in contrast to their mere love of nature "to articulate sweet sounds together" or esoteric love and literary allusion "precedents out of beautiful old books" or the influences that are antithetical to the process of individuation and co-existence, the individual's identity, growth and advancement. Thomas pictures the romantic nature of the war poets dreaming of time and space and timeless art:

Time by, their dust was flesh the swineherd rooted sly,
Flared in the reek of the wiving sty with the rush
Light of his thighs, spreadeagle to the dunghill sky,
Or with their orchard man in the core of the sun's bush
Rough as cows' tongues and thrashed with brambles their buttermilk
Manes, under the quenchless summer barbed gold to the bone.... (*Poems*)

Thomas's vitalizing power in the early phase, his "double vision" of paradoxical sensibility, his own Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian noble art song vis-a-vis the contemporary poets' immortal vision of art song as demonstrated in the sonnets "Altarwise by Owl-light" telescoping the varied seasons and creating an ideal, incorruptible form of beauty is celebrated in the transitional-piece, "After the Funeral," "I mean by time the cast and curfew rascal of our marriage ... at nightbreak born in the fat side, from an animal bed ... in a holy room in a wave" (*Poems* 89).

Day Lewis, pitying the abysmal ignorance of the war poets, their poems of mere dreams and inactive life, their lack of time-consciousness and awareness of poetic tradition, predicts that their poetry of Wordsworthian individualism would end in failure:

Each is our wish. Alas, the bird flies blind,
Hooded by a dark sense of destination:
Her weight on the glass calm leaves no impression,
Her home is soon a basketful of wind.
Travellers, we're fabric of the road that we go;
We settle, but like feathers on time's flow. (*DCP* 220)

MacNeice compares the war poets' romantic poems to "the British Museum Reading Room" (*MCP* 183) and foresees that their poems of the Wordsworthian spontaneity, self-indulging dreams and wishes, love and fear, "their gallopings" would "end in vain" (185) and as "the guttural sorrow of the refugees" (*MCP*).

Thomas's dramatic art song "After the Funeral" throws further light on the contrasting motifs of his early poem, his mortal vision of altruistic art song, his paradoxical sensibility and the process of hierarchy and succession, "yesterday's papers ... huddling under the seat" "a train, andante ... with wafers of early sunlight blessing the unknown fields" (*MCP* 260). As the war poets are lovers of pleasures and insensitivity, "out on the steps in the sun the pigeons are courting ... puffing their ruffs and sweeping their tails or taking ... a sunbath at their ease ... and under the totem poles – the ancient terror" (*MCP*), they are afraid of confronting the reality of war and ignorant of the historical poetry of Sassoon, Owen, Auden and Thomas according to MacNeice:

And if the world were black or white entirely
And all the charts were plain
Instead of a mad weir of tigerish waters,
A prism of delight and pain,
We might be surer where we wished to go
Or again we might be entirely
Bored but in brute reality there is no
Road that is right entirely. (*MCP*)

Auden, commenting on the early poems of the war poets as "the dullard" under the influence of the Wordsworthian process of recollecting powerful emotions, "beneath the hot incurious sun," describes them as "past stronger beasts and fairies ... he picks his way, a living gun ... with gun and lens and bible ... a militant enquirer" (*Another Time* 15). Thomas suggests to the romantic war poets to act on the Yeatsian acts of transcendence and translucence that he has demonstrated in the early poem *18 Poems* and attained success, hope and greatness similar to that of Auden's early poem *Poems*, "see

what clings to hair and skull ... as the boat skims on with drinking wings ... the statues of great rain stand still ... and the flakes fall like hills" (*Poems*) as they stand ignorant and divided between the influences of Wordsworth and Auden, Wordsworth and Owen or Sassoon.

Thomas's later art songs involve the problem of ignorance, and the agonizing tension is recorded in "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London," "Poem in October" and "Fern Hill." The song "A Refusal..." asserts faith in the viable and mortal world of Yeatsian vicarious impersonal art and records the apprehension that too long an absorption in dreams of immortality, in the realm of imagination, may deprive the human soul of its anchorage in substantial reality.

Who once were a bloom of wayside brides in the hawed house
And heard the lewd, wooed field flow to the coming frost,
The scurrying, furred small friars squeal, in the dowse
Of day, in the thistle aisles, till the white owl crossed....
(*Poems*)

Thomas drives home that his art song is in tune with the poetical character of his early phase, his disinterested goodwill and action, his Yeatsian tone of persuasion and mortal concerns for the voiceless fellow-beings in contrast to the political and the war poets' indifference and insensitivity and Auden's aloofness preoccupied with ironic prayer, their gigantic passion for eternal love, pity and peace:

Sing and strike his heavy haul
Toppling up the boatside in a snow of light!
His decks are drenched with miracles
Oh miracles of fishes! The long dead bite! (*Poems* 37)

The nightmarish experience of the death of the child in the war is over, and the pull of metaphysical anchor proves strong enough to bring Auden's ironic mind back to metaphysical art and reality, but the assurance and the insensitivity of the political and the war poets carry no final certitude in contrast to Thomas's prudent and noble functioning identical to that of his early poem *18 Poems* and Yeats's mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song.

Norman MacCaig distinguishes Thomas's functioning committed to impersonal vicariousness of his early poem, "a red rag in a black rag, round and round ... and that long helmet plume of water waving" from the war poet's commitment to their life of comforts, love, pity and war, "the four elements, hoisted from the ground ... become this grace, the form of their enslaving" and from the unconcerned attitude of Auden and the political contemporary poets, "and nothing moves except one dog that runs" (*Contemporary Verse* 236). Empson commends on the emergence of Thomas as Yeatsian Grecian human artist of success and popularity, pragmatism and prudence identical to his image in the early phase in contrast to the fall of Auden's grand image as an unrivalled metaphysical artist, his prayer for regaining the lost image of his early phase "all those large dreams by which men long live well ... are magic-lanterned on the smoke of hell ... this then is real, I have implied ... a painted, small, transparent slide" (*MV* 265).

The song "Poem in October" witnesses a clear repudiation of the war poets' romantic aesthetic, the poetry of pity

of the war poets, Sassoon and Owen. In contrast to Thomas's asocial, apolitical and ahistorical position, his atypical, pragmatic functioning identical to that of his early poem *18 Poems* and Yeats's functioning, "their breast, the vaulting does roister, the horned bucks climb ... quick in the wood at love," the attitude of Auden towards war is as evasive and metaphysical as his early phase, "where a torch of foxes foams," and the functioning of the political and the war poets is as sentimental and sudden, ignorant and impulsive as their early phase, "all birds and beasts of linked night uproar and chime" (*Poems*). Thomas contradistinguishes his committed functioning as pagan altruistic artist identical to that of his in the early poem from the non-committed, short-sighted functioning of the contemporaries, "out of the urn a size of man ... out of the room the weight of his trouble ... out of the house that holds a town ... in the continent of a fossil" (*Poems*). Empson underlines that Thomas's functioning as empathic and corporate, modest and moderate poet as in the early poem, "these the inventive can hand-paint at leisure ... or most emporia would stock our measure ... and feasting in their dappled shade ... we should forget how they were made" (*MV*) strikes sharp contrast to the incorporate Auden, the political and the passive war poets, the comfort-conscious impassive war poets and the eternal pity conscious heroic war poets. MacCaig contradistinguishes Thomas's disinterested goodness and action, "a pose of meaning ... whose pose is what is explicit" from the war poets dreams of immortality, "meeting and marrying in the midmost air ... is mineral assurance of them all ... white doldrum on blue sky" and from Auden's metaphysical concern for immortal art and immortality, "a miracle ... made, and made bearable, by the water's screening" (*CV*).

In the art song "Fern Hill," although the passive war poet Prince expresses his trust in the stability of Auden's metaphysical art, the memory of the metaphysical process of self-annihilation, of the dark chasm that both fascinates and frightens his romantic mind persists, "and the mole snout blunt under his pilgrimage of domes ... or, butter fat goosegirls, bounced in a gambo bed" (*Poems*); and this sense of terror, the dilemmatic functioning destabilises the final assurance, and his functioning is as ignorant and ironic, hollow and sterile as the inactive romantic war poets whom he criticizes for their personal concerns, "their breasts full of honey, under their gander king ... trounced by his wings in the hissing shippen, long dead ... and gone that barley dark where their clogs danced in the spring ... and their firefly hairpins flew, and the ricks ran round...." Moreover Prince, while sarcastic about the fallen political poets' time-serving attitude towards Owen, Auden and Thomas, their change of love and their self-centredness identical to that of the inactive war poets, "but nothing bore, no mouthing babe to the veined hives ... hugged, and barren and bare on Mother Goose's ground ... they with the simple Jacks were a boulder of wives" (85), is scornful of Thomas's magnanimous impersonal art and his rhetoric, pulls him down, "now curlew cry me down to kiss the mouths of their dust" (*Poems*). However Thomas perceives that the political, the metaphysical and the war poets' years of chasing their dreams of eternal

beauty, love, pity and peace is on a wild goose chase as they are ignorant of the golden goose, the process of intensity, mortal life, mortal situations and mortal concerns, "one by one in dust and shawl ... dry as echoes and insect faced ... his fathers cling to the hand of the girl ... and the dead hand leads the past" (*Poems*).

