

INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a manuscript sent to us for publication and microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted. Pages in any manuscript may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. Manuscripts may not always be complete. When it is not possible to obtain missing pages, a note appears to indicate this.
2. When copyrighted materials are removed from the manuscript, a note appears to indicate this.
3. Oversize materials (maps, drawings, and charts) are photographed by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each oversize page is also filmed as one exposure and is available, for an additional charge, as a standard 35mm slide or in black and white paper format.*
4. Most photographs reproduce acceptably on positive microfilm or microfiche but lack clarity on xerographic copies made from the microfilm. For an additional charge, all photographs are available in black and white standard 35mm slide format.*

***For more information about black and white slides or enlarged paper reproductions, please contact the Dissertations Customer Services Department.**

UMI University
Microfilms
International

8611390

Williams, Katherine

"SONG NEW-BORN": RENAISSANCE FORMS IN SWINBURNE'S LYRICS

City University of New York

Ph.D. 1986

**University
Microfilms
International** 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Copyright 1986

by

Williams, Katherine

All Rights Reserved

**"SONG NEW-BORN": RENAISSANCE FORMS IN
SWINBURNE'S LYRICS**

by

Katherine Williams

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, The City University of New York.**

1986

© 1986

KATHERINE WILLIAMS

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Jan 9, 1986
date

George M. Ridenour
Chairman, Examining Committee

Jan 17, 1986
date

Michael Timko
Executive Officer

George M. Ridenour

Michael Timko

Norman Kelvin

Supervisory Committee

Michael Timko

Norman Kelvin

The City University of New York

Abstract

"SONG NEW-BORN": RENAISSANCE FORMS IN SWINBURNE'S LYRICS

by

Katherine Williams

Advisor: Professor George M. Ridenour

Swinburne's adaptations of Renaissance forms of the ode exemplify his ability to transform past poetic tradition into his own idiom. Essentially a late Romantic, he continues the Romantic "revival" of Renaissance spirit and poetic practice. In his poetry, as in much Renaissance verse, the literary influences are cosmopolitan. English Renaissance prosodic experiments provide important models. Swinburne also looks to the continent and to classical poets for inspiration and prosodic models. The result is often a versification that stretches the boundaries of and invigorates English prosody.

His adaptations of Renaissance forms range from early "pastiches"--imitations of French fixed forms and classical meters--to stanzas modeled on that of Milton's "Nativity Ode" and on Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" stanza, which is itself adapted from the sonnet. Some of

these forms have prosodic traits that Swinburne uses throughout his poetry: three-part structures, refrains, repetends, and other kinds of repetition that create antiphonal effects. The adaptations are more than imitations of external forms, however. They also bring into play genres and conventions with which the forms are associated. Especially significant is the historical and conventional association of the ode with music, and thus with song forms. Swinburne's transformation of a Renaissance form in "To a Seamew" weds lyric song form to the basically antithetical Romantic practice of infusing the prosody with musicality.

The subtlest adaptations are Romantic nature poems created from Renaissance forms. In these, the Romantic sense of sublime nature is given new perspective. The continuity of the Renaissance and Romantic traditions is upheld. At the same time, Swinburne, like Milton, uses forms of a past tradition to revivify and transform the aging tradition of which he is a late representative--in Swinburne's case, nineteenth-century Romanticism.

Acknowledgments

I am greatly indebted to my advisor, George Ridenour, for his patient and wise counsel during the writing of this dissertation. To his students--and to his students' work--he brings an unusual generosity of spirit. Above all, I am grateful for his skill as a teacher and for the imagination, inspiration, and clarity he brings to his reading of Romantic poetry.

Swinburne studies have been advanced in recent years by two works: Jerome McGann's Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism and Cecil Lang's collection of Swinburne's letters. I have found McGann's readings especially provocative and helpful. David Riede's Swinburne: A Study of Romantic Mythmaking has also done much to establish Swinburne within nineteenth-century Romantic tradition. The works of Samuel Chew and Georges Lafourcade have been important sources of reference for this dissertation. I would also like to thank George Ridenour for sharing with me an as yet unpublished article on Swinburne's classical poems.

Norman Kelvin gave the dissertation a thoughtful and thorough reading. I am extremely thankful that he so

graciously consented to read and comment on such short notice. I am also particularly beholden to Michael Timko, who read the dissertation and helped shepherd it--and me--through an unholy maze of bureaucracy and administrative detail. Lynn Kadison, too, guided, counseled, and encouraged me throughout my years in the program. My thanks, as well, to Diane Huntzicker, Karen Looze, and Barbara Frontera of Flashback, who typed the dissertation efficiently and professionally.

Among those with whom I studied at the Graduate Center were a number of gifted teachers who contributed directly or indirectly to this dissertation: Allen Mandelbaum, Tom McFarland, Patrick Cullen, Miriam Starkman, Wendell Johnson, Michael Timko, Angus Fletcher, Robert Payne, and Helaine Newstead. Their guidance has enriched my life. To them, and to the Graduate Center, I am forever indebted.

To many friends, also, I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude. They lent sympathetic ears and offered much-needed encouragement: Peter Chamedes, Jennifer Shawe, Kathleen Paradiso, Laury Magnus, Ray Cantos, Grace Peraza, Tom Oveis, and John Fitzgerald. Marjorie Norris kindly read parts of the initial draft. Barry Bissell fielded obscure questions on liturgiology and the rules of

moveable feasts. Diane Marks helped guide me to works on troubadour poetics. I am especially thankful for the friendship of Bill McClellan and Carol Shepko, whose counsel, solicitude, and concern made a shared journey more joyous.

My family has borne this affliction with fortitude and good humor. My father and stepmother led the way; to their example I owe much. They, along with my mother, brother, and sister, have given me moral support and have steadily cheered me on. I am especially grateful to my mother and father for their love of books and for their gift of language. To them, and to my grandfather, I also owe childhood memories of Western landscapes, a mighty world of eye and ear.

Finally, I am eternally grateful to Burton Feldman, friend and teacher, who, with much humor, humanity, and insight, was my first guide on the subject of Romanticism.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE - IMITATIONS OF RENAISSANCE FORMS . . .	16
CHAPTER TWO - THE MILTONIC POEMS	85
CHAPTER THREE - THE ROMANTIC REVISIONS	168
CONCLUSION	250
BIBLIOGRAPHY	256

INTRODUCTION

"Reviens, reviens, bel art antique."

- Théophile Gautier

Indebted to the poets of the Romantic revival and to the mythopoetic tradition of Romantic poetry, Algernon Charles Swinburne was equally committed to a lyric tradition that lies behind much Romantic lyric poetry--a Renaissance lyric tradition that exalts the connection between music and verse and represents the first modern attempt to find a vernacular counterpart to the Greek classical ode. This link between modern and classical "high-style" lyrics is vital to Swinburne's lyric practice. Also important to the development of his lyric style is the cosmopolitanism of the Renaissance, especially the impulse of Renaissance poets to imitate classical lyric forms and the impulse of English Renaissance poets to imitate the lyric forms and experiments of continental poets.

The Renaissance offers Swinburne a variety of lyric forms and prosodic strategies from which he borrows freely. Sometimes he explicitly echoes the nonce form of a particular poet; sometimes more subtly he reworks Renaissance conventions by adapting a common Renaissance

lyric form. Swinburne's most interesting adaptations reflect not only his ability to imitate outward form, but also his ability to use form as a way of transforming poetic convention. The pastoral/Christian conventions of Milton's "Nativity Ode" figure in several of Swinburne's imitations of the Nativity stanza form. In "Blessed Among Women," for instance, Republicanism supplants Milton's Protestantism as the dominant ethos. Yet much of the language and imagery of Swinburne's poem is drawn from the New Testament or from the Prayer Book. Milton finds Christian principles and history in pagan myth; Swinburne finds Republican ideals in Milton's Protestant poetics. This process of creating new poetry out of the poetic materials of the past characterizes much Renaissance poetry, and it is the hallmark of Swinburne's Renaissance spirit.

Swinburne's use of Renaissance lyric forms falls generally into three categories. First, there are direct formal imitations of Renaissance practices and fixed forms. These include imitations of early French "fixed" forms and experiments with classical meters and forms. These experiments are the most visible evidence of Swinburne's connection with the Renaissance lyric tradition. By imitating continental and classical forms in

the same way that English Renaissance poets did, Swinburne recapitulates the Renaissance experience. In addition, by imitating the forms and meters of Renaissance poets, he draws closer to the formalism of Gautier and the Parnassians. Like Gautier, Swinburne seems to set up Renaissance poetic practice as an ideal that has currency in nineteenth-century poetics.

The second use of Renaissance lyric form in Swinburne's poetry consists of adaptations of two verse forms of Milton--the "Nativity Ode" stanza and the meter of "Lycidas." These adaptations are more than simple borrowings or imitations of a verse form. They are also homages to Milton's genius as a lyric poet, significant because Swinburne resurrects the lyric Milton rather than the epic and dramatic Milton lionized by the Romantics. As formal allusions, these adaptations echo the early Renaissance traditions from which Milton constructs his poems. In "On the Cliffs," for instance, Swinburne rejuvenates the canzone form of "Lycidas" and merges it with the tradition of the Romantic nature poem. In a sense, Swinburne is attempting to unite the traditions from which Milton builds his poems with the Romantic traditions he helped engender.

Swinburne, like Milton, uses form as a vehicle for mixing genres. The Miltonic adaptations let Swinburne

recreate Milton's Renaissance practice of elevating a mean or lowly genre by mixing it with conventions that signal the sublime mode. The "Nativity Ode," for instance, elevates the pastoral and the carol by invoking them in the context of a literary hymn. The pastoral and the carol are thus given new dignity and the literary hymn is given a freshness and an air of simplicity that befits Milton's Protestant version of the Nativity. Swinburne does something very similar by treating Romantic topographical description as allegorized landscape in "A New-Year Ode," a poem that echoes the opening lines and adapts the verse form of the "Nativity Ode." Romantic nature imagery in the Krakatoa passage of "A New-Year Ode" is introduced by what is essentially a trope of the liturgical conception of time, and Christian time is transfigured into a human-centered rather than divinely inspired time through the process of Romantic mythopoesis.

The third kind of borrowing from Renaissance lyric is evident in Swinburne's adaptations of Renaissance forms rediscovered by Romantic poets. Some of Swinburne's most successful Romantic nature poems are adapted from forms that the Romantics themselves borrowed from the Renaissance. The trimeter octave of Swinburne's "The Garden of Proserpine," for instance, is derived from

Renaissance lyric songs. Shelley and Keats use the same trimeter octave in Romantic versions of Renaissance song. "The Garden of Proserpine" incorporates some Romantic attitudes towards the convention of the Renaissance love-song--a reappraisal of Petrarchan nature imagery, a heightened sense of dramatic irony, and an effort to elevate the mean style of the Renaissance love-song. Swinburne also varies the trimeter octave in several poems by repeating the first two lines as the final two lines of the stanza. This triolet-like stanza, which Swinburne uses in "To a Seamew," is a kind of formal allusion to the early Renaissance practice of making popular song forms into elegant, courtly lyrics. The problem of how music relates to poetry becomes a formal as well as a thematic issue in "To a Seamew."

I will look at these three uses of Renaissance lyric forms, and at the relation of Swinburne's forms to the subjects of nature, music, and poetic tradition, in three chapters. The first chapter, focusing on Swinburne's adaptations of French fixed forms and his experiments with classical meters and versification, is concerned primarily with the influence of the French Parnassian poets and with the early influence of the pre-Raphaelites. One salient issue is Swinburne's somewhat ambiguous

relationship with medieval poetry, a relationship that resembles Gautier's retreat from his early fascination with the Romantic Middle Ages.

Swinburne's adaptations of Milton's verse forms, discussed in the second chapter, and the adaptations of Romantic revivals of Renaissance forms, discussed in the third chapter, raise the question of how the Romantic element in Swinburne's poetry is often reflected in his manipulation of form. Swinburne sometimes uses form as allusion, drawing on old poetic conventions while attempting to transform and renew the tradition. His transformation of the ethos that lies behind Milton's "Nativity Ode" into a new Republican ethos, discussed above, is one example of how form as allusion and as the repository of generic markers can serve the process of Romantic mythopoesis. Another example, perhaps more complexly layered, is Swinburne's use in "A Vision of Spring in Winter" of Keats's sonnet-like ode stanza. "A Vision of Spring" is one of Swinburne's most "Elizabethan" lyrics, in part because of the heavy use of Petrarchan imagery, and in part because the pastoral elements of the poem, especially the allegorical treatment of the girl-child spring, recall the Spenserian pastoral. The modification of the stanzaic form is also deliberately

"Elizabethan" insofar as it imitates the practice of English Renaissance poets, who borrowed form as well as theme and imagery from Petrarch, the progenitor of the sonnet. The intensely literary quality of "A Vision of Spring" is heightened by the way Swinburne allows Petrarch to surface in the adaptation of Keats's stanza form. The result is a hybrid of Renaissance and Romantic lyricism.

What I have called the Renaissance tradition of "high-style" lyric is fluid and elastic, difficult to define because it had no single program or dogma. Much of my analysis of Swinburne's use of Renaissance forms focuses on the strategies Renaissance poets devised to domesticate the classical ode and on Swinburne's ability to adapt these strategies through the mediation of Romantic poetics. The ode provides some formal markers by which poems may be identified as high style, especially odes modeled on Pindar. However, the odic tradition that emerges from the Renaissance is also characterized by the assimilative practices of Renaissance poets.¹ From the time of the Renaissance, the English ode has derived or borrowed stanzaic forms and patterns from a variety of native or continental lyric forms in order to recreate the sublime effect of classical models. Varied in form and associated with classical poets as different from

each other as Anacreon and Pindar, the ode is so loosely defined by poets that its usefulness as a generic type, identified by clear generic markers, may seem questionable. The odic tradition in English poetry has always presented a divided face. On the one hand, high-style lyrics not strictly identified by their authors as odes play an important part in the tradition--Spenser's "Epithalamion" and Milton's "Lycidas" are examples. On the other hand, the idea of the ode as derived specifically and directly from the models of Pindar, Horace, and, to a lesser extent, Sappho, Alcaeus, and Anacreon--in other words, from individual classical models--has tended to reserve the ode as a poetic kind distinct from the more general class of high-style or at least classically inspired lyric.

My concern is not with the ode tradition itself, but with Renaissance lyric forms that contribute to the tradition. I have therefore not included any analysis of the effects on Swinburne's poetry of the development of the ode from the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. It is clear that eighteenth-century odes do influence Swinburne's conception of the ode, as they influence the ode throughout the nineteenth century. In fact, Swinburne seems to accept the eighteenth-century

distinction between the "greater ode" and the "lesser ode"--the former Pindaric and the later Horatian (although Swinburne prefers to call the "lesser" monostrophic ode "Sapphic or Alcaic.") Yet he rejects the irregular English Pindaric invented by Cowley, and in a sense seems to reject the formal division between "ode" and "lyric" suggested by the radical prosody of the English Pindaric. Swinburne's Pindarics instead resemble those of Collins, who adopts regular stanzas for the strophes, antistrophes, and epodes of "Ode to Fear" and "Ode to Liberty."

Restoration and Augustan poets created a distinct English ode form, in effect cannonizing the tradition. The English Renaissance ode, by contrast, was eclectic. With the exception of Jonson's Pindaric, no single representative ode form emerges from the period. But English Renaissance poets borrow heavily from Italian and French models, and, like continental poets, they imitate classical forms. For Spenser, Sidney, and Milton, the pastoral tradition provides themes and imagery that become part of the conception of the ode. In addition, the English ode of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries draws upon devotional and meditative religious poetry. The psalms of David, which were widely translated, influence the tradition profoundly.

The influence of the psalms has much to do with the importance--in terms of theme and form--of music. Much of the odic tradition is bound up with idea of an ideal unification of verse and music (and it is this strain of the ode--rather than the more elusive, pervasive influence of Horace--that concerns us here). Thematically and formally, Swinburne grapples with the subject of music throughout his career. When he draws on the Renaissance ode tradition, he often borrows or echoes forms that Renaissance poets associated with song. Music and verse are unified in the Greek classical models of the ode, and Renaissance ode conventions are marked by attempts to resurrect this unity. For Swinburne, too, the tradition of the Pindaric ode is rooted in the ideal of the unity of verse and music:

The ode or hymn--I need remind no probable reader that the terms are synonymous in the speech of Pindar--asserts its primacy or pre-eminence over other forms of poetry in the very name which defines or proclaims it as essentially the song. ²

Two forces complicated Renaissance attempts to sustain the unity of verse and music. First, the rise of instrumental music and polyphony changed musical tastes.³ The English madrigal was polyphonic, but for the most part the attraction toward polyphony meant a drift away from

the simple monodic musical setting that was the staple of Renaissance song. Verse is more easily set to monody because monody does not overwhelm the words and thereby obscure the meaning of the verse. In short, with the development of modern notions of harmony and orchestration, the emphasis shifts from the text to instrumental virtuosity, and music begins to assert its autonomy from voice. The second force, paradoxically, was the introduction into Renaissance lyric poetry of the very classical models that exemplified the unity Ronsard and others sought.⁴ Ronsard's program for re-establishing lyric song along the lines of the classical Greek ode was at root a literary movement, as was the borrowing of continental forms by Elizabethan poets. By the seventeenth century, the classically-inspired ode was almost always literary. Crashaw, Milton, and Cowley, representing respectively the devotional Catholic ode, the Pastoral ode, and the Pindaric ode, wrote in complex meters and verse forms that are not suited to musical arrangement. Exceptions to this development existed. Campion created song lyrics based on complex quantitative experiments; Herrick continued the tradition of Elizabethan "airs" by composing simple, light lyrics modeled on the poems of Anacreon; Dryden composed complex odes for the cantata

form. But for the most part, lyric and song became distinct forms. This rupture is felt throughout the Romantic era. Swinburne, like Shelley, is especially interested in developing strategies to overcome the division of verse and music.

Swinburne writes formal odes in the manner of Pindar, traditional odes in the manner of the English Horatian or monostrophic ode, and high-style lyrics that draw on disparate conventions associated with the English odic tradition. These high-style lyrics reveal his ability to exploit poetic tradition and his genius in what Rossetti calls the "Assimilative in Literary Form."⁵ The most obvious examples of assimilation are his "pastiches," usually identified as the early experiments with medieval, classical, and French imitations. The pastiches are attempts to recreate a poetic past by transforming past forms into modern poetry. In addition, the pastiches often imitate different kinds of lyric song. Swinburne uses forms historically associated with song in order to suggest a kind of continuous tradition of musical verse. These forms are often rich in the prosodic devices Swinburne depends on for the musicality of his verse-- devices such as rhyme, repetition, and parallelism. Thus, his recreations of French fixed forms exploit the rich

development of troubadour poetics, originally conceived not as written verse but as sung lyric, in which poetic form and musical setting were wholly interdependent.

Using form as allusion raises problems usually associated with translation, and Swinburne's adaptations of Renaissance forms are in some sense translations. Forms, like language and subject, carry distinct historical connotations. When a translator attempts to transpose a poem from one language to another, he searches for ways to mitigate the inevitable loss of meaning. The transposition of form, whether across the boundaries of language or of time, involves some of the same loss and requires the translator to devise strategems that preserve the historical identity of the form without violating the prosodic norms of the language to which the work is translated. Thus, when Swinburne adapts classical meters to English, he chooses to stay within the general limitations of the accentual-syllabic base of English prosody rather than to impose a foreign prosody on the English language. When he adapts Milton's canzone-like form from "Lycidas," he chooses to emphasize large patterns of rhyme at the expense of stanza structure, a practice closer to that of Milton than to the practice of Italian poets.

Swinburne's adaptations of odic forms are thematic of his "Renaissance" sensibility. What Samuel Chew calls

Swinburne's "creed of literary cosmopolitanism"⁶ is evident in the range of his models--from the ballade to the canzone; from the sapphic to the rondel; from the sonnet to the carol. Almost exclusively French, Italian, and classical, his non-English models are the models of English Renaissance poets. For the Renaissance, Swinburne says in "A Ballad of François Villon," represented a new era of poetry: "When song new-born put off the old world's attire/And felt its tune on her changed lips expire." (III,88) It is not surprising, then, that he borrows heavily from the odic tradition, which is central to Renaissance poetics, nor that his adaptations of odic forms are so richly allusive of past poetic conventions.

NOTES

¹ George Shuster, The English Ode from Milton to Keats (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), p. 63. See also John Heath-Stubbs, The Ode (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 10.

² A. C. Swinburne, Poems (Chatto & Windus, 1904), I, xiv. All quotations of poetry are from this edition and will be noted in the text by volume and page number.

³ John Hollander, Vision and Resonance (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 15-16.

⁴ Shuster, p. 54.

⁵ William Rossetti, "Swinburne's 'Poems and Ballads,'" in Swinburne: The Critical Heritage, ed. Clyde K. Hyder (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), p. 62.

⁶ Samuel C. Chew, Swinburne (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966), p. 69.

CHAPTER 1

IMITATIONS OF RENAISSANCE FORMS

Mr. Swinburne's bent was rather towards French and the Renaissance than towards Italian or English medievalism, but this last was not alien to him; while, like a true child of the Renaissance itself, he united with these the classical scholarship which the other [pre-Raphaelites] could not boast.

- George Saintsbury

Poems and Ballads: First Series,¹ Swinburne's first volume of poetry, contains a number of lyrics that have been called "pastiches"--imitations of medieval genres, French fixed forms, and classical meters. While critics have taken these imitations seriously--that is, as more than exercises in exotic forms--little has been said about how the early "pastiches" fit in to the whole of Swinburne's lyric poetry. Swinburne never stopped writing "pastiches," although it might be argued that he became more adept at culling from the prototype he was imitating those qualities that merge most easily with his style. His early rondels, for instance, are variations of the traditional rondeau form, which he later adapts to his own style in A Century of Roundels. It is clear from the early imitations that Swinburne is captivated by the

three-part structure suggested by the placement of the rentrement (the repetition of part of a line), but only in his later roundels does he take full advantage of stanzaic divisions and of his decision to make the rentrements part of the rhyme scheme.

The "pastiches" show us how closely tied to the Renaissance lyric tradition Swinburne's poetry is, and how the Renaissance values of variety and experimentation serve him. Even in the earliest "pastiches," we see Swinburne mixing genres in the manner of a Renaissance poet. The first two poems in Poems and Ballads: First Series, "A Ballad of Life" and "A Ballad of Death," use medieval dream vision conventions and ballade devices like the envoy in a stanza form that conforms with the metrical rules Milton uses in "Lycidas." While the subject of these poems--the eroticism of death personified by Lucretia Borgia--lends itself to parody, Swinburne later employs this sort of formal experimentation in non-parodic contexts. For instance, he uses the envoy structure in "Blessed Among Women" and the prosody of "Lycidas" in "On the Cliffs."

Poems and Ballads: First Series lays out many of the formal elements of Swinburne's lyric practice. The volume also includes his last real flirtations with the

medievalism of the pre-Raphaelites and the first strong evidence of his debt to the line of Renaissance lyric tradition that informs the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century.¹ This debt, already evident in his early dramas, is distinguished in its emphasis on Hellenism and on the French Renaissance. The pre-Raphaelite strain is nevertheless important. Swinburne's "medieval" poems take up medieval themes and characters; they sometimes use medieval genres, like the dream vision in "The Two Dreams." But they also reveal his incipient reading of the Middle Ages as a period of apprenticeship for poetry, both continental and English. This notion is reflected in one of his comments on Villon: Villon was "the first modern and the last medieval poet a man of a changing and self-transforming time, not utterly held fast, though still sorely struggling, in the jaws of hell and the ages of faith."² Villon's individualism is important. Swinburne saw all ages in terms of the poets those ages produced, or, rather, his historical imagination seems firmly anchored to the individual, and Villon, a great lyric poet "in a time sufficiently barren of lyric merit,"³ is an eminently visible anchor.

Pater, in The Renaissance, also finds a "changing and self-transforming time" in the French Renaissance, which

looked back to native French examples, the "light, aerial delicacy . . . of Villon's poetry . . . and Clovet's painting." The French Renaissance "is thus not so much the introduction of a wholly new taste ready-made from Italy, but rather the finest and subtlest phase of the Middle Ages itself, its last fleeting splendor and temperate Saint Martin's summer."⁴ In defining the gothic, native spirit of the French Renaissance, Pater gives us some historical insight into Swinburne's reading of Villon, and, further, a sense of the complex aesthetic relationship between the Hellenism that inspired the Renaissance and the medieval age out of which the Renaissance emerged:

So the old French chanson, which, like the old Northern Gothic ornament, though it sometimes refined itself into a sort of weird elegance, was often, in its essence, something rude and formless, became in the hands of Ronsard a Pindaric ode.⁵

Villon, too, inherited the native French chanson, a lyric tradition that blossomed in the twelfth century "Renaissance" of the French Provençal troubadours whose lyrics dominated Europe through the thirteenth century.

The sophistication of Provençal lyrics Swinburne captures in two "imitations": "In the Orchard (Provençal Burden)" and "April (From the French of the Vidame de

Chartres)." These imitations are less prosodically complex than other French forms like the ballades, sestinas, and rondels with which Swinburne experiments elsewhere. But they manage the tension between naivete and world-weariness with a pleasant intricacy of images:

Leave go my hands, let me catch breath and see;
 Let the dew-fall drench either side of me;
 Clear apple-leaves are soft upon that moon
 Seen sidelong like a blossom in the tree;
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.
(I,102)

The "burden" of "In the Orchard" suggests the conventional "alba," which in Provençal poetry was a particularly useful vehicle for examining the tension between fleshly and spiritual concerns. The refrain of the alba traditionally ends in the word "alba," (or "dawn"); Swinburne's refrain intimates the coming of dawn. The alba may be a warning from a friend standing watch or the monologue of one lover, as in Swinburne's poem, or a dialogue between two lovers.

One interesting aspect to "In the Orchard" is its pastoral setting. The Provençal poets often used nature to reflect disjunction. Marcabrun's "A la fontana del vergier," for example, plays one interpretation of nature, the idea of Natura, pagan and distinct from theology, against another interpretation, the idea Nature as God's

handmaiden. What is so effective about Marcabrun's poem, a dialogue between a would-be seducer and a lady whose lover has left for the Crusades, is the degree to which the tension between conflicting or at least different interpretations of nature and human instinct is left unresolved. The lady's statement of conventional theology rings hollow:

"Lord," she said, "I do believe
that God may pity me
in the next world, time without end,
like many other sinners,
but here He wrests from me the one thing
that made my joy increase."⁶

Macrabrun's eroticized nature, governed by the quasi-pagan humanism of the seducer's Natura, is relatively light-hearted in itself. It is given more weight by the dislocation of the lady's psyche and by the suggestion of death in her response.

Swinburne's poem, less dialectical but more overtly erotic than Marcabrun's, uses nature imagery to reflect the dissociation that is inherent in passion and to emphasize the transience of sexual pleasure:

The grass is thick and cool, it lets us lie,
Kissed upon either cheek and either eye,
I turn to thee as some green afternoon
Turns toward sunset, and is loth to die;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.
(I,102)

The "theology" that is put in question in the poem appears to be that of psychological hedonism, or the idea that pleasure (here, sexual pleasure) motivates all human conduct. Like Marcabrun, Swinburne neither disputes nor condones this reading of human instincts, although Marcabrun does juxtapose it against conventional theology. Both poets see irony in this pleasure principle, but Swinburne's irony consists not in deflating the contending "theologies" equally, as Macrabrun does, but in carrying both the "theology" that equates eroticism with death and the convention of the alba as a celebration of love to their logical extremes:

Nay, I will sleep then only; nay, but go.
Ah sweet, too sweet to me, my sweet, I know
Love, sleep, and death go to the sweet same
tune;
Hold my hair fast, and kiss me through it so.
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.
(I,103)

I

Swinburne's major interest in early French poetry lies not in the Provençal poets of the twelfth and thirteenth century, but in Villon, with whom Swinburne, like his French Parnassian contemporaries, claimed a

spiritual kinship, and in the poetic forms that Villon, Deschamps, Machaut, and Charles d'Orléans helped establish in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Swinburne was certainly guided by the Parnassians, especially Gautier and Banville. Gautier's essay on Villon, Les Grotesques, was published in 1834. Gautier seems to have cherished Villon as much for his black humor as for his reputation as an outcast.⁷ Banville's kinship with Villon was relatively straightforward. Like the later Parnassians, Banville saw himself as a Villon-like vagabond and admired Villon as an artist of great craft and as a clear precursor of the Renaissance.

Swinburne, like the French Parnassians, was never really attracted to the Gothic Middle Ages, which the early French Romantics and the English Victorian poets, especially the pre-Raphaelites and Tennyson, found so seductive. Gautier specifically rejected Chateaubriand's fascination with the trappings of Gothic architecture and Hugo's more complex attraction to the sinister and the grotesque that are hallmarks of the Middle Ages. The lines of battle over the Middle Ages were more clearly drawn for Gautier than for Swinburne because the political and religious fires of nineteenth-century France were so clearly reflected in the Catholic, feudal world

of medieval France.⁸ Victorian England--Protestant, its titular monarchy intact--could look to the Middle Ages as a model of social unity, a time of spiritual fulfillment, and a repository of religious imagery and symbol. These social and aesthetic qualities were what attracted English poets and writers of opposing political views to the Middle Ages. Perhaps because for England the feudal past still lived in the political and social forms of the early nineteenth century, as Walter Houghton argues, Victorians found the lessons of the Middle Ages less politically divisive than did French writers of the second Empire, for whom the Middle Ages were distant enough to serve as an historical battleground.⁹ Here, as elsewhere, Swinburne is an exception to the Victorian norm in his rejection of the Middle Ages. His antipathy is focused on the Church, which represents spiritual, aesthetic, and political oppression:

But the wide harvest-field of Chaucer's husbandry was all glorious with gold of ripening sunshine while all the world beside lay in blackness and in bonds, throughout all those ages of death called ages of faith by men who can believe in nothing beyond a building or a book, outside the codified creeds of a Bible or the oecumenical structures of a Church.¹⁰

Villon is the hero of French Parnassians because, although his world view is essentially medieval, he is a

social outcast whose poetry and craftsmanship illuminate the age. In Villon, the Middle Ages come alive through sophisticated, individual expression. Gautier recoils from the gruesome spectacle of medieval Christianity steeped in death and despair, but he is moved by Villon's image of the victims of the gallows. For Swinburne, too, Villon is a human voice whose rich vision gives depth and perspective to the decaying medieval world. He is man of the "new world." In him, Swinburne finds not only a spiritual kinsman but a craftsman of forms. Swinburne's early pastiches reveal a wide interest in the Parnassian revival of Villon and of "fixed" French forms.

Swinburne's fascination with fixed forms is particularly interesting in light of their history. The ballade form of Guillaume de Machaut, Charles d'Orléans, and François Villon was perhaps the hardest and most popular form in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century France. Like many French lyric forms, its roots are in Provençal poetry, the forms of which became fixed in the fourteenth century. Fixed forms hold a somewhat ambiguous place in the chronology and development of French lyric poetry. They emerged out of the twelfth-century French Renaissance, a flowering of art and poetry that Curtius sees as the result of the humanism and educational reform

of the reign of Charlemagne. This early Renaissance, says Curtius, was "the courtly culture of France,"¹¹ which flowed to England by virtue of the close political ties forged by the Norman invasion, and to Italy, where it fed the beginnings of the high Italian Renaissance. By the time the Italian Renaissance began to spread across the continent, this early French Renaissance had waned somewhat. The twelfth-century Provençal troubadours were followed by the thirteenth-century trouvères, who adopted many troubadour forms. During the fourteenth century, the last medieval French lyricists, Machaut, Deschamps, and, in the fifteenth century, Charles d'Orléans, established the ballade, virelai, chant royale, and rondeau as standard poetic forms.

These forms were rejected by the Pléiade at the height of the French Renaissance as archaic and overly confining. In terms of form, the Pléiade claimed to have borrowed little or nothing from its native French past and much from the Italian Renaissance and Petrarch, rejecting outright the ballade and other popular fixed forms, and introducing the sonnet and the alexandrine line. The Pléiade preferred suppleness to complexity of form; Ronsard was a master of metrical invention, but his real innovation lay in re-discovering and refining the

alexandrine and in domesticating the Horatian ode stanza. The poets of the Pléiade did use some fixed forms. Pontus de Tyard wrote sestinas, for instance, and Ronsard and du Bellay wrote sonnets. But these forms were Italian and had none of the feeling of decadence that du Bellay associated with the French poets of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.¹² For the French Renaissance, the ballade form epitomized the artifice, the formalism, and the lightness of the troubadour and fixed forms.

Villon belies the "Romantic" revolt of the Pléiade against the conventions of late medieval poetry, at least from Swinburne's perspective, because although the medieval world view can be discerned in Villon's themes and spirituality, his voice is clear and individual, and his fascination and identification with the accursed, afflicted lower orders is genuine. However, the Pléiade's forceful renunciation of outworn French forms held sway over French literary development. From the mid-sixteenth century, when an edition of Villon was commissioned by an admiring François I^{er} and compiled by the early Renaissance court poet Clement Marot, until the nineteenth century, when Villon was rediscovered by Gautier, Banville, and the "poètes maudits," Villon was almost completely neglected.

Swinburne and Rossetti, who at one point planned a joint translation of the complete poems of Villon,¹³ were the first English poets after Chaucer to reintroduce the ballade form into English. While Rossetti's translation of "Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis" remains perhaps the most famous translation of Villon, Swinburne's translations and imitations are both more extensive and, in some senses, more ambitious. Above all, Swinburne's "Villonerics," like his "imitations" of Sappho, are intended as complex homages to an immortal poet--a way, says Jerome McGann, by which Swinburne creates "a more permanent and, as it were, spiritual relation" to the poet he imitates.¹⁴

In the case of Sappho, Swinburne attempts only one true imitation of form: the "Sapphics" of Poems and Ballads: First Series. "Anactoria" is a different matter. No attempt is made to reproduce the outward form (Sappho's poem to Anactoria is in the Sapphic stanza) or to translate: "I have striven to cast my spirit into the mold of hers, to express and represent not the poem but the poet."¹⁵ So effusively does Swinburne evoke and elaborate the implicit sexuality of Sappho's poem that his defense of the poem centers on distinguishing between two different kinds of "translation." It is possible,

says Swinburne, to defile Sappho by translating her in the accepted sense of the word. His own version is not translation, but a higher fiction--a Sappho envisioned by and inseparable from Swinburne, who makes no claims to equal Sappho, and thus testifies to her sublimity by his own self-denigration. No such paradoxical relationship is developed in "Sapphics." The outward form the poem is Sappho's, and there are distinct allusions to "Ode to Aphrodite." Where borrowing form would have "traduced" Swinburne's dramatic monologue "Anactoria," the form of "Sapphics" is, besides being a vehicle for a Swinburnian tour de force, a way for Swinburne to distance himself from his impression of Sappho, and to bring her poetry, as distinct from herself, into play. It might be argued that "On the Cliffs" is a version of "Anactoria" cast into confessional lyric rather than dramatic monologue, where the confessional impetus and dialectic manner of the former poem allows Swinburne to lay out the spiritual relationship between himself and Sappho more clearly than in the latter poem.

Swinburne's Villon imitations, some written quite early in his career, are either, like "Sapphics," imitations of forms, or they are true translations. It is clear from these poems that Swinburne distinguishes between pure translation and impressionistic translation.

From his remarks on "Anactoria," it might be assumed that he held the latter--impressionistic translation--in higher esteem. But conventional translation obviously held some charms. His translations of Villon, the finest being "The Ballad of Villon and Fat Madge," written in the early 1860s and privately published in 1910, are generally very close to the originals. Of the five ballades he translated in 1876, Swinburne wrote of "preserving the order and number of rhymes (only three or four variations in the whole poem), which makes it a considerable feat in metre to find an equal number of corresponding rhymes in English which will fit the original sense as well as (of course) the metres."¹⁶ The earlier translations, including "Fat Madge," do not reproduce the meter exactly, Swinburne points out, a license also taken by Rossetti in his translations. The challenge of adopting the strict rhyme scheme of the originals in the late translations Swinburne seems to have accepted with alacrity, but this formalism does not dictate all of his imitations.

Not all of Swinburne's ballades are imitations of Villon. Some are imitations of the ballade form.¹⁷ Swinburne's first published ballade appears in Poems and Ballads: First Series. "A Ballad of Burdens" has nine eight-line stanzas, rather than the conventional three,

and sixteen rhymes in all, rather than the conventional three. Each stanza runs on three rhymes. The "c" rhyme, which is the rhyme of the refrain, runs throughout in the sixth line and the eighth (or refrain) line of each stanza, and in the second line and fourth (or refrain) line of the envoy. In this early ballade variant, Swinburne is able to modify the rhyme scheme without sacrificing the identity of the form, primarily because he preserves many conventional rhetorical and thematic devices associated with the ballade, including the envoy addressed to "Princes," the "catalogue" of complaints, and the repetition of words at the beginning of each stanza, suggesting anaphora, a popular device of Villon and other ballade writers.

"A Ballad of Burdens" is typical of the kind of parody Swinburne offers in Poems and Ballads: First Series. He is so faithful to the conventions of the ballade that the ascerbic modernity of the poem's fatalism seems to spring from the medieval conventions themselves. When Swinburne reproduces medieval ballade conventions, he creates an anonymous medieval poet; thus, the worldweariness and the psychic disjunction represented by the poem come across as generalized, even ritualized attitudes. Like Browning, Swinburne finds a

way of distancing himself from the "speaker" of his lyric. But Swinburne uses the device of couching his words in historical literary conventions rather than attributing them to a fully-rounded, identifiable speaker. The final stanza illustrates how Swinburne weaves in imagery that evokes conventions of medieval lyrics, both secular and religious:

The burden of much gladness. Life and lust
 Forsake thee, and the face of thy delight;
 And underfoot the heavy hour strews dust,
 And overhead strange weathers burn and bite;
 And where the red was, lo the bloodless white,
 And where truth was, the likeness of a liar,
 And where day was, the likeness of the night;
 This is the end of every man's desire.
(I,127)

The influence of Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites is suggested in the color imagery and in the literary quality of the punning on "burden." Swinburne's images are not visual in the Pre-Raphaelite mode: the synesthesia in the phrase "strange weathers burn and bite" is evocative and suggests an erotic, even salacious physical landscape, but the image itself is not developed into a concrete, sharply defined picture.

By far the best known of Swinburne's Villoneries is "A Ballad of François Villon," not a translation but a ballade in honor of the "Prince of all ballad makers."

The form is one Villon used frequently--a ten-line stanza on four rhymes. McGann points out the significance of this ballade in Swinburne's development of a "myth of history" that connects Villon as the first lyricist of the Christian era with Sappho, the first lyricist of the Pagan era: Villon, is the "gaol-bird" and Sappho the nightingale.¹⁸ Both are "consumed with flame," and both are poets with clear, individual, personal voices. The ballade on Villon is markedly prophetic in its imagery and allusions. The first stanza introduces the theme of the rebirth of the world through the creation of a new kind of poetry. Villon emerges from the "dusk of dolorous years" into a "world of new men." The historical significance of Villon is personalized and sentimentalized in the second and third stanzas, but the imagery is also brutal, as in the allusion to Prometheus:

What far delight has cooled the fierce desire
That like some ravenous bird was strong to tire
On that frail flesh and soul consumed with
flame.

(III, 89)

Swinburne also weaves into the ballade subtle allusions to Villon as a Christ forsaken by man and God. Thematically, of course, these analogies position Villon as man isolated in his own age but prophetic of a new era.

Swinburne's experiments with the ballade form can be divided into two general types: translations or direct imitations of Villon and what might be called "assimilations" of the ballade into the mainstream of domesticated forms. These latter attempts include the nine poems of "A Midsummer Holiday," and other nature ballades published along with "A Midsummer Holiday" in a volume of the same name. Swinburne seems to have found the form useful for both middle and high styles. The "Midsummer Holiday" ballades are "conversational" poems, relatively restrained and essentially devotional; the "Villonerics" are more impassioned, retaining, for the most part, the distinctive ballade convention of the envoy to a Prince, and, as homages to Villon, using form as the central device for claiming a timeless kinship among poets.

This motif, expressed in a kind of continuous "dialogue" throughout Swinburne's poetry, is clearly developed in Swinburne's final imitation of Villon, "The Ballad of Melicertes," an elegy to Théodore de Banville. In this poem, the poet who resurrected a number of early French fixed forms, including the ballade, is eulogized as the French Simonides of Ceres, a rival of Pindar and of Aeschylus, and a prodigious writer of dirges or memorial odes. Swinburne's ballade uses allusion and myth to

create complex correspondences among Simonides, Villon, Banville, and Gautier. The allusion to Simonides' poem "Danae" in the second stanza of the ballade refers to Danae and her son Perseus, who were cast in the sea in a chest by Danae's father Acrisius, and who drift on the waves to the island of Seriphus: "Mother's love, and rapture of the sea, whose womb/Breeds external life of joy that sings like brine." (VI,220) Still another allusion is to Melicertes, also cast into the sea with his mother, Ino; the gods, taking pity on them, changed both into sea divinities.¹⁹ Melicertes was then honored by the Isthmian funeral games, for which Simonides, like Pindar, wrote odes.

Swinburne returns to the ballade form in A Midsummer Holiday and Other Poems. The nine poems that make up A Midsummer Holiday, published in 1884, are ballade variants that preserve the repetition of the final line of each stanza, but modify the typical ballade rhyme scheme, in some cases limiting the rhymes to two instead of the usual three. The meters range in length from pentameters to octameters. All have three stanzas and an envoy. The poems fall into a general category that Swinburne calls "poems of place," landscape poems that evoke in some way the texture and topography of a specific locale. Written

in Sidestrand, Norfolk, during holidays Swinburne took with Watts-Dutton in 1883 and 1884, these ballades, according to Georges Lafourcade, are the product of Watts encouraging Swinburne to write poetry of "a purely descriptive form." Lafourcade finds in these poems "a fatal discrepancy between matter and form . . . here as in 'By the North Sea' and most of the later descriptive verse of Swinburne."²⁰ In fact, the "Midsummer" poems are no more "purely descriptive" than "On the Cliffs" or "The Lake of Gaube," though the poems of A Midsummer Holiday do not rise to the intensity of some of Swinburne's other Romantic nature poems. Instead, the "Midsummer" poems are "conversation" poems, although much more formulaic than Coleridge's and less intent on building toward a climactic moment of revelation.

The echoes of "By the North Sea" suggest the strife of sea and land, but these images are relatively incidental to the more reverent attitude toward nature of "The Mill Garden." "The Cliffside Path" also touches on many of the images and themes of "By the North Sea," but the former poem is both gentler and more didactic. The "scarred cliffs" are treated as self-evident symbols of the ruin nature inflicts, of the barrenness and the fragility of a land ruled, as in "By the North Sea," by wind and change. The lesson drawn is stated wistfully and humbly, as is appropriate in an envoy:

Friend, through man be less than these, for all
 his pride,
 Yet, for all his weakness, shall not hope abide?
 Wind and change can wreck but life and waste but
 land:
 Truth and trust are sure, though here till all
 subside
 Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the
 strand.

(VI,13)

"On a Country Road," a ballade praising Chaucer, who was the first English ballade poet, is the most explicitly social of the poems, focusing mainly on the beneficent effect Chaucer (who for Swinburne is a distinctly "middle-class" poet) has had on England:

Each year that England clothes herself with May,
 She takes thy likeness on her. Time hath spun

Fresh raiment all in vain and strange array
 For earth and man's new spirit, fain to shun
 Things past for dreams of better to be won,
 Through many a century since thy funeral chime
 Rang, and men deemed it death's most direful crime
 To have spared not thee for very love or shame.
 (VI,9)

Swinburne's praise of Chaucer suggests a perceived resemblance to Villon, not in what the latter's suffering brought to his poetry, but in their common audience:

To speak with us as once in days long done
 With all men, sage and churl and monk and mime,
 Who knew not as we know the soul sublime
 That sang for song's love more than lust of fame.
 (VI,10)

Swinburne may seem to be claiming more for Chaucer here than in his essay "Short Notes on English Poets," where he ranks Chaucer, as the father of English narrative poetry (a lesser form than drama, epic, and lyric, according to Swinburne), below Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley. Swinburne also ranks Chaucer (and Dante, the third in Swinburne's medieval triumvirate of greats) below Villon, calling the latter "a golden tongued gallows-bird of Paris . . . distinguished from his two more dignified compeers by a deeper difference yet . . . [h]e is of us . . . a man of a changing and self-transforming time."²¹ Chaucer, who suffered little and wrote in a less exalted genre than Dante and Villon did,

nevertheless had an advantage, according to Swinburne: "With the single and sublimer exception of Sophocles, he seems to me the happiest of all great poets on record." This happiness strikes Swinburne as evidence of Chaucer's insulation from the ravages of the Middle Ages:

And when Ariosto threw across the windy sea
the glittering legend and fluctuant romance
the broad summer lightnings of his large and
jocund genius, the dark ages had already
returned into the outer darkness where there
is weeping and gnashing of teeth--the tears of
Dante Alighieri and the laughter of François
Villon. But the wide warm harvest-field of
Chaucer's husbandry was all glorious with
gold of ripening sunshine while all the world
beside lay in blackness and in bonds, through-
out all those ages of death called ages of
faith by men who can believe in nothing
beyond a building or a book, outside the
codified creeds of a Bible or the oecumenical
structures of a Church. ²²

Chaucer, then, speaks of and to the "middle class at its best and wisest," setting a course for all English poetry that in a curious way solidified the English character, yet left it open to foreign influence: "Of all . . . national poets," says Swinburne, "Chaucer borrowed most from abroad, and did most to improve whatever he borrowed Chaucer was in the main a French or Italian poet, lined thoroughly and warmly throughout with the substance of an English humorist. And with this great gift of specially English humour he combined,

This bright sharp death shines everywhere;
 Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

(VI,67)

The iambic pentameter lines, particularly sensitive to inversion and substitution, allow Swinburne to build toward the refrain in each stanza. In the first stanza, quoted above, the initial spondee in the final, refrain line sets the refrain apart from the preceding lines. In the third and sixth stanzas, the refrain is preceded by a line beginning with a spondee. The refrain is somewhat more integral to the stanzas, especially in the sixth stanza, where the refrain is a grammatical part of the rest of the stanza. In "A Double Ballad of August," as in all ballades, the refrain provides a central organization. As a device of song, the refrain creates a sense of unity; as a device of stanzaic verse, it marks the end of the stanzaic unit. In "A Double Ballad of August," the refrain completes the stanza and at the same time impels the poem forward by offering a contrast to the images of heat and oppression, until the resolution begun in the fourth stanza and completed in the final stanza:

For there, though night and day conspire
 To compass round with toil and snare
 And changeless whirl of change, whose gyre
 Draws all things deathwards unaware,
 The spirit of life they scourge and scare,

Wild waves that follow on waves that flee
 Laugh, knowing that yet, though earth despair,
 Life yearns for solace toward the sea.
 (VI,68)

The technique of allowing the refrain to carry the weight of the theme until the final resolution is very useful, especially when the refrain is counterposed against the messages of the stanza it ends. Such a resolution also occurs in "The Last Oracle," where the two-line refrain--"O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo, Destroyer and healer, hear!"--is heard throughout the poem as a protest against the dismantling of paganism, until the final stanza, in which Apollo merges with song and is in a sense resurrected. The refrain, which is an invocation, participates in the resurrection because it returns the poem to primitive song and ritual, and thus embodies the idea of Apollo as the originator of song or poetry.

Like the ballade form, the rondeau of late medieval France was revived in the nineteenth century by Theodore de Banville. Banville's Petit Traité de Versification Française, written in 1872, lays out prosodic principles for the fixed forms he reintroduced into the language.²⁴ Banville's emphatic prescription for French poetry is a return to rhyme as the principle of verse. The ballade

and the rondeau are especially powerful vehicles for rhyme because their rhyme schemes are so restricted. The French language rhymes relatively easily, so fixed forms, which restrict the number of rhymes, are ideally suited to it. On the other hand, many French poets, both classical and Romantic, steered clear of the forms because, as showcases for rhyme, they can devolve into tours de force. Gautier was the first well-known poet since the early French Renaissance to have taken fixed forms seriously, although Musset had written several rondeaus. Banville's extensive work in fixed forms is the outgrowth of the Parnassian obsession with form.

The French rondeau is thirteen lines on two rhymes. Its most notable feature is the rentrement, or partial repetition of the first word or words of the poem. The rentrement (which is not considered part of the rhyme scheme) occurs after the eighth and the thirteenth lines: aabba aabR aabbaR. Like the refrain of the ballade form, the rentrement is central to the rhetorical organization of the rondeau.

Swinburne's roundels (the word was used by Chaucer as a synonym for rondeau) are variations of the rondeau form, adapted in such a way that the rhyme pattern is simplified and the rentrement is more integral to the

rhyme scheme and to the formal structure. His roundel is eleven lines long, including the rentrements, and is rhymed abaB bab abaB. Within this basic pattern, Swinburne finds much room for variation. He varies line lengths, even within stanzas, as in "Mourning," and he uses roundels almost as single stanzas in combinations of two or more, as in "In Guernsey: To Theodore Watts," which has eight parts, each made up of a roundel. The pattern encourages a clear, three-part development; the three appearances of the rentrement, in the first, fourth, and final lines, and the stanzaic divisions determine the division of parts.

Although the master of the rondeau was Charles d'Orléans, Villon left several rondeaux. An interesting series of imitations springs from one, "Mort, j'appelle de ta rigueur." Two are actually translations, one by D. G. Rossetti, published in 1869, and one by Swinburne, published in 1904. The third is Swinburne's roundel "On an Old Roundel Translated by D. G. Rossetti from the French of Villon." This latter is in some ways the more successful of Swinburne's two imitations, particularly in terms of form. "On an Old Roundel" uses Swinburne's roundel form rather than Villon's rondeau form. "On an Old Roundel" actually consists of two roundels, the first

imitating Villon's original, the second commenting on Rossetti's translation.

Villon's rondeau takes a courtly theme, the death of the poet's mistress, expressed as a complaint to Death. There is a simple elegance in the imagery, and the evocative "tolling" effect in the rentrement, "Mort," elevates the poem from the artificiality of the courtly convention. The poem is, nevertheless, conventional, something Swinburne seems to ignore in his translation:

Death, I would plead against thy wrong,
 Who hast reft me of my love, my wife,
 And art not satiate yet with strife,
 But needs wilt hold me lingering long.
 No strength since then has kept me strong:
 But what could hurt thee in her life,
 Death?

Twain we were, and our hearts one song,
 One heart: if that be dead, thy knife
 Hath cut me off alive from life,
 Dead as the carver's figured throng,
 Death!

(VI, 395)

Swinburne abandons the conventional "complaint," which depends on artifice to ensure a poignant understatement, for a more energetic, strident tone. Rossetti's translation is a closer, more faithful version:

Death, of thee do I make my moan,
 Who hadst my lady away from me,
 Nor wilt assuage thine enmity

Till with her life thou hast mine own;
 For since that hour my strength has flown.
 Lo! what wrong was her life to thee,
 Death?

Two we were, and the heart was one;
 Which now being dead, dead I must be,
 Or seem alive as lifelessly
 As in the choir the painted stone,
 Death!²⁵

In both of these translations, there is an attempt to compensate for the loss in English of the sonority of the French word, "Mort," which in Villon's poem appears as the *rentrement* and occurs also in the second line of the last stanza. Rossetti highlights the *rentrement* by using "dead" twice in the second line: "Which now being dead, dead I must be." Swinburne emphasizes the final *rentrement* by beginning the penultimate line with the word "dead."

Swinburne's two-part roundel on Rossetti's translation uses the same *rentrement*--"death"--and, because the roundel form allows rhyme and placement to emphasize the *rentrement* more effectively in English than does the *rondeau* form, the *rentrement* "tolls" through the verse more gracefully in Swinburne's roundel:

Death, from thy rigour a voice appealed,
 And men still hear what the sweet cry saith,
 Crying aloud in thine ears fast sealed,
 Death.

As a voice in a vision that vanisheth,
 Through the grave's gate barred and the portal
 steeled
 The sound of the wail of it travelleth.

Wailing aloud from a heart unhealed,
 It woke response of melodious breath
 From lips now too by thy lips congealed,
 Death.

(V,174)

The "tolling" of the rentrement is picked up in the extended metaphor of a voice whose "wail" travels beyond the grave. In the second part of the poem, the voice is identified as Villon's:

So clear, so deep, the divine drear accents flow,
 No soul that listens may choose but thrill to
 know it,
 Pierced and wrung by the passionate music's throe.
 (V,175)

The alliteration and assonance of the first line of this stanza, like the alliteration in stanza two of the first part ("a voice in a vision that vanisheth"), help create the resonance Swinburne attributes to Villon's voice. Moreover, the three-part structure is built on the return of the rentrement of line four rather than, as in the translation and the original, at line seven. The structure establishes the rentrement as central.

Swinburne's roundel form is a particularly innovative adaptation of a non-English form to English because the

form makes up for the relative lack of sonority in English by heightening the effects of rhyme. The rentrement in the roundel carries the "b" rhyme, so that the rhyme pattern is tighter than that of the rondeau. The repetition of the rentrement at line four, just at the end of the first stanza, establishes the structure and the rhyme sound more securely than in the rondeau.

Ballades and rondels are not the only Provençal forms with which Swinburne experiments. He also adapts the sestina form. His sestinas are prosodic tours de force and exquisite dramatic monologues. The sestina form, which requires that the six end-words of the first stanza recur in fixed patterns as end-words in the remaining five stanzas and in the envoy, was originally a creation of troubadour poets. It was imported from Provence to Italy by Dante and Petrarch, then introduced to Renaissance France by the Pléiade. In English, the sestina is often rhymed, and the fixed pattern of recurrence modified or ignored. Drummond of Hawthornden wrote sestinas on three rhymes; Swinburne's "Sestina" ("I saw my soul at rest upon a day") and "Nocture" are both on two rhymes.

Swinburne's best known sestina is "The Complaint of Lisa," famed especially for being a double sestina, with twelve stanzas of twelve lines each, on six rhymes, and

with a six-line envoy. The subject of the poem is courtly love. The story of Lisa, taken from the Decameron, turns on the visionary power of song and the creative imagination of the poet. In Boccaccio's story, the poet reveals Lisa's torment to the king for whom she has harbored a secret love. Swinburne's poem is a dramatic monologue spoken by Lisa and addressed to "Love." As in the song by Boccaccio's poet, "Love" is both the personified abstraction and the king himself.

"The Complaint of Lisa," more than "Sestina," draws on the troubadour theme of blighted love and the power of obsession, a theme discussed by Leslie Fielder in his essay on Dante's "Al poco giorno." Although Dante seems to have taken the term *sestina* to be somewhat more generic than did later poets, "Al poco giorno" is clearly an imitation of the form developed by Arnaut Daniel, whom Dante revered as a great craftsman of the mother tongue.²⁶ Daniel's "do ferm vole q'el cor m'intra" is the first known *sestina*. Like all *sestinas*, it is by nature an exercise in obsession; the pyrotechnics involved in devising shifting contexts for the continually returning end-words always threaten to overwhelm the poetry. Daniel solves the problem by shifting from secular love imagery to religious imagery in the final two stanzas.

As a result, the envoy, where all of the end-words must turn up, suggests somewhat ironically the transfiguration of his "Desired."²⁷ A central image in Daniel's sestina is the "chamber," one of the end-words, which is variously a place for libertine love, the lady's private and forbidden chamber (the image is both architectural and sexual), and the enshrinement of joy. The most interesting progression in Daniel's poem lies in the poet's ascending to a "purer" love, while at the same time seeming to rid himself of the sense of the chamber as enclosure.

For Dante, desire threatens annihilation. The poet is imprisoned in the green hills that are colored first by the poet's green longing, then by the poet's vision of the lady dressed in green. Fiedler calls the sestina form "a dialogue of freedom and necessity, like, say, Bach's 'Art of Fugue'; but it is one loaded heavily on the side of necessity--a predestinarian dialogue."²⁸ The form, then, lends itself to the troubadour artifice of unrequited, inescapable desire. Even more suggestive of this tension between necessity and freedom is the metaphysical treatment of desire in Dante's poem, where the poet's blighted love impregnates the nature world, and the lady's power overwhelms the pastoral landscape. Rossetti's

exquisite translation of Dante's sestina captures its complex metaphysical imagery and its allusiveness:

When on her hair she sets a crown of grass
 The thought has no more room for other lady;
 Because she weaves the yellow with the green
 So well that Love sits down there in the shade,--
 Love who has shut me in among low hills
 Faster than between walls of granite-stone.²⁹

The sestina, Fielder notes, rejects standard rhyme in favor of repetition.³⁰ Although technically repetition might be considered a subcategory of identical rhyme (the rhyming of two identical sounding words, like "week" and "weak"), in the sestina, end-words are endowed with such semantic weight that they become peculiarly isolated from the rest of the poem, and, in some ways, from each other. The pattern of repetition becomes increasingly oppressive, so that the poet is forced to discover new meanings in the six end-words. At each reappearance, an end-word acquires additional semantic weight, reflects a new meaning, and becomes more individualized and more isolated. The pattern of repetition holds the poem together, but the repeated end-words threaten to fly apart. To counter this tendency, Dante creates in his envoy an elaborate metaphysical conceit, a kind of "triple" image. This is Rossetti's translation:

How dark soe'er the hills throw out their shade,
 Under her summer-green the beautiful lady
 Covers it, like a stone covered in grass.³¹

The "hills" and their "shade" are eclipsed by the brilliant "green" of the "lady," and the latter image and the lady herself are likened to a "grass"-covered "stone."

When Swinburne adds rhyme to the sestina, he heightens the connections between the end-words and relieves the individual end-words of some semantic weight. Rhyme allows the end-words to become more suggestive than focused, more metaphorical than analytical. This harmonic coalescing is best exemplified in "Sestina," where the end-words are familiar Swinburnian images:

I saw my soul at rest upon a day
 As a bird sleeping in the nest of night,
 Among soft leaves that give the starlight way
 To touch its wings but not its eyes with light;
 So that it knew as one in visions may,
 And knew not as men waking, of delight.
 (III,34)

The rhyme scheme of this poem is so regular that it creates a pattern at least as weighty as the pattern of end-word repetition. (Swinburne forsakes the elaborate repositioning of end-words according to the conventional formula.) What rhyme takes away from the sestina by blurring the individuality of end-words, it gives back in its suggestion of stasis. The "stony" oppression of

Dante's sestina, with its compulsive return to the reserved end-words, becomes in Swinburne's "Sestina," and to a lesser extent in his "Complaint of Lisa," a harmonic oppression of absolute rhyme, a sameness both of the semantic indicators and of sound.

Swinburne's poetry often seems to search out limitations of language in this way. The constrained boundaries intensify the reverberations of meaning and sound; boundaries also give weight to subtle variations and semantic shifts. The visionary experience in "Sestina" occurs during an unspecifiable liminal period between day and night. In attempting to describe this place "Between the rise and rest of day and night," (III,35) the poet discovers that paradox ("There shall he dwell, beholding night as day" (III,35)) is unable to affirm the visionary experience. In the final stanza, the rhyme words cross with each other and contradict each other, so that the possibility of vision seems to disintegrate:

Song, have thy day and take thy fill of light
 Before the night be fallen across the way;
 Sing while he may, man hath no long delight.
(III,35)

"The Complaint of Lisa," more loosely rhymed than "Sestina," is a striking instance of Swinburne's ability, in Eliot's phrase, to "work" words. The irregular rhyme

and the repetition of words resemble in some ways the versification of "On the Cliffs" (discussed in the next chapter), another poem with formal roots in Italian prosody. The stanza of "The Complaint of Lisa," twelve lines rather than the usual six, allows Swinburne twice the number of reserved end-words. The result is less semantic emphasis on end-words. The form gives Swinburne the freedom to "work" his end-words because they occur twelve times each and they can be more widely disbursed. "The Complaint of Lisa," like Dante's sestina, has as an end-word a central image representing the beloved. Dante's lady is a "stone"; Lisa's king is a "sunflower." This latter image works well as a variation of the Petrarchan image of the unattainable lady who resembles a brilliant sun. The word allows Swinburne to cluster the sunflower image with the words "flower" and "sun" (the latter also an end-word). In stanza two, for instance, the verbal play is on the word "flower":

I am the least flower in thy flowery way,
 But till my time be come that I be dead
 Let me live out my flower-time in the sun
 Though my leaves shut before the sunflower.
(III, 43)

II

"Hendecasyllabics" and "Sapphics," Swinburne's first imitations of classical meters, are, like some of the other pastiches of Poems and Ballads: First Series, experiments in the effects of unusual meters on the sound of the language. They are not so much attempts to domesticate foreign meters as they are attempts to heighten the strangeness and otherworldliness of the subject matters of the poems. In this emphasis on the distinctiveness of the meters, Swinburne's Catullan imitations belong to the Romantic and Victorian modes of imitation of classical meters rather than to the Renaissance tradition, which, especially under the influence of Sidney, sought to discover new rules of English prosody that would accommodate quantity.

Victorian experiments with classical meters were plentiful. Tennyson adapted Latin meters; of all the Victorian poets, he was the most interested in quantitative experiments. Clough wrote hexameters, elegiacs, and Alcaics. Meredith's translations of parts of the Iliad are dactylic hexameters, and, like Tennyson, Meredith wrote Galliambics. But true experimentation with quantity in English came about only at the end of the century, with Robert Bridges. Bridges, even more than

Campion and Sidney, made studious forays into quantitative practice and theorized on English quantitative practice. Most imitators of classical meters, Swinburne included, forge their adaptations from the accentual-syllabic base of English prosody, paying some attention to the supposed length of syllables, but never really attempting to impose quantity upon the essential metrical pattern of the language. Tennyson is the great exemplar of the middle ground between those who believe quantity in English possible and those, like Swinburne, who opt for the accentual base. Even Tennyson, in attempting quantity, recognized an inevitable awkwardness, which he sometimes turned into humor:

These lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music
 of Homer!
 No--but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.³²

Swinburne uses quantity to a limited extent only in order to embellish and color the accentual equivalent of a classical meter. Especially effective in combination with secondary accents is Swinburne's use of long vowels. In the second line of "Hendecasyllabics," for instance, two syllables that carry secondary accents have long vowels: "I beholding the summer dead before me." The coincidence of long vowels and accent is effective,

especially as a way of approximating spondees. Unlike Bridges, Swinburne seems content with the frequent coincidence between accent and quantity that English affords naturally. However, Swinburne is generally strict in his adaptations of classical meter to the accentual base. While he allows frequent (and permissible) substitution of a trochee in the final two syllables of the hendecasyllabic line, he is never as liberal with substitution as Coleridge, who allows substitution of a dactyl for the initial spondee or trochee:

Hear, my beloved, an old Milasian story! --
High, and embosom'd in congregated laurels.³³

Saintsbury, noting the extra syllable, suggests that Coleridge's prosodic wisdom keeps him from what is undeniably an unnatural meter in English. In this context, it is interesting to note Swinburne's comment, highly praised by Saintsbury, on English metrical practice--that "all dactylic and spondaic forms of verse are unnatural and abhorrent" to the English language.³⁴ Indeed, the initial spondee of the hendecasyllabic is attempted in several of Swinburne's hendecasyllabic lines; the remainder are trochees. The unnatural spondees lengthen the lines and heighten the asymmetry of the hendecasyllabic in English:

We bring flowers that fade not after autumn,
 Pale white chaplets and crowns of latter seasons,
 Fair false leaves (but the summer leaves were
 falser).