The political and the passive war poets committed to their romantic and political concerns of love and pity, "miraculous virginity old as loaves and fishes," have been ignorant of the metaphysical process of Auden's art songs since the beginning, "waking alone in a multitude of loves when morning's light ... surprised in the opening of her nightlong eyes ... his golden yesterday asleep upon the iris ... and this day's sun leapt up the sky out of her thighs." Similarly, Auden and the active war poets, as they are more preoccupied with dreams of peace and immortality, are ignorant of the disastrous consequences of the tragic war and their understanding of the reality of war is pacifistic, "though the moment of a miracle is unending lightning ... and the shipyards of Galilee's footprints hide a navy of doves." To Thomas, the predicament is general rather than personal as he has been invariably sensitive to what happens in and around him since the beginning of his poetic career, and to his paradoxical sensibility, the ignorance of contemporary poets of war time is part of the tragedy of human existence:

No longer will the vibrations of the sun desire on
Her deep sea pillow where once she married alone,
Her heart all ears and eyes, lips catching the avalanche
Of the golden ghost who ringed with his streams her mercury bone,
Who under the lids of her windows hoisted his golden luggage,
For a man sleeps where fire leapt down and she learns through his arm
That other sun, the jealous coursing of the unrivalled blood. (*Poems* 106)

Thomas's later art songs also project the Yeatsian mythopoeic paradoxical functioning, his disinterested goodness and action as witnessed in the early and the transitional phases.

Thomas designs the scope of his later dramatic art songs recalling the functional images of Venus and the paradoxical sensibility of Yeats in contradistinction to the contemporary poets' of war time, their romantic, political and historical sensibility, their insensitivity and their dreams of immortality:

In the groin of the natural doorway I crouched like a tailor
Sewing a shroud for a journey
By the light of the meat-eating sun.
Dressed to die, the sensual strut begun,
With my red veins full of money,
In the final direction of the elementary town
I advance as long as forever is. (140)

Thomas attributes his steady and steadfast progression to the influence of Yeatsian empathy and moral disinterestedness in contrast to the stillness and stagnation, digression and regression, ignorance and impassivity of the contemporary poets of war time. In the later art songs, Thomas's

position and functioning as an integrated artist assimilating the contradictory images of human predicament and the contrary functioning of the poets of war time evokes Yeats's paradoxical image "terrible beauty," his mythopoeic process and his pagan altruistic functioning during critical moments, "Hearts with one purpose alone ... through summer and winter seems ... enchanted to a stone ... to trouble the living stream" (*YCP* 153) in contrast to the fanciful functioning of his contemporary poets of war time.

Empson observes that Thomas's concrete, organic form of experience of human affections in the Grecian altruistic art songs of the later phase analogous to that of his early and transitional phases alone is considered real as it has been projecting the introspective process of man's and another man's predicament, individuation and integration vis-a-vis the metaphysical art and reality of Auden and the fanciful world of the political and the war poets, "feign then what's by a decent tact believed ... and act that state is only so conceived ... and build an edifice of form ... for house where phantoms may keep warm" (*MV* 266). The leit-motif of Thomas's later art songs is liberation of the war poets from their wild love of immortal art, exposition of the Yeatsian process of impersonal vicariousness, disinterested goodness and action, pagan altruism in contrast to Auden's metaphysical process of aesthetic amoral impersonal attitude and immortality, "the heavenly ambulance drawn by a wound ... assembling waits for the spade's ring on the cage" and the realistic and the romantic war poets' ecstatic existence, "the morning is flying on the wings of his age ... and a hundred storks perch on the sun's right hand" as they are abysmally ignorant of the poetic process of prudent and benevolent art song. Thomas perceives:

When the morning was waking over the war
He put on his clothes and stepped out and he died,
The locks yawned loose and a blast blew them wide,
He dropped where he loved on the burst pavement stone.
And the funeral grains of the slaughtered floor.
Tell his street on its back he stopped a sun
And the craters of his eyes grew springshots and fire.
(*Poems* 30)

Thomas's introspective process of individuation and integration, his tragi-comic vision of art song, his magnanimous equanimity, his paradoxical sensibility closely associated with experiences of all animate things reflects Yeats's practical approach towards life of birth and death in contrast to the metaphysical abstract wisdom of power and pride and the high-mindedness. Yeats sings:

For wisdom is the property of the dead,
A something incompatible with life; and power,
Like everything that has the stain of blood,
A property of the living; but no stain
Can come upon the visage of the moon
When it has looked in glory from a cloud. (*YCP*)

In the last dramatic art song "Over Sir John's Hill," Thomas shows himself in the poetic image of Venus as generative and regenerative as in the early phase, as self-styled and self-balanced as "the heron," as imaginative and magnanimous as Yeats while ignoring his gravediggers. He

explains his paradoxical sensibility, his Yeatsian vision of Grecian altruistic art song:

Venus lies star-struck in her wound
And the sensual ruins make
Seasons over the liquid world,
White springs in the dark. (*Poems*)

In the last art song, Thomas shares the suffering of Auden and cares for his salvation while presenting an introspective process of his memory of his own art songs, his Yeatsian process of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation, mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song that makes him an artist of success and happiness, popularity and influence finding the allegorical poet Ted Hughes as a prospective follower of his Yeatsian poetic process of life-in-death, a defender of his later art songs in contrast to the political poets censuring his later art songs as Audenesque and metaphysical. Thomas recasts:

Teach me the love that is evergreen after the fall leaved
Grave, after Beloved on the grass gulfed cross is scrubbed
Off by the sun and Daughters no longer grieved
Save by their long desires in the fox cubbed
Streets or hungering in the crumbled wood.... (*Poems*)

In the last phase, Auden continues to be the worshipper of Eliot's stylistics, his metaphysical aesthetic song and ascetic aloofness that deprives him of his established grandeur and success, popularity and appeal among the contemporary poets and finds Larkin as the glorifier of his artistic process in the early poem "they from houses where the harvest kneels, hold me hard ... who heard the bell sail down the Sundays of the dead ... and the rain wring out its tongues on the faded yard..." and the political and the war poets after a phase of oscillation and hysterical shriek enter their last phase as lovers of lyricism and romantic existentialism, "the dust of their kettles and clocks swings to and fro ... where the hay rides now or the bracken kitchens rust ... as the arc of the billhooks that flashed the hedges low ... and cut the birds' boughs that the minstrel sap ran red." Moreover, Auden's cry of his invidious position, his war mongering against Thomas's tilting and toppling conspiracy in the art songs and the Movement poets involved in a crusade for Auden's supremacy is in stark contrast to Thomas's Yeatsian magnanimous equanimity and co-existence, his ignorance and innocence, his disinterested goodness and action "to these ... hale dead and deathless do the women of the hill ... love for ever meridian through the courters' trees ... and the daughters of darkness flame like Fawkes fires still" (*Poems*).

Empson points out that it is Auden's metaphysical process of self-annihilation and pure art that wrecks his increasing popularity during the middle phase. In the early phase, the contemporary political poets ignorant of Auden's artistic process flatter him as their supreme ruler and their god of song, "gives it (God's grace) for her own bounty sake ... what morning's pale and the crisp mist debars." Auden who enjoys supremacy, appeal and literary reputation among the ignorant contemporary poets loses his appeal as and when he confronts rivalry in Thomas, the political contemporary poets start switching their love and loyalty from Auden to Thomas, "Its glass of divine (that Will could break)..."

restores, beyond Nature.” In the case of Thomas, it is not the ignorant friends’ flattery or their fawning behaviour that makes him popular and influential and it is his own Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his own Yeatsian introspective process of self-creation and self-recreation, his process of transfiguration and transformation, his continuous labouring to enlighten the ignorant contemporary poets and make them aware of the alternative artistic process of intensity that assures him of divination, increasing popularity and influence among the contemporary poets of the thirties, the forties and the fifties, “or, lets Heaven take ... (itself being dimmed) her pattern, who half awake ... milks between rocks straddle sky of stars.” Thomas is nothing to do with the wrecking of Auden’s popularity among the contemporary poets, the game of wreaking vengeance to tilt and topple the grand image of Auden according to Empson, “and now she cleans her teeth into the lake” (*MV* 263).

It should, however, be noted that Thomas’s Yeatsian introspective process of discovering his own identity and another’s identity, his poetry of warm impersonal art and his art songs of pagan humanistic vision are closely interrelated to each other, that the separation between the creative self and the human self that is so amazingly illustrated in Auden does not, in the main, characterize his creative efforts. Auden’s Eliotian metaphysical concept of depersonalization and ascetic aloofness is fundamentally alien to Thomas’s poetic process and his Grecian altruistic character. Thomas sings:

There grows the hours’ ladder to the sun,
Each rung a love or losing to the last,
The inches monkeyed by the blood of man.
And old, mad man still climbing in his ghost,
My fathers’ ghost is climbing in the rain. (*Poems*)

Thus, Thomas’s Yeatsian self-awarding, self-rewarding, self-guarding introspective process, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art since his early phase makes him popular and influential. His art songs make him a godhead among the contemporary poets as his tragi-comic vision of art song and his process of life and death has been adjudged as viable, prudent and benevolent alternative to Auden’s tragic vision of art song and his death-centric metaphysical process and coldness. Auden, being very proud of his historical knowledge and metaphysical process of intensity and immortal art song, has been sarcastic of the contemporary poets’ ignorance of the metaphysical process and scornful of their mortal concerns since the early phase, “travelling by daylight on from house to house ... the longest way to the intrinsic peace ... with love’s fidelity and with love’s weakness” (*Poems* 46). So, Thomas is in no way responsible for the downfall of Auden as he has been offering salvation to the tense, helpless and ignorant contemporary poets including Auden since the inception of his poetic career, as his functioning has been inextricably connected with disinterested goodwill and action, “I spelt my vision with a hand and hair ... how light the sleeping on this soily star ... how deep the waking in the worlded clouds” (*Poems* 67) Secondly, Thomas’s vision of munificent impersonal art is closely associated with Yeats’s Grecian vision of moral disinterestedness, his Grecian altruistic impersonality, his paradoxical sensibility,

“such thought, that I in it bound ... I need no other thing ... wound in mind’s wandering ... as mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound” (*YCP*). In contrast to Thomas’s introspective process of self-regulation and self-recuperation, his paradoxical comprehension of human suffering, his free play and free love, Auden’s metaphysical historical knowledge and the political and the war poets’ divided perception are seen as ignorance of the vehicle of truth about human reality as they cloud the perspective and destroy clarity of vision and understanding according to Empson, “you are nomad yet; the lighthouse beam you own ... flashes, like Lucifer, through the firmament ... earth’s axis varies; your dark central cone ... wavers, a candle’s shadow, at the end” (*MV* 264).

MacNeice, referring to Thomas’s Yeatsian introspective metaphorical and metamorphical process especially in the early and the transitional phases, contradistinguishes his pagan philanthropic functioning for the salvation of the suffering fellow-poets from Auden’s amoral ascetic functioning:

I would like to give you more but I cannot hold
This stuff within my hands and the train goes on;
I know that there are further syntheses to which,
As you have perhaps, people at last attain
And find that they are rich and breathing gold. (*MCP* 84)

MacNeice finds that Auden’s “ascetic profile,” “his high-mindedness,” his “lethal” character, “being too violent in soul to kill ... anyone but himself” (224) and his cold “neutrality,” the chief characteristics of his artistic temperament since the beginning of his poetic career are attributed to Eliot’s influence, his modernism and esotericism, and that Thomas’s generous impersonal art, his cordial “neutrality” to Yeats’s influence, his pagan altruistic poetical character:

But then look eastward from your heart, there bulks
A continent, close, dark, as archetypal sin,
While to the west off your own shores the mackerel
Are fat – on the flesh of your kin. (225)

Day Lewis also distinguishes Thomas’s helpful and smiling attitude towards all the ignorant poets from Auden’s incriminating criticism of the poems of the ignorant contemporary poets, his discriminating gestures of kind approval and violent disapproval, love and hatred, praise and scorn based on their modes of approach and operation and their laws of poetic justice and poetic licence, “the angels carry ... such tidings often enough, but never since ... to one who in such blissful ignorance smiled” (*DCP* 342). While the poets of romanticism, paganism and anti-metaphysical motif would invariably incur Auden’s wrath and curse on their career, the poets of his own metaphysical conception, apart from enjoying his blessing and friendship, would become active crusaders of the passive metaphysical expressionism, “the winsome rescuer draws his sword ... while from the svelte, impassive fjord ... breaches terrific, dense and bored ... the usual monster (343)

Eliot in his poetry has been mocking at the contemporary poets, Lawrence and Yeats for their sceptical functioning, for their ignorance of his metaphysical process and immortal vision of art song, for their ecstatic existence and warm impersonal art, “all his soul in his gallant member ... and

his head gone heavy with the knowledge of desire ... and humiliation" (Lawrence 68). Eliot commences *The Waste Land* with his ironic and sarcastic comments on the skeptical romantic art of Lawrence and the introspective process of impersonal art of Yeats, "April is the cruellest month, breeding ... lilacs out of the dead land, mixing ... memory with desire, stirring ... dull roots with spring rain" (*Collected Poems* 53). Lawrence, while interpreting the poetry of his contemporary poets, has not been as scornful as Eliot nor as objective as Yeats, "the Arabs were only half right, though they hinted the whole ... everlasting lament in everlasting desire" (DHL). Commenting on Eliot's "howls in that agony" as "the black cross on his shoulders," Lawrence describes his indignant and spiteful approach towards the contemporary poets:

The wave of agony bursts in the stone that he was,
Bares his long ass's teeth, flattens his long ass's ears,
straightens his donkey neck.

And howls his pandemonium on the indignant air. (69)

However, Lawrence has been insensitive to the howling of Eliot and Yeats has been ignorant and gentle to Auden's sarcasm, "the horse, being nothing but a nag, will forget ... and men, being mostly geldings and knack-boned hacks have almost all forgot" but Eliot has been revengeful and violent towards poets working against his metaphysical ideas of pure being and pure art, "... but the ass is a primal creature, and never forgets" (DHL). Yeats has been revealing himself as totally objective and generously disinterested in his attitude towards the fellow-poets. While contradicting his generous, helpful approach from "the weasel's twist, the weasel's tooth" towards the afflicted contemporary poets, he explains the working hypothesis, his equanimity and magnanimity behind his successful functioning treating violence and war-mongering as "violence upon the roads: violence of horses," as a matter of ignorance:

Mock mockers after that
That would not lift a hand may be
To help good, wise or great
To bar that foul storm out, for we
Traffic in mockery. (*YCP* 179)

The poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" reaffirms that Thomas's faith in the Yeatsian vision of generous impersonal art, the process of individuation and integration in defiance of Auden's metaphysical conception of historical suffering and historical impersonal art is the transparent leit-motif of his main poetry and his art songs as well, "is old as water and plain as an eel ... always good-bye to the long-legged bread ... scattered in the paths of his heels ... for the salty birds fluttered and fed" (*Poems*). It also maintains that Thomas's later and the last art songs enact what Thomas has acted and done in the early poem, the early and the transitional art songs. The Yeatsian motif of tragic mirth, tragic-comic vision of impersonal art in his early poem continues to operate as the leit-motif of his early art song, "Altarwise by Owl-light" and the other art songs that follow. In the art songs, Thomas's acts of reconciliation and regeneration, metaphorical and metaphorical process, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song vis-à-vis Auden's Eliotian immortal vision

of eternal suffering and eternal art have been ensuring the smooth transference of rule and energy to the fellow-poets lost in their wild love of Auden's art song, "the tall grains foamed in their bills ... always good-bye to the fires of the face ... for the crab-backed dead on the sea-bed rose ... and scuttled over her eyes" (*Poems*).