(I, 203)

One of two exceptions to Swinburne's use of an initial trochee or spondee occurs in line twelve of "Hendecasyllabics": "And saw, trodden upon by noiseless angels." This line, set off by the metrical variation, is important because it contains the third in a sequence of verbs that define the narrator's relationship to the landscape ("heard" in line seven; "knew" in line ten; and "saw" in line twelve). The slight variation in meter relieves the general monotony of the hendecasyllabic line. The variation also emphasizes the experience of sight. Although "Hendecasyllabics" is a poem about "vision," the narrator himself experiences an "audition" in hearing the "voice of exultation." What the narrator actually sees is insubstantial--that is, the idea of vision:

And saw, trodden upon by noiseless angels,
 Long mysterious reaches fed with moonlight,
 Sweet sad straits in a soft subsiding channel,
 Blown about by the lips of winds I knew not.

(I, 202)

The meter of "Hendecasyllabics" sounds alien because it combines metrical units that are unusual in English

poetry. Yet the classical line has metrical "equivalents" in English. The classical hendecasyllabic is the combination of a spondee or trochee, a choriamb, an iamb, and an anti-bacchic or amphibrach ($\text{—} \text{—} / \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} / \text{—} \text{—} / \text{—} \text{—}$). The English line breaks down into more familiar duple or triple units consisting of a spondee or trochee, a dactyl, two trochees, and a spondee or trochee ($\text{—} \text{—} / \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} / \text{—} \text{—} / \text{—} \text{—} / \text{—} \text{—}$).

Swinburne's "Sapphics" is an imitation of another Greek meter that Renaissance poets borrowed from Latin rather than from Greek originals. Both Horace and Catullus imitated the Sapphic stanza, and Catullus is evidently Swinburne's model. Swinburne has in fact discussed the phenomenon of Latin imitation-translation. His comments reveal complex ideas on translation and imitation and also touch on his relation to Sappho and to the odic tradition. The first discussion occurs in "Notes on Poems and Reviews," Swinburne's defense of Poems and Ballads: First Series. Swinburne denounces attempts to translate Sappho:

To translate the two odes and the remaining fragments of Sappho is the one impossible task; and as witness of this I will call up one of the greatest among poets. Catullus 'translated'--or as his countrymen would now say 'traduced'--the 'Ode to Anactoria'--*Εἰς Ἀνακτορίαν*: a more beautiful translation there never was and will never be; but compared with the Greek, it is colourless and

bloodless, puffed out by additions and enfeebled by alterations Where Catullus failed I could not hope to succeed ³⁵

Translation of individual poems or poets is in some sense doomed, Swinburne implies. But he also speaks of imitation of form as a function of the linguistic constraints of a language in the "Dedication" to the Chatto and Windus edition of his poems:

The Sapphic or Alcaic ode, a simple sequence of identical stanzas, could be imitated or revived in Latin by translators or disciples: the scheme of it is exquisitely adequate and sufficient for comparatively short flights of passion or emotion, ardent or contemplative and personal or patriotic; but what can be done in English [i.e. the Pindaric ode] could not be attempted in Latin.

(I, xv)

The imitation of form or the transposition of form from one language to another must first be possible on a basic prosodic level. As we will see, Swinburne finds English suited to the general principles of the Pindaric ode, and Swinburne's Pindarics are true transpositions of these principles rather than specific imitations or translations.

Where translation is not possible, Swinburne advocates recreating a voice that has in some way been internalized. In "Anactoria," the "inner" voice of

Sappho is recreated not through mimesis but through Swinburne's personal expression; that is, his intercession becomes the primary subject. Sappho the poet is evoked while her poem retains its absolute, unreachable, almost mystical perfection:

I felt myself incompetent to give adequate expression in English to the literal and absolute words of Sappho; and would not debase and degrade them into a viler form I have striven to cast my spirit into the mould of hers, to express and represent not the poem but the poet. ³⁶

Swinburne not surprisingly accepts the commonplace associated with Romanticism that poetry is essentially untranslatable. Yet translation seems to have been a pleasant exercise for Swinburne. He evidently enjoyed the ease with which Aristophanes' "Grand Chorus of Birds" could be translated. Moreover, the translation of a specific poem or the transposition of a form often gave Swinburne insights into English prosody.

"Sapphics" illustrates a type of imitation common in Elizabethan poetry--the borrowing of alien poetic properties in order to stretch the prosodic limitations of the English language. As such, the poem is part of the tradition of classical imitation in English. The best known English Renaissance sapphics are Sidney's "Cleophila" and

"O my thoughts' sweete foode" and Campion's illustration of what he calls the trochaical English Sapphic in his Observations in the Art of English Poesie. Both Sidney and Campion attempted to impose some version of quantity on English, although Campion's main concession to quantity, points out Walter Davis, was the rule of position.³⁷ Campion allows accent to govern his classical imitations, and as a result, they are scanable in a way that Sidney's experiments are not. However, post-Renaissance poets generally avoided the notion of quantity. The rule of accent was firmly established in the eighteenth century, when Isaac Watts and William Cowper produced Sapphic stanzas in purely accentual verse.

Swinburne's accentual "Sapphics" is remarkably faithful to Sappho's metrical scheme. The poem also uses formal imitation as a reflection a recurrent motif in Swinburne's poetry: the kinship and generational descent of poetic genius. Swinburne's poem has Sappho's hymn to Aphrodite as a subtext, but Swinburne also uses Sappho as a character in his complexly layered narrative. "Sapphics" is not a dramatic monologue in the manner of Browning; the poem is structured as a dream vision with a conventional frame where the narrator introduces a "waking" vision. The drama that takes place during the

vision has behind it the drama of Sappho's ode. Sappho's first-person narrative becomes Swinburne's vision, and by shifting the point-of-view Swinburne's poem implies that the narrator's vision can contain Sappho's. The framing device distances Swinburne the narrator from the vision. This distance validates the content of the vision, as is conventional in dream visions, by locating motivation outside the narrator.

While the meters of "Hendecasyllabics" and "Sapphics" are basically alien to English prosody, some of Swinburne's classical imitations are at root intricate variations of meters native to English. Swinburne's elegiacs, "Hesperia" and "Evening on the Broads," succeed because they artfully disguise an anapest base as dactylic hexameters alternating with pentameters. Ultimately, says Saintsbury, Swinburne uses the principle of equivalence to introduce initial anapests and, thus,

defeat the hexametrical movement, and pull off the mask at the beginning [of the line], though it returns at the end. You end, therefore, as with "Abt Vogler," by perceiving that the metre is really anapaestic throughout; but that the poet has availed himself of the dactyl-simulating tendency of the English anapaest, or the anapaest-becoming tendency of the English dactyl, to make a new and brilliant and genuine combination, with stable rhythm and swing. ³⁸

Swinburne's use of stressed-syllable anacrusis in the heavily equivalenced pentameters of the first stanza of "A Nympholept" illustrate how an effective resolution can be produced in English through a progression from dactyl-like to true anapest:

Summer, and noon, and a splendor of silence, felt,
 Seen, and heard of the spirit within the sense.
 Soft through the frondage the shades of the
 sunbeams melt,
 Sharp through the foliage the shafts of them, keen
 and dense,
 Cleave, as discharged from the string of the God's
 belt.
 Ah, why should an hour that is heaven for an hour
 pass hence?

(VI,127)

The same variation is used for mimetic effect elsewhere in the poem. In the stanza beginning "Smiling and singing, wailing and wringing of hands" (VI,133), for instance, the falling meter speeds the cadence and evokes the tumult of worshippers of Pan caught up in "panic."

Although Swinburne's experiments with classical meters never abandon what Saintsbury calls the native accentual-syllabic base of English prosody, they usually stretch the boundaries of the prosody. One of the most alien-sounding of Swinburne's experiments is "Choriambics," the first experiment in choriambic rhythm since the Renaissance and the first sustained use of the choriambic in English.³⁹

Swinburne's handling of the choriambic line is especially noteworthy because, like all long lines, it tends to break down into shorter phrases. Swinburne's choriambic line sometimes fights the natural pause at the end of each foot:

Love, what ailed the to leave life that was made
lovely, we thought, with love?
(III,98)

Colder surely than past kisses that love poured
for thy lips as wine.
(III,99)

More often, however, syntax and metrical pauses coincide, reinforcing the regular, even monotonous rise and fall of the choriambic foot:

Ah, thy snow-coloured hands! once were they chains,
mighty to bind me fast;
Now no blood in them burns, mindless of love,
senseless of passion past.
(III,98)

In addition to imitating classical meters, Swinburne also adapts the choral odes of the Greek dramatists and the Pindaric ode. Swinburne wrote five full-blown Pindarics, with strophes, antistrophes, and epodes, placing great weight on the element of responsion. While length is clearly one marker of the ambitiousness of the Pindaric, equally important is the complexity of

Swinburne's structures--the sequencing of parts, the choice of stanza forms, the tendency to long metrical lines.

Swinburne's imitations of classical lyric verse forms are often attempts to infuse English poetry with a renewed sense of the sublime, just as Ronsard and the Pléiade had done for French poetry of the sixteenth century. The Pléiade established the poet as prophet and thus elevated the Renaissance poet along with his poetry. For Ronsard, the impulse to "elevate" was in part a revolt against the early Renaissance humanists who had continued to write in native medieval forms. Swinburne, coming at the end of the Romantic revival rather than at its height, is less in revolt against a poetic past than in search of stable aesthetic norms that are associated with sublime high-style expression or with pure lyric song. Swinburne ascribes the highest lyric expression to Pindar's odes and to the triadic scheme that is associated with Pindar. The Pindaric is more ambitious than the Sapphic ode, the structure of which, according to Swinburne, "is . . . adequate . . . for comparatively short flights of passion" (I,xv) But the Pindaric had never been wholly domesticated in English, except through Cowley, whose irregular English Pindarics

are not triadic. Ronsard's three-part Pindarics borrow much from the Humanist ode tradition of regular stanzas, but are carefully constructed triadic odes with the obligatory strophe, antistrophe, and epode. Pindar is clearly the presiding spirit. In his ode "A Michel de l'Hospital," Ronsard invokes Pindar: "Trois fois torse d'un ply Thebian."⁴⁰

Much more like the original Renaissance form first domesticated by Ronsard than the irregular English Pindaric, Swinburne's Pindaric ode form nevertheless owes something to the English tradition. The triadic Pindaric ode first entered English poetry through a book of odes and "odellets," highly derivative of Ronsard, written by John Soowthern and published in 1584.⁴¹ Two somewhat conflicting influences seem to have dictated the odic tradition of Elizabethan England: the idea of Pindar's sublimity and the much more imitable practice of Ronsard, who, despite his early flirtations with the triadic structure, preferred Horatian, or monostrophic odes. Pindar captured the imaginations of the Elizabethans, but more by the force of his name and reputation than by his actual works. George Shuster suggests that, besides the fact that Pindar was seldom if ever read in the original,

the influence of Ronsard's Horation odes and the identification of the "ode" with music drew the Elizabethans away from Pindar's difficult, elaborate, and lengthy form.⁴² However, the idea of imitating Pindar's triadic form never subsided, and with Jonson's "To the Immortall Memorie of That Noble Paire, Sir Lucius Cary, and Sir H. Morison," the triadic Pindaric structure was, with other classical models, more or less successfully imitated in English. But Jonson's imitation remains the best known formal imitation of Pindar in English. This suggests how difficult it is to achieve a balance between the pedantry that the formal arrangement invites and the sense of sublime ruggedness that later seventeenth-century poets attribute to Pindar. Out of this association of Pindar with ruggedness came the form that is known as the English Pindaric, the baroque form of Abraham Cowley.

Swinburne condemns the English Pindaric, neither triadic nor prosodically regular, as "lawless." His own Pindarics attempt to domesticate Pindar in ways that had never really been practiced in English, although the Jonsonian model of regular stanzas made of varying line lengths comes close. Swinburne's first assumption is that the three-part structure is central to the form. His second assumption is that strophe, antistrophe, and

epode may be arranged in a variety of patterns, as long as the responsion between parts is clear and the parts are metrically regular. Above all, the three-part structure must somehow be upheld. In "The Garden of Cymodoce," stanzas identified as strophes and antistrophes occur between three longer passages, apparently intended as prelude, interlude, and epode,⁴³ written in the meter of Milton's "Lycidas." The Pindaric structure is therefore technically violated, but Pindaric responsion--that is, a stanza which is repeated, then followed by another stanza type--is upheld. A stricter conception of the Pindaric structure is illustrated in "Birthday Ode," the poem that follows "The Garden of Cymodoce" in the volume Songs of the Springtides. Epode follows strophe and antistrophe regularly throughout this poem.

Swinburne's belief that the Pindaric structure allows much variation is evident in his handling of the seven-part ode "The Armada," which he calls "less classically regulated" than "Athens: An Ode," but "which, though built on a new scheme, is nevertheless in its way, I think, a legitimate ode, by right of its regularity in general arrangement of corresponsive divisions." (I,xvii) The subparts of the seven-part "Armada" are numbered meticulously, and all seven parts contain either two

subdivisions, representing strophe and antistrophe (always identical in form), or three parts, representing strophe, antistrophe, and epode.

Swinburne returns to the seven-part ode, built loosely along the lines of "The Armada," three times, in "By the North Sea" (discussed in chapter three), "An Autumn Vision," and "The Altar of Righteousness." None of these is Pindaric in the sense of being "classically regulated," but each fulfills Swinburne's prescription of "regularity in general arrangement of corresponsive divisions." The number of parts is particularly important. The seventh part of "By the North Sea," for instance, may provide a kind of closure that is related both to the symmetry suggested by the repetition of stanzaic forms in succeeding parts and to the asymmetry suggested by the uneven number of parts.

This notion holds true only if we assume that formal structure alone can determine closure, an assumption that Barbara Hernstein Smith warns against in Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End.⁴⁴ Bound up in the practice of closure is the equally important factor of convention. We know that a sonnet has ended because we are used to sonnets ending where they do. Yet Swinburne's elaborate experimenting with forms suggests his faith in

the formal integrity of certain poetic structures. What Smith has to say about closure in the rondeau may also apply to poems like "By the North Sea":

In certain poetic forms, such as the rondeau, closure may be secured through a structured principle analogous to that of the circle; and, in general, whenever a poetic form repeats at its conclusion a formal unit with which it began, closure will be thereby strengthened. Formal structure in these instances, however, is "circular" only in its loosest sense and never more than by analogy to geometric circularity. To mention only the most obvious distinction, one is perceived spatially and the other temporally. We cannot ever really "return" to the beginning point in a poem or a piece of music; we can only repeat it. And . . . it is the repetition, not the return, that is the source of closure effects in such poems. ⁴⁵

Smith points out that repetition in the case of a refrain in a song is a device of anti-closure, as well. That repetition and return can work both ways is part of the paradox of the simultaneous symmetry and asymmetry of the seven-part structure of "By the North Sea" and also of the triadic structure of Swinburne's Pindarics. The seventh part of "By the North Sea" repeats the stanza forms of first and fourth parts, so there is a circularity in the overall structure, but part VII sets up closure by using only half the number of stanzas that

parts I and IV use. The expectations created by the rigid symmetry of the parts of the poem are upset.

Something similar happens with the basic triadic structure of Swinburne's Pindarics. The single, long epode of "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia" picks up some of the meters of the six strophes and antistrophes that precede it, but its length and overall structure set the epode apart. As a result, the epode resembles a coda. This coda structure reinforces closure, as does the oracular tone of the final lines:

Turn thee, O holiest head,
Toward all thy quick and dead,
For love's sake of the souls that cry for thee;
O love, O light, O flame
By thine own Grecian name,
We call thee and we charge thee that all these
be free.

(II, 208)

There is even a recapitulation of the basic triadic structure in these lines. The final six lines, like the 36 lines that precede them, break down into tercets. Swinburne achieves final closure in the last line by adding two syllables to the expected pentameter, a device Milton uses in his "Nativity Ode" stanza.

Swinburne's formal Pindarics cannot really escape the "criminal risk and the capital offense of formality," the charge he levels at "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia."

The Pindarics nevertheless illustrate how Swinburne uses the choral effect of antiphonal responsion, particularly in elaborately structured poems like "A Lamentation," "The Last Oracle," "Astrophel," and "The Lake of Gaube," as well as "By The North Sea." The structures of these poems express Swinburne's ambition in the lyric mode:

The ode or hymn--I need remind no probable reader that the terms are synonymous in the speech of Pindar--asserts its primacy or pre-eminence over other forms of poetry in the very name which defines or proclaims it as essentially the song; as something above all less pure and absolute kinds of song by the very nature and law of its being. The Greek form, with its regular arrangements of turn, return, and after song, is not to be imitated because it is Greek, but to be adopted because it is best: the very best, as a rule, that could be imagined for lyrical expression of the thing conceived or lyrical aspiration towards the aim imagined.

(I, xiv-xv)

What is the special musical distinction of the triadic Greek poem? The choral poetry of Pindar, Bacchylides, and the Greek dramatists is generally considered to be no more rooted in "song" than the Aeolic or monostrophic ode: both were sung, the choral ode by a chorus, either in parts or in unison, and the Aeolic lyric by a single voice, probably accompanied by a lyre. When Swinburne calls the Pindaric rather than the Aeolic ode "essentially the song," he offers a formal rather than an historical

distinction. He seems to be setting up the inherent antiphony of the Pindaric structure as the distinguishing musical characteristic. No such antiphony is possible in the monostrophic ode because it is single-voiced. What Swinburne calls the "regular variations" of the Pindaric is a kind of concordia/discors in structure that provides for a wholly self-sufficient, self-referential form.

Some of the implications of this embrace of triadic form are suggested in the choral odes of Swinburne's Greek dramas, Atalanta in Calydon and Erechtheus. On the purely formal level, Erechtheus adopts the triadic choral odes of Aeschylean and Sophoclean drama. There are four full odes with strophe, antistrophe, and epode, and five odes lacking epodes⁴⁶ in Erechtheus. Each choral ode fulfills the dual purpose of the chorus--that is, participation in and commentary on the action. The play itself, according to Jerome McGann, is made up "of a vast complex of evolving structures," essentially mathematical and so highly structured that it consists of multiple echoes and perfected "systems of musical combinations of motifs and their interlocking variations."⁴⁷ Similarly, the use of triadic rather than monostrophic choral odes suggests completion, self-enclosure, and containment.

If the triadic choral odes of Erechtheus give a sense of completion, the monostrophic odes of Atalanta are basically open-ended. Like the choruses of Erechtheus, those of Atalanta are integrated into the dramatic action; in this, the model for both plays is Aeschylean drama. The openness and the fluidity of the monostrophic odes add to the sense of human tragedy in Atalanta, because, argues McGann, the antiphonies are more haphazard than are the complex echoes of Erechtheus.⁴⁸ Fate seems capricious in Atalanta, where in Erechtheus fate ordains a tragedy that carries its own resolution in the affirmation of the idea of Athens. In other words, the formal odes seem entirely fitting in a play about sacrifice to a greater, if invisible, good. The less rigidly constructed, less "controlled" monostrophic and polystrophic odes of Atalanta suggest helplessness in the face of malevolent fate and at best indifferent gods.

Swinburne may well have had in mind the varied, irregular meters of Samson Agonistes for the Atalanta choruses; at least Milton (and Euripides, of whom Swinburne consistently disapproved) offered the precedent of monostrophic choruses in classical Greek drama. But Milton's prosodic models were probably more Hebraic than Hellenic, whereas Swinburne's choruses are lyrical in the

Romantic sense. The chorus beginning "Who hath given man speech?"--a truly Victorian answer to Milton's "Just are the ways of God/And justifiable to Men" chorus in Samson Agonistes--uses prosody emotively. Except for the final stanza, which resembles that of Milton's "Nativity Ode," the verse form is that of the irregular Italian canzone. In form and voice, the chorus is tumultuous and seethes with abject horror and fury at the diefication of the cosmos in all its indifference and cruelty.

With the Pindaric imitations, Swinburne seems to be assigning formal complexity as the primary marker of the elevated, sublime lyric. But the Renaissance tradition of pure lyric song also plays a part in Swinburne's high-style lyric poetry, as it does in the English odic tradition. Conceivably, Swinburne finds a classical precedent for lyric song in the odes of Sappho and Alcaeus. The monodic ode, intended says Swinburne for "short flights of passion," (I,xv) actually came to the Renaissance in several different forms: the Horatian ode, itself derived from Greek sources, and the Greek forms of Sappho, Alcaeus, and Anacreon. The Greek forms are important to English poetry because of the influence, especially of Anacreon, on the Elizabethan song. Actual imitations of the Sapphic, Alcaic, or Anacreontic meters are

rare experiments in exotic forms. The English Horation or monodic ode, derived from the Renaissance humanist ode and only tangentially associated with the Greek monodic lyricists, is the dominant form of English Renaissance ode.

When Swinburne differentiates between the choral ode of Pindar and the monodic ode of Sappho and Alcaeus, he specifies length as one of the markers of the Pindaric. The lyric ode that satisfies shorter, yet intense expressions of "passion or emotion" is still an elevated, even sublime form. Swinburne is careful never to rank lyric genres or forms too absolutely. One reason for this is that he does not want to undervalue the place of "song" in English poetry. Although he points to the Pindaric arrangement as pre-eminently "song," he also acknowledges in his essay on Robert Herrick a distinction between elaborate odes and songs that can actually be sung:

We have only to remember how rare it is to find a perfect song, good to read and good to sing, combining the merits of Coleridge and Shelley with the capabilities of Tommy Moore and Haynes Bayly, to appreciate the unique and unapproachable excellence of Herrick. . . . The apparent or external variety of his versification is, I should suppose, incomparable; but by some happy tact or instinct he was too naturally unambitious to attempt, like Jonson, a flight in the wake of Pindar. He knew what he could not do: a rare and invaluable gift.⁴⁹

If Herrick is less ambitious than the writers of Pindaric or high-style odes, he nevertheless represents at its best the successful union of verse and music. Herrick's lyrics are indebted to Catullus and Anacreon, although he is commonly thought of as Horatian.⁵⁰ The Anacreontic influence helped Herrick find a suitable form for his compressed, metaphysical imagery and for his subject matter--the themes of love, wine, and song, which are readily associated with Anacreon. Although Swinburne separates Herrick, who writes verse that can actually be sung, from the great lyric voices to which he continually refers when he speaks of the highest lyric poetry--the voices of Villon, Hugo, and Shelley--Swinburne's highest praise is often couched in musical terms, both in his critical prose and in his poetry. The difference between the "music" of Shelley and the "music" of Herrick lies in the distinction between verse infused with musicality and verse that is written for musical accompaniment. This distinction is particularly important for Swinburne who, like the Romantics, looks back to past poetic eras, especially the Renaissance and Classical Greece, for a golden age of poetry when verse and music were one. Swinburne's Miltonic imitations, discussed in the next chapter, illustrate how certain late Renaissance verse

forms combining antecedent conventions help infuse poetry with music. The adaptations of Romantic versions of Renaissance song, discussed in chapter three, reflect a Romantic effort to reunite verse and music.

NOTES

¹ Samuel Chew notes a yielding of the "Pre-Raphaelite influence . . . to the Elizabethan" in Swinburne's early dramatic verse. In "The Queen Mother," Chew notes the influence of Chapman, Shakespeare, and Webster (Chew, pp. 190-191).

² A.C. Swinburne, "Short Notes on English Poets," The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne, ed. Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise (1925; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), XIV, 100; hereafter cited as Bonchurch.

³ "William Blake," Bonchurch, XV, 132n.

⁴ Walter Pater, The Renaissance (New York: New American Library, 1959), p. 109.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Fredrick Goldin, ed. and trans., Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères (Garden City: Doubleday, 1973), p. 54. For a further discussion of Macrabrūn, see Linda M. Paterson, Troubadours and Eloquence (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Chew notes that Swinburne's poem faithfully translates the Provençal refrain, "Oi deus, oi deus, de l'alba! tan tost ve!" (Chew, p. 83).

⁷ Gautier sees this humor as a hallmark of Villon's disdain for the aristocracy: "Une chose plaisante, c'est la rancune qu'il conserve à Thibaud d'Aussigny, non pour l'avoir tenu en prison et l'avoir voulu fair pendre, mais pour lui faire boire de l'eau froide et manger du pain sec." (Les Grotesques, quoted in Villon, Poésies complètes, ed. Pierre Michel (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1972), p. viii.)

⁸ See Janine R. Dakyns, The Middle Ages in French Literature, 1851-1900 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 110-114. Dakyns analyzes Gautier's rejection of the Romantic Middle Ages and his claim to having led French poets out of Gothic cathedrals and into the Parthenon. Gautier's "conversion," notes Dakyns, is similar to Michelet's. Behind these shifts in attitude

Dakyns sees the political texture of mid-century France at work: "During the 1850s and 60s various republican poets and critics recalled, in language strongly reminiscent of Michelet, the heroic struggle of their Romantic elders to break free from the Middle Ages, and reminded their readers that the struggle against the forces of reaction was far from being at an end" (p. 115). Dakyns's study reveals the Middle Ages as a bitter political and religious battleground in nineteenth century France.

⁹ Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 1-3.

¹⁰ "Short Notes on English Poets," Bonchurch, XIV, 100.

¹¹ Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 387.

¹² Provençal poetry was collected and anthologized during the fourteenth century, especially in Italy, where Provençal metrical invention encouraged Dante and Petrarch to create the canzone and the sonnet. The preservation of Provençal forms allowed the Renaissance poets of France to "rediscover" the sestina--a Provençal form untainted by the late medieval grands rhetoriquers.

¹³ A. C. Swinburne, New Writings by Swinburne, ed. Cecil Y. Lang (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1964), p. 187.

¹⁴ Jerome McGann, Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 88.

¹⁵ Swinburne, New Writings by Swinburne, p. 183.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 187.

¹⁷ Swinburne calls his imitations of the French ballade form "ballads." This is somewhat confusing because he uses the same term, more conventionally, for his traditional English ballads.

¹⁸ McGann, p. 88.

19 Frazier says that Ino jumped into the sea with her son in an effort to save the boy from his father, Athamas, a variation in which "mother-love" and the sea as salvation are important themes. Sir James George Frazier, The Dying God (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911; rpt. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 162. See Ovid's Metamorphoses, Bk. IV.

20 Georges Lafourcade, Swinburne: A Literary Biography (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1932), p. 270.

21 "Short Notes on English Poets," Bonchurch, XIV, 100.

22 Ibid, p. 101.

23 Ibid, p. 98.

24 Banville, Theodore de, Petit Traité de Versification Française (Paris: Le Ciere, 1872).

25 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, The Works, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Ellis, 1911; rpt. New York: Adler's Foreign Books, 1972), p. 542.

26 Goldin, p. 209.

27 Linda M. Paterson, Troubadours and Eloquence (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 197.

28 Leslie A. Fiedler, "Green Thoughts in a Green Shade: Reflections on the Stony Sestina of Dante Alighieri," Kenyon Review (Spring, 1956), p. 241.

29 Rossetti, p. 355.

30 Fiedler, p. 241

31 Rossetti, p. 356.

32 "On Translations of Homer," The Poems. ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1969), p. 1154.

33 "Catullian Hendecasyllables," The Complete Poetical Works of Coleridge, ed. E. H. Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 307.

34 Swinburne, Poems, V, 42. The quotation comes from Swinburne's prefatory comment to his translation of Aristophanes "Grand Chorus of Birds." Swinburne notes that the anapestic base of the original is "almost exactly reproducible in a language to which all variations and combinations of anapestic, iambic, or trochaic metre are . . . natural and pliable"

35 Swinburne, Bonchurch, XVI, 357.

36 Ibid, p. 358.

37 Thomas Campion, The Works of Thomas Campion, ed. Walter R. Davis (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 289.

38 George Saintsbury, A History of English Prosody (New York, Russell & Russell, 1961), III, 424.

39 Enid Hamar, The Metres of English Poetry (London: Methuen & Co., 1930), p. 321.

40 Pierre de Ronsard, Poésies ed. Louis Terreaux (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1960), p. 153.

41 Shuster, p. 30.

42 Ibid, p. 42

43 Collins, too, varied the arrangement of parts in his Pindaric imitations, "Ode to Fear" and "Ode to Liberty." But the arrangement of "Garden of Cymodoce" seems to violate the three-part principle by beginning and ending with the same stanza form. However, Swinburne would evidently not have conceived of an ode that begins with an epode. In a letter to Rossetti, he complains that Shelley "muddled" the "metrical marks of strophe etc." in his "Ode to Naples"; the epode may never come first, according to Swinburne. He suggests that the first sections of the poem be called "parodes," according to dramatic choral convention. (The Swinburne Letters, ed. Cecil Lang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-62), Vol. II, pp. 63-64.)

44 Barbara Hernstein Smith, Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 26-29.

45 Ibid, p. 27.

46 One of these, spoken by Chthonia going to her death, is followed immediately by a full choral ode of which the major motif is the fruitfulness of the land, playing on the etymology of Chthonia, from chthon, or "earth." The two odes, although formally distinct, are related in imagery and theme.

47 McGann, pp. 119, 121.

48 Ibid, p. 119.

49 "Robert Herrick," Bonchurch, XV, 260-261.

50 Shuster, p. 121n.

CHAPTER II

THE MILTONIC POEMS

"Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him."

- Charles Lamb

Swinburne's adaptations of Renaissance verse forms include twelve poems using Milton's "Nativity Ode" stanza and four poems using Milton's verse form of "Lycidas." Of these poems, the best known and perhaps most successful are "Thalassius" and "On the Cliffs," both long lyric poems in the "canzone" verse form of "Lycidas." Their success stems in part from the ease with which this verse form can be adapted to suit Romantic themes and genres and in part from Swinburne's ease with the melodic possibilities of long, sweeping stanzas. Swinburne's adaptations of Milton's highly baroque Nativity stanza are on the whole less spectacular and less successful as lyrics in their own right. Like the "Lycidas" adaptations, however, the experiments with the Nativity stanza give us some interesting examples of how, for Swinburne, relationships among genre, subject matter, and the historical development of a verse form play an important part in the continuity and preservation of poetic tradition.

The Miltonic poems offer an interesting perspective on Swinburne's use of Renaissance lyric versification, for the Nativity stanza and the verse form of "Lycidas" are not "traditional" forms like the sonnet or terza rima, nor are they the products of more or less anonymous traditions, like many of the French fixed forms with which Swinburne experiments. Moreover, neither form was used in any significant way by poets of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries before Swinburne. Although Collins and Shelley borrowed part of the Nativity stanza, Collins in the "Ode to Simplicity" and Shelley in a chorus of "Hellas," Swinburne was the first major poet to use the Nativity stanza extensively¹ and the first poet to experiment with the verse form of "Lycidas." Swinburne's adaptations offer clear and direct echoes of Milton, not only through versification, but through theme, genre, and style, as well. Often the relationship between form and content in these adaptations suggests a process of "revising" Milton along the lines of Blake's re-reading of Paradise Lost in its "infernal" sense.

Like his Romantic predecessors, Swinburne recognizes in Milton a supreme creative energy that could not be bound by "pedantic" or "conventional" practices. Milton, like Dante, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Hugo, is both a "god" and a "giant":

[T]hey have the lightning as well as the light of the world, and in hell they have command as in heaven; they can see in the night as by day.²

As this encomium suggests, Swinburne joins with the Romantic revival in its ecstatic approval of Milton. While Swinburne's Miltonic poems appeal directly to the authority of Milton as a representative of the Renaissance, it is interesting to note that Swinburne describes one of the "Lycidas" adaptations, "Thalassius," as a poem in the manner of Shelley or Hugo.³ Swinburne's adaptations of the "Lycidas" form reveal his own ties to Romanticism and the Romantic conception of the lyric. Moreover, Swinburne's use of this form as a vehicle for Romantic themes and conventions demonstrates in very concrete ways the harmony of spirit felt by Romantics toward Milton.

The influence of Milton on the English Romantic movement was profound, but this influence cannot be characterized easily, nor was Milton the exclusive discovery of the Romantics.⁴ Paradise Lost was generally admired by the eighteenth century for its theology and for its epic form. Even in the face of sometimes hostile reaction from Neo-classical critics, Milton's admirers counted among their numbers Pope and Swift. Dr. Johnson's reluctant approval

of Milton's blank verse is particularly important, for in some ways, paradoxically, the Neo-classicists' respect for Paradise Lost and its form anticipates the late eighteenth-century revolt against the tyranny of the heroic couplet and the consequent efforts to liberalize versification.

But if Paradise Lost was widely read and discussed by the poets and critics of the eighteenth century, Milton's minor poetry was widely ignored. Johnson's dismissal of "Lycidas" represents the kind of hostility that virtually buried the minor poems until the publication of Thomas Warton's volume in 1785. Although eighteenth-century critics generally acknowledged Milton's genius, they were ill at ease with his "irregularity." The reputation of the minor poems, usually employing genres less popular with the Neo-classicists than the epic, suffered from this passion for regularity.

The Romantics, on the other hand, exalted Milton's departures from classical rules his dismissal of rhyme, and his audacious prosodic experiments. What seemed to the Augustans a failure of performance was for the Romantics Milton's great poetic strength. As John Walter Good notes, condemnation by Neo-classicists actually reinforced claims for Milton's genius:

When the classicists affirmed that Milton did not conform to the rules of highest excellence his admirers affirmed that Milton was not subject to the rules imposed.⁵

Rather than spell out rules that might apply in an examination of Milton's works, the Romantics preferred to redefine the purpose of the examination. The criteria of Milton criticism shifted from judgment of the text to investigation of the creative act, from the poet represented by his poem to the poet revealed by his poem. Arnold Stein suggests that Blake's reading of Milton ("He was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it") signifies a revolution in Milton criticism, for Blake "opens the path to interpretations that may seek to divide and conquer, obliging the poem, the poesy, and the poet to testify against each other."⁶ Romantic critics were thus frequently able to make a virtue of what Augustan critics had defined as Milton's lapses in moral or theological taste. For Blake, evidence of Milton's supreme poetic power was his seeming failure, the creation of an energetic and interesting Satan.

Equally troublesome for Augustan critics was the problem of Milton's style, which Johnson judged to have been formed on a "perverse and pedantick principle."⁷ The singularity of Milton's style did not trouble Coleridge:

The language and versification of the *Paradise lost* are peculiar in being so much more necessarily correspondent to each other than those in any other poem or poet. The connection of the sentences and the position of the words are exquisitely artificial; but the position is rather according to the logic of passion or universal logic, than to the logic of grammar. Milton attempted to make the English language obey the logic of passion as perfectly as the Greek and Latin. Hence the occasional harshness in the construction.⁸

In terms of form and prosody, Coleridge's remarks reveal the nineteenth-century reaction against the tyranny of regularity that dominated the eighteenth century. The Romantic movement led English prosody away from the heroic couplet toward new metrical freedom. Blake and Coleridge discovered possibilities of substitution and equivalence that for all practical purposes had been lost to English poetry since the Elizabethan era. Prosodists throughout the nineteenth century rescanned Milton and other earlier poets in an effort to redefine their "irregularity" in terms of nineteenth-century metrical practices.⁹ Clearly, Coleridge was at ease with Milton's "occasional harshness" in large part because of the transformation of the poetic ear.

Coleridge assumes that this "occasional harshness" is part of a great harmony born of a universal "logic of passion." The harmony of Milton's verse comes from the

poet himself. Coleridge, like Blake, finds Milton revealed by his poetry: "John Milton himself is in every line of the Paradise Lost . . . attracting all forms and things to himself, into the unity of his own grand ideal."¹⁰ Similarly, Shakespeare, says Coleridge, creates a poetic harmony not out of "forms of symmetry" nor the rules of neo-classicism but from "a blended multitude of materials . . . mingled . . . with a dissatisfying or falling short of perfection."¹¹ The "occasional harshness" of great verse may be dissonant in itself, but such harshness actually contributes to the harmony of the work as a whole.

Swinburne finds a similar kind of harmony in Milton's verse. However, it is clear that Swinburne approaches Milton with somewhat different interests. Coleridge venerates Milton's "intense egotism" and ascribes to his "revelation of spirit"¹² a kind of infinite variety that needs no intercourse with external things. Swinburne seems to accept this notion of self-containment in his essay on Byron where he praises the extraordinary ability of Byron and Shelley to "recall or suggest the wide and high things of nature." The "divine lust" for nature in some poets represents for Swinburne a kind of supreme poetic power. But in Milton, Swinburne notes, "the

sublimity is chiefly of sound; the majesty of melodies unsurpassed from all time well-nigh excludes and supplants all other motives of material beauty."¹³ Whether or not Swinburne is contrasting the "inner" music of Byron and Shelley to the "outer" music of Milton in order to suggest, as one critic argues, that Milton's poetry lacks an essential "rapport between elemental forms and emotion,"¹⁴ it is clear that Swinburne admires Milton's technical facility. Milton's "majesty of melodies" offers a different approach to the sublime from Shelley's communion with physical nature. Milton's "sound" supplants "all other motives." His self-containment may be in some senses limiting, but it results nonetheless in sublimity. Swinburne's admiration of Milton's prosodic and musical genius is even more evident in the following observations on choral meter:

It is hard to realise and hopeless to reproduce the musical force of classic metres so recondite and exquisite as the choral parts of a Greek play. Even Milton could not; though with his godlike instinct and his godlike might of hand he made a kind of strange and enormous harmony by intermixture of assonance and rhyme with irregular blank verse, as in that last titanic chorus of Samson. . . . 15/

Swinburne's comments on Milton and his "enormous harmony" reflect the Romantic assumption that Milton is a "deity of

prescience," a voice, writes Swinburne, "'for the dwellers upon earth'" and a "nursing mother" of those poets of "republican faith and freedom."¹⁶ But Swinburne speaks of this prophetic power almost solely in relation to Milton's lyrics, and it is this emphasis on Milton's genius as a lyric poet that distinguishes Swinburne from his Romantic predecessors.

Swinburne's adaptations of the Nativity stanza and the verse form of "Lycidas" are complex homages to Milton's lyrics. Swinburne approaches these forms with a sense not only of their prosody and versification, but also of the forms in relation to genre, subject matter, tone, and historical development. It is clear, for instance, that when Swinburne adapts Milton's Nativity ode stanza in the highly political poem "Blessed Among Women," he has in mind not only Milton's stanza, but the medieval forms and genres out of which Milton devised the "Nativity Ode." Swinburne's interest in the traditions that lie behind Milton suggests that, unlike the Romantics, Swinburne uses Milton less as a model for rebellion than as a key to the extraordinary variety and elasticity of the Renaissance lyric tradition. Milton's lyric forms are in some ways accretions and admixtures of past forms; although innovative in their composition,

they suggest a variety of poetic traditions, often mixing genres and conventions in such a way as to give new life to those traditions. Milton's ability to translate his poetic past into a vibrant present is the gift Swinburne seems most anxious to emulate and exploit in his own Miltonic adaptations.

Three examples of these adaptations illustrate Swinburne's ability to exploit the rich prosodic history of Milton's forms and to transform antecedent genres into vibrant Romantic statements. The first two poems, "Blessed Among Women" and "A New-Year Ode to Victor Hugo" are modeled on the Nativity stanza. Both poems echo the language of and the genres reflected in the "Nativity Ode." The first looks back to forms from which Milton derived his poem. The second adapts the form and language of the "Nativity Ode" to loco-descriptive nature poetry in the Romantic tradition. The third poem, "On the Cliffs," is written in the verse form of "Lycidas." Swinburne works the form into the Romantic tradition of meditative poetry by allowing the irregularity of the meter to reflect a tumultuous psychological journey.

I

The "Nativity Ode" found its most appreciative audience in the nineteenth century, for Romantic critics were the first to place it unreservedly among the most inspired and most sublime of English lyrics. E. M. W. Tillyard notes that even the most fervent of Milton's eighteenth century admirers found the poem wanting:

The eighteenth century gave it little praise, and Wharton's opinion that except for one or two stanzas 'the Ode chiefly consists of a string of affected conceits, which his early youth, and the fashion of the times can only excuse', went little counter to contemporary taste. ¹⁷

As this taste changed, and as Milton's reputation soared, poets and critics continued to reappraise Milton's lyrics, especially those that had been obscured by Neo-classical sensibilities. The influence of the minor poems was never as strong as that of Paradise Lost, but as the Romantic age became increasingly enthusiastic over the imaginative vision of Milton, the minor poetry emerged from obscurity.

The Nativity stanza was adapted by several poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but, as Raymond Dexter Havens notes, these borrowings are rare and relatively insignificant.¹⁸ The meter of the Nativity

stanza is so distinct that borrowings are often direct allusions to Milton's poem. In Blake's "Europe: A Prophecy," for instance, the echoes are both metrical and verbal:

The deep of winter came;
What time the secret child,
Descended thro' the orient gates of the
eternal day.¹⁹

Collins, Joseph Wharton, and Gray each adapted the stanza for odes, and Shelley used a modification of the stanza for a chorus of Hellas. John Keble, apparently perceiving the form as an important example of sacred lyric, incorporated the Nativity stanza into one sequence of The Christian Year. With the possible exception of Keble's adaptation, however, these borrowings reflect a fascination less with Milton's stanza than with the spirit of Milton himself. John Walter Good suggests that, especially for the Romantics, the influence of Milton's minor poetry is always bound up in the influence of his major poetry: "[T]he poetic spirit of many imitations of the Minor Poems came directly from the quickening influence of Milton's Epic."²⁰

Swinburne's fascination with Milton's stanza, evident in recurrent adaptations, suggests much more interest in the form itself than is evinced by Collins, Wharton,

Gray, or Shelley. Certainly Swinburne's elaborate experimentation with the stanza demonstrates his confidence in the elasticity of the form.

The intricacy of the stanza and the rich history of its prosody account in part for its elasticity. Modern critics have suggested a variety of sources for the stanza, and, although the suggestions are speculative, elements of the stanzas are clearly related to earlier forms. F. T. Prince sees some Italian influence in the meter of the two tercets.²¹ Carol Maddison sees a connection to the Romance-six and the rime couée (or tail-rhyme stanza), with an added couplet ending in an alexandrine.²² The rhyme scheme and line length of the two tercets would seem to indicate an unusual variation of rime-couée, where the "tail wags the dog," and in Milton's version, the pentameters rhyme, rather than the usual form of rime-couée, in which short lines rhyme. The final couplet, concluding with a Spenserian alexandrine, suggests Milton's debt not only to Spenser, but to Giles Fletcher's Christ's Victory and Triumph, which also treats the Nativity theme. The alexandrine lends a literary quality to an otherwise "popular" stanzaic form. But the use of the tetrameter in the first line of the couplet is also important, Saintsbury notes, because

the overall effect of the stanzaic structure is an incremental or "proportional" rise in line length, from six to ten and eight to twelve syllables.²³ The incremental rise in syllables rounds the stanza off, giving each unit its own proportion and weight in relation to the whole poem. It is the relative weight of the alexandrine and the effect of the incremental rise in length of lines that allow Swinburne to prefix an octave of pentameter lines to the Nativity stanza and still retain the effect of a whole, single stanza in his elaborate "New-Year Ode" stanza.

The musicality of rhyme in the Nativity stanza reflects the origin of rime-couée, what Saintsbury calls "the peculiar jingly infusion of rhyme into Latin hexameters which has been traced back at least to the twelfth century."²⁴ Marot's use of the rime-couée stanza in his translations of the Psalms indicates the rime-couée was associated with dignified forms, yet Saintsbury's word "jingly" is particularly apt. Milton himself calls the "Nativity Ode" a "humble ode" (l.24), accurately describing a form derived from a mixture of popular and exalted versifications: the medieval meter of the Romance-six, the somewhat exotic French meter of rime-couée, Anglo-Saxon alliteration, the excessive rhyming of Latin

hymnists eager to popularize medieval church hymnology, and the Spenserian alexandrine. This mixture of sublime and common meters reflects a similar mixture of genres and themes in the "Nativity Ode." Milton draws upon popular pre-Renaissance forms of sacred song in his stanza and integrates form and content in the "Nativity Ode" by employing the conventions of the dream vision and of English carols to celebrate a homely and relatively austere Nativity.²⁵

Swinburne experimented with the Nativity stanza throughout his career. The first example, "To Victor Hugo," in Poems and Ballads (1866), is a monostrophic ode with the sole modification of the Nativity stanza occurring in the final line, where a pentameter is substituted for the alexandrine. Swinburne never returns to this modification (suggesting that the alexandrine is integral to the "shape" of the stanza), but in his next volume of poems, Songs Before Sunrise (1871), he develops a stanza form joining a pentameter octave to the Nativity stanza for "The Eve of Revolution," and he uses the same stanza again in "Song for the Centenary of Walter Savage Landor" (1880) and in "A New-Year Ode" (1884). This highly formal stanza is Swinburne's most complex adaptation of the Nativity stanza.

After the experiment with the pentameter substitution in "To Victor Hugo," Swinburne abandons any attempt to modify the couplet of the Nativity stanza. Late in his career, he modifies the stanza slightly in "The High Oaks" and "Barking Hall: A Year After," shortening the first two lines to five syllables and expanding the second tercet to a quatrain by adding a third six-syllable line, giving the following pattern: aa⁵b¹⁰ccc⁶b¹⁰d⁸d¹². This modification produces a fairly successful stanza, given Swinburne's ease with rhyme and his facility with the three-stress five-syllable lines. The fluidity of the stanza allows him to play off the trochaic rhythm of the first two lines against the iambics of the subsequent lines.

In the remaining poems, Swinburne adapts Milton's Nativity stanza without modification. These poems include mixed odes that employ the Nativity stanza as one of several stanzaic forms. "The Altar of Righteousness" (1904) contains seven parts, most of them experiments with long meters. Four Nativity stanzas make up the fifth part. It is significant that this late poem uses Milton's stanzaic form to condemn Milton's theology. The final stanza of part five illustrates Swinburne's use of formal and thematic antiphonal response:

Though death seem life, and night
 Bid fear call darkness light,
 Time, faith, and hope keen trust, through sorrow
 and shame,
 Till Christ, by Paul cast out,
 Return, and all the rout
 Of raging slaves whose prayer defiles his name
 Rush headlong to the deep, and die,
 And leave no sign to say that faith once heard
 them lie.

(VI, 314)

The Miltonic echoes derive primarily from Paradise Lost. Swinburne reassigns the players' parts in a new version of the Fall of Satan and offers a prophetic account of the restoration of Christ to his proper place. Paul, the false deity of Christendom, casts out Christ just as Milton's God "Hurl'd headlong . . . To bottomless perdition"²⁶ the rebellious Lucifer. But when Christ returns in Swinburne's poem, it is the "raging slaves" of false Christianity, rather than Milton's Lucifer, who "Rush headlong to the deep." The spontaneous dispersal of "slaves" in "The Altar of Righteousness" resembles in some ways the destruction of pagan divinities in the "Nativity Ode," where the infant Christ can "controul the damned crew"²⁷ merely by his presence.

An early and more complex example of Swinburne's use of the unmodified Nativity stanza is "Blessed Among Women" (1871). This poem, one of the political poems of Songs Before Sunrise, is a monostrophic ode dedicated to

the Signora Cairoli, the mother of four martyred Italian Republicans. "Blessed Among Women" is not only an adaptation of Milton's stanza, but also an attempt to experiment with genres suggested by the stanzaic structure and the Nativity theme of the "Nativity Ode" as well. The generic and thematic aspects of "Blessed Among Women" are particularly interesting in that they reflect a "revision" of Milton's Christian stance in the "Nativity Ode."

"Blessed Among Women" is neither parody nor, as David Riede points out, a return to Christian asceticism, either in terms of man's willingness to die for an ideal or in terms of the consolation Swinburne's poem attempts to provide for the bereaved mother.²⁸ Christian asceticism is not so much negated as it is transformed into an active political mode, wherein idealism is expressed not through self-denial but through selflessness in pursuit of liberty. In order to achieve this transformation of Christian asceticism, Swinburne creates a secularized version of the Marian lyric out of conventional formulas of medieval devotional poetry.

Milton's "Nativity Ode," like other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religious lyrics, is influenced by contemporary secular poetry and poetic style. Yet Milton clearly draws upon medieval conventions. What Louis

Martz calls the "decorum of an ancient and traditional simplicity"²⁹ of the "Nativity Ode" illustrates Milton's sophisticated transformation of elements of a lost tradition. For the most part, the forms of the medieval lyric did not survive the effects of the Reformation. Nevertheless, echoes of themes and images common to medieval religious lyrics can be found in later Renaissance poetry and in some forms of popular religious poetry, such as the carol. Milton's shepherd-musician is common to carols of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the framing effect of the prologue to the hymn links the structure of the "Nativity Ode" to the typical structure of the medieval dream vision.

While the stanzaic structure of Swinburne's "Blessed Among Women" provides the most obvious connection to Milton's "Nativity Ode," the generic ties between Milton's poem and Swinburne's homage to Signora Cairoli are also very strong. In fact, it is difficult to distinguish between some Nativity poems and Marian lyrics in late medieval poetry because the Virgin's association with the Nativity is an important theological basis for Marian piety.³⁰

Devotional poetry on the Virgin has its roots in the early Latin lyrics of the Middle Ages. The English vernacular tradition of Mariology developed relatively early.

By the thirteenth century, three major types of early English Marian lyrics--praise of the Virgin, celebration of her joys, and lullabies--were well established.³¹ By the fifteenth century, the meditative poem on the Compassion of the Virgin began to emerge as a distinct type of Marian lyric. Rosemary Woolf points out that the relatively late development of the Compassion lyric reveals much about medieval doctrine and traditional assumptions of the Virgin's nature and her role in the Church as the model of decorous suffering. St. Ambrose, in a consolatio, noted of the Virgin, "It is written that she stood, not that she wept."³² The emphasis on the Virgin's gravity and decorum during the Crucifixion gave way very slowly to more naturalistic representations of her grief. Some other important themes of devotional lyrics on the Virgin include parallels between the Nativity and the Crucifixion, parallels between Mary and Eve, and suggestions of physical beauty through metaphors borrowed from secular love poetry.

The tendency to view the Virgin as a distant, rather removed object is common to much early Marian poetry, and the treatment of the Virgin as a more or less shadowy figure is evident in Swinburne's version of the devotional lyric. The object of devotion in "Blessed Among Women,"

Signora Cairoli, exists as a passive, pacific center for the poem. There is little drama in "Blessed Among Women"; the Signora remains a static figure throughout, true to the conventionally grave, unmoving, silent Virgin of early versions of the Passion. This quiescence is one aspect of the ineffability that Swinburne praises in stanza eighteen: "But you, with sweet shut eyes/. . . pure of all words said." Our sense of the Signora's remoteness is heightened by the stanzaic structure, which Swinburne uses to create an aura of solemnity and ceremony.

This solemnity is largely the result of the slow, deliberate pace of the prosody of the stanza. The characteristic rhythm of the Nativity stanza derives from the combination of three-foot lines with longer lines of four, five, and six feet. The trimeter lines slow the tempo of the stanza and emphasize the iambic base. The short lines are sensitive to trochaic inversion and to compensation, two devices that may be used to produce halting effects in a line. Both Milton and Swinburne use dieresis and caesura effectively in this meter to slow the tempo. Saintsbury hears in Milton's "Nativity Ode" "a wonderful nativity . . . in the world of prosody itself The atmosphere of almost unearthly solemnity which, very mainly by pure prosodic means, he has thrown over the whole is miraculous."³³

The first stanza of "Blessed Among Women" demonstrates how Swinburne uses trisyllabic substitution to produce a kind of stiffness that distances the poet from the poem:

Blessed was she that bare,
 Hidden in flesh most fair,
 For all men's sake the likeness of all love;
 Holy that virgin's womb,
 The old record saith on whom
 The glory of God alighted as a dove;
 Blessed, who wrought to gracious birth
 The sweet-souled Savior of a man-tormented earth.
 (II,56)

Two interesting aspects of this stanza are the effect of the iambic base in combination with the use of monosyllables in lines three and eight, and the effect of trisyllabic substitution in lines five and six. The iambic base and the tendency to use monosyllables characterize the stanza as it was conceived by Milton. These aspects give the characteristic sing-song effect of the stanza. Milton's first line, "It was the Winter wilde," exemplifies the wrenched accent that lends the shepherd-speaker's voice a naive and child-like tone. In long lines, Milton's iambic pattern continues to override the rhetorical accent: "All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies." The intended effect is not only sing-song, but also stiff and unnatural, and the wrenched accent slows

the tempo of the line because the wrenching is felt through the remainder of the line. Swinburne plays with wrenched accent throughout "Blessed Among Women." In the line "For all men's sake the likeness of all love," the first "all" is accented both metrically and rhetorically, but the rhetorical accent on the second "all" fights against the iambic base, as does the weakness of the monosyllable that precedes it. The rhythm is wrenched from the base meter, and the final foot becomes spondaic. The result of such play with rhetorical accent and rhythm is a slower, more deliberate pace than is usual in Swinburne's verse. Although Swinburne does not create the distinctly naive voice of Milton's shepherd, the cadence suggests a certain solemnity bound up in the artifice of the song, a simplicity and formality that creates a structural mode of distancing.

Brooks and Hardy ascribe to Milton's Nativity stanza "lulling, circular effects" and "the quality of remoteness and the tranced deliberation of movement appropriate to the dream vision" and to the aesthetic distance between poet and poem characteristic of the "Nativity Ode."³⁴ Similarly, the Nativity stanza in "Blessed Among Women" helps to distance the Signora as the object of devotion. The result is that we are reminded less of

the Signora's presence than of the qualities with which the poem endows her. The Signora is stylized by the conventional expressions of devotion that best characterize her suffering. The conventions of the devotional lyric do not simply allude to ceremony but make the poem itself a ceremony, and the poem as ceremony is an important element in Swinburne's development of the envoy.

"Blessed Among Women" can be divided in terms of Christian images and allusions into three parts: 1) stanzas one through nine, which include a comparison of the Blessed Virgin and Signora Cairoli and allusions to the Nativity and to the Magi; 2) stanzas ten through seventeen, which develop the theme of the Assumption; and 3) stanzas eighteen through twenty-one, which are structured as an "envoy" and include allusions to the Resurrection.

The coupling of the Virgin and Signora Cairoli, developed in the first part of the poem, provides a typology, and, by extension, a mythology for Swinburne to exploit. The mythographic structure of the poem resembles that of the "Nativity Ode," in which Milton associates the infant Christ with Hercules and subsumes pagan mythology within the principles of Christianity. Swinburne's secularization of the Blessed Mother transforms the

asceticism of the Christian mythos into a secular, public mythos based on republicanism and the ideals of the Italian revolution. However imprecise and underdeveloped this "republican" mythos, the process of transformation is clear. Signora Cairoli is a second Blessed Mother, four times blessed because she has lost four sons, whereas the Virgin lost only one. The Signora is further linked to the Virgin through an allusion to the medieval theme of the Virgin as a type of Eve; the Virgin is the original mother of all Cairolis ("Thine and their mother, that gave all you breath" (II,57)), and, by extension, the Signora, as a type of Mary, becomes a kind of universal mother.

The poem to Signora Cairoli begins by asserting the Signora's eternal fame through her association with the Virgin. But in stanzas four and five, it becomes clear that the Signora's immortality cannot be established in Christian terms, whatever the similarities of experience. The Signora has sacrificed, but, unlike the Virgin, the Signora is

Poorer so much, by so much given.
Than who gives earth for heaven's sake, not for
earth's sake heaven.

(II,57)

The important distinction between the Signora and the Virgin lies in the different motivations of their sons'

sacrifices. Christ forsakes earth and gains heaven; the Cairolis lose their lives for the sake of earth, and the Signora loses her heaven, which is "motherhood." The brutal, unsentimental lines, "The little laughter of mouths milk-fed/Now open again to feed on dust among the dead" (II,58), remind us that the Cairolis and their mother do not share in the miracle of Resurrection.

The ideals of asceticism imply an imitation of the sacrificial life of Christ. By interpreting the deaths of the Cairolis as non-ascetic sacrifices, Swinburne would seem to deny Signora Cairolis the recompense that Christianity offers the Virgin Mary: eternal motherhood through the Resurrection and eternal glory through the Assumption. In fact, the poem provides alternative, parallel compensations assuring the Signora of another kind of eternal motherhood and glory. These compensations derive from secular principles, but Swinburne continues to borrow conventions associated with the Marian devotional lyric. As a result, Christian ideals are revised or reinterpreted rather than negated. In stanzas eight and nine, the Signora's motherhood is reestablished through "man's love" and "the world's worship." As Italy adopts her as its mother, Italy itself becomes reborn. The stanzas effectively unite the

The intermixing of secular and religious themes and images is no way foreign to the Devotional lyric, and Swinburne's poem profits enormously from this elasticity.

In the third part of the poem, the Signora, although not wholly abandoned as the subject, is no longer central to the imagery. Stanza eighteen begins with a variation of the formulaic "Go litel book":

Hush thyself, song, and cease,
Close, lips, and hold you peace;
What help hast thou, what part have ye herein?
(II,62)

The development of this envoy in the final four stanzas of the poem is complex. The envoy is not set apart from the rest of the poem through a shift in versification, but, instead, becomes an integral part of the devotional process. Swinburne plays with the envoy formula by sending the poem on a pilgrimage to the graves of the Cairolis:

Song, fold thy feebl' wings,
And as a pilgrim go forth girt and shod,
And where the new graves are,
And where the sunset star,
To the pure spirit of man that men call God,
To the high soul of things, that is
Made of men's heavenlier hopes and mightier
memories . . .

To them, veiled gods and great,
 There bow thee and dedicate
 The speechless spirit in these thy weak words
 hidden.

(II,62,63)

Swinburne's envoy, like Milton's prologue to the "Hymn" of the "Nativity Ode," works as a kind of framing device, emphasizing the artifice of the structure and the stylization of the subject matter. In addition, the envoy of "Blessed Among Women," like the final stanza in the "Nativity Ode," develops the conventional stance of the poet's modesty. In the "Nativity Ode," Milton rounds off his "humble ode" in tones appropriate for the self-deprecating devotion of the pastoral shepherd-speaker:

But see the Virgin blest,
 Hath laid her Babe to rest.
 Time is our tedious Song should here have ending.
 (ll.237-239)

As Curtius notes, the formulas of "affected modesty" developed by the ancients were easily adapted by Christian writers because modesty is suited to expressions of devotion.³⁶ Thus, Milton's "affected modesty" fulfills both pastoral and Christian conventions. The "affected modesty" of the poet in Swinburne's envoy echoes the Christian convention of humility, but the convention is enriched by the poet's comparison of his song to the silence of Signora Cairoli:

But you. with sweet shut eyes,
 Heart-hidden memories,
 Dreams and dumb thoughts that keep what things
 have been
 Silent, and pure of all words said,
 Praise without song the living, without dirge
 the dead.

(II,62)

Swinburne's treatment of the Signora's silence demonstrates that within the language and conventions of devotional poetry there lies an important Romantic paradox. The Signori's silence and purity speak so as to emphasize the inadequacy of words. Swinburne's envoy is an attempt to imitate the Signora's silence. Through the pilgrimage of the poem, expression finds authority in the "speechless spirit" hidden in its own "weak words." Like Wordsworth's journey to a place of "eternal Silence" in the "Intimations Ode," the pilgrimage represents an imaginative effort that unifies human speech with the ineffable:

And mix thy reverent breath
 With holier air of death,
 At the high feast of sorrow a guest unbidden,
 Till with divine triumphal tears
 Thou fill men's eyes who listen with a heart
 that hears.

(II,63)

The very weakness of expression, then, compels the poet to discover the "spirit within the sense" of the devotional act. The inadequacy of the poem can be redeemed

expression of devotion, the Dedication validates the quality of that inspiration.

In "Blessed Among Women," the relationship between Signori Cairoli and the poet establishes not only the political significance of public action, insofar as the Signora and the poem enshrine the active republicanism of the Signora's sons, but also the political significance of expression in the service of an ideal. Swinburne's poem is highly public, and in this sense his approach to devotional conventions resembles that of Milton, whose "Nativity Ode" differs from most seventeenth century devotional poetry in that it rejects "private" meditation in favor of an active and social perspective. Milton's use of medieval devotional conventions allows the poet to subsume the naive, personal voice of the shepherd within the more resonant public voice of an odic singer. C. A. Patrides, commenting on the difference between Milton's Protestant view of the Nativity and Crashaw's Catholic view, sees the contrast not only in religious but in political terms as well:

Crashaw approaches the Nativity "vertically," focusing attention on the manger and dwelling upon the direct perpendicular relationship between God and Man. Milton, by contrast, concentrates on the "horizontal" significance of the "rude manager" as it affected the

relationships not between God and man but between God and all mankind, the totality of all human beings. ³⁸

The simplicity, naivete and particularity of imagery in the "Nativity Ode" help create a kind of realism that ties the action of the poem to earthly affairs and to the society of men. As Christopher Hill notes, Milton's radical reputation depends in part on his "this-worldliness."³⁹

The political texture of the "Nativity Ode" lies behind many of the assumptions of "Blessed Among Women." The "Nativity Ode" characterizes the incarnation of Christ as a revolution. For Milton, as for Swinburne, revolution occurs when elements of an old order are revitalized and transformed mythopoetically into a new order. In the "Nativity Ode," pagan shrines and temples fall, but the infant Christ, who embodies the principles of the new order, takes on selected qualities of pagan heroism, appearing, for instance, as a new Hercules in "swadling bands." Swinburne's Signora Cairoli, while embodying the principles of Italian republicanism, is clearly a second Virgin, and the suffering of the Signora and her sons resembles the suffering of Christian martyrs. Like Milton, Swinburne defines a new order through the conventions and modes of an old order, in this case the convention of the ascetic ideal as a means of glorifying

those who suffer in the manner of Christ. While the ascetic ideal is replaced by a "republican" ideal, Christian images and conventions lend authority and universality to Swinburne's ideal, just as Milton's classical allusions claim the authority of antiquity as part of the Christian inheritance.