Auden's faith in God and in Eliot's metaphysical concept of passivity, his tragic vision of immortal art song stands pious and persistent regardless of his own descending unpopularity, "He is the Truth ... seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety ... You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years" (*Collected Poems* 308). His faith in Eliot recalls Eliot's faith in Dante, "and I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow ... dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings ... there midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow ... and evening full of the linnet's wings" (*YCP* 31). The political, the passive war and the Movement poets stand divided between love and fear, ecstatic song and existence in their wild love of immortal art and immortality "he shall love your body ... untroubled by the soul ... love cram love's two divisions ... yet keep his substance whole" (*YCP* 255) and end as futile and fanciful as the inactive war poets experiment with Thomas's metaphorical and metamorphical process and as melodramatic and self-destructive as the active war poets in the experience of death and sacrifice for the immortality of the pity of war, "what hurts the soul ... my soul adores ... no better than a beast ... upon all fours" (*YCP*). The political and the war poets' ignorance of the metaphysical process of intensity kills their dream of art song and immortality, their career and life. The heroic war poets' last poems equally underline the suddenness of the moment of illumination in laying down their lives, the inactive war poets and the political poets being disenchanted with Thomas's poetic process return to romanticism of their early phase and the war poet Prince's change of journey leads him to romantic existentialism. Moreover, Auden's pursuit of metaphysical process of artistic intensity, his Eliotian immortal vision of art song kills his established grand image and popularity in the middle phase and he turns again in the last phase to Eliot whose influence has made him grand and influential in the early phase. He suffers setback in his career as he has been ignorant of the process of life and death, human impulses of joy and suffering, as he has been closely associated with the Eliotian wise passivity, the metaphysical *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*, the motif of pure art and pure being, the aesthetic amoral disinterestedness since his juvenile verses. Thomas comments: "Kill Time! She turns in her pain!/The oak is felled in the acorn/And the hawk in the egg kills the wren" (*Poems*).

It is Thomas's Yeatsian leit-motif of liberating the contemporary poets enthralled in ignorance and fanciful wild dreams implicit in his art songs, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his "double vision" of paradoxical sensibility that awards him enviable position, self-fulfillment and self-contentment, magnanimous nature with which he ignores the hostile nature of his contemporary poets. In the poem "In the White Giant's Thigh," he hopes to revivify the

passive Auden and the impassive young Movement poets with his Yeatsian introspective process of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song and his “double vision” of paradoxical sensibility:

But the hungry kings of the tides;
Sin who had a woman's shape
Sleeps till Silence blows on a cloud
And all the lifted waters walk and leap.... (*Poems*)

Yeats underlines his functioning as an introspective artist of innocence and ignorance, disinterested goodness and action, tragic joy and cosmopolitan culture and polygonal sensibility:

I am content to follow to its source
Every event in action or in thought;
Measure the lot;
Forgive myself the lot!
When such as I cast out remorse
So great a sweetness flows into the breast
We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by everything,
Everything we look upon is blest. (*YCP* 199)

The poem “In the White Giant's Thigh” underscores that Thomas's mortal vision of art song is totally Yeatsian, modest and magnanimous, atypical, asocial, apolitical and ahistorical, “nor dread nor hope attend ... a dying animal ... a man awaits his end ... dreading and hoping all” in contrast to Auden's gigantic stoic love of Eliot's immortal vision of immortal art song for power, pride and immortality, “a great man in his pride ... confronting murderous men ... casts derision upon ... supersession of breath” and the political, the war and the Movement poets' wild love of ecstatic life and immortal art song, comfortable existence and immortality, “many times he died ... many times rose again.” The difference is between the ancestral, philosophic vision of art song, the aesthetic amoral disinterestedness and the mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, the moral disinterestedness: “He knows death to the bone --/Man has created death” (*YCP* 198).

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Thomas's Yeatsian introspective process of breath and death, transfiguration and transformation, individuation and integration, his mortal vision of kind impersonal art, his “double vision” of paradoxical sensibility indicates not merely a search for a rational, coherent explanation of the organic creative mind, but also an occupational therapy for the happiness of the lost fellow-poets, “through winter-time we call on spring ... and through the spring on summer call ... and when abounding hedges ring ... declare that winter's best of all” in contrast to the contemporary poets' dreaming of immortal art, the pristine beauty, “and after that there's nothing good ... because the spring-time has not come ... nor know that what disturbs our blood ... is but its longing for the tomb” (*YCP* 179). This is metaphorically implicit in the poem “In the White Giant's Thigh.” But there is stark realization that so long as the fallen contemporary poets are condemned to the condition of mortal ignorance they

would never know the answer, and their poems end on the note of despair and bafflement analogous to Thomas's ignorance before he emulates Yeats, “city of spring, the governed flower ... turns in the that turns the ashen ... towns around on a wheel of fire” (*Poems* 26).

The poem “In the White Giant's Thigh” shows that Thomas's early poem *18 Poems* and art song “Altarwise by Owl-light” are written during an apparently fallow period and records that his ignorant paradoxical experience of mortal and immortal passions is equal to the ignorance of the mortal woman Leda when raped by the immortal God Zeus, the primordial source of life and death, power and pride, love and hatred, historical conflict and war, “being so caught up ... so mastered by the brute blood of the air ... did she put on his knowledge with his power ... before the indifferent beak could let her drop?” (*YCP* 182). Yeats's “double vision” of paradoxical art, his paradox of life-in-death points to a resolution. Thomas sings of his experience of ignorance, his Yeatsian way of knowledge in the early poem, the “double vision” of his own self and the contemporary poets' antithetical self:

Who blows death's feather? What glory is colour?
I blow the stammel feather in the vein.
The loin is glory in a working pallor.
My clay is unsuckled and my salt unborn,
The secret child. I sift about the sea
Dry in the half-tracked thigh. (*Poems* 99)

Thomas's early poem underlines that the young Auden under the influence of de la Mare looks into the possibility of exploring the metaphysical process of historical suffering and immortal art as the human life of birth and death, joy and sorrow is not much to look at, “the force that drives the water through the rocks ... drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams ... turns mine to wax.” On the contrary, the young Thomas watches the drama of human life from the Yeatsian pagan perspective and finds in Yeats's journey a prefigurement of his own:

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.

And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever. (*Poems* 127).

So, it is the problem of choice making, it is the paradoxical process of man's action, his endurance and tolerance that determines the identity, the individuation of the poet rather than the metaphysical philosophy of determinism, “by the help of an image. I call to my own opposite, summon all ... that I have handled least, least looked upon.” Here identity does not mean a perplexing, unchanging individuality; the attainment of it presupposes a process of growth, of becoming, “that is our modern hope, and by its light ... we have lit upon the gentle, sensitive mind ... and lost the old non-chalance of the hand.” Secondly, Thomas's soft impersonal art is closely linked with Yeats's mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art vis-a-vis Auden's Eliotian vision of immortal art in the metaphysical sense. The mind, realizing its potential divinity through the knowledge of suffering cannot indulge in self-love or remain absorbed in itself; the extended aware-

ness lifts it out of narrow ego-centricity, and increases its obligations to the mortals whose minds are still shrouded in ignorance, "whether we have chosen chisel, pen or brush ... we are but critics, or but half-create ... timid, entangled, empty and abashed ... lacking the countenance of our friends" (YCP 134).

In *25 Poems*, Thomas acknowledges that it is the Yeatsian modes of approach and operation that makes his early poem *18 Poems* as popular and influential as Auden's early poem *Poems* among the political poets of the thirties, it is the Yeatsian mythopoeic process and the mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song that he emulates in his early art song makes him a popular artist:

We in our Eden knew the secret guardian
In sacred waters that no frost could harden,
And in the mighty mornings of the earth;
Hell in a horn of sulphur and the cloven myth,
All heaven in the midnight of the sun,
A serpent fiddled in the shaping time. (*Poems* 86)

The poetic images such as "incarnate devil in a talking snake," "shapes of sin forked the bearded apple," "God walked there who was a fiddling warden," "all heaven in the midnight of the sun" contain an implicit reference to the treatment meted out to the early Thomas, "the shaping time," whose early poem *18 Poems* that Auden critiques as sceptical, sensual, Yeatsian and trivial. It is the Yeatsian introspective process of transfiguration and transformation, the tragi-comic vision of magnanimous impersonal art that Thomas offers in the early poem, "youth did condense; the tears of spring ... dissolved in summer and the hundred seasons ... one sun, one manna, warmed and fed" (*Poems* 59) in defiance of metaphysical process of transgression and transmigration, self-annihilation and metaphysical aesthetic amoral impersonal art, "one wound, one mind, spewed out the matter ... one breast gave suck the fever's issue" (58), that provokes Auden's adverse criticism.

Empson, commenting on Thomas's *18 Poems* as complete adoption of the Yeatsian introspective process of individuation and integration, pagan altruistic impersonal art that alchemizes the political poets' predicament into tragic mirth in defiance of Auden's metaphysical process of pure being and pure art, explains:

'What is conceivable can happen too,'
Said Wittgenstein, who had not dreamt of you;
But wisely; if we worked it long
We should forget where it was wrong.... (*MV* 265)

Treece describes Thomas's *18 Poems* as illustrative of the Yeatsian mythopoeic process of Grecian altruistic impersonal art, magnanimous impersonality that transforms the political poets' tragic experiences into tragic joy in contrast to Auden's Eliotian metaphysical impersonality, aesthetic amoral art aspiring for immortality:

There was a man
With a coloured coat of rags
Who left his body and blood on a tree.
But the thieves at his side gave the bones to the dogs,
And the black-thorn cock sang merrily. (*CV* 242)

MacCaig observes that Thomas's early poem is characteristic of Yeatsian Grecian altruistic impersonality, paradoxical vision, "nude in a fountain," written for the regeneration of the fallen political poets in defiance of Auden's metaphysical ironic impersonality, his aesthetic amoral impersonal art:

Clip-clop go water-drops and bridles ring --
Or, visually, a gauze of water, blown
About and falling and blown about, discloses
Pudicity herself in shameless stone,
In an unlikely world of shells and roses. (*CV* 235)

Day Lewis perceives that Thomas's life-centric process, his vicarious impersonal art stands as a viable alternative to Auden's death centric impersonal art and as a challenge to Auden's greatness among the contemporary poets:

From the gallous springs of desolation
Our life-blood springs to liberty,
And in the callous eyes we see
The landscape of their dissolution. (*DCP* 175)

Spender arrives at the bitter realization that the "freedom's friends" are now "laurelled" and resurrected as harbingers of spring and opposition to the poetry of poetic justice:

...we, who are living, seem
Exiles from them more living; for we endure
Perpetual winter, waiting
Spring that will break our hardness into flowers
To set against their just and summer skies. (*Still Centre* 24)

MacNeice commends the early Thomas for his empirical and empathic impersonal art, "time on a horseback under a Roman arch" (*MCP* 84), his impersonality of lyric impulse, "the shape of the song ... of the cuckoo" (83) in contrast to Auden's metaphysical process of self-annihilation and eternal art, "a small eternity, a sonnet self-contained in rhyme" (79). He foresees conflict between the phono-centric Eliotian Auden and the grapho-centric Yeatsian Thomas:

The room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window was
Spawning snow and pink roses against it
Soundlessly collateral and incompatible;
World is suddener than we fancy it. (86)

In the early art song "Altarwise by Owl-light," the introspective process of life and death, reconciliation and regeneration represents the process of liberation from ignorance attendant on the mortal condition of the political poets as the disgraced aesthetic lovers of Auden's art song, "how now my flesh, my naked fellow ... dug of the sea, the glanded morrow ... worm in the scalp, the staked and fallow" (*Poems*), and the beginning of a new phase; Thomas's Yeatsian mortal vision of soundless art song for the salvation of the ignorant political poets recalls the lines from Yeats, "you, should hand explore a thigh ... all the labouring heavens sigh" in contrast to the political poets' dilemmatic approach to the process of impersonal art song, "but in honour split his love ... till either neither have enough and Auden's sound-centric metaphysical art, "that I may hear if we should kiss ... a contrapuntal serpent hiss" (*YCP* 256). The art song "Altarwise by Owl-light" marks a rejection of Auden's Eliotian immortal vision of art song, the aesthetic amoral art song, "the white giant's thigh" and also the political poets' dreaming of consummation of the half-sound process of immortal art song,

“the half-tracked thigh” that the mortal condition can confer only momentarily on man. Thomas’s own comment on the early art song that it is written for the salvation of the ignorant wild lovers of Auden’s metaphysical art song shows the paradoxical, vicarious nature of his concern, his Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song:

Beginning with doom in the ghost, and the springing marvels,
Image of images, my metal phantom
Fording forth through the harebell,
My man of leaves and the bronze root, mortal, immortal,
I, in my fusion of rose and the male motion,
Create this twin miracle. (*Poems* 73)

In the early art song *Poems*, Auden adheres to Eliotian tragic vision of metaphysical process of intensity and immortal art, historical knowledge and historical suffering. Imaginatively placing himself in the freer world of his early poem *18 Poems* that evokes the Yeatsian tragi-comic vision, the process of transfiguration and transformation, Thomas in the early art song “Altarwise by Owl-light” articulates the fellow-poets’ craving for release from the constrictive atmosphere, the death-in-living experience as fallen lovers of Auden’s metaphysical art song:

Man was the scales, the death birds on enamel,
Tail, Nile, and snout, a saddler of the rushes,
Time in the hourless houses
Shaking the sea-hatched skull,
And, a for oils and ointments on the flying grail,
All-hollowed man wept for his white apparel. (*Poems* 75)

The political poets’ conflicting motif, their ignorance and their subsequent disgraced suffering becomes the focus of Auden’s art song that awards him supremacy and unrivalled ruling, grandeur and greatness, power and pride among the contemporary poets according to Thomas:

Man was Cadaver’s masker, the harnessing mantle,
Windily master of man was the rotten fathom,
My ghost in his metal Neptune
Forged in man’s mineral.

This was the god of beginning in the intricate seawhirl,
And my images roared and rose on heaven’s hill. (*Poems*)

The political poets as lost lovers of Auden’s art song perceive that their mind is suddenly assailed by a strange morbidity, the fear of approaching insanity. The ecstatic state is regarded as an aberration, as a retreat from reason. Thomas’s early art song conveys poignantly the dread of the void, and the apparently impersonal statement carries the stress of personal anxiety. The lovers no longer pray for the prolongation of the trance; they want to return to actuality as they know that Thomas’s Yeatsian process of art song would offer them a reward of both hope and happiness.

Thomas’s disinterested action and findings in the early art song underscore that life is a mystery because man knows so little about it; he is ignorant of the source of life and of his ultimate destiny, and his life on earth is shrouded in mist. He sings of his Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his introspective process of transfiguration and transformation, magnanimous equanimity, paradoxical sensibility:

Intricate manhood of ending, the invalid rivals,
Voyaging clockwise off the symbolised harbour,
Finding the water final,
On the consumptives’ terrace taking their two farewells,
Sail on the level, the departing adventure,
To the sea-blown arrival. (*Poems*)

In Thomas’s mind Auden’s art song is associated with the metaphysical process of death-in-life and immortal art song, the hieroglyphics of Nature, and it is the Yeatsian mortal vision of pagan philanthropic art song, the introspective process of self-discovery and self-advancement that he is thinking of now in repudiation of Auden’s metaphysical poetry of self-sacrifice, self-extinction and eternal art, “I heard a sea-mew cry ... and saw a flake of the yellow foam ... that dropped upon my thigh,” in contrast to the ignorant political poets’ passionate love of Auden’s Eliotian immortal art song pattern in combination with their wild desire for worldly pleasures, “how therefore could she help but braid ... the gold into my hair ... and dream that that I should carry ... the golden top of care...” (*YCP* 97). Both his early poem and early art song demonstrate his Yeatsian introspective process of individuation and integration, empathic impersonal art offering hope for poetry and happy living to the depressed political poets, “the boat swims into the six-year weather ... a wind throws a shadow and it freezes fast ... see what the gold gut drags from under ... mountains and galleries to the crest...” (*Poems* 37) vis-à-vis Auden’s metaphysical process of immortal art and his aesthetic distance from the fellow-poets’ predicament.

Auden who has critiqued Thomas’s early poem holds that in stylistic maturity Thomas’s early art song surpasses anything he has written before, and that, at the formal level, it sets the pattern for the later art songs:

Cold, impossible, ahead
Lifts the mountain’s lovely head
Whose white waterfall could bless
Travellers in their distress. (*LS* 24)

In the early poem *18 Poems*, Thomas, emulating Yeats’s poetic process of life-in-death and tragic rejoice, finds his identity as a poet of magnanimous impersonal art, Yeatsian impersonality as an alternative to Auden’s Eliotian impersonality and in the early art song “Altarwise by Owl-light,” he grows and improves himself as an artist of magnanimous art song that reconciles himself to the conflicting experiences of the suffering political poets and regenerates hope for Grecian altruistic paradoxical art song as an alternative to Auden’s metaphysical tragic vision of ironic art song, “whispering neighbours, left and right ... pluck us from the real delight ... and the active hands must freeze ... lonely on the separate knees.” But Auden perceives that the aesthetic, the merry rhythm implicit in Thomas’s art song explains the main direction of Yeats’s Grecian vision of art song towards the fall of his grand divination and his influential art songs among the contemporary poets, “starving through the leafless wood ... trolls run scolding for their food ... and the nightingale, is dumb ... and the angel will not come” (*LS*). He estimates that Thomas’s early art song inveigles the lost political poets into dethroning his grandeur and influence.