II

Swinburne's "Blessed Among Women" resembles Milton's "Nativity Ode" in its manipulation of genre and convention. The most obvious resemblance, however, is the stanzaic form itself. A further example of Swinburne's experiments with the Nativity form and stanzaic structure is the creation of a sixteen-line stanza used in three long, highly formal monostrophic odes, "Eve of Revolution," "Song for the Centenary of Landor" and "New-Year Ode to Victor Hugo". In this stanza, an octave of pentameter lines is prefixed to the Nativity stanza. Although Havens finds that "the eight lines of uniform length . . . do not combine happily with the eight of varying length,"⁴⁰ the stanza provides Swinburne with a spaciousness and weight that the Nativity stanza alone cannot.

The problems with the stanza are numerous and relatively easy to identify. The pentameter octave tends to overwhelm the delicate proportions of line length of the Nativity stanza, so that, as Havens observes, the stanza is "top heavy." The two stanzaic units are not always successfully merged into one. Much of the metrical ingenuity of these stanzas is the result of Swinburne's continual battle against the stanza's breaking in two, with the Nativity stanza taking on the aspect of a chorus or repetend, as the twelve anapestic lines of "The Last Oracle" are meant to do. Thus, Swinburne's fusion of pentameters with the Nativity stanza is in one sense constrained by the natural tendency of longer stanzas to break apart, especially when parts of the stanza have their own responsive identity. But where the fusion succeeds, Swinburne creates a stanza that might be likened to a sonnet in its length and self-sufficiency. The pentameter octave establishes the thrust of the stanza, like the octave of a sonnet, and provides space for the description or narration. The Nativity stanza, signaled by the abrupt change of meter at the ninth line, functions like the "turn" of a sestet in a sonnet. The lyrical qualities of the Nativity stanza and the more expansive development of the pentameter octave are deliberately

juxtaposed. The complexity of the versification allows Swinburne to play the rhetorical pattern of the stanza against the verse pattern.

As in "Blessed Among Women," the three poems in this "extended" Nativity stanza frequently allude to Miltonic subjects or echo Milton. "Eve of Revolution," a political poem in Songs Before Sunrise, praises Milton and Milton's republicanism in three stanzas that recall much of the imagery and tone of Wordsworth's "Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour." The allusions to Milton in "Song for the Centenary of Landor" are part of the densely allusive texture of the poem, which traces Landor's literary inheritance.

One of the most interesting uses of Milton occurs in the third of these poems, "A New-Year Ode to Victor Hugo," Swinburne's celebration of the publication of Hugo's La Légende des Siècles: tome cinquième et dernier, in 1883. Swinburne had read the first volume of La Légende de Siècles in December, 1859.⁴¹ Much of the organization of his poem revolves around the chronological and seasonal significance of these dates. The first half of the "New-Year Ode" reflects upon and recapitulates Hugo's epic. Swinburne alludes frequently to La Légende and provides notes for reference at the end of his poem.

The second half of the "New-Year Ode" begins with six stanzas describing the Krakatoa sunset of November 25, 1883, which Swinburne viewed from Putney.⁴² The description of the sunset provides an interesting lyric counterpart to the epic allusions of the first half of the ode. The mythopoetic process of the Krakatoa stanzas involves not only the transformation of a natural scene into a visionary landscape, but the conversion of Christian time to a more naturalized sense of season and occasion. The references to the season in the Krakatoa stanzas explain, in part, the title of the ode. While the "new year" refers to the completion of Hugo's epic and the dawning of a "hope triumphant" that was for "twice twelve years deferred," there is also a clear reference to the Christian calendar in the first few lines first Krakatoa stanza (stanza XVII):

It was the dawn of winter: sword in sheath,
 Change, veiled and mild, came down the
 gradual air
 With cold slow smiles that hid the doom beneath,
 Five days to die in yet were autumn's, ere
 The last leaf withered from his flowerless wreath.
(VI, 38)

Swinburne glosses this stanza "November 25, 1883," the evening of the Krakatoa sunset, five days before St. Andrew's Day, celebrated on November 30. The liturgical

year begins officially on Advent Sunday, but the feast of St. Andrew traditionally signals the new liturgical year and the coming of the winter season.⁴³ Thus, although the line "Five days to die in yet were autumn's" points specifically to the immoveable feast of St. Andrew, Swinburne is actually invoking the Advent season, as the title of the poem and the imagery of the Krakatoa passage, to be discussed later, makes clear.

The sunset of November 25 was one of a number of spectacular atmospheric effects produced by the explosion of Krakatoa, an island in the Dutch East Indies, on August 26, 1883.⁴⁴ Volcanic debris from the explosion, dispersed through the upper atmosphere, reached England toward the end of October, and, from late October through December, the English skyline provided extraordinary vistas. The spectacles peaked in November and December then gradually disappeared, although some effects were observed through 1884.

The explosion and its atmospheric effects resulted in an enormous surge of scientific inquiry and greatly excited popular scientific imagination and curiosity. Richard Altick, in "Four Victorian Poets and an Exploding Island," discusses some of the voluminous documentation of scientists and laymen alike, noting that many accounts

of these effects published in a volume of Nature tend to read more like "poetry" than scientific observation. Altick's brief study of how Tennyson, Swinburne, Hopkins, and Bridges used Krakatoa and the atmospheric effects of the explosion touches on a central Victorian theme: the relationship between science or empirical enquiry and poetry. The Krakatoa passage of Swinburne's "New-Year Ode" is roundly condemned by Hopkins in a letter to Bridges and is dismissed as inaccurate and diffuse by Altick.⁴⁵ But of the four poets, only Swinburne makes his observations of a Krakatoa sunset central to a poem. Hopkins deals with Krakatoa in a lengthy prose statement in a letter; Bridges and Tennyson allude to Krakatoa in poems, but only in passing.

The Krakatoa section of the "New-Year Ode" falls into two parts: the first, a description of the color and cloud patterns as they spread over the sky; the second, a description of the land and people transformed by the play of light. The first three stanzas, in setting the scene, establish both the Miltonic element of the passage and the centrality of the description to the poem as a whole. The first line of stanza XVII, "It was the dawn of winter," clearly echoes the first line of Milton's "Nativity Ode": "It was the Winter wilde." Swinburne uses Milton's line

as a kind of formula that introduces an idealized landscape. Nature in Milton's poem is both idealized and moralized; its transformations revolve around the infant Christ and tend to reflect such Christian ideals as modesty and simplicity. Swinburne's allusion to the "Nativity Ode" is a way of incorporating Christian poetic conventions and Christian attitudes into the loco-descriptive poetic tradition of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." Although Swinburne uses pastoral conventions, his landscape is not a classical pastoral locus amoenus ordered to reflect the abstract ideals of a Christian Arcadia. Rather, as the second half of the Krakatoa passage suggests, the mythopoetic process of these stanzas involves the discovery of humanistic principles through the poet's creative perception of the natural event.

The stanzaic structure of "A New-Year Ode" determines much of the development of the Krakatoa passage. On one level, the description of the sunset is straightforward. Stanzas seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen follow the sunset from its inception in the west to its spread eastward; stanzas twenty, twenty-one and twenty-two describe the landscape lit by the sunset. Chronologically and spatially, the description is direct and logical. From a point midway between the sky and the landscape,

Swinburne follows first the unfolding sunset above him and then the effects of the sunset below him. Stanza twenty-two unifies the special development by joining together earth and sky:

The lowliest lakelets of the moorland nigh,
 The narrowest pools where shallowest wavelets
 play,
 Were filled from heaven above
 With light like fire of love.

(VI,41)

Yet Swinburne's stanzaic structure works against this linear development. When the incremental process of development of the whole is subordinated to prosodic incrementation within the stanza, as is the case in the Nativity stanza, development may be bound less by an external logic than by the internal logic of each stanza. Swinburne's modified Nativity stanza attempts to preserve the separateness of each stanza while expanding the stanza in order to permit fuller development of themes. The "circular" effects of the Nativity stanza described by Brooks and Hardy permit a development emphasizing mixed genres, complex themes, and extended images that enrich the basic narrative development.

The purpose of this circular development is to integrate related literary conventions into the visionary fabric of the passage. Stanza seventeen, the first

stanza of the passage, introduces three genres or literary conventions: the Nativity theme, the dream vision, and the pastoral. The Nativity theme is particularly evident in the Miltonic echoes. The dream vision, suggested by the formal personifications of "Change" and "autumn," is more fully developed in stanza nineteen, where the poet envisions an April morning, and in stanzas twenty and twenty-one, where a procession of men is illuminated by the sunset. The pastoral age of Saturn suggested by the reference to "earth in time's keen youth" is more subtly integrated into the imagery of the passage; pastoral themes are continually suggested by the animate landscape. Much of the integration of these literary conventions depends upon Swinburne's ability to translate genres into Romantic terms. The landscape of stanzas twenty and twenty-one of the Krakatoa passage, seems Wordsworthian, especially in the treatment of the working men who pass by below the hill from which Swinburne views the sunset. Swinburne's landscape sometimes suggests the highly schematic landscape of the traditional pastoral, where much of the interest lies in discovering the paradoxes that spring from the relation between art and nature. One interesting twist on a pastoral convention occurs in stanza twenty-two, where

the "lowliest lakelets of the moorland" reflect, and thereby seem to absorb, the sunset, mirroring both the world and the creative spirit which Swinburne is attempting to define. While this image echoes the pastoral's fascination with mirrors and reflection, it also occasions the sort of analogizing typical of the Romantic understanding of the sublime found equally in depth as in great height. The light reflected from the lowly lakelets is like the light from "hearts that lowlier live" when such hearts are touched by the sort of invigorating light Hugo produces.

What distinguishes the Krakatoa passage from other examples of mythmaking in Swinburne's nature poetry is the degree to which literary Christian conventions and poetic imagery pervade and are absorbed into the essential fabric of the loco-descriptive tradition. Just as the occurrence of the new liturgical year is given special significance by its association with the sunset and, by implication, with the completion of Hugo's epic, so are other Christian conventions transformed into aspects of Swinburne's mythopoetic vision. For instance, Swinburne's personification of "Change" in stanza XVII resembles Milton's personification of "Peace" in of the "Nativity Ode." Both personified abstractions descend upon the

scene; both bring to the landscapes of the poems the sense of a new order. Milton's "Peace" suggests the conventional personification of abstractions typical of Spenserian allegory. Swinburne's "Change," on the other hand, is a complex parody of allegorical personification. "Change" functions as a kind of annunciation figure representing the Romantic sense of potentiality in flux:

. . . sword in sheath,
Change, veiled and mild, came down the gradual air
With cold slow smiles that his the doom beneath.
(VI, 38)

The playfulness of this personification comes in part from the undercutting of Miltonic language. Whereas Milton's "Peace" is sent from heaven to become the tool of heaven's representative on earth, Swinburne's "Change" characterizes the moral neutrality of the landscape from which the sunset emerges.

The setting for the Krakatoa sunset is a sky "blown bare" by the late autumn winds. Swinburne's landscapes are often barren sterile stretches of land or sea, as in "By the North Sea" or "Neap-tide." These landscapes challenge Swinburne to find beauty in an eternal desolation. The sky of the Krakatoa passage, on the other hand, is a temporary phenomenon. The sky "blown bare" and purified seems to invite the new "heaven" which

emerges from the west. Unlike the desolate shore of "Neap-Tide," the sky of the Krakatoa passage is suddenly filled by the color and material of the sunset. The poetry of landscape in Swinburne's lyrics often seems to be divided along lines similar to those suggested by Coleridge in his comments on the Lyrical Ballads: "By the North Sea" discovers richness in the monotonously "ordinary" sea and landscape; the Krakatoa passage finds applications to ordinary life in the extraordinary, seemingly supernatural event of the sunset.

The initial bareness of the Krakatoa landscape also contrasts sharply with the traditional Christian vision of the world before the coming of Christ, and especially with the rich pagan world of Milton's "Nativity Ode." The fullness of the pagan world suggests a kind of earthiness, or at least qualities which Milton associates with works of darkness. Swinburne's bare landscape, on the other hand, consists of a kind of emptiness, both material and moral, that becomes filled by the sunset and by the poet's perception of the event. Whereas Nature in the "Nativity Ode" allows the "shady gloom" of night to be replaced by the light of the infant Christ, Swinburne's empty sky is filled by "sheer wings of sundering cloud" that, far from deriving any moral connotation from the

traditional Christian opposition of light and dark, are a "living darkness" and seem to resemble the wings of "some giant angel." The moral suggestiveness of this image is neutralized, for Swinburne does not know whether the angel's message is one of "doom or benediction."

Yet the season is Advent, and the imagery essentially eschatological.⁴⁶ The image of a "sundering cloud" rising on the "midnight black" suggests another vision of the Advent, from Luke 21.27-33:

. . . And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, til all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

These verses are from the Gospel for the second Sunday in Advent. Thus, underlying much of the Krakatoa passage is imagery of a second coming--not of Christ, but of Hugo:

Priest, prophet, seer and sage,
Lord of a subject age
That bears thy seal upon it for a sign.
(VI,42)

Swinburne's attempt to reconcile the traditional Christian opposition between light and dark, one of the more important reworkings of Advent imagery in "A New-Year

Ode," illustrates his "infernal" reading of Milton's "Nativity Ode." Throughout the first half of the poem, Swinburne refers to Hugo in conventional terms as a source of great "light" or as a bringer of light. The Krakatoa passage is an attempt to define the visionary process in more subtle terms than can be suggested by conventional imagery. The similarity between Hugo's "light" and the light of the sunset is implicit and suggests that Hugo's "light," like that of the sunset "woven of day and night," is an expansive and inclusive rather than exclusive phenomenon.

Another related opposition is that of the seasons. In stanza XIX, Swinburne approaches the opposition through a mixture of two related conventions, the aubade and the alba. As the sunset progresses, gold fades to green and the light on the clouds produces "large live petals broad as love bids lie/Full open when the sun salutes the rose" (VI,39). Love and the rose open to the spring "dawn" as they would in an aubade, traditionally a joyous love lyric greeting the dawn. But the bitterness of the alba, a related form of morning serenade, is also present in the suggestion of the coming winter and an empty bed:

And small rent sprays wherewith the heavens
 most high
 Were strewn as autumn strews the garden-close
 With ruinous rose eaves whirled
 About their wan chill world
 Through wind worn bowers that now no music knows.
 (VI,40)

Swinburne plays with the conventional interchange of seasonal and day/night images throughout these stanzas, so that we are always aware of the association of autumn with the coming night and dawn with spring, especially the primary association of a dawn-like sunset with a "new year" in mid-winter.

The concept of a new year at mid-winter is fundamentally Christian and quite revolutionary, for it imposes a conception of time outside the natural cycle of sowing and harvesting. For Milton's "Nativity Ode," as for Spenser's "Shepherd's Calendar," this Christian concept of the year is vital and miraculous because it is outside of the natural cycle. The incarnation of Christ serves as a fixed and abstract point for the new year. Milton makes much of the superiority of Christ over nature as, for instance, when the sun "hides his head for shame" at the sight of the Infant, "a greater Sun." Christ is the true source of light and life in the dark of winter, and the paradox of Christ's birth in winter is an affirmation of the superiority of Christian time over natural time.

Swinburne's use of such paradoxical oppositions, with their heavy Christian overtones, has a different purpose. For Swinburne, the Krakatoa sunset opens up the possibility of reconciling Christian time with nature. The sunset occurs within five days of one of the liturgical celebrations of the new year. Insofar as the dawn-like sunset suggests a kind of rebirth, Christian celebration is given concreteness and life through a miracle of nature.

Thus, the Krakatoa sunset that Swinburne describes subsumes the Christian mythos, just as the "Nativity Ode" subsumes pagan myth. Christian time, that is, the a-natural time of the Christian calendar, where the dead of winter heralds a new year in opposition to natural evidence, is transformed by the sunset into a miraculous natural time. This transformation is not metaphysical or supernatural, for Swinburne finds meaning in the "transfiguration" through the act of perceiving a natural event creatively. The sunset progresses "Till east and west were fire and light,/As though the dawn to come had flushed the coming night." However metaphysical this description seems, the "dawn" provides the medium for useful and unifying vision:

Yea, no man's head whereon the fire alit,
Of all that passed along that sunset road
Westward, no brow so drear,
No eye so dull of cheer.
No face so mean whereon that light abode,
But as with alien pride
Strange godhead glorified
Each feature flushed from heaven with fire that
showed
The likeness of its own life wrought
By strong transfiguration as of living thought.
(VI,41)

The word "transfiguration" in the last line exemplifies Swinburne's ability to work Christian language and concepts into the concrete landscape of the Krakatoa sunset. In this image and in the stanza following ("For, when such light is in the world, we share,/All of us, all the rays thereof that shine") lie allusions to Advent imagery and to the Christmas Day Gospel, from John 1.9: " . . . that was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The glory of the transfiguration of Christ on the mountain becomes the more vital and present glory of common men lit by the sunset. The traditional Christian opposition, between the miraculous and nature, so integral a part of Milton's "Nativity Ode," is reconciled in Swinburne's poem.

III

The third example of Swinburne's "Miltonic" verse forms is his borrowing of the verse form of "Lycidas" in four poems that make up Songs of the Springtides. The "Lycidas" verse form differs radically from that of the Nativity stanza and provides a versification for high-style lyric more congenial to the mainstream Romantic tradition that depended so heavily on emancipation from the rigidity of eighteenth-century prosody. Much of the freedom that Swinburne discovers in the verse form of "Lycidas" has to do with its strong ties to blank verse.

Generally, the form of "Lycidas" differs from the Nativity stanza in the conception of the stanzaic unit. "Blessed Among Women" and "A New-Year Ode" illustrate Swinburne's use of a versification that focuses attention on the stanza as a single unit. The intricate and elaborate Nativity stanza, as Brooks and Hardy note, "sets up resistance to any rapid narrative drive. It tends to break up a narrative into separate segments, each relatively complete in itself."⁴⁷ Unlike the prosody of "Lycidas," the versification of the Nativity stanza provides a rigid pattern. Rhyme, meter, and stanzaic length establish clearly defined expectations, fulfilled

by the repetition of each stanzaic unit. In this sense, the Nativity stanza functions as any other regular stanza does, providing a regularity absent from the rhyme scheme and verse paragraphing of "Lycidas." The external pattern of "Lycidas" can only be defined through an examination of the whole poem, and even then it is the function of the prosody to under-determine external patterns, emphasizing the connections between larger movements.

Songs of the Springtides, published in 1880, contains four of Swinburne's adaptations of the Lycidas verse form. The first two poems of the volume, "Thalassius" and "On the Cliffs," are composed entirely in this meter. "The Garden of Cymodoce" is best described as a mixed ode, with verse paragraphs in the prosody of "Lycidas" alternating with a variety of fixed stanza forms and meters. The final poem in the volume, "Birthday Ode" (for Victor Hugo), is a full-blown, formal Pindaric tripartate ode, with regular stanzas, including a regularized version of the Lycidas verse paragraph, and the Nativity stanza.

The organization of Songs of the Springtides plays an important part in Swinburne's experiment. The prosodic and thematic relationships of these poems were evidently not recognized by Gosse and Wise, who in the Bonchurch edition printed the first three poems of Songs of the

Springtides along with the poems of Poems and Ballads: Third Series, and rearranged the order of the poems so that the "Dedication" of Poems and Ballads: Third Series becomes the "Epilogue" for all three volumes, following "The Garden of Cymodoce."⁴⁸ The incongruity of this placement is obvious, for the "Dedication" ("The years are many, the changes more . . .") is clearly a ballad, in no way suited to the high style nor to the themes of Songs of the Springtides. Furthermore, Gosse and Wise printed "Birthday Ode," along with its prefatory sonnet, in the following volume of Bonchurch, separating it from the other three odes, and altogether altering the highly formal original placement of the poems. Among other effects lost is that resulting from the position of the sonnet, "Between two seas the sea-bird's wing makes halt," printed in editions authorized by Swinburne on the page following "The Garden of Cymodoce" and preceding "Birthday Ode," but omitted by Gosse and Wise.⁴⁹ The sonnet, untitled, serves both as an introduction to "Birthday Ode" and as a transition between "Birthday Ode" and the three previous poems.

Each of the poems of Songs of the Springtides involves one of Swinburne's poetic mentors. The dedication to Trelawny alludes to Shelley and to the inspiration of his

"heavenlier song." In "Thalassius," Swinburne is nurtured by his foster-father, Walter Savage Landor. "On the Cliffs" centers on Swinburne's relationship to Sappho. Both "The Garden of Cymodoce" and "Birthday Ode" celebrate Victor Hugo.

In addition, these poems have in common the themes of spring and of the sea. "Thalassius" and "The Garden of Cymodoce" are set on the English Channel, "Thalassius" near Swinburne's childhood home on the Isle of Wight, and "The Garden of Cymodoce" around Sark, an English Channel Island. "On the Cliffs" describes a landscape on the North Sea, evidently in Northumbria, an area with which Swinburne had been familiar since childhood. The motif of spring also links these poems, especially "Thalassius," in which Swinburne's April birthday helps structure the narrative lines, and "Birthday Ode," in which the Anniversary Festival of Victor Hugo, February 26, is considered as a kind of "spring in winter."

Swinburne's choice of meter and form reinforces the thematic unity of the poems of Songs of the Springtides. Swinburne refers to the form in a description of "On the Cliffs" as the "irregular Italian metre of Lycidas."⁵⁰ Like many critics of the nineteenth century, Swinburne realized that the prosody of Lycidas was related to the

Italian meter of the canzone, popularized by Dante and widely practiced by Milton's Italian contemporaries.

The Italian background of the prosody of Milton's "Lycidas" has been studied by twentieth-century critics and requires some discussion here. However, one particularly interesting nineteenth-century analysis of the Lycidas form comes from Saintsbury, who observes that "Lycidas" is "in effect a piece of blank verse carefully equipped with rhyme, for the purpose, technically speaking, of providing it with a lyric vehicle."⁵¹ A very helpful interpretation of Saintsbury's comment can be found in Edward R. Weismiller's review of Milton's prosody A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton. Saintsbury's comment is sometimes understood to suggest that "Lycidas" is "equipped with rhyme" as if rhyme were mere ornamentation, but Weismiller interprets Saintsbury's description more carefully: "Saintsbury understood blank verse to be an inappropriate vehicle for lyric; he understood that Milton wished, nonetheless, in 'Lycidas,' to write lyric that could have the powerful and varied movement of blank verse."⁵³

Saintsbury hears in the Lycidas form a union of the blank verse paragraph and the "lyric vehicle" of rhyme. The prosodic license for such a meter has been traced by

F. T. Prince and others to the structure of the Italian canzone, the vernacular lyric inherited by Dante from his Provençal masters, and considered by him to be the highest lyric form.⁵⁴ The long line of the canzone is the Italian heroic line of eleven syllables, and Dante associates the canzone with epic form because in the canzone long lines far outnumber short lines.⁵⁵ Saintsbury's notion of the power of blank verse behind *Lycidas* suggests also that the verse form of "*Lycidas*" is a lyric counterpart to the blank verse of Milton's epic.

Dante's discussion of the canzone in De Vulgari Eloquentia is based both on his extensive experiments with the form and on the practices of the Provençal poets and their Italian followers.⁵⁶ De Vulgari examines the metrical and stanzaic form of the canzone and develops rules which define the basic patterns and arrangements possible within the boundaries of the form. Essentially, Dante's canzone consists of stanzas of two major parts, broken by a diesis. Each of these halves may then be further subdivided into two parts, and the first part of the stanza consists of a musical phrase called a pes which is repeated. After the repeated pedes comes the diesis, the transition to the second half of the stanza. The second half may also be subdivided; that is, it may

consist of a musical phrase called the volte, which is repeated. When the second half of the stanza does not consist of repeated phrases, it is called the sirma. The two halves of the stanza are usually linked by a device Dante calls a concatenatio pulcra, the rhyming of the first line after the diesis with the last line before the diesis. The stanza in Dante's canzone frequently ends in a couplet.

Dante's prescription for the canzone indicates that the form has achieved an important freedom from the lyric inventions of the Provençal poets. The sirma, or second half of the stanza, can be and often is liberated from the necessity of repetition. Indeed, Dante contemplates, though never illustrates, a canzone made up of two parts, a frons and a sirma, that contain no repeated parts, and are linked at the diesis by the concatenatio pulcra, or the linking of the two parts by a shared rhyme.

From this conception of a lyric stanza liberated from the necessity of repeated phrases, Milton devises his verse paragraph. As F. T. Prince points out, Milton's pattern of rhyme and rhetoric depends upon the divisions inherent in the canzone form.⁵⁷ Similarly, the abstract divisions in a sonnet are overridden by poets who can be sure that such a counterpoint can be heard by a reader

attuned to the formal pattern. Thus, according to Prince, "the most obvious feature which this method gives the poem is the failure of Milton's sentences to correspond to the pattern of rhymes; the ebb and flow of statement, the pauses and new departures, appear to be independent of any necessity of their own."⁵⁸ Milton is always aware of the principle of concatenatio pulcra, whereby the divisions of stanzas, or, for Milton, each new series of rhymes, are to be linked to the preceding series by a rhyme. Thus, rhyme serves as a device that connects elements in a verse paragraph freed from the repetition of metrical phrases, and it also serves as a transition, like Dante's diesis. The devices of rhyme, Prince points out, give the effect of looking backward and of looking forward.⁵⁹ The linking of a new series of rhymes through the key line, the diesis, carries the echo of the old series of rhymes and announces the transition to a new series. A similar effect, says Prince is created through the use of six-syllable lines, "placed so as to give a sense of expectation: they not only always rhyme with a previous longer line (thus looking back), but they give the impression of a contracted movement which must be compensated by a full movement in the next line (which is always of full length), and they thus look forward."⁶⁰

Milton's meter complies with Dante's prescriptions in a number of ways, but it should be noted that Milton weighs Dante's rules against his own English prosodic idiom. Like Dante, Milton begins each stanza or verse paragraph with a long line and rhymes short lines with a preceding long line. Milton's meter complies with Dante's prescription of a preponderance of long lines over short lines. But Milton follows the accepted English practice of avoiding lines of odd numbers of syllables suitable for Italian, with its tendency toward feminine or weak-stressed word endings. Like Spenser, Milton adapts the canzone line lengths of hendacasyllables and heptasyllables to line lengths of ten and six syllables. Milton's rhyming practices generally follow Dante's prescriptions or practices. Milton prefers to end his verse paragraph with a couplet, and he allows no more than two lines to come between rhymed lines. His use of unrhymed lines concurs with the practice of some late Renaissance practitioners, and even one of Dante's canzone contains unrhymed lines in fixed positions.⁶¹

Milton's adaptation of the canzone is not the first experiment with Italian prosody in English. William Drummond of Hawthorndon wrote a number of canzoni, closely following the prosody of his Italian models. Spenser's

"Epithalamion" and "Prothalamion" are both indebted to Italian metrical practices.⁶² But Milton's "Lycidas" differs from former adaptations in its prosodic license, and it exemplifies the process of adapting non-native forms into fully successful English counterparts. Thus, while Swinburne and others refer to the Italian sources for the prosody of "Lycidas," Saintsbury rightly observes that behind Milton's ten-syllable line and his verse paragraph lies the wholly English idiom of blank verse.

Swinburne, like Milton, takes full advantage of the canzone's metrical license. But Swinburne's primary model is clearly "Lycidas." Although he acknowledges the Italian sources of the meter, he strays from many of the accepted practices of the Italian form and adopts the basic Miltonic principles of the meter. The hendecasyllabic and heptasyllabic lines of Dante become ten and six syllable lines in both Milton and Swinburne. Both poets also see the meter as particularly suitable for long lyrics. But Swinburne's adaptation of the meter differs from some of Milton's practices. Swinburne's short lines do not always rhyme with preceding long lines, stanzas do not always end in couplets, nor is there a consistent underlying two-part pattern in Swinburne's verse paragraphs equivalent to the structures

F. T. Prince finds in "Lycidas." Nevertheless, Swinburne shares with Dante and Milton a sense of the basic advantage of a form that liberates the stanza from the repetition of metrical or "musical" phases while retaining a basic pattern of responsion through rhyme and the limited possibilities of line length. Milton's domestication of the form allows Swinburne to further explore a fundamental assumption made by Milton--that the Lycidas verse paragraph is the marriage of blank or heroic verse and lyric. The result is poetry in which the force of emotion and the dramatic overflow of that emotion are disciplined by the complex pattern of rhyme.

The tension between emotion and regularity in the Lycidas form provides a highly successful structure for two of Swinburne's most Romantic poems, "Thalassius" and "On the Cliffs." Of the two, "On the Cliffs" offers a more dramatic example of pattern emerging from irregularity in form and meaning simply because "Thalassius" is structured by an externally coherent narrative pattern. "On the Cliffs" is an interior monologue. Its Romantic types are the meditative poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge, but it is some senses more subject in tone and voice to the extreme vacillations of its narrator's mood and mind-play. The unity of voice Wordsworth and

Coleridge bring to their meditations has in part to do with the control they exercise as poets inextricably bound with their personas. The surface of "On the Cliffs" is much less rigorously unified. The tumult of the narrator's psyche functions on the mythopoetic level of the poem as the chaos out of which pattern can be fashioned. That this tumultuous psyche discovers structure in its own chaos is the paradox on which the poem as a poem about poetry turns. Song, the ultimate creative act, unifies without negating the multiplicity of experience. This respect for multiplicity determines both the formal and the psychological development of "On the Cliffs," where the irregular prosody and the randomness of the poet's psychic tumult are as essential to the creative act as the structure that underlies.

The "ebb and flow" characteristic of the Lycidas rhyme scheme is reflected not only in the prosodic structure and psychological tumult, but in the poet's physical movements. The narrative progress of the poem is in one sense wholly static. The poem begins with the poet turning his back on the sea in order to confront a foreboding landscape ("Fiercely the gaunt woods to the grim soil cling") and it ends with the poet in the same place, hearing Sappho's song, carried by the wind, "To enforce

us, O our sister of the shore,/Look once in heart back landward and adore." The line echoes Milton's phrase, "Look homeward Angel," as a reminder that resolution is at hand, and that it has been at hand since the beginning of the poem. In "Lycidas," reconciliation is achieved through the machinery of pastoral convention. Milton resolves the conflicts created by King's death through the formal structure of the pastoral elegy. Such a formal, schematic structure is absent in "On the Cliffs," where the sense of conflict is indistinguishable from the chaos and tumult of the poet's psyche and where reconciliation emerges directly out of this chaos. This feeling of structure and reconciliation latent throughout the poem gives "On the Cliffs" its power and defines it as Romantic meditation.