However, Empson observes that the Eliotian metaphysical process of self-crucifixion and immortal song may be a satisfying experience to Auden, but the process of self-annihilation would mean a denial of Yeatsian tragi-comic vision of art song, paradoxical sensibility and Grecian altruistic freedom, and Thomas's newly gained Yeatsian mortal vision of art song, free play and free love impels him to face the complexity of the fellow-poets, and does not flinch from fellow-feeling:

Those thorns are crowns which, woven into knots,
Crackle under and soon boil fools' pots;
And no man's watching, wise and long
Would ever stare them into song. (*MV*)

MacCaig perceives that the qualities that Thomas seeks to emulate in the early art song are not quite clearly defined, but certain values might be abstracted from the epithets and images employed: simplicity, sensuous richness, vigour, largeness or width of vision, adequacy or self-efficiency, the Yeatsian pagan altruistic vision of art song vis-à-vis Auden's Eliotian metaphysical vision of art song, his self-deficiency and the political poets' romantic vision of self-sufficiency:

On shaven grass a summer's litter lies
Of paper bags and people. One o'clock
Booms on the leaves with which the trees are quilted
And wades away through air, making it rock
On flower-beds that you have blazed and dazed and wilted. (*CV*)

Treece, commending Thomas as "legend" for his exemplary early art song on a par with the legendary Auden as an unrivalled artist, observes that his sonnets are complete in themselves what the political poets left incomplete:

The lads of the town
Drank down to the dregs
Then took a sharp axe to lop the tree,
But the thieves had been there first gathering logs,
And the black-thorn cock sang steadily. (*CV*)

The political poet Spender emphasizes the transparent modes which separate them from the dead as a means of effecting an unexpected awareness:

I stand so close to you,
I will confess to you,
At night I'm flooded by a sense of future,
The bursting tide of an unharnessed power
Drowning the contours of the present. (*Still Centre* 33)

MacNeice perceives that Thomas's early poem and his early song offer the depressed political poets, the wild lovers of Auden's art song, hope for poetry, happy life and art song:

The heated minutes climb
The anxious hill,
The tills fill up with cash,
The tiny hammers chime
The bells of good and ill,
The world piles with ash
From fingers killing time. (*MCP* 106)

Thomas's early song that sings of the same pagan altruistic art of his early poem definitely enters on his mature later phase of grand achievement of moral disinterestedness in contrast to Auden's aesthetic amoral disinterestedness according to MacNeice:

At the penultimate move, their saga nearly sung,
They have worked so hard to prove what lads they were
when young,
Have looked up very word in order to be able to say
The gay address unheard when they were dumb and
gay. (113)

Day Lewis perceives that Auden, being the supreme ruler among the contemporary poets of the thirties, expects that the young poet Thomas is to be as modernistic, metaphysical and Eliotian as his early poem *Poems*. While attributing Auden's scornful disapproval of Thomas's early poem to his anti-metaphysical, anti-Eliotian stance both in technique and theme, Day Lewis commends on his identical Yeatsian *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* both in the early poem and the early art song, his "cornet solo" written for the fallen political poets' freedom, for the realization of their dreams of art song:

I fear this careful art
Would never storm the sense:
Its agonies are but the eager
Retchings of an empty heart;
It never was possessed
By divine incontinence,
And for him whom that eygre
Sweeps not, silence were best. (*DCP* 207)

Thomas's early art song "Altarwise by Owl-light" is free from any trace of bitterness, complaint, and agony, and the fallen political poet Day Lewis has been struck by its quiet reserve of power, its rich resonance that anticipates the complex harmonies of the paradoxical art song "After the Funeral" in his transitional phase.

In the transitional art song "After the Funeral," Thomas persuades the ignorant Wordsworthian war poets to alter their romantic vision of art song and choose the Yeatsian tragi-comic vision of kind art song that he has emulated and succeeded, "the world is what we make ... and we only can discover ... life in the life we make" (*MCP* 185). In recalling the process of self-discovery and self-recovery in the early phase during which he sings of the introspective exploration of his inner reality, his identity that empathizes with the sorrows of the ignorant fellow-poets, Thomas directs:

In my craft or sullen art
Exercised in the still night
When only the moon rages
And the lovers lie abed
With all their griefs in their arms
I labour by singing light
Not for ambition or bread
Or the strut and trade of charms
On the ivory stages
But for the common wages
Of their most secret heart. (*Poems* 82)

This is analogous to his singing of the Yeatsian introspective process of noble impersonal art, individuation and integration, free play and free love in the early poem *18 Poems* while defying Auden's Eliotian intellectual process of impersonal art:

In spring we cross our foreheads with the holly,
 Heigh ho the blood and berry,
 And nail the merry squires to the trees;
 Here love's damp muscle dries and dies,
 Here break a kiss in love's quarry,
 O see the poles of promise in the boys. (*Poems* 72)

The song "After the Funeral" is also reminiscent of his bond of love and friendship, his disinterested goodness and action, his Grecian vision of tragic rejoice in his early art song "Altarwise by Owl-light" in contrast to Auden's art song of phono-centric metaphysical craftsmanship and aesthetic cold distance:

Not for the proud man apart
 From the raging moon I write
 On these spindrift pages
 Not for the towering dead
 With their nightingales and psalms
 But for the lovers, their arms
 Round the griefs of the ages,
 Who pay no praise or wages
 Nor heed my craft or art. (*Poems*)

In the transitional art song "After the Funeral," Thomas persuading the pre-war poets trapped between the influences of Wordsworth and Auden, wild love of romanticism and metaphysical art, "for what mere book can grant a knowledge ... with an impassioned gravity ... appropriate to that beating breast ... that vigorous thigh, that dreaming eye..." to explore the possibility of freedom from the bondage of personal experience and ignorance is identical to Yeats's singing of the mortal vision of Grecian humanistic art song, "go pluck Athena by the hair" (*YCP* 147).

The paradoxical truth that recurs in the song "After the Funeral" is that the archetypal figure Yeats is projected as the Greek mythological hero, Perseus who killed Medusa and whose "face ... a monument to fear" brought freedom and moral disinterestedness, and Auden as the monster Medusa, "now, in a day of monsters, a desert of abject stone ... whose outward terrors paralyse the will" according to Day Lewis:

But Perseus, lifting his shield, beheld as in a view-finder
 A miniature monster, darkly illustrious,
 Absorbed, pitying perhaps, he struck. And the sky behind her
 Woke with a healthier colour, purified thus. (*DCP* 222)

Day Lewis persuades the romantic war poets to heed to Thomas's Yeatsian transfigurative and transformative process, Grecian humanistic art song to effect a transfusion of individuation, energy and happiness in their career, "let the shield take that image, the image shield you," in lieu of the Wordsworthian process of personality or the Audenesque metaphysical process of impersonality, "the glare of death transmuted to your own ... measure, scaled-down to a possible figure the sum of ill" (*DCP*).

MacNeice, while comparing Auden's architectural stylistics to Corinthian pillars of order, commemorates Thomas's Yeatsian pagan altruistic functioning in the transitional art song identical to that of his early poem and art song as a "stylite" artist of fertility, the Greek god Lupercus who comforts the helpless and ignorant world-centric poets:

The saint on the pillar stands,
 The pillars are two,
 A young man opposite
 Stands in the blue,
 A white Greek god,
 Confident, with curled
 Hair above the groin
 And his eyes on the world. (*MCP* 180)

Spender perceives that the song "After the Funeral" is related to the contrasting background of the poems of pre-war inactive poets and is compared to Thomas's launching of the Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song that he offers to the lost political poets as a hope for prospective poetry and life:

And then the heart in its white sailing pride
 Launches among the swans and the stretched lights
 Laid on the water, as on your cheek
 The other kiss. (*SC* 86)

The transitional art song provides the poet's way of knowledge of the organic form, the Yeatsian process of noble impersonal art as an alternative to the ignorant, impassive war poets bonded to the Wordsworthian subjectivism according to MacCaig:

Light perches, preening, on the handle of a pram
 And gaps on paths and runs along a rail
 And whitely, brightly in a soft diffusion
 Veils and unveils the naked figure, pale
 As marble in her stone and stilled confusion. (*CV*)

Empson perceives that in the transitional art song Thomas's acts of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation which are acts of transference from Yeats's Grecian altruistic impersonal art and his own early poem and art song are offered as a purgatorial act to the pre-war poets of personal expression and sentiments:

Thorns burn to a consistent ash, like man;
 A splendid cleanser for the frying pan:
 And those who leap from pan to fire
 Should this brave opposite admire. (*MI*)

The problem of choice-making hinted at in the early and the transitional art songs is elaborated in the later art songs subjected to controversial censure of the political poets who have already rewarded divination to Thomas.