"On the Cliffs" owes much of its poetic structure to what Jerome McGann calls the "new organization of familiar materials."⁶³ This organization is reflected in the retrospective echoing of words and of rhetorical patterns, both within individual stanzas and throughout the poem as a whole. One of the most interesting guides to this echoing can be found in the interrelation of rhymes in the poem. What appears to be an irregular scheme when examined in relation to parts of the poem

becomes more regular and coherent when examined in relation to the whole poem. Anthony Wittreich's analysis of the rhyme scheme of "Lycidas" demonstrates much the same thing: the irregularity of the rhyme in terms of stanzaic scheme contributes to larger patterns and movements.⁶⁴ Milton uses rhyme to create an ebb and flow that both binds the stanzas to the whole of the poem and pushes the poem forward. As "Lycidas" progresses, the rhyme scheme becomes more regular, and at the same time the scheme repeats earlier rhymes, so that the whole of the poem seems to be pulled into the final stanzas of resolution. Swinburne's use of the irregular rhyme scheme resembles Milton's. Rhyme and repetition allow Swinburne to work through multiple meanings and associations of words: by the end of the poem words like "strife" and "life," which are repeated several times throughout the poem, and words like "might," which picks up a key rhyme, carry a resonance that unifies the poem and defines the psychic transformation of the narrator.

Thus, the prosody of "On the Cliffs" structures the poem on two levels: first, on the stanzaic level, where the seeming irregularity frees the poet to follow diverse allusions and trains of thought; and second, on the level of the poem as a whole where the seeming irregularity

allows pattern to emerge from the density of allusion and meditation, guiding rather than guided by the poet. Within stanzas, Swinburne develops complex rhetorical strategies that often emphasize the shapelessness of the poet's state of mind. In the third stanza, the key rhymes are found in two short lines, the first line of the stanza ("Nay, what far other word") and the twelfth ("Made keener of edge to smite"). The structure of the stanza depends upon the way rhymes link rhetorical elements and upon the repetition of the key words or rhymes. There is in this stanza a structure corresponding roughly to the bi-partite structure of the canzone. Lines one through ten consist of the first half, with no repetition of metrical phrasing, but with a repetition of rhetorical structure: "Nay, what far other word" and "What voice of what strong God." The first half of the stanza rhymes abbabbbacc. (The gap of three lines between the "a" rhymes of lines four and eight represents a major departure from Milton and Dante, who tend to rhyme lines closely. Milton, for instance, rarely allows more than two lines to come between rhymes.) The "a" rhyme of the stanza is carried over to the second half of the stanza, lines 11 through 28, where the rhyme scheme shifts, and the "d" rhyme on

"smite" is introduced. This second half begins again with a question, but the rhetorical and syntactical structure of the question is disrupted, and the effect of the anacoluthon in line thirteen is to turn the question into what seems at first to be a declaration:

What voice of God grown heavenlier in a bird,
 Made keener of edge to smite
 Than lightning--yea, thou knowest, O mother Night,
 Keen as that cry from thy strange children sent
 Wherewith the Athenian judgement-shrine was rent,
 For wrath that all their wrath was vainly spent,
 Their wrath for a wrong made right
 By justice in her own divine despite
 That bade pass forth unblamed
 The sinless matricide and unashamed?
(III, 312-13)

The pattern of questioning in the stanza has shifted from an attempt to identify the "word" or the "voice" to an invocation of "mother Night," who would have heard this voice. This digression seems, at first, to be fruitless, for "night makes answer none." But in fact the evocation of "mother Night" leads the poet to a recapitulation of Aeschylus's Eumenides, and to an oblique association of Apollo, through his attributes of "Lightning" and "Light," with the "bird" that has tentatively been identified as the source of song.

Aeschylus provides much of the mythic and literary material for the first half of "On the Cliffs." The

poet's cry to mother Night in the third stanza, echoing the Furies' vengeful song (Eumenides, ll.321-346), illustrates Swinburne's ability to mythologize his landscape on both the psychological and the literary levels. As the poet speaks to the mute landscape, he is reminded by the presence of Night of "that cry by thy strange children," a cry which he supposes nearly as "keen" as the voice for which he listens. The Furies' cry serves a double purpose for the poet. It introduces Apollo, who later becomes more explicitly linked to the nightengale and Sappho. It suggests, also, that the poet's cry to mother Night for a "word" born across the sea is misguided and in vain. For the poet, as for the Furies, "night makes answer none." The introduction of this analogy early in the poem suggests that the poet must undergo a kind of redemptive transformation similar to that of the Furies in The Eumenides. The poet's transformation occurs on the psychological plane and is a version of the Romantic search for reunification of the psyche.

The Orestian Trilogy appears in two other passages in the poem. Cassandra's wail in stanza eleven is drawn from Agamemnon and Cassandra herself serves as the foil for Sappho's more creative version of prophesy. Stanza

ten begins with an echo of Keats's words to his nightingale: ("Thou wast not born for death"):

We were not marked for sorrow, thou nor I,
For joy nor sorrow, sister, were we made,
To take delight and grief to live and die.
(III,315)

Instead, Sappho and the poet possess "A soul behind the soul," an imaginative power that dominates ("And makes our life move only with its wings"), gives sustenance, and in turn feeds from their hearts. This domination, the poet bleakly observes, seems to offer no escape from "our doom." The word "doom" leads the poet to Cassandra's cry ("Ah, ah, the doom"), and to Cassandra's image of the domination of the "great gods" over Philomela's "wing-borne body" and over Cassandra herself. The layering of this literary allusion is complex. Cassandra, in Agamemnon, compares her own "doom" to that of Philomela, whom the gods rewarded with "a sweet life that hath no part in moan." The identification of Sappho with a nightingale, already established in stanza five, suggests that her "doom" resembles Philomela's rather than Cassandra's. But stanza thirteen makes it clear that Sappho's relation to the gods and their "blessing" of her is more reciprocal than either Cassandra's or Philomela's. The gods reward Sappho for her "service" and reward her

all the more that, "errant on dark ways diverse," she must be forgiven more.

This stanza provides an interesting counterpart to Milton's discussion of "fame" in "Lycidas" (ll.64-84). Swinburne's use of words "guerdon" and "meed" echoes the language of "Lycidas," and the elegiac nature of the stanza reinforces the allusion. Milton distinguishes between the transitory, earthly "fair guerdon" to which men aspire and the purer "meed" of an "all-judging Jove," whose praise outlasts death. Sappho's "guerdon stranger" presumes a similar distinction, for her reward entails a kind of immortality denied Cassandra. But the nature of this immortality does not immediately strike the poet as positive. Whether the gods's gift is a "blessing and no curse" becomes an important issue in the poem and is developed obliquely in the next stanza, which again echoes the most haunting and displaced of Aeschylus's immortals--the Furies, whose frenzied song in lines 306-390 of The Eumenides ritualizes the pain and terror that defines their vengeance.

The structure of stanza fourteen offers a kind of choral interlude that suggests the underlying regularity of the rest of the poem. The stanza can be broken down into three parts: a "proem" quatrain in envelope form; a

body of fifteen lines consisting of a triplet and six couplets; and a "reprise" envelope quatrain, with the end words of the "proem" repeated and inverted. The repetition of structures, the effect of the inversion and modification of the final "reprise" quatrain, and the tightness of the rhyme scheme produce a kind of ritualized chant. The movement from the first envelope quatrain to the final quatrain is circular, defined by repetition and rhyme. The envelope quatrains also function as an envelope frame for the entire stanza. Within this frame, the stanza becomes less regular prosodically. For the most part, lines run in couplets. Two short lines in the stanza determine the prosodic variety. The first is the final line of a triplet:

O thou past praise and pity; thou the sole
Utterly deathless, perfect only and whole
Immortal, body and soul.

(III,317)

These lines are interesting in the development of the stanza, for they introduce in a declamatory mode the issue of Sappho's immortality. Once asserted, the idea of immortality raises a problem central to the stanza and to the poet: does Sappho's immortality remove her from time and nature? The stanza offers as a resolution the paradox of a kind of immortality that overcomes time:

been transformed through the poem. For instance, the first line of the final stanza, "Song and the secrets of it, and their might," echoes rhymes on "smite" in the third stanza:

What word is this thou hast heard,
 Thine and not thine or theirs, O Night, what word
 More keen than lightning and more sweet than
 light?
 As all men's hearts grew godlike in one bird
 And all those hearts cried on thee, crying with
 might,
 Hear us, O mother Night.

(III,313)

These lines follow an exposition of The Eumenides, and the poet's cry to "mother Night" echoes the futile cries of the Furies, who are ultimately defeated by Apollo. The contrast between the word "might" in stanza three and the word as it is used in the final stanza illustrates a movement toward a unified sensibility. The negative, futile "might" of the Furies' cry is transformed into the positive "might" of Sappho's song. Simply put, the poet has transformed the disorganized, dispairing "cry" of the Furies into the organized, cosmic song of Apollo.

The final two lines of the poem also pick up a pair of important words that are coupled in stanzas five, seven, and nineteen. These words are carefully worked through the context of the poem, and their transformation

is relatively easy to follow. In stanza five, "life" and "strife" refer to the poet's confusion and psychic disorder: "unmanned with strife/Of waves that beat at the tired lips of life." (III,314) The erotic landscape of the sea in which the poet's soul "swam" is wholly negative, suggesting a bleak and disunifying version of life in death. The second pairing of the words is also negative, but here the context is the poet's attempt to project his own misunderstanding of his isolation on to what he presumes is his kinship with Sappho:

. . . yet can no memory say
 How many a night and day
 My heart has been as thy heart, and my life
 As thy life is, a sleepless hidden thing,
 Full of the thirst and hunger of winter and spring
 That seeks its food not in such love or strife
 As fills men's hearts with passionate hours
 and rest.

(III,314)

In stanza nineteen, the context becomes more positive, although the word "strife" occurs as part of a negative example of Sappho's universal song: "No healing hymn of peace-prevented strife,--/This is her song of life." (III,321) "Strife" seems here to be opposed to "life." However, this particular "strife" is negative in that it is not a full and vibrant "strife," but "peace-prevented," forestalled and crippled, like the Northern "heart of

love afraid." The final coupling of "life" and "strife" at the end of the poem resolves a central dilemma: "in thine heart where love and song make strife,/Fire everlasting of eternal life." (III,325) Sappho is not the victim of "strife" as Cassandra was the victim of the god's "intolerant net." Nor does Sappho repress the tumult of experience. "Where love and song make strife" might seem like a careless inversion, because "song" might be more aptly thought to be the harmony that comes out of "strife." But, as John Rosenberg explains in his introduction to the selected poetry, these reversals are not mere play.⁶⁵ They propose alternatives for experiential relationships that are necessarily ambiguous. Thus, Sappho's "strife" is not the uncontrolled flux of a chaotic universe, but the product of her creation. Part of the ambiguity of the line lies in the words "make strife," which can be read as either verb and object or as a verbal. Either way, the point is that "love," "song," and "strife" are interdependent. The material that makes up song and song itself are not oppositions, nor is "strife" negated or averted by "love and song."

It is this inclusive sense of relationships that Jerome McGann sees as "Swinburne's ideal of full human awareness." Through such a perception of the universe,

"the world comes not as something to be possessed, mastered, or used but as a vitality one is to be possessed by."⁶⁶ The theme of vatic "possession" has great relevance to the work of Sappho and suggests, as McGann points out, an idea "recurrent in all symbolist art"⁶⁷: a heightened receptivity that is essentially passive. Thus, the poet who at the beginning of the poem turned toward the forbidding landscape of the shore learns by the end of the poem the wisdom to "Look once in heart back landward and adore."

The poems discussed in this chapter are adaptations of two very different Renaissance lyric forms. The Nativity stanza is an intricate, fixed, stylized verse form. Any poem in the Nativity stanza achieves symmetry or regularity not only through repetition of the stanza but also through the balance created by rhyme and line length within the stanza. The verse form of "Lycidas," on the other hand, is metrical, but neither fixed nor "regular" in terms of its stanzaic pattern. The principles of versification governing the Lycidas verse paragraph free the lyric elements from certain rigidities of pattern and repetition without sacrificing the lyric vehicle of rhyme. Clearly, one advantage of the Lycidas form is that it is suited to long poems. Indeed,

Swinburne's poems in this form, "Thalassius" and "On the Cliffs," are much longer than "Lycidas." Swinburne is less successful with the form in "The Garden of Cymodoce" and "Birthday Ode," where the sweep of the prosody is broken by shifts in the meter or stanzaic pattern. Length alone provides sufficient space for the complex rhyme scheme to develop resonance, or what Weismiller calls "a constellation of effects which appeal only secondarily to the identifying intellect."⁶⁸

Swinburne seems to find the Lycidas form useful for a kind of Romantic meditation related to Coleridge's Conversation poems, which range in tone from informal, leisurely, "conversational" periods to climactic formal invocations. In "On the Cliffs," Swinburne takes advantage of the flexibility of the prosody of "Lycidas" and of its capacity for complex syntax, lengthy sentences, and anacoluthon. The irregular rhyme and convoluted syntax reflect a psychic tumult and groping that directs the poem's development. Modern critics often speak of Milton's "Lycidas" as a poem seeking form and discipline; they note a tendency to regularized rhyme and line length towards the end of the poem.⁶⁹ Similarly, Swinburne's "Thalassius" ends in a fifteen-line stanza of rhyming couplets with very balanced rhetorical and syntactic

patterns. The final stanza or verse paragraph of "On the Cliffs" is more regularly rhymed than the rest of the poem, and there are no short lines and few enjambments.

The versification of the "Nativity Ode" and that of "Lycidas" have in common one aim: to provide lofty themes or subjects with verse structures appropriate to the English tradition of the sublime lyric. The "Nativity Ode" transforms elements of the medieval vernacular religious lyric into sublime "hymnody," preserving the simplicity and austerity of the Middle English religious lyric, but elevating the form through associations with the high style of the Renaissance lyric. The verse form of "Lycidas" transforms Dante's conception of high style lyric into an English odic form, preserving the strong connections between the canzone form and heroic verse. One aspect of "Lycidas" noted by Wittreich is the elevation of the pastoral mode from its traditional position as rustic or low style to a high style:

Milton allows pastoral to climb the ladder of genres, assimilating to itself various lyric forms like elegy, canzone and madrigal, and various dramatic perspectives like tragedy, comedy, and satire, achieving dimensions that are epical and strains that are prophetic. Forms within forms, visions within visions, each mediating the others, "Lycidas" achieves what has recently been credited to Coleridge: the extension of the pastoral to its outermost bound.⁷⁰

"Lycidas" is not the first pastoral poem to claim the high style. Vergil's fourth eclogue, known as the "messianic" eclogue, proposed a "high" style pastoral, and this greatly influenced poems like the "Nativity Ode" and Renaissance attitudes toward the pastoral. Moreover, certain pastoral commonplaces found their way into religious poetry, a process facilitated by the association of Christ with the shepherd. Milton's experiments with the pastoral come at the end of the Elizabethan era, the culmination in England of the Renaissance fervor for creating dignified vernacular forms. The English odic tradition can scarcely be separated from the rise of Protestant sensibilities during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from the burgeoning demand for a new Protestant religious poetry. The Renaissance sensibility encouraged poets to develop forms that rivaled those of the ancients. Milton, like many of his Renaissance predecessors, found that biblical models like David's psalms and classical models like the odes of Pindar and Horace served to inspire rather than to dictate. This Renaissance sensibility is nowhere more evident than in Milton's versification. The prosodic and metrical materials from which Milton constructs his lyric forms are eclectic, and his choice is governed by Renaissance ideals of variety and innovation in the service of the vernacular.

When Swinburne borrows Milton's lyric forms, he continues the well-established Romantic tradition of rediscovering English prosody through the heritage of the Renaissance. Blake's lyrics, Wordsworth's sonnets and irregular odes, Coleridge's irregular ballad form in "The Ryme of the Ancient Mariner," Keats's adaptation of the sonnet in his odes and his prosodic borrowings from Spenser--all draw upon some development of the Renaissance.

But Swinburne's use of Milton's lyric forms has a special resonance. Swinburne affirms the vitality of the English lyric tradition by borrowing from a poet whose lyrics are historical commentaries on the Renaissance lyric tradition, for Milton stands in relation to the Renaissance as Swinburne stands in relation to the age of Romanticism. Just as Milton distills new forms from late English Renaissance experiments with forms of the late Middle Ages, so Swinburne distills his from Milton's. By examining Romantic themes through Milton's pre-Romantic verse forms, Swinburne offers unique perspective on Romanticism. The tension between the history of the form and the history of themes creates a certain authenticity, a way of objectifying and unifying Romantic themes by throwing these themes in relief against antecedent forms.

NOTES

¹ Raymond Dexter Havens, The Influence of Milton in English Poetry (New York, 1961), p. 565.

² "Coleridge," Bonchurch, XV, 141.

³ The Swinburne Letters, IV, 106.

⁴ John Walter Good, Studies in the Milton Tradition (New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1967), p. 146 et. seq.

⁵ Ibid., p. 159.

⁶ Arnold Stein, "On the Criticism of Milton" in On Milton's Poetry, ed. Arnold Stein (Greenwich Conn.: Fawcett, 1979), p. 8.

⁷ Samuel Johnson, Samuel Johnson's Literary Criticism, ed., R. D. Stock (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1974), p. 228.

⁸ Samuel T. Coleridge, Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century, ed. Roberta Florence Brinkley (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 578.

⁹ Good, p. 19.

¹⁰ Quoted in Stein, p. 7.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 8.

¹² Coleridge, p. 587.

¹³ "Byron", Bonchurch, XV, 125.

¹⁴ Robert L. Peters, The Crowns of Apollo (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), p. 156. See also Thomas Connolly, Swinburne's Theory of Poetry, (Albany: State University of New York, 1964), p. 68.

¹⁵ "Matthew Arnold's New Poems," Bonchurch, XV, 99.

¹⁶ "Collins", Bonchurch, XIV, 152-153.

17 E. M. W. Tillyard, Milton, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), p. 31.

18 Havens, p. 565.

19 William Blake, Poetry and Prose, ed. David V. Erdman, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970), p. 60.

20 Good, p. 239.

21 F. T. Prince, The Italian Element in Milton's Verse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 60-61.

22 Carol Maddison, Apollo and the Nine: A History of the Ode (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), p. 321.

23 George Saintsbury, A History of English Prosody, II, 210.

24 George Saintsbury, Historical Manual of English Prosody (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 329.

25 Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. "A Poet Amongst Poets," Milton and the Line of Vision, ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), p. 113.

26 John Milton, The Complete Poetry, ed. John Shawcross (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), p. 252.

27 Ibid., p. 72

28 David G. Riede, Swinburne: A Study of Romantic Mythmaking (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 110.

29 Louis L. Martz, Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton's Poetry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 55.

30 Rosemary Woolf, The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 118.

31 Ibid., p. 114.

32 Ibid., p. 240.

- 33 Saintsbury, A History of English Prosody, II, 210.
- 34 John Milton, The Poems of Mr. John Milton; the 1645 Edition, with Essays and Analysis, ed. by Cleanth Brooks and John Edward Hardy. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951), p. 104.
- 35 Woolf, p. 154.
- 36 Curtius, p. 84.
- 37 II Corinthians, 12.10, and Ephesians, 6.17.
- 38 C. A. Patrides, Milton and the Christian Tradition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 258.
- 39 Christopher Hill, Milton and the English Revolution (New York: Viking Press, 1977), p. 460.
- 40 Havens, p. 569.
- 41 The Swinburne Letters, I, 28.
- 42 Richard D. Altick, "Four Victorian Poets and an Exploding Island," Victorian Poets, III, No. 3 (March, 1960), p. 256.
- 43 Saint Andrew's Day is either the first fixed feast of Advent or the last of the liturgical year. In 1883, Advent Sunday fell on December 2.
- 44 Altick, p. 250.
- 45 Ibid., p. 259.
- 46 I am grateful to George M. Ridenour for pointing out to me the significance of Advent imagery in this passage.
- 47 Brooks and Hardy, eds., Poems of Mr. John Milton, p. 104.
- 48 Bonchurch, III, 331.
- 49 See especially the Chatto & Windus edition, Vol. III, p. 339.

- 50 The Swinburne Letters, IV, 109.
- 51 Saintsbury, A History Of English Prosody, p. 222.
- 52 Edward R. Weismuller, "Studies of Verse Form in the Minor English Poems," A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), Vol. II, Part Three, p. 1069.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Prince, p. 72-73.
- 55 Dante Alighieri, The Odes of Dante, trans. with an introduction by H. S. Vere-Hodge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 2.
- 56 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
- 57 Prince, pp. 84-85.
- 58 Ibid., p. 85.
- 59 Ibid., p. 87.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Shuster, p. 26.
- 63 McGann, p. 166.
- 64 Wittreich, p. 114.
- 65 Algernon Charles Swinburne, Selected Poetry and Prose, ed. John D. Rosenberg (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. ix-x.
- 66 McGann, p. 164.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Weismuller, p. 1067.
- 69 See especially Weitttrich, p. 114.
- 70 Ibid., p. 115.

CHAPTER III

THE ROMANTIC REVISIONS

Ione. Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?

Panthea. 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air
Aeolian modulation.

- Shelley

The "pastiches" and the Miltonic imitations discussed in chapters one and two are direct imitations of Renaissance forms, sometimes incorporating distinctly Romantic themes, but always formally invoking the Renaissance through the versification. Not all of Swinburne's revisions of Renaissance forms are direct imitations, however. Sometimes he approaches Renaissance lyric forms through the meditation of Romantic poets. That is, he adapts Romantic lyric forms that are themselves adaptations of Renaissance forms. This chapter examines three such adaptations--"To a Seamew," "By the North Sea," and "A Vision of Spring in Winter"--and Swinburne's use of some Renaissance roots of Romantic ode-making.

Among Romantic revisions of Renaissance forms are two revolutionary experiments in odes: Shelley's adaption of terza-rima in "Ode to the West Wind" and Keats's adaption of the sonnet for his ode stanza. Shelley uses an Italian fixed form, radically altered and domesticated but still distinctive, to create a brief, impassioned Romantic nature ode. Swinburne also borrows a fixed form--the French "triolet"--and creates his own fixed-form amalgam in "To a Seamew," one of several triolet-like adaptations. More elusive are the formal roots of "By the North Sea," which adapts a stanza developed by Praed and Byron from early comic meters and which is built loosely on the idea of a triadic ode. The most explicit revision of a Romantic ode with Renaissance roots is "A Vision of Spring in Winter," Swinburne's adaptation of Keats's ode stanza.

Swinburne brings a rich perspective to the Romantic revival of Renaissance lyric tradition. Romantic poets (including pre-Romantics like Collins and Grey) looked to the Renaissance lyric as an authority that justified their rebellion against the prosodic and poetic norms of the eighteenth century. But Swinburne and other Victorian poets were in a sense liberated from eighteenth-century neo-classicism by the Romantic revolt, and thus freed from the need to assert Romantic poetic principles as

principles. Victorian poets inherited from the Romantic revival certain important assumptions: that the lyric is a legitimate vehicle for sublime poetry; that the lyric affords both variety and subjectivity, affirming the supremacy of creativity and imagination over imitation; and that poetry itself is freed from the eighteenth-century passion for syllabic regularity.

Of course, Victorian poets were caught up in reactions to Romanticism itself. But of all the major Victorian poets, Swinburne seems most at ease with the Romantic search for a unified cosmos in and through nature. Arnold, Tennyson, and Browning, however imbued with Romantic sensibility, found themselves drawn to themes and forms that particularize man's confrontation with a fragmented universe. Still at odds with rationalism, they were nevertheless anxious that the confrontation not dissipate poetic authority. Browning, for instance, turned to the dramatic monologue as a way of distancing the poetic voice from the confrontation, thereby heightening the authority of the poetic statement without committing himself to bald didactic observation.¹

Swinburne also uses dramatic monologue, but less as a staple device to avoid the problems of poetic authority than as one of many approaches to the lyric.

Swinburne embraces Romanticism at least in part because it is a fundamental and immediate link to the continuous and varied lyric tradition that stretches back through the Renaissance to the lyric poets of ancient Greece. The question of poetic authority, which so preoccupied Browning, Tennyson, and Arnold, is resolved by Swinburne in the very acceptance of this poetic tradition, a tradition that is essentially orphic, yet one that exalts the individual voice.

Swinburne's sense of the English Renaissance is never particularly well defined in his criticism, beyond encomiums on Renaissance poets and dramatists; in fact, his attraction to both Romantic and Renaissance poets seems bound up in his brand of hero worship. His impatience with the argument that art is time-bound reveals not only his belief that the individual poet is supreme but that poetry is the union, not the battleground, of the past and the present:

All times and places are one to her; the stuff
she deals with is eternal, and eternally the
same; no time or theme is inapt for her, no
past or present preferable. ²

Instead, Swinburne speaks of poetic ages only insofar as they encompass great poets: the "first great age of

English lyric poetry"³ extends from Lyly to Herrick, and includes Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the brilliant sacred and secular lyric poets of the seventeenth century. It is particularly the age of "song." Even Jonson's ambitious Pindaric ode, Swinburne argues, cannot compare to the purity of the less pretentious song in which the Elizabethan age excelled. As for Jonson's other lyrics, they pale in comparison with the lyric poetry of the age:

What they want is that magic without which the very best verse is as far beneath the very best prose as the verse which has it is above all prose that ever was or ever can be written. And there never was a generation of Englishmen in which this magic was a gift so common as it was in Jonson's. We have but to open either of the priceless volumes which we owe to the exquisite taste and the untiring devotion of Mr. Bullen, and we shall come upon scores after scores of 'lyrics from Elizabethan songbooks' as far beyond comparison with Shirley, as Milton is beyond comparison with Glover, or as Coleridge is beyond comparison with Southey. ⁴

For Swinburne, the Elizabethan era and the age of Romanticism are distinguished by the musicality of their lyric poetry. Other periods bred fine lyric poets and songwriters--the eighteenth century produced Collins, the Restoration, Aphra Behn, and Dryden--but the Renaissance and the Romantic period are the two great ages of English lyric poetry.

The Renaissance and Romanticism also have in common what Pater calls "the Hellenic element,"⁵ a celebration of the art and literature of Greece that, for Pater, is the essence of the Renaissance. (So strong is the link between the Hellenism of the Renaissance and that of the Romantic era that Pater concludes The Renaissance with a chapter on Winkelmann, an eighteenth-century precursor of Goethe and the Romanticism of the Continent, whose Hellenism marks him as "the last fruit of the Renaissance."⁶) For Swinburne, too, the Greek example, in lyric and drama, is central.

The example of Pindar's odes helped the Renaissance define the high-style or sublime lyric. Ronsard modeled his odes on the idea, if not the practice, of Pindar's triadic structure. But with the Romantic movement came a new understanding of sublime. Whereas seventeenth and early eighteenth-century poets and aestheticians identified sublimity as the property either of rhetoric or of things, the Romantic era began to see sublimity as part of the visionary process. David B. Morris, in The Religious Sublime, finds that this new focus on perception leads to the development of the "egotistical sublime" in Romantic poetry.⁷ Burke defines the sublime as that which can "excite the ideas of pain and danger."

He thus effectively shifts the focus from the objective to the psychological. Central to this new approach is the role of perception in art and aesthetics. The most forceful position on perception and sublimity is Kant's. Arguing that beauty and sublimity differ insofar as the former resides in the object and the latter in the mind, Kant justifies the association of the sublime with the infinitude suggested by nature and objects in nature by finding the capacity to judge infinitude within the mind:

Sublimity . . . does not reside in anything of nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious that we are superior to nature within, and therefore also to nature without us. . . . Everything that excites this feeling in us, e.g. the might of nature which calls forth our forces, is called then (although improperly) sublime. ⁸

The Romantic era established the visionary poem as the great vehicle for the sublime, according to Morris, and Romantic poets placed the religious tradition in poetry into the service of a theory of aesthetics. This use of tradition is paradigmatic of Romantic mythopoesis. The perceiving mind creates its own myths, announcing them in the language and forms of the myths they supplant.

Swinburne's conception of sublime lyric poetry is derived from such Romantic principles and is heavily dependent on Romantic poetics. Two propositions are

essential to Swinburne's poetics. First, truly sublime poetry⁹ has nature as its subject and as its arena. The greatest poets "feed upon nature with a holy hunger, follow her with a divine lust." Nature, however indifferent, gives the sublime poet "no less of sensual pleasure than of spiritual sustenance."¹⁰ Like the seamew, the poet knows nature as an inexhaustible source of power:

For you the storm sounds only
More notes of more delight
Than earth's in sunniest weather.
(III, 212)

The second proposition has to do with the music of poetry. Thomas Connolly and Robert Peters have argued persuasively that Swinburne conceives of two types of music in poetry: an "outer" music, characterized by attention to the formal devices of poetry, and an "inner" music, which depends on consonance with the divine harmonies of nature.¹¹ Connolly and Peters point out that this "inner" music outranks "outer" music, although Swinburne adheres rigidly to certain formal standards that shape external form. His commitment to rhyme in lyric poetry wavers when he considers Whitman's free verse; as Peters notes, Swinburne finally "dissociated himself from the scrollists and pedants who insisted on

Also reflected in Swinburne's poetry is the Romantic return to a Renaissance ideal: the indivisibility of verse and music. During the English Renaissance, this ideal came closest to realization in the Elizabethan lyric song. But as John Hollander notes, the union of verse and music is for all practical purposes an unattainable ideal even for Renaissance poets. According to George Shuster, the Romantics found a way of accommodating the post-lapsarian rupture between verse and music: "Instinctively, the poet and the theorist arrived at the conclusion that language must attempt to absorb some of the functions of music" ¹³ The notion of the "music of poetry" arises from the autonomy of lyric poetry from song that developed in the Renaissance. The pre-Romantics were the first to theorize on this development, and the Romantic poets, especially Shelley, were the first to practice versification as if it could subsume music, or at least provide a "music" of its own. ¹⁴

The Romantic idea of the musicality of verse transformed English versification not so much in form as in the relative weight accorded sense and sound. Hollander observes that where words and sound conflict, neo-classical sensibilities emphasize sense or meaning over sound. Neo-classicism sets up a division between sound

and sense that denies music anything other than a supporting role. Romanticism, on the other hand, asserts a kind of balance, which the neo-classicist would view as the exaltation of music at the expense of "meaning."¹⁵ The Romantic argument, at the heart of Swinburne's equation of song with poetry, is that poetic meaning and musicality are not exclusive of each other. Poetry in which sound is subservient to sense excludes the irrational element of lyric expression, that power of verbal music and incantation so forceful in a poem like Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind."¹⁶

The notion that music is ultimately non-representational--and like its complement, silence, inherently sublime--is central to both "By the North Sea" and "To a Seamew." Song in these poems has its place in human intercourse. But its origins are apart from man. "To a Seamew," as we will see, suggests that these origins lie in a version of silence, the "songless measures" of the seamew's flight.

I

"To a Seamew" is Swinburne's counterpart to Shelley's ode "To a Skylark." Written in 1886, six years after the composition of "By the North Sea," "To a Seamew" is one of Swinburne's most compressed and lyrical statements on poetry and nature. It also takes up the complex subject of music and sound in nature. Like much of Swinburne's nature poetry, "To a Seamew" addresses aesthetic and moral issues: the seamew embodies notions of freedom and infinitude. While human participation in nature is limited, we can at least imagine a unified nature and therefore can in some ways emulate the seamew. One way is through nature's cyclical return, expressed in the first stanza as a kind of racial memory:

When I had wings, my brother,
 Such wings were mine as thine:
 Such life my heart remembers
 In all as wild Septembers
 As this when life seems other,
 Though sweet than once was mine;
 When I had wings, my brother,
 Such wings were mine as thine.
 (III, 211)

The "outer" music of "To a Seamew" reflects this cyclical return. The stanza is a free adaptation of the triolet, a French form, usually in tetrameters, built on

two rhymes, with the first line repeated at lines four and seven, and the second line repeated at line eight. Swinburne's adaptation is in trimeters, on three rhymes, and it lacks the repetition of the first line at line four. Even more than in other French fixed forms--the rondel or the ballade, for instance--repetition gives the triolet stanza rigid boundaries and creates a reflexive "cyclical" structure.