In the later art songs, the context becomes increasingly private, and the Grecian vision of warm impersonal art as demonstrated in the early poem and the early and the transitional art songs crowd back into Thomas's memory. What Thomas implies in the art songs, "A Refusal..." "Poem in October," and "Fern Hill" is that human existence is worn out by cares and fear, but it is preferred to the shadow-world that takes one beyond the border of sorrow and tension and at the same time deprives one of sanity. This kind of prudent and tolerant, pragmatic and empathic impersonal truth is analogous to that of his in the early and the transitional phases of his poetic career:

I
 Myselfes
 The grievors
 Grieve

Among the street burned to tireless death
 A child of a few hours
 With its kneading mouth
 Charred on the black hours of the grave
 The mother dug, and its arms full of fires. (*Poems* 44)

Thomas's functioning in the later art songs of war time is suggestive of the Yeatsian disinterested goodwill and action, the mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art that he has dramatically performed in the early poem, the early and the transitional art songs. Yeats explains his asocial, apolitical and ahistorical pragmatic and paradoxical functioning analogous to that of Hector in Homer's *The Iliad* in contrast to the war time poets' ideas of death-centric immortal art and ascetic aloofness and self-centred romantic vision of ecstatic existence:

His Memories
 We should be hidden from their eyes,
 Being but holy shows
 And bodies broken like a thorn
 Whereon the bleak north north blows,
 To think buried Hector
 And that none living knows. (*YCP* 190)

Thomas's functioning in the later art songs as an artist of moral disinterestedness that reassures and reaffirms his success and influence, popularity and happiness is all due to Yeats's "double vision" of paradoxical sensibility, "even like these to rail and sweat ... staring upon his sinewy thigh" in contrast to the poets of war time, their deliberate ignorance of the human reality and the reality of disastrous war, their wild passion for immortal art song and immortality, "once, when midnight smote the air ... eunuchs ran through Hell and met ... on every crowded street to stare ... upon great Juan riding by" (*YCP* 89).

Empson observes that Thomas's Yeatsian cyclical process and mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his intellectual honesty and courage in the later art songs synchronises with his Yeatsian introspective process of individuation and integration in the early poem and the early and the transitional art songs in contrast to the contemporary poets' metaphysical or metempirical process, their immortal vision of aesthetic amoral or romantic ecstatic art song:

Lucretian could not credit centaurs;
 Such bicycle he deemed asynchronous.
 'Man superannuates the horse;
 Horse pulses will not gear with ours.' (*MV*)

Thomas's functioning in the later art songs reflects the evolutionary process of man's life and death, Hector's cordial neutrality in contrast to Auden's artistic process of death and life, self-annihilation and immortal art and the political and the war poets trying to reconcile with the irreconcilables, political pity and romantic immortal art, personal romantic love and metaphysical impersonal art according to Empson:

Courage. Weren't stripes of heart culture seen
 Of late mating two periodicities?
 Could not Professor Charles Darwin
 Graft annual upon perennial trees? (*MV*)

Donald Davie, in a rejoinder to Empson's approbatory criticism on Thomas's functioning as Hector in his later art

songs, writes that Auden, though not blessed with no such benediction, appeals to the readers as a supreme artist of metaphysical process and ontological reality, modernism and avant-gardism rather than an unwanted anachronistic adventurous post-modern artist like Thomas:

For courage is the vegetable king,
 The sprig of all ontologies, he weed
 That beards the slag-heaps with its hectoring,
 Whose green adventure is to run to seed. (*CV* 326)

Though Auden is not endowed with any delighted self-exploration and self-discovery in his Eliotian art songs, the post-modern era needs the existential artist like Auden to make poetry pure and impersonal, aesthetic and amoral, influential and immanent rather than a heroic and chivalrous, romantic and outdated poet like Thomas according to Davie:

A neutral tone is nowadays preferred,
 And yet it may be better, if we must,
 To find the stance impressive and absurd
 Than not to see the hero for the dust. (*CV*)

What Auden gains is only an increased awareness of the limits of the known, "heigh-ho that means we fall short of alas ... which sprigs the grave of higher hopes than ours ... yet heigh-ho too has its own luxuries ... and salts with courage to be jocular ... disreputable sweets of wistfulness," but his fall and despair is controlled by Eliot's musical avant-gardism, his calm recognition of the fundamental mystery and numbness in contrast to the contemporary poets finding happiness in the afterlife and the transitory life, "and then some falls are still more fortunate ... the meteors spent, the tragic heroes stunned ... who go out like a light" (*CV* 327). On the whole, Thomas's later art songs reflect the disinterested goodwill and action of Yeats for the good of poets of war time, "by kindred slain," "or driven from home and left to die in fear" in contrast to their impulsive and instinctive, inanimate and inhuman functioning as poets of dreams, yearning and fear, "they sang, but had nor human tunes nor words ... though all was done in common as before ... they had changed their throats and had the throats of birds" (*YCP* 299).

In the last art song "Over Sir John's Hill," Thomas as usual shares and cares for the freedom of the afflicted Auden from ignorance, uncertainty and anxiety, "now sinks the same rest ... on mind, on nest ... on straining thighs" in contrast to the existential, the political, the war and the Movement poets' dreams of immortal art, "birds sigh for the air. thought for I know not where ... for the womb the seed sighs" (*YCP* 256). The last art song underscores that Thomas has been relentlessly functioning since the early poem and the first art song as an artist of innocence and ignorance and emulating the Yeatsian introspective process of transfiguration and transformation, the Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song. Blissfully ignorant of the conflicting and hostile environs of adverse critics of his influential art songs and mortal enemies of his popular image, the dying Thomas in the last art song has been establishing the contradiction of his Yeatsian organic process of birth and death, his Yeatsian mortal vision of pagan humanistic art song, his paradoxical culture of revivification and revitalization vis-à-vis the visionary and dreaming contemporary poets, Aud-

en's metaphysical process of aesthetic amoral art song and immortality, his ironic ascetic culture and the political, the war and the Movement poets' conflicting process of romantic life and immortal art, their lyrical self-centred culture. Thomas explains the leit-motif of his last art song:

Leads them to as children and as air
On to the blindly tossing tops;
The centuries throw back their hair
And the old men sing from newborn lips.... (*Poems*)

The cluster of images of father and son widens to include Larkin and Hughes, and the mortal poet Thomas's insight receives a new dimension from Hughes's frame of Greek allegorical myths of *Aesop and the Fables*. In the last phase, Auden's emphasis is on the moment of final illumination and immortality, but Larkin's early poems leave a vision of the dark night of the soul straining for light.

However Auden, being "weary of trooping ... with the whimpering dead" (*YCP* 31), "a beautiful lofty thing, or a thing ... heroically lost, heroically found," resolves to commune with the Eliotian modes of processing and functioning, "no matter what disaster occurred he stood in desperate music wound" (259) to ensure his "triumph" that he has secured in the early phase. The political and the war poets continue with their ignorance and romanticism, "that we are tired, for other loves await us ... hate on and love through unrepining hours," and the Movement poets remain as ignorant of the "ephemera" as their divine being Auden, "before us lies eternity our souls ... are love, and a continual farewell" (11). Yeats explains his modest and moderate, sober and sagacious functioning in contrast to the contemporary poets' functioning as wild lovers of immortal art song and survival, sentiments and illusion, self-deception and delusion, *ignis fatuus*:

For those that love the world serve it in action,
Grow rich, popular and full of influence,
And should they paint or write, still it is action:
The struggle of the fly in marmalade.
The rhetorician would deceive his neighbours,
The sentimentalist himself; while art
Is but a vision of reality. (*YCP* 134)

Auden, while adjudging Thomas's last art song "Over Sir John's Hill" as asymmetrical and atypical, chaotic and incoherent as his *18 Poems* and invoking poetic justice, has been consistently critical of his later art songs that are completely Yeatsian in the leit-motif, the *modus operandi*, *modus vivendi* and the merry rhythm although they are symmetrical and sympathetic, well accomplished in craftsmanship. He describes Thomas's art song as a play within a play written in polysemous language purported to invite his friends to engage themselves in tilting and toppling the grand image of Auden.