Swinburne's first "triolet" variation is "A Match," one of a number of poems in Poems and Ballads: First Series using eight-line trimeter stanzas. The other eight-line trimeter poems in this volume (among them, "Rococo" and "The Garden of Proserpine") contain no repeated lines. The trimeter octave, although relatively rare in English, appears during the English Renaissance in the sonnets and songs of Wyatt, Surrey, and Sidney. Later examples include a song from Dryden's "Spanish Fryar" ("Farewell ungratefull Traytor"), Keats's "Stanzas" ("In a drear-nighted December"), and Shelley's "The Indian Serenade." Of these models, the most important for Swinburne in terms of prosody are Dryden's song and Shelley's extravagant, tuneful, and very Renaissance serenade.

The eight-line trimeter stanza is so simple and lucid that it seems to be able to sustain a wide variety of prosodic styles. Shelley and Swinburne bring to the stanza a Romantic conception of the musicality of verse. Swinburne merges the stanza with the circular triolet structure; Shelley's musicality is less dependant on the stanzaic unit. His prosody, heavily equivalenced and varied, infuses the potentially monotonous iambic trimeter lines with sudden urgency, as in the truncation and hypercatalexis of the final two lines of the second stanza:

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream--
The Champake odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart;--
As I must on thine,
Oh, beloved as thou art! 17

Shelley's prosody differs markedly from the regular measures of Sidney and Dryden, both of whom use feminine endings in alternate lines as the primary device for avoiding a monotonous run of iambic trimeter lines. Dryden's stanza runs on three rhymes, as do Shelley's and Swinburne's stanzas. Dryden uses the stanza for a brief, melodramatic complaint:

Farewell ungratefull Traytor,
 Farewell my perjur'd Swain,
 Let never injur'd Creature
 Believe a Man again.
 The Pleasure of Possessing
 Surpasses all expressing,
 But 'tis too short a Blessing,
 And Love too long a Pain. 18

The stanza, especially with the feminine rhymes of the tercet (lines five through seven), exemplifies what Mark Van Doren calls poetry of "lively languor,"¹⁹ simple, graceful, and decorous. Like many of Dryden's other poems, this song was set to music by Purcell.

The musicality of Dryden's lyric lies not in the richness and complexity of the prosody but in a transparency that is the hallmark of Elizabethan song. Dryden's ostensible model is Shakespearean song, but in Dryden's stanza the passion for regularity dominates. Shelley's stanza, on the other hand, illustrates the Romantic absorption of the irrational element of music into the texture of the prosody. Shelley's lines are heavily equivalenced and truncated; there are no feminine endings to soften the endlines; and Shelley makes careful use of inversion and hovering accent in the fourth and eighth lines. The result is a highly "musical" stanza, but musical in a sense that would have been foreign to Dryden.

The prosody of Shelley's stanza itself conveys an underlying musical texture. In the stanza quoted above, for instance, Shelley manipulates the meter to create something like a shift in key:

It dies upon her heart,-
As I must on thine,
Oh, belov'd as thou art!

(III, 294)

The drama of Shelley's poem exists primarily in the extravagant expression and self-indulgence of the speaker's voice. But the prosody creates another dramatic effect in that by becoming increasingly irregular, it mirrors the speaker's increasing passion. The first stanza is the most regular metrically. All lines but the seventh consist of iambic base with anapestic substitution in the initial foot. The second stanza is more varied in its substitution and its use of hovering accent. The third stanza includes pure iambic lines, lines with initial anapestic substitution, and two hyper-metrical lines. Thus, the initial stanza provides a regular, stable pattern against which the increasing irregularity of the following stanzas is counterposed. This use of prosody to create an initial, rigid pattern, similar to the abstract pattern of the underlying meter itself, allows for a great deal of expressiveness.

Although Swinburne's stanza seems in some ways to return to the regularity and "languor" of Dryden's song, the languor of the prosody becomes an essential part of the musicality of the poem. Like much of Swinburne's prosody, the prosody of "To a Seamew" flirts with monotony. Shelley's prosody fights the iambic base meter of the trimeter lines. Word accent frequently competes with metrical accent, and the short trimeter lines are highly sensitive to equivalence, especially when they lack feminine endings that extend the line. Swinburne, however, uses the iambic base meter to speed the verse, and feminine endings in all but the second, sixth, and eighth lines give them a lingering, echoing effect. The feminine endings and rich rhymes also shape the units of the stanza:

Thy cry from windward clanging
 Makes all the cliffs rejoice;
 Though storm clothe seas with sorrow,
 Thy call salutes the morrow;
 While shades of pain seem hanging
 Round earth's most rapturous voice,
 Thy cry from windward clanging
 Makes all the cliffs rejoice.
 (III, 211)

The stanzaic structure is marked by the pattern of alternate masculine and feminine endings, by the rhyming couplet of lines three and four, and by the envelope

created through the repetition at the end of the stanza of the initial two lines.

Within this simple, rigidly structured pattern, Swinburne uses prosody in an attempt to "musicalize" the verse. There are two distinct tensions in the versification. The first is the conventional tension between rhythm and meter. The second is the tension between what Saintsbury calls Swinburne's "cadences" and the stanzaic pattern.²⁰ That is, the flowing rhythm of Swinburne's line works along with sound combinations, alliteration, and sentence patterns to produce a rush of verse that is constrained by the boundaries of the stanzaic structure.

Swinburne's "cadence" is a studied, stylized version of Shelley. In "Ode to the West Wind," the verse, like the energy and brute force of the wind, rushes toward an affirmation of the poetic imagination:

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
(II, 297)

The tumult of the verse creates its own energy and its own emotional context, affective and essentially irrational, a context within which the imagination can overcome cyclical nature. Likewise, the prosody overcomes

the restraints of the stanzaic pattern, not only through frequent enjambment (Saintsbury points out that Shelley's habit of overrunning the Dantean tercet in Prince Athanase as in "Ode to the West Wind," is antithetical to Dante's conception of the the tercet as "integral"²¹), but also through the judicious use of substitution, inversion, and compensation, as in the opening lines:

O Wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driving, like ghosts from an enchanter
fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence--stricken multitudes
(II, 294)

The third and fourth lines illustrate the varied rhythm that drives the verse, first through the rapidity created by the use of unstressed syllables, then through the falling effect of initial trochees in the pounding iambic line.

There is an undeniable sensuality to Shelley's prosody, an adulation of sound for its own sake. However much the sound of the verse may contribute to the "matter" of "Ode to the West Wind," however apt the hypnotic rhythm in a poem that presents itself as a hymn, the extravagance of the sound creates an aesthetic value apart from semantic meaning. This irrational element in

Shelley's poetry, the indulgence in sound and rhythm and the melodious texture of the verse, is in some senses a hallmark of Romantic verse. Sound--that is, the "music" of the verse--predominates. The equation of poetry with music is common in Romantic poetry. As M. H. Abrams points out, the abstract or "non-representative" quality of music means that it is the "pure . . . expression of spirit and feeling."²² Shelley, like Keats, Coleridge, and, to some extent, all Romantics, attempts to regain for verse the union with music that is lost, in a very real sense, to all English poetry, but which periods of "revival" in the English poetic tradition have sought to regain. The great exemplar of mellifluous verse is Milton, who continues the Italianate line of Spenser. For Shelley, the line of Spenser and Milton provides the rich, poetic diction, the melodic resonance of a Grand Style, and the prosodic variety created by equivalence and feminine syllables that Swinburne hears as Milton's "sublimity of sound."

Swinburne's triolet variation stylizes this irrational element by using the rich rhyme and repetition of a French stanza form. In "To a Seamew," the triolet-like repetition is highly musical. Swinburne regularizes the expressive, deliberately ragged prosodic devices of

Shelley without sacrificing the variety. More leisurely than Shelley's Indian singer, the voice in "To a Seamew" is also more incantatory, more lilting, more rhapsodic. Swinburne's ability to turn poetry into a kind of chant is evident even in the short trimeter lines of "To a Seamew":

The lark knows no such rapture,
 Such joy no nightingale,
 As sways the songless measure
 Wherein thy wings take pleasure.
 Thy love may no man capture,
 Thy pride may no man quail;
 The lark knows no such rapture,
 Such joy no nightingale.

(III, 213)

As the imagery of this stanza makes clear, Swinburne wants to create a lyric that rivals Renaissance and Romantic poems on tuneful nightingales and larks, one that plays the pure passion of the sea gull's flight against the convention of singing birds. There is a double irony in this revision of convention. The seamew's cry, so alien to what we call music, is superior to the nightingale's more human singing precisely because the cry is so inhuman and so primordial.

Thus, the seamew's music transcends rationality. It cannot even be heard as music, unless the listener acknowledges his inability to emulate it. Swinburne's strategy in "To a Seamew" is, as Jerome McGann notes,

quite unlike that of Shelley in "To a Skylark." Swinburne never struggles to merge with the seamew, nor does he wish to become the seamew, because the bird's real value lies in its "otherness." The poet's devotion to the bird is in a way utterly selfless: as McGann says, the seamew "is loved for no explicable human reason."²³ Neither is Swinburne trapped by the "humanness" of the nightingale or the lark, whose songs encourage poets into doomed efforts of emulation.

As in many of Swinburne's poems, failure has its rewards. The poet's inability to compete with the seamew, a failure acknowledged at the outset of the poem, allows him to hear a music more rapturous and inexplicable than any human song. "To a Seamew" touches on the awesome relation of the elements to Swinburne's notion of sublime music, a notion more fully explored in "By the North Sea." In "To a Seamew," man has a limited place in the scheme of nature; the seamew's part is limitless: "Free birds live higher than free men,/And gladder ye than we." The seamew finds in nature an endless source of music:

For you the storm sounds only
 More notes of more delight
 Than earth's in sunniest weather
(III, 212)

The bird enjoys a boundless concourse with elements that offer utterly positive values. These values are particularly difficult for men to discern. "By the North Sea" provides no intercessor such as the seamew, so the poet must confront the elements himself in order to free his imagination from its land-bound state. In "To a Seamew," the poet recognizes these values by seeing them reflected in the seamew. If man cannot find beauty in the storm, the seamew can:

With wider wings, and louder
 Long clarion call of joy
 Thy tribe salutes the terror
 Of darkness, wild as error,
 But sure as truth, and prouder
 Than waves with man for toy.
 With wider wings, and louder
 Long clarion call of joy,

(III, 212)

McGann rightly points out that the poet celebrates the seamew's powers by acknowledging his own limitations.²⁴ In a way, the poet's humility, like Milton's self-effacement in the "Nativity Ode," exalts the seamew, so that poem and subject rival in their purity the self-styled grandeur of Shelley's skylark and Keats's nightingale.

II

The positive value of nature and the relationship of nature to song are developed at greater length in "By the North Sea." Written after Swinburne's retirement to Putney, "By the North Sea" is a mature Romantic nature ode, in which nature, serving both as subject and teacher, is identified with the creative imagination. The poem's prototypes are "Mont Blanc" and "Tintern Abbey," two Romantic "poems of place," which are themselves descended from descriptive poems of the eighteenth century. Like Wordsworth and Shelley, Swinburne finds in nature an imaginative construction that helps resolve the persistent division between materialism and spirituality. In its conception of the monotony of eternity and in its topological description of evolution, Swinburne's poem is determinedly Victorian. Like Shelley, Swinburne finds in his landscape evidence of the sublime, but where Shelley evokes the rugged qualities described by Burke, Swinburne sees Ruskin's awesome "monotony" and creates a limbo-on-earth version of Pascal's "espaces infinis."

The formal structure of "By the North Sea" will be discussed later in this section, but a few words on how the versification of the poem reflects the claim to high

style are necessary here. "By the North Sea" is one of Swinburne's mixed or polystrophic odes, like "Astrophel," "The Altar of Righteousness," "An Autumn Vision," and "A Swimmer's Dream," all late poems built on odic principles but without the oppressive formality of Swinburne's earlier Pindaric odes. The structure of "By the North Sea" is as rigid as that of "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia," "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic" or "Athens: An Ode." Yet essentially Romantic principles govern the versification of "By the North Sea" and make it as original a Pindaric ode as the nineteenth century can offer, not excluding Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode." Ultimately, "By the North Sea" is a highly Victorian experiment in metrical variation, a kind of symmetrical "Maud," where parts and stanzas are carefully numbered and order is emphasized by the exact correspondence of verse units.

Each of the seven parts of "By the North Sea" is a monostrophic ode, with uniform stanzas, but the parts also work in combination: the stanza of part I is repeated in parts IV and VII, the stanza of part II is repeated in part V, and the stanza of part III is repeated in part VI. Thus, the overall structure is distinctly triadic; the poem is not in the style of the irregular English

Pindaric of Cowley, but in the spirit of the Pléiade, whose regular stanzas were the original models for the English Renaissance ode. Yet it depends on Romantic versification also, and it incorporates the Romantic conception of the odic stanza as a simple, distinctive, repeated stanza--the terza rima of "Ode to the West Wind," for example. Shelley and other odewriters, from Collins to Landor, have in mind the Renaissance ode, constructed out of earlier native or imported stanza forms that have been made elegant and "literary."

The three meters of "By the North Sea" also reflect the heritage of the Romantic revival. For example, the stanza of part I, in a meter and form Swinburne first used in "Dolores," is adapted from W. M. Praed's comic eight-line stanza and is related to the anapest meter used by Byron in his lyric, "I enter thy garden of roses." (Byron's lyric seems to be the first use of the meter for serious, rather than comic, verse.) The anapest and the trochee are the central metrical units of "By the North Sea." The triple meter of the Dolores stanza and the trochaics of part III have their roots in poems like "Christabel" and Shelley's "Rarely, rarely, comest thou." The prosody of all three meters reflects general Romantic trends. Romantic lyricists returned to the trisyllabic

substitution and prosodic variety of the Elizabethans, discovering in the anapest and the trochee new expressiveness and spontaneity.

The Dolores stanza, derived from Praed's comic verse stanza, is one instance of how Swinburne uses meter to color and in some ways to undercut the ceremony of the elaborate triadic structure of the poem. Parody on the formal level reflects parody on the thematic level. David Riede calls "By the North Sea" a "ghastly parody of Gray's 'Elegy.'"²⁵ The macabre graveyard scene of part VI does suggest Gray's "Elegy," but more central to the parody is the eighteenth-century genre popularized by Blair and Young, whose "graveyard school" had roots in such poetry of melancholy as "II Penseroso." Gray's "Elegy" elevates the "graveyard" genre by infusing it with the moral purpose of the elegiac tradition. Although Swinburne's parody includes the elegiac ("Here is all the end of all his glory--/Dust, and grass and barren silent stones"), it is more concerned with evoking the extreme aestheticism of the "graveyard" genre. In Robert Blair's "The Grave," the poet imagines a scene of dismemberment:

. . . . Roused from their slumbers,
In grim array the grisly spectres rise,
Grin horrible, and obstinately sullen
Pass and repass, hushed as the foot of night. 26

This fascination with the details of death can be found in Swinburne's description of a Christian burial ground:

Tomes, with bare white piteous bones protruded,
 Shroudless, down the loose collapsing banks,
 Crumble, from their constant place detruded,
 That the sea devours and gives not thanks.
 Graves where hope and prayer and sorrow brooded
 Gape and slide and perish, ranks on ranks.
 (V, 107)

The parody of the aestheticism of graveyard poetry serves a serious moral purpose. Here as elsewhere Swinburne attacks the Christian doctrine of Resurrection as a perverse denial of death that ends in death worship ("and thou being dead art a God" is the paradox that "the world has grown grey from" in "Hymn to Proserpine"). "By the North Sea" contemplates the Resurrection as a piteous, even bitterly comic doctrine:

Now displaced, devoured and desecrated,
 Now by Time's hands darkly disinterred,
 These poor dead that sleeping here awaited
 Long the archangel's re-creating word
 (V, 107)

More subtle is the attack on the doctrine of the immutability of the godhead. Swinburne confronts the Nicene Creed in part I by denying the Christian godhead, or any transcendent being, dominion over the land: "For the land has two lords that are deathless:/Death's self

and the sea." The union of death and the sea is developed as a kind of mock theogony, although there is, deliberately, neither an account of origins nor a geneology. Eroticism, rather than fertility, is the dominant characteristic, suggested by echoes of "Song of Solomon," which give to the union a kind of lush extravagance that contrasts with the sterile landscape:

These twain, as a king with his fellow,
 Hold converse of desolate speech

In the pride of his power she rejoices,
 In her glory he glows and is glad

"If thou slay me, O death, and outlive me,
 Yet thy love hath fulfilled me of thee"

And the thirst of her heart is not fed
 (V,86-87)

These lines pick up, obliquely, words and images scattered through the "Song of Solomon":

. . . the king hath brought me into his
 chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in
 thee (1.4)

. . . for Love is as strong as death; jealousy
 is cruel as the grave (8.6)

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can
 the floods drown it. (8.7)

These playful echoes encourage us into a kind of pathetic fallacy. We entertain the notion that the sea and death

are somehow human in their courtship, a notion quickly dispelled by the brutal description in stanzas seven and following of the destructive powers of the sea:

Her walls have no granite for girder,
 No fortalice fronting her stands:
 But reefs the blood guiltiest of murder
 Are less than the banks of her sands:
 These number their slain by the thousands;
 For the ship hath no surety to be,
 When the bank is abreast of her bows and
 Aflush with the sea.

(V,87)

Part I lays out the mythographic texture and moral attitude of the poem: in the epic forces of nature, the only surety is death and change. Swinburne's treatment of the natural world, while in the mythopoetic mode of the Romantics, also reveals the kind of skepticism Victorians assumed in their attitudes toward nature. Yet the landscape is not psychologized. Unlike Tennyson's "barren land" in "The Passing of Arthur," where the land symbolizes man's fate in an age of intellectual disgrace, and Browning's "Stubbed ground" in "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," where the landscape mirrors the fragmented psyche of the narrator, Swinburne's "land that is lonelier than ruin" exists foremost as an objective order, the post-Cartesian world of nature from which man has been separated. "By the North Sea" is a poem of

place, in the Romantic tradition of "Mont Blanc" or "Tintern Abbey." It celebrates, says Swinburne,

. . . the dreary beauty, inhuman if not unearthly in its desolation, of the innumerable creeks and inlets, lined and paven with sea-flowers, which make of the salt marshes a fit and funeral setting, a fatal and appropriate foreground, for the supreme desolation of the relics of Dunwich.

(I, xxii)

In tone and theme, the poem recalls the eroticism and aestheticism of Poems and Ballads: First Series. Perhaps with more sympathy, but no less vehemently, Swinburne attacks Christianity as a failed, even perverse, principle. He sets the doctrine of the immutability of the godhead--the Nicene Creed--against a backdrop of its own choosing, the six churches and the cathedral of Dunwich, which fall in ruins to the sea. In place of the Christian trinity, he offers a trinity of sea, wind, and sun, elements that represent physical immutability rather than spiritual immortality.

The structure of "By the North Sea" seems to reflect man's isolation from the elements. Parts I, IV, and VII consider the elements apart from any human construct interposed between the reality of their power and the problem of our inadequacy. Parts III and VI examine and find wanting myth and religion, both powerful constructs

we have devised to tame and to possess nature. Parts II and V are transitional. They serve to focus the poet's shifting attitudes towards issues raised in parts I and IV.

Myth and religion, the subjects of parts III and VI, respectively, attempt but fail to solve the problem of mortality. The vision of Odysseus's visit to the underworld in part III is an example of a mythic quest to overcome the absolute division between life and death. The scene springs to the poet's mind as he observes a landscape that is Hades-like ("Here is Hades, manifest, beholden"). But Homer's Hades and the poet's differ: Homer's vision involves human contact, emotional if not physical. The poet's vision is more despairing:

Here? But all dispeopled here of visions
Lies, forlorn of shadows even, the shore.
(V,96)

Homer's vision fails to bridge the physical division between the living and the dead. It does not attempt to deny the absolute nature of the division. But it offers some recompense in the showing of love between Odysseus and Anticlea:

Love that lives and stands up re-created
Then when life has ebbed and anguish fled.
Love more strong than death or all things fated,
Child's and mother's, lit by love and led.
(V,96)

Homer's myth portrays the bittersweet anguish of mother and son divided by death, but it also challenges the division. Odysseus, in his attempt to bridge the ditch of blood, brings Death into the realm of the living ("Here, where never came alive another" (V,96)), and thereby suggests that even in defeat, the personal, heroic will has some power over mortality. Swinburne's "dispeopled" Hades does not offer any analogous recompense. Homer's vision, like his Hellenic speech, fails the poet because it is "too sweet" and the poet's landscape too far removed from the healing possibilities of Homer's myth.

Christianity is a more audacious attempt to reconcile life with death. The scene in part VI is still Hades-like (a "land of utter death"), but the mythic construct is developed through images that are more empirical than mythic. The failure of the Christian vision is visible in the physical evidence of the landscape:

Naked, shamed, cast out of consecration,
 Corpse and coffin, yea the very graves
 Scoffed at, scattered, shaken from their station,
 Spurned and scourged of wind and sea like
 slaves

(V, I07)

Christianity lends itself to Swinburne's graveyard parody because it denies what Homer's vision accepts--some sense

of the absolute nature of death. Dunwich is the grim reality of Resurrection: the dead, awaiting "the archangel's re-creating word," crumble grotesquely to the sea. Their only resurrection is their disinterment from an indifferent land and their only converse with eternity is the sacrifice of their remains to the sea. But if the Christian vision of immortality is vulnerable to the reality of a devouring Time, if the land of death upon which it built church and hospice crumbles at the foundations, Christian works of piety, charity, and mercy, like the love between Odysseus and his mother, offer positive values, of which Swinburne's humanist poem approves.

The sea, the wind, and the sun, the three elements of Swinburne's trinity, are an alternative to the failed Nicene Creed. The trinity of elements is reflected in the triadic structure of the poem: part I focuses on the sea, part IV on the wind, and part VII on the sun. The arrangement indicates the underlying progression of the poem, towards the sun, the element that represents the positive value of creativity and is the analogue to the poet. The sea, in part I, suggests power, especially power over the land, and, by extension, over man. The wind, in part VI, introduces sound in the form of howling, as a kind of unorganized song. The sun in part VII is

Apollonian and comprehensive, nature's version of the poet:

Where the horn of the headland is sharper,
 And her green floor glitters with fire,
 The sea has the sun for a harper,
 The sun has the sea for a lyre.

(V,108)

Like the Christian trinity, the elements are co-equal yet distinct. But they are physically immutable, wholly accessible and sensible to man, and therefore constant in a way that gods of man's creation cannot be:

That satiety never may stifle
 Nor weariness ever estrange
 Nor time be so strong as to rifle
 Nor change be so great as to change
 His gift that renews in the giving,
 The joy that exalts him to be
 Alone of all elements living
 The lord of the sea.

(V,99-100)

The sea offers positive, creative attributes, unlike the land. Man's folly is that he chooses as worthy of worship aspects of nature that only serve as projections of fear and loathing. In part VI, Swinburne examines the deification of "Death, and change, and darkness everlasting," attributes of the land. Even man's attempt to escape this oppression--by creating a God of compassion, positive but woefully inadequate in the face of the more

powerful gods of the land--fails. Swinburne makes a logical case that Christianity, or any religion that abstracts god from nature, as has its origins in nature worship of the inanimate. Nature worship progresses to animism, in which the inanimate is presumed to have a life-force, and finally to monotheism, where the dualism postulated by animism is intellectualized and a separate life-force is ascribed to an invisible, transcendent being whose attributes are projections of generalized notions of good. Thus, man first worships the land, then defines aspects of the land as the outward signs of consciousness. If the land is corrupt, gods of the land are created out of corruption. Christianity attempts to deny its corrupt, landbound roots:

Here, where sharp the sea-bird shrills his ditty,
 Flickering flame-wise through the clear live calm,
 Rose triumphal crowning all a city,
 Roofs exalted once with prayer and psalm . . .
 Filled with spirit of prayer and thrilled passion,
 Hailed a god more merciful than time.
 (V,105)

One of the most effective aspects of "By the North Sea" is that the formal elements, especially the prosody, seem to reflect attributes of the desolate, barren sea-shore. In many ways, the complexity of the formal arrangement is tempered by the poem's length, which

conveys the sense of ragged expanse that Romantic poets found in blank verse or pentameter paragraphs and encourages a discursiveness and breadth that resembles the barren landscape of the shore and the immensity of the sea. Thus, Swinburne describes the landscape along the shore at length and from different perspectives, and he allows the juxtaposition of landscape and seascape to work out aesthetic and moral distinctions:

Her fields that know not of dearth
 Nor lie for their fruit's sake allow
 Laugh large in the depth of their mirth:
 But inshore here in the shallow,
 Embroiled with encumbrance of earth,
 Their skirts are turbid and yellow.
(V,102)

Three lines are devoted to the sea and three to the land. The symmetry of the stanza reinforces the suggestion that sea and land are diametrically opposed. Swinburne works out many of the problems posed by the landscape in the texture of the poem itself. It is for this reason that "By the North Sea" seems so representative of his lyric voice. Repetition, chiasmus, parataxis, parallelism, the exhaustive "working" of words through slightly differing contexts--these hallmarks of Swinburne's verse seem to spring naturally from the rich monotony and diffuseness of the landscape.

Lyric in form and in conception, the poem nevertheless avoids the kind of particularity of image we most often associate with the lyric. This lack of particularity is a function of the landscape. Diffuseness ultimately suggests the nearly insurmountable inhumanness of the landscape. Nowhere does a particular image allow the kind of sympathetic indulgence of Shelley: "If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear/ Drive my dead thoughts over the universe/Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!" Much of "By the North Sea" concerns particularity escaping into a diffuse and confusing liminality:

When the ways of the sun wax dimmer,
 Wings flash through the dusk like beams;
 As the clouds in the lit sky glimmer,
 The bird in the graveyard gleams;
 As the cloud at its wing's edge whitens
 When the clarions of sunrise are heard,
 The graves that the bird's note brightens
 Grow bright for the bird.

(V,89)

The play of light in this stanza progresses from the flashing of wings to the glimmering of clouds, and, finally, to the whitening of a cloud at its "wing's edge." The images are particular in that they focus on minutiae of observation--the whitening of the cloud at its edge, for instance. But they are neither very visual nor very concrete. The imagery of "By the North Sea"

reflects the ethereal quality of the elements. The land crumbles to the sea; the sea, the wind, and the sun are elements as formless as they are immense. Yet the image of graves brightening in the sunrise is dense, for all the visual diffuseness of the imagery. The brightening sun, oblivious to the "souls of men" so unceremoniously interred, seems to dance with the bird, its light fading and weaving in and out of the air, flirting with the bird's wings, and finally lighting up the graves.

It can be argued that the unusual meters of "By the North Sea" temper the complex formal arrangement as well. This is not readily apparent. For one thing, the arrangement of parts is rigid; the meters set off each part and define the triadic structure. Parts I, IV, and VII act as the "strophes." Parts II and V resemble "antistrophes" in that they echo the meter of the parts they follow. Parts III and VI, trochaic measures, make up the "epodes." The "strophes" are anapestic trimeters, with much dissyllabic substitution and a final dimeter line. The "epodes" are pentameters in a falling rhythm. The "antistrophes" are anapestic trimeters, like the strophes, in stanzas of six lines, providing a transition between the shapely Dolores stanza of parts I, IV, and VII, and the intense falling rhythms of the six-line trochaic stanzas.

There is some unity in the metrics of the three stanza types. All three make use of a redundant feminine syllable in alternate lines (with some variation in the transitional parts). This prosodic touch offers an interesting continuity to the tone of the poem, although the redundant syllable is used for different effects in each stanzaic form. Generally, the redundancy gives lines an unfinished quality at the same time that it slows the tempo. In the anapestic parts, the redundancy at the end line combined with the rising rhythm of the first foot of the following line functions as a kind of echo, where the extra unstressed syllable falls to the same accentual level as the next syllable in the following line. The result is often a coupling of two lines in a litany-like verse and response:

The grime of her greed is upon her,
 The sign of her deed is her soil.
(V,102)

The redundant syllable offers a pause and requires a rejoinder. The meter itself provides a version of repetition.

The two major meters, the trochaic pentameters and the anapestic trimeters of the Dolores stanza, dominate the poem. The tones of these two meters differ greatly from

each other: the trochaics are somber, even ponderous; the Dolores stanza is almost sing-song. Its roots, discussed below, are essentially comedic. Much of the overall tone of the poem depends on the shifts back and forth between the anapestic parts and the trochaic parts.

The light tripping anapestic measures of parts I, IV, and VII are well-suited to a celebration of the power and freedom of the elements. If parts III and VI focus on man's inadequacy, parts I, IV and VII provide a strange and playful relief from the oppressive falling meter and the anthropocentric concerns of myth and religion. The elements are personified in the three anapestic parts, but only to the extent that nature exhibits what seem to be human qualities--delight, desire, physical might, weariness--not to the extent that the personification suggests anthropomorphism. Swinburne does not liken the elements to man, but rather suggests ways in which man might be likened to nature. These three parts offer possibilities by which man can partake in the eternal nature of elements.

The Dolores stanza, used in parts I, IV, and VII, has a rich history. Both the Dolores stanza and the five-foot trochaic stanza used in parts III and VI illustrate Swinburne's ability to build on the Romantic rebirth of

lyric versification. The Dolores stanza is distinctive. Saintsbury traces its origins to three-foot iambics of the Middle Ages. The eighteenth century turned to three-foot anapests for comic verse (Saintsbury cites Gay's "Molly Meg"²⁷). The comic uses of the meter came of age with W. M. Praed, who fashioned it into a recognizable eight-line stanza. Swinburne shortens the last line to two feet. He uses the stanza in several poems, including the dedications to Poems and Ballads: First Series, Astrophel and Other Poems, and A Channel Passage and Other Poems. Like Byron, who uses the three-foot anapest meter in his song "I enter thy garden of roses," Swinburne adapts Praed's comic stanza to "serious" verse. Byron's poem, which he calls a translation of a Romaic, or modern Greek song, employs a twelve-line stanza, but it has all the important prosodic features of Swinburne's stanza:

I enter thy garden of roses,
 Beloved and fair Haidee,
 Each morning where Flora reposes,
 For surely I see her in thee.
 Oh, Lovely! thus low I implore thee,
 Receive this fond truth from my tongue,
 Which utters its song to adore thee,
 Yet trembles for what it has sung;
 As the branch, at the bidding of Nature,
 Adds fragrance and fruit to the tree,
 Through her eyes, through her every feature,
 Shines the soul of the young Haidee. ²⁸

Like Swinburne, Byron hears the comic possibilities of the meter; his poem is an elaborate, melodramatic complaint, a parody of Petrarchan conventions and of Romantic and Gothic sentiment:

But the loveliest garden grows hateful
 When Love has abandon'd the bowers;
 Bring me hemlock - since mine is ungrateful. . .
 Too cruel! in vain I implore thee
 My heart from these horrors to save:
 Will naught to my bosom restore thee?
 Then open the gates of the grave. 29

While the anapestic base of Praed's stanza ties it to purely comic verse, Elizabethan lyrics in iambic trimeter were fairly common. Thomas Campion wrote airs in this meter with redundant syllables in alternate lines:

I care not for these Ladies
 That must be woode and praide,
 Give me kind Amarillis
 The wanton countrey maide;
 Nature art disdaineth,
 Her beautie is her owne. 30

And he used an initial anapest in another lyric. The result is a rather haunting tone to a bittersweet complaint:

Shall I come, sweet love, to thee,
 When the evening beams are set?
 Shall I not excluded be?
 Will you find no feigned let?
 Let me not, for pity, more
 Tell the long hours at your door. 31

Byron picks up on the musicality of the meter, and the associations with Elizabethan song, in his Romaic song. Swinburne seems to find it a useful form for discussing the ties between poetry and nature. With the exception of "Dolores," poems that use the stanza tend to return to and work through the large metaphors and familiar imagery of Romantic nature poetry. The first stanza of "Astrophel," for instance, lays out a rather elaborate series of Romantic images associated with the sublime:

A star in the silence that follows
 The song of the death of the sun
 Speaks music in heaven, and the hollows
 And the heights of the world are as one;
 One lyre that outsings and outlightens
 The rapture of sunset, and thrills
 Mute night till the sense of it brightens
 The soul that it fills.