Johnson could see no bicycle would go;
'You bear yourself, and the machine as well.'
Gennets for germans sprang not from Othello,
And Ixion rides upon a single wheel. (*MV*)

Unlike the political poets' inconsistent estimate of exultation and suspicion, their intense love and hatred, their divination and desecration of Thomas's art songs,

Auden has been persistent in his critiques on Thomas's art songs according to Empson. Moreover, Thomas's Yeatsian Grecian poetical character, his paradoxical sensibility of human lyric impulse stands polychromic and polyvalent impersonality or disinterestedness that assures him of increasing popularity and influence among the contemporary poets of the thirties, the forties and the fifties in contrast to Auden's metaphysical aesthetic character, his ironic sensibility of religious faith representing monochromic and monovalent impersonality costs his image of grandeur and literary reputation and the political and war poets' romantic sensibility that deprives them of the ways to greatness, their poetic career and life according to Empson, "no, it is we soaring explore galaxies ... our bullet boat light's speed by thousands flies ... who moves so among stars their frame unties ... see where they blur, and die, and are outsoared" (*MV* 264).

Auden's monomaniac passion for immortal vision of aesthetic amoral art, double immortality has been monophonic, manic and tragic while the political and the war poets' double-maniac passion for Auden's immortal art and a life of physical pleasures has been stereo-phonic, manic-depressive and ludicrous. Empson perceives that "soap tension that the star pattern magnifies ... smoothly Madonna through-assumes the skies ... whose vaults are opened to achieve the Lord..." (*MV*). Unlike Auden's seasoned and impalpable, ironic and passive art songs and the political and the war poets' seasonal and imperceptible passionate and impassive love of immortal art song, Thomas's love of art song is occasional and occupational, as impassionate and impartial, dramatic and dynamic, quadraphonic and tragi-comic, "and prophets loud on the burned dunes ... insects and valleys hold her thighs hard ... times and places grip her breast bone ... she is breaking with seasons and clouds" (*Poems*), and as Grecian and altruistic as Yeats's. Yeats brings out:

I sang what was lost and dread what was won
I walk in a battle fought over again
My king a lost king, and lost soldiers my men
Feet to the Rising and Setting may run
They always beat on the same small stone." (*YCP* 267)

Unlike Auden's love of art song as aversion therapy as Eliot's, Thomas's love of art song is as occupational therapy as Yeats's, "speak no evil of the soul ... nor think that body is the whole ... for I that am his daylight lady ... know worse evil of the body" (*YCP* 256).

The extreme presence of an inner tension and the despairing recognition, of the dogma centric immortal vision of power and pride and the survival-centric freedom are the extreme examples of ignorance, wild passion and fantasy in contrast to the mortal vision of Grecian altruistic freedom, disinterested goodwill and action synonymous with Thomas's Yeatsian art song according to Day Lewis:

Freedom is more than a word, more than the base coinage
Of statesmen, the tyrant's dishonoured cheque, or the
dreamer's mad
Inflated currency. She is mortal, we know, and made
In the image of simple men who have no taste for carnage
But sooner kill and are killed and see that image betrayed.

Mortal she is, yet rising always refreshed from her ashes.... (DCP 191).

The poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" reaffirms and reasserts that in the art songs Thomas's leit-motif is salvation to the contemporary poets of ignorance, offering viable alternative mortal vision of life and death and Grecian altruistic art song, free play and free love, modesty and magnanimity, "whatever most can bless ... the mind of man or elevate a rhyme" that synchronizes with Yeats's mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, "but all is changed, that high horse riderless ... though mounted in that saddle Homer rode ... where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood" (YCP 206). The process of salvation, in this context, does not mean release from sin; it means freedom from ignorance, or freedom from the prison of experience, and this freedom is achieved through participation and involvement rather than through wise passivity or romantic impassivity.

The poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" that underlines Thomas's Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his "double vision" of paradoxical sensibility vindicates that the thought of annihilating the measurable divisions of time and space or self-indulgence in spacious freedom as freedom of the artist is a chimerical fancy and a sheer ignorance:

But her faith that each vast night and the saga of prayer
He comes to take
Her faith that this last night for his unsacred sake
He comes to leave her in the lawless sun awaking
Naked and forsaken to grieve he will not come. (*Poems* 81)

In the last phase, Auden's immortal vision of Eliotian musical avant-gardism, "traditional sanctity and loveliness" annihilates both time and space, and the political and the war poets' absorption in immediate sensory pleasure is an escape from the naked horror of real life. The Movement poet, Larkin in the early poem celebrates the pleasures of freedom and intimate companionship with the Word-centric Auden.

The poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" sums up that in the occasional art songs Thomas has been consistently functioning as an artist of Yeatsian introspective process of transfiguration and transformation, mortal vision of Athenian philanthropic art song, "sing a 'the' before his name ... allow that he, despite ... all those learned historians ... established it for good," vis-à-vis Auden's metaphysical process of historical suffering and historical art, "he wrote out that word himself ... he christened himself with blood" (YCP 263). His disinterested goodness and action, his poised, benign persuasion to the contemporary poets of wild love of immortal and mortal concerns, his generous-minded functioning in his art songs in contrast to the contemporary poets' contempt and scorn, indignation and hatred, war-mongering and peace is analogous to Yeat's life and love-centric poetical character, "world-besotted traveller" who "served human liberty" and his cosmopolitan outlook, "savage indignation there ... cannot lacerate his breast ... imitate him if you dare of the "world-besotted traveller" with which he has "served human liberty" (208).

CONCLUSION

The poem "In the White Giant's Thigh," thus, contains Thomas's mature reflections on the contemporary poets'

wild love of Eliotian amoral art song and their suffering and the contradistinction of his own occasional love of Yeatsian Grecian altruistic art song and his delight, "out-worn heart, in a timeout-worn ... come clear of the nets of wrong and right" (YCP 46). Thomas's miming is at bottom optimistic as it offers the metaphysical and the metempirical wild lovers an alternative process of art song and also carries salvation to transcend their sorrowful failure, "a stone upon her breast ... and a clock wrapped about the stone ... and she can get no rest ... with singing hush and hush-a-bye" (47-48). It is Thomas's faith in the Yeatsian process of transfiguration and transformation, the possibility of deliverance from the bondage of experience and ignorance that assures him of success and happiness, popularity and influence in his poetic career, that Auden repudiates in his metaphysical process of transgression and transmigration and his immortal vision of aesthetic amoral art song, "and then I laugh till tears run down ... and the heart thumps at my side ... remembering that her shriek was love ... and that he shrieks from pride" (48). The dramatic poem implies that Auden, as a result of his continual ignorance of the human reality of life and death, his stoic love of metaphysical art and reality, "bodily decrepitude is wisdom" (YCP), loses his grandeur and literary reputation and stoops to the level of a common man susceptible to hatred and indignation, violence and vengeance like the victims of his art songs, the political, the war and the Movement poets who remain equally ignorant of the metaphysical process and the reality of breath and death. So, the poem "In the White Giant's Thigh" establishes the fact that the contemporary poets' undying passion for pure art and after the life, Auden's wild passion for Eliotian modernism, musical avant-gardism and immortality positions him as an existential artist of aesthetic amoral disinterestedness, pride and power, war and peace and anxiety and uncertainty since his early phase, "and with the clashing of their sword-blades make ... a rapturous music, till the morning break," that the political, the war and the Movement poets' whimsical functioning, their conflicting wild love of Auden's immortal art song and comfortable living sees them as whining and whimpering pathetically from the beginning of their poetic career, "and of the embattled flaming multitude ... who rise, wing above wing, flame above flame ... and, like a storm, cry the Ineffable Name" (40) and that Thomas's occasional love of Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song that imparts salvation, success, freedom to the affected and afflicted, the helpless and ignorant contemporary poets of the thirties, the forties and the fifties contrapositions him as an artist of moral disinterestedness and cosmopolitan outlook, innocence and ignorance, self-fulfilment and self-contentment from the first art song to the last art song, "and you shall awake, from country sleep, this dawn and each first dawn ... your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun" (*Poems* 81).

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