(VI,121)

But the tripping anapests of the stanza allow Swinburne fascinating range; the comic roots of the meter are evident in the the extravagant tone of the first lines of "By the North Sea":

A land that is lonelier than ruin,
 A sea that is stranger than death.

(V,85)

So equipped for parody is the stanza that it is hard to read Swinburne's first use of the stanza in "Dolores", a poem taken quite seriously by the grim critics of

"fleshly" poetry, without hearing comic possibilities in the way that the meter toys with monotony and threatens to dissolve into "sing-song" anapests.

Swinburne's *Dolores* stanza brings an otherworldliness and a kind of lyrical exoticism to the three parts of "By the North Sea" that concern the strange and inhuman "sovereign three" elements. Equally expressive are the trochaic measures of parts III and VI. Swinburne uses trochaic pentameter in these stanzas as inventively as Blake and Shelley use shorter trochaic measures. The later nineteenth-century poets, Tennyson, Browning, and even Arnold, seemed inspired by the Romantic rediscovery of the trochaic. The Victorians were especially anxious to use the meter in longer lines. Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," Browning's "A Toccata of Galuppi's" and Arnold's "Tristram and Iseult" are all written in trochaic lines of five feet or more. Swinburne's pentameter trochees, like the trochaic measures of his fellow Victorians, are rarely modulated. Swinburne builds upon the discovery by the Romantics that trochees with little or no modulation make powerful verse. The trochaic precedents in English prosody, especially in the late Renaissance, are lyrics intended for singing, generally light, "amorous" lyrics, or lyrics, like Herbert's "Discipline," that are part of

the hymnal tradition. The great danger of trochees, that the decisive beat may become too mechanical and monotonous, the Victorians put to happy use, as Swinburne's emphatic but rapid measures in "By the North Sea" illustrate.

The alternating meters of each part create an antiphonal effect. Equally important to the music of the poem is the repetition of words and rhetorical structures of corresponding parts. Parts II and V, for instance, begin with the conjunction "for":

For the heart of the waters is cruel . . . (pt.II)
For the sea too seeks and rejoices . . . (pt.V)

and end with a similarly antiphonal response:

And the warfare endureth forever . . . (pt.II)
And her sweetness endureth forever (pt.V)

Parts II and IV take on their own internal dialogue, working almost as paired songs of innocence and experience. Part II examines the sinister possibilities of the sea and the seashore through images of the devouring female ("their waves are as fire is to fuel") and through allusions to a Hobbesian interpretation of nature in stanzas three and four. The sea of stanzas one and two is unapproachable in the way of a Petrarchan mistress;

the marshy inlands of stanzas three and four are cold and atomistic. Part V proposes an alternate interpretation of the same relationship. The first stanza offers the image of man stretching to incorporate the vastness of the sea's spirit:

. . . And the joy of her heart's own choice is
 As ours, and as ours are her pains.
 As the thoughts of our hearts are her voices,
 And as hers is the pulse of our veins.
 (V,102)

Not only has the sea become approachable, but it has also acquired such a beneficent force that, by contrast, the inland reaches exude negativity. The earth is described in highly moralized terms: "grime of her greed," "her own dishonor," "corruption the crown of her toil." What part II describes as an eternal "warfare" between the shore and the sea is not diminished in part V. The poet has instead found in the sea an unequivocally positive image, an image expressed in stanzas one and four of part V through the language of Christianity.

Swinburne's use of biblical language in "By the North Sea" is much more than a device of parody. Biblical language is traditionally associated with the sublime, and Christian myth is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between man and the infinite. However incomplete the Christian vision seems to Swinburne, it

provides a rich and supple language of revelation, a language that identifies poetry as sublime. The sublimity of Swinburne's bibilical echoes reinforces the sublimity of the elements and the sublimity Romantics associate with nature. The language of the King James Version, its diction, versification, and rhetorical patterns, rivals the latinate high style. More powerful still is the lyrical quality of biblical language, and the language of Christian prayer, especially for a Romantic sensibility preoccupied with the relationship between the ordinary and the extraordinary. The language of the King James Bible offers Swinburne both an associative value and a medium that insists upon the individual vision.

The repetition of rhetorical structures is an important poetic device in Swinburne's evocation of the sublime. "By the North Sea" uses repetition of phrases not only to echo the Bible but to mirror in the language of the poem the extraordinary interrelationship of material and maker. Swinburne's material is the barren landscape and the monotonous flux of nature. Out of these materials, he creates the possibility of imaginative vision. "Experience" merges with the world of "prophecy" in form as well as theme through compounding and repetition of

words. The most striking use of this repetition occurs in parts III and VI:

Miles, and miles, and miles of desolation!
 Leagues on leagues on leagues without a
 change! (pt. III)

Death, and change, and darkness everlasting . . .
 Change of change, darkness of darkness,
 hidden (pt. VI)
 (V,93,104)

Repetition is coupled with the extraordinary falling rhythm of these lines to evoke the monotony of the landscape, a monotony that suggests the problems all post-enlightenment poets face in a universe of infinite and spiritless space. The formal effects of Swinburne's poem mirror this infinite monotony, and the hypnotic repetition of words eventually works out a solution through the very device that embodies the problem. Song and harmony, as in much of Swinburne's poetry, emerge out of monotony.

This use of repetition in the poem, where monotony creates a supreme harmony, explifies McGann's observation that in Swinburne's greatest lyrics, the "resolution" can be found in some manner throughout the poem.³² The grand harmony of the elements appears to be nothing more than mechanical repetition. Yet harmony in whatever guise is song, and the discovery of song in nature ties the elements to the songs of man: "The song that is over

my song." This human song is grounded in the physical attributes of the landscape.

The biblical and liturgical sounding repetition in part VI has two purposes. One is to echo the techniques of part III in order to suggest that the prosodic harmonies of the Bible resemble the harmonies Swinburne finds in the mechanics of nature and the elements. The second is to debunk Christian precepts in the language of the Church. These purposes seem at first to be contradictory. Yet Swinburne's parody of the Resurrection never dismisses the aesthetic quality of the language. If the language and rhetorical structures of part VI undercut the ideology of Christianity, similar language in part VII proposes a more useful godhead:

. . . But the air is fullfilled of the glory
 That is shed from our lord's right hand.
 O father of all of us ever
 All glory be only to thee
 From heaven, that is void of thee never,
 And earth, and the sea.

(V,108-109)

The sun unites the land and the sea as the Christian God cannot. Thus, the desolation of the land reflected in the desolation of Christian faith is, as Reide points out, the consequence of a reductive vision. Like any reductive vision, it has its element of truth. Death

rules the land, yet man's spirit requires some intimation of immortality. Christianity fails not through its purpose, but through its premises. Paradoxically, death becomes the central issue, the central image, and ultimately the obsession of the Christianity simply because Christianity cannot deny the existence of death. The alternative, in the terms of the poem, is to abandon a "land-locked" vision of the universe in favor of a more comprehensive vision. Such a vision requires quite literally a lifting of one's sight, as the poet of "By the North Sea" achieves when he looks out to the sea.

In The Stones of Venice, Ruskin offers an elaborate discussion of the function of monotony in nature and art:

I believe that the true relations of monotony and change may be most simply understood by observing them in music. We may therein notice first, that there is a sublimity and majesty in monotony, which there is not in rapid or frequent variation. This is true throughout all nature. The greater part of the sublimity of the sea depends on its monotony; so also that of desolate moor and mountain scenery; and especially the sublimity of motion as in the quiet, unchanged fall and rise of an engine beam. So also is there sublimity in darkness which there is not in light. 33

This passage illuminates basic assumptions Swinburne seems to make about how the sublime is manifest in the natural world. The face of nature is central to "By the

North Sea." Nature in the poem is both elemental and vast. The triadic forces of wind, sea, and sun are awesome not only in relation to man, but in relation to one another. The sea "devours" the shoreline; the wind is "lord of the sea"; the sun is "father of all." Each force represents a version of infinity. The sea is immense; the wind races "worldwide," insatiable; the sun lights all "heaven . . . and earth, and the sea." From these physical manifestations of infinity Swinburne finds evidence of an eternity more accessible and affirmative than any postulated by religion.

Ruskin's notion that monotony lies at the heart of sublimity is an interesting variation on the classical notion of *concordia discors*. Monotony unrelieved by change, or variety, is unbearable and demands of the audience much patience. But monotony sets up a necessary resistance to variety: the more pain felt at the monotony, the more pleasure felt upon relief from the monotony. Ruskin even suggests that monotony unrelieved may be pleasurable: "In cases of more majestic monotony, the patience required is so considerable that it becomes a kind of pain, - a price paid for the future pleasure."³⁴ So monotony in nature and in art corresponds roughly to "concordia," and, in Swinburne's desolate, solitary world

of the shoreline and the sea, monotony is the law of nature.

Jerome McGann sees a connection between the "tonal uniformity" of Swinburne's verse and the oracular style of lyric. Monotony empties the verse of the poet's personality and creates a prophetic chant, says McGann, "set into a tone which, though itself invariable, permits a wide range in pitch and tempo."³⁵ Swinburne's fascination with monotony, whether in theme or in technique, is one of his most abiding traits. His nature poetry often dwells on the monotonous and the uniform, sometimes finding in uniformity an enchanting oppression, as in "A Nympholept," where "the tyrannous weight of the dumb fierce mood" overwhelms the senses:

. . . The fearful charm of the strong sun's
 imminent might,
 Unmerciful, steadfast, deeper than seas that
 swell,
 Pervades, invades, appals me with loveless light,
 With harsher awe than breathes in the breath of
 night.

(VI,131)

Ruskin points out that nature provides two versions of diversity in monotony (very roughly corresponding to theme and variation and counterpoint):

The sea-waves, resembling each other in general mass, but none like its brother in minor divisions and curves, are a monotony of the first kind; the great plain, broken by an emergent rock or clump of trees, is a monotony of the second. ³⁶

Swinburne deals with both kinds of monotony in "By the North Sea," finding harmony in the first and a bleak, seductive sterility in the second.

Swinburne's interest in the monotones of nature, especially of the sea, is the subject of "On the Downs," one of his most explicitly philosophical lyrics, where the "wise passivity" he discovers in the more evocative "A Nympholept" is discussed in the language of epistemology:

By footless ways and sterile went
My thoughts unsatisfied, and bent
With blank unspeculative eyes
On the untracked sands of discontent
Where, watched of helpless skies,
Life hopeless lies.

(II, 192)

What Swinburne works out rationally in "On the Downs," that the whole can be perceived only by the creative mind ("There is no God, O son, / If thou be none,") emerges from "By the North Sea," as well. But the insatiable, eternal wind and the awesome regularity of the sea are visceral pleasures, not just symbols of sublimity, and out of the monotony of the wind's "moan" comes the very real possibility of imagining and emulating sublime song:

The delight that his doom is for ever
 To seek and desire and rejoice
 And the sense that eternity never
 Shall silence his voice.
 (V,99)

III

"By the North Sea" and "To a Seamew" typify Swinburne's ability to enrich the meters and versification that the Romantics developed from Renaissance models. "By the North Sea," especially, brings to the Romantic nature ode a renewed sense of musicality by merging two types of odes: the monostrophic and the triadic. A third example of a "revision" of a Romantic borrowing of Renaissance versification is "A Vision of Spring in Winter," for which Swinburne adapts the stanzaic form of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale." "A Vision of Spring" is one of the clearest examples of Swinburne's ability to search out the roots of a nonce form. The adaptations of Milton's Nativity stanza, discussed in chapter two, suggest that Swinburne might have had in mind some of Milton's own models, but the adaptation of Keats's stanza clearly depends on Keats's primary model, the sonnet.

Keats uses his stanza, with variations, in "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on Melancholy," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and "Ode on Indolence." In these poems, the stanza consists of ten lines, with a quatrain rhyming abab, and a sestet of three rhymes, usually cdecde. The only deviation from iambic pentameter occurs in "Ode to a Nightingale," where the eighth line consists of three rather than five feet. This variation Swinburne borrows for his stanza. But in Swinburne's stanza, which is twelve lines to Keats's ten, the short line comes at the ninth line. Swinburne's rhyme scheme differs from Keats's, but the difference actually emphasizes the origin of the stanza, for Swinburne substitutes for Keats's English abab sonnet quatrain the Italina sonnet quatrain rhyme of abba. The two additional lines come between the quatrain and the sestet in Swinburne's stanza, and rhyme ab, suggesting an abortive Italian octave. The result is a highly Italianate rhyme scheme of $a_{10}bbaabcde_6c_{10}de$, and an interesting variation on Keats's mixed English and Italian scheme of $a_{10}babcddec_6d_{10}e$.

That the sonnet was Keats's model has been suggested by several modern critics, including Walter Jackson Bate, whose close prosodic analysis of the odes brings into play the evidence of rhyme scheme, meter, and rhetorical

pattern.³⁷ The archetectonics of Keats's odic stanza also suggest elements of monostrophic odes. The short line fulfills Dante's prescription that high lyric poetry combine long and short lines, but that long lines predominate. The single short line allows a slight modulation in an otherwise regular stanza. Bate concludes that Keats developed his stanza from elements of the sonnet, but that the ten-line ode stanza may also have been influenced by eighteenth-century ten-line stanzas frequently used in odes.³⁸

Swinburne's decision to add two lines to Keats's stanza and to place the short line four lines rather than three lines from the last tends to bind the meter of the stanza more closely to the Petrarchan rhyme scheme. The last three lines in Swinburne's stanza make up a tercet and function uniformly as a rhetorical structure apart from the rest of the stanza. Only in stanzas four and six do the tercets depend for subjects and verbs on the foregoing lines, and the tercet of stanza six is effectively, if not grammatically, independent, as it consists of a catalogue the predicate of which is only implied in line three of the stanza. As in the Petrarchan sonnet rhyme scheme, the effect of this structure is to extend the space within which to "resolve" the stanza. Swinburne's

stanzas are more consistently resolved than are Keats's. One of the essential movements in "Ode to a Nightingale" involves the echoing back of phrases in the first line of a stanza to its counterpart in the last line of the previous stanza--"Fade far away" in the third stanza, and "Forlorn" in the eighth. Swinburne's stanzas, by contrast, are all rigorously end-stopped.

"A Vision of Spring in Winter" insists upon the shapeliness and regularity of its architechtonics. Much of Keats's versification suggests a tumult and back-tracking that would have no place in the calm of "A Vision of Spring." Even in Keats's final stanza, where the poet returns abruptly from the world of the imagination to "the common earth," a kind of psychic tumult emerges through the grammar and the prosody of the verse. The final couplet,

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:--Do I wake or sleep?³⁹

carries the full burden of the resolution, because the couplet is isolated by the end-stopped short line that precedes it. Each line of the couplet is broken in two, and the unanswered questions emphasize the poet's confusion and bewilderment.

As Bate points out, Keats's stanza mixes English and Italian rhyming patterns. Keats wanted to avoid both the "pouncing rhymes" of the Italian scheme and the unsatisfactory, abrupt couplet of the Shakespearean scheme.⁴⁰ Swinburne, clearly more at ease with the envelope rhymes of the Petrarchan stanza, avoids the problem of the couplet even more assiduously than does Keats. Swinburne's approach to the sensitive short line is to allow rhyme to bind the tercet to the stanza. As all of the short lines are end-stopped, their rhymes are particularly weighted. The integrity of the tercet is preserved, yet the stanza does not break off at the tercet. Swinburne's rhyme of the short ninth line with the twelfth emphasizes the Petrarchan rhyme scheme.

In fact, the rhyme scheme of "A Vision of Spring" is the rhyme scheme of the Italian sonnet lacking only two lines to complete a second quatrain in the octave. The advantage to this lies in the modulation that results from the conflict between the rhetorical pattern and the units of rhyme. The envelope rhymes of the Italian scheme create a particularly cohesive unit. In the Italian sonnet stanza, two quatrains of envelope rhymes are strongly linked because they are both on the same two rhymes. Swinburne's stanza omits two lines of the second

quatrain, but the result is still six lines on only two rhymes and a unit in which the "envelope" effect functions equally for lines three through six. Thus, the first two lines of stanza six, separated by the rhetorical pattern from the four that follow, resemble a couplet prefixed to an envelope quatrain:

I would not bid thee, though I might, give back
 One good thing youth has given and bourne away;
 I crave not any comfort of the day
 That is not, nor on time's retrodden track
 Would turn to meet the white-robed hours or black
 That long since left me on their mortal way.
(III,96)

The first two lines, which we are used to hearing in combination with the third and fourth as an envelope quatrain, are isolated by the grammar and rhetorical structure of the stanza, first by the end-stop at "away" and then by the repetition of the rhetorical pattern and of the "I" in line three. Swinburne overrides the quatrain effect created by the rhymes, giving the first two lines particular emphasis. These lines signal a shift from the visionary world to the "earthly" world of rational perspective, a shift similar to Keats's return to the common earth in "To a Nightingale." The development of stanza six, the movement from the general statement in the first two lines to the particularities of the

lines that follow, is reinforced by the prosody of the stanza. There is also kind of chiasmic effect with the following, final stanza, in which the development from general to particular is reversed and the relationship between the envelope quatrain of the first four lines and the couplet following is regained.

The stanza allows Swinburne to suggest a number of internal symmetries either by varying or by repeating rhetorical patterns. In stanza one, for instance, the quatrain forms the first statement. The fifth line, bound to the quatrain by rhyme, forms a second grammatical statement:

O tender time that love thinks long to see,
Sweet foot of spring that with her footfall
sows
Late snowlike flowery leavings of the snows,
Be not too long irresolute to be;
O mother-month, where have they hidden thee?
Out of the pale time of the flowerless rose
I reach my heart out toward the springtime lands,
I stretch my spirit forth to the fair hours,
The purplest of the prime;
I lean my soul down over them, with hands
Made wide to take the ghostly growths of
flowers;
I send my love back to the lovely time.
(III,94)

The isolation of the fifth line is interesting, for the rhetorical strategy of the line, the question beginning "where," is repeated in the first line of the second

stanza. The third rhetorical pattern develops in lines six through twelve, where the repetition of subject and verb ("I reach," "I stretch," "I lean," and "I send") allows Swinburne to emphasize the final line of the stanza, "I send my love back to the lovely time." The final line provides the key to the development of the poem: the spring to come cannot be imagined without the poet's returning to springs of the past. This underpinning of nature as a cycle is woven into the imagery and the structure of the poem.

The poet's presence in "A Vision of Spring" seems particularly muted in comparison with Keats's presence in "Ode to a Nightingale." Keats merges into the physical world of his poem so completely that it is impossible to consider the images apart from the poet's own sensations. Each stanza details the active involvement of the poet with his vision. Even verbs that have a passive sense--"Lethewards has sunk," "fade away"--are sensual and physical. This is in part because, as David Perkins notes, "the nightingale . . . has a living identity and sings to the senses, thus allowing a massive sympathetic response."⁴¹ Keats's problem is finding something of the eternal in this experience.

The poet in "A Vision of Spring" does not have this intense, physical involvement with the landscape. His most active involvement comes in the first stanza, where his movements are deliberately stylized:

I reach my heart out toward the springtime lands,
 I stretch my spirit forth to the fair hours,
 The purplest of the prime;
 I lean my soul down over them, with hands
 Made wide to take the ghostly growths of
 flowers;
 I send my love back to the lovely time.
 (III,94)

The poet, denuded of personality, describes in a kind of litany his elaborate prostration before the most ephemeral of idols, the nostalgic memory of a "lovely time." Four of these six lines begin with simple subject-verb constructions, not only allowing greater stylization but also enforcing a sense of the poet's disjunction from the present and from a mobile and shifting physical world. It is clear, at this point, that the "lovely time" is for the poet somehow fixed and stationary.

This lack of physical involvement in the world of the vision suggests how differently from Keats Swinburne approaches his vision. However "personal" the poem becomes, it never abandons a sense of distance through which the poem retains a kind of public voice. It is difficult to distinguish between "public" and "personal"

posture in such a poem as this because the poet's intent is to bridge both kinds of poetry. Where Keats plunges into the drama of "Ode to a Nightingale" with an intensely emotive pronouncement ("My heart aches . . ."), Swinburne reserves his most personal note for the final lines:

But flowers thou mayest, and winds, and hours of
ease,
And all its April to the world thou may'st
Give back, and half my April back to me.
(III,97)

Even this observation, although wistful, avoids any real suggestion of sentimentality, if sentimentality is the indulgence in excessive emotion, through the rigor and sparseness of the poet's sense of existence. The poet insists that what is lost may not be regained, even through the intensity of the moment and the power of emotion.

The stylized manner of the poem is also evident in the personification of spring in stanzas three and four. The personification is developed through the conceit of a birth. Throughout the poem, the poles of life and death are intertwined. Stanza two suggests that the spring is a "ghost," and in stanza four this association is made more explicit. The "ghost arisen of May before the May" emerges from the winter. Less an apparition than a

device for analogy, this ghost is also described as "the gracious ghost of morning risen ere morn." The ghost represents the invisible presence of past and future time in the present, embodying cyclical or recurrent time. Somewhat playfully, the ghost suggest the Platonism that feeds Petrarchan tradition. It lives a relatively care-free ghost's existence, "footless . . . on some unfooted lawn." It is invisible, yet because invisibility is its most characteristic attribute, it is surely present. Stanza three creates the ghost's liminal world. The pre-dawn becomes a kind of nativity scene ("They watch the dawn of slender-shapen limbs,/Virginal, born again of doubtful death" (III,95)), and the metaphoric construction establishes the equation of the dawn and spring. Underlying the birth scene is an oblique allusion to the Prosperine myth with "death" becoming spring's "Chill foster-father."

The birth of spring in stanza three provides few visual images. Not until the emergence of the "girl-child spring" in stanza four does Swinburne offer a picture of the personification. This reluctance to give spring an image is important, as is the relative sentimentality of the lines describing the "girl-child" in stanza four. Swinburne develops his themes well before attempting an

allegorical device so easily misinterpreted as personification. Indeed, the character attributed to the "girl-child" is deliberately innocuous, her actions merely innocent and child-like.

The personification of spring moves from creative force to prophesy in stanza five, which begins with the language of dream-vision:

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see,
 Fair face that art not, how the maiden breath
 Shall put at last the deadly days to death
 And fill the fields and fire the woods with thee
 And seaward hollows where my feet would be
 When heaven shall hear the word that April
 saith
 To change the cold heart of the weary time,
 To stir and soften all the time to tears.
 Tears joyfuller than mirth
(III,96)

The conventions of dream-vision are made ambiguous in the first line, where either the poet or spring may be "sleeping." The poet then sees not the fact of spring ("Fair face that art not") but rather the transformation that spring brings to the world. The ghost of "May before the May," concretized in the sentimental lines of stanza four, becomes most active and, paradoxically, least visible in this stanza. The poet abandons simile and allows the vision of spring to become prophecy. As the presence of spring becomes more real in relation to time, the poet becomes more certain of the vision and at

the same time more distant from it. The verb tenses describing the coming spring shift to the future ("Shall put"). The verb placing the poet within that spring shifts to conditional ("And seaward hollows where my feet would be").

It is the poet's confrontation with the certainty of spring that leads him to grasp his own relation to time in the final three lines of stanza five:

As even the May's clear height the young
 days climb
 With feet not swifter than those fair first
 years
 Whose flowers revive not with thy flowers
 of earth.

(III,96)

The poet's understanding develops through a series of verbal echoes in the stanza, echoes centering primarily around the idea of time. In line 51, spring puts to death "the deadly days." In line 68, "the young days" are ascendant; these are, of course, both the days of a "youthful" spring and the poet's own "young days." The "feet" of line 59 echo the poet's feet imagined in the spring of line 53, and again they are not only the feet of a personified May, but the poet's own feet in "those fair first years." The final line of the stanza completes the verbal progression with a repetition of the

word "flowers," first to characterize youth, and finally to characterize spring. The antithetical placement of "flowers" within the line that highlights the poem's dilemma: the poet, no longer young, cannot take part in spring's complete rejuvenation.

As remarkable as the subtle verbal play of this stanza is the degree to which the poet's experience is objectified and universalized. While Swinburne develops his understanding through the process of the vision, as images suggest other images, this highly Romantic procedure involves much less of the poet's presence in nature than similar experiential processes in Keats or Coleridge. The visionary experience of the stanza is particularly economical. Verbal echoes bring the vision rapidly from the particular to the universal as Swinburne works through the images of the stanza. The repetition of "time" in lines 55 and 56 illustrates this movement. Spring changes "the cold heart of the weary time"--that is, winter, the present--and stirs and softens "all the time to tears"--that is, not only the spring, but all time. This universalization is illusory in one sense, in that time cannot be contained, but it suggests a common experience. All time can be softened by the experience of spring.

The relationship between the final two stanzas is intricate. Not only are the movements from general to particular complementary, but the effect of the first six lines of the last stanza is greatly dependent on the rhetorical patterns of stanza six. The repetition of negatives in the catalogue of what is irretrievably lost is abandoned in the final stanza, where the image of a youth celebrating the sunrise is so fully developed that it seems to insist upon its own life. The potency of this image bespeaks the magnitude of the poet's loss. It also provides an understated irony that adds to our sense of the poet's remarkable tranquility. The youth sings to a "sun that was to crown his head," unaware or unperturbed by the sense of mortality that haunts the poem. The rhetorical isolation of this image, presented first without a reminder that it belongs to that catalogue of the unrecoverable, then given perspective in line seven, "These may'st thou not give back for ever," reminds us that the youth's experience carries with it the implication of mortality and that time has given the poet this experience.

What McGann calls the absolute ambiguity⁴² of the final tercet is presaged by the tone of the "morning song" image. Swinburne manages to convey a sense of

cyclical nature by incorporating elements of the night--"star," "twilight," and "moonless"--into the pre-dawn of the image, as elsewhere in the poem the vision of spring exists in a liminal place between "sunrise" and "set of star." This borderline existence is nowhere more obviously humanized than in the image of the young singer and the degree of affirmation in this image is therefore all the more potent. In a way as stylized as the poet's reaching back in stanza one, the image of the young singer represents the poet's "ghostly growths of flowers," the testament of his lost youth, his own counterpart to the allegorized version of spring, the "girl-child," in stanza four. Yet however personal the effect of the image on the poet, the portrait of the young singer is essentially conventional. His "burning lips and wreathless hair" are attributes of a visionary poet-seer, although "wreathless" is an ironic inversion of the conventional image of a laurel-wreathed head. As attributes, these images suggest a type rather than an individual. This use of convention has the effect of distancing the poet from the subject, in this case, the memory of his youth, now focused in a stylized image. With such distancing, Swinburne commits his poem to the "impersonal" vein of Romantic poetry, a prophetic poetry that assumes

authority beyond the personality of the poet.⁴³ What is particularly interesting in "A Vision of Spring" is that, from the establishment of such impersonal authority, the poet derives his own very personal application in the last three lines of the poem. The absolute value of the youthful singer-poet allows to poet the discover the richness of loss, and in that discovery to present an attitude of affirmation that neither denies the loss nor exaggerates it. The discovery is achieved through memory that is stylized, and convention itself becomes a guide to prophecy.

The sestet of the final stanza, by providing rich modulations of rhythm and repetition, takes advantage of the many virtues of the stanzaic form:

These may'st thou not give back for ever; these
As at the sea's heart all her wrecks lie waste,
Lie deeper than the sea;
But flowers thou may'st, and winds, and hours of
ease.
And all its April to the world thou may'st
Give back, and half my April back to me.
(III, 97)

The iambic base is wrenched in the first line of the sestet, where the rhetorical accent falls on the initial "these," but the word and metrical accents fall on "may'st." The second line again provides a wrenched accent in the third foot, where the word accent on "heart"

is sufficiently strong that the third foot can be heard as a spondee. These wrenched accents slow the rhythm somewhat in the first three lines of the tercet. By contrast, the final three line are regular iambic base, although there is some minor modulation in the accent ("all its April to the world"). The effect of this regularity is a sense of resolution carried by the rhythm as well as the words.

The phrasing of the sestet is equally important and delicately modulated. The two enjambments, at the first line of the sestet and at the penultimate line, allow Swinburne to reinforce the tranquility of the lines through the repetition of words. By beginning and ending the first line with "these," Swinburne lingers over the loss of all that the world refers to. The enjambment at "may'st" produces one of the finest effects of the poem, the careful attenuation of the idea of recompense. The asymmetry of the final two lines lies in the grammatical phrasing and in the careful division of the two "Aprils." The world's "April" spills over into the "half" April of the poet, and the poet's "half" April is grammatically dependent on the world's.

"A Vision of Spring" draws upon imagery and conventions associated with love poetry, even though its most

immediate roots lie in the visionary tradition of the Romantic poets. Like Shelley's "Ode to that West Wind," "A Vision of Spring" invokes nature's elements in order to conjure up the human face of prophecy:

They watch, the dawn of slender-shapen limbs,
Virginal, born again of doubtful death,
Chill foster-father of the weanling spring.
(III, 95)

The weanling becomes, in stanza four, "the girl-child spring," a creator seemingly unconscious of her gifts, who "kindles" the trees "with her own mouth's colourings." The image, faintly suggestive of the Petrarchan lady of fire, collapses two conventions, the lady's fiery eyes and her rosy lips, to create an active, positive, and un-Petrarchan character.

The sonnet-like stanza of "A Vision of Spring" suggests the poem's Petrarchan bent. The Petrarchan imagery serves a less personal, less dramatic voice, however. Compare the bitterness and isolation of Petrarch in "Zefiro torna, e 'l bel tempo rimena,"⁴⁴ Petrarch's own spring song, to the temperate, quiet nostalgia of Swinburne's voice, and it is clear that Swinburne's poem has at its center a sense of acquiescence and maturity that transforms the Petrarchan complaint. Petrarch uses the division between himself and nature as a foil for the

dislocation that Laura's death engenders. The sonnet is a map of fragmented psyche that rejects all manifestations of rejuvenation and deracinates nature by turning it into "a desert and wild beasts harsh and savage."

Part of the richness of "A Vision of Spring in Winter" is its appeal to another Renaissance convention that attaches to spring, that of hastening and intensifying experience in the face of mortality, the "gather ye rosebuds" theme expressed in a sonnet by Spenser:

Fresh spring, the herald of love's mighty king,
In whose coat-armour richly are displayed
All sorts of flowers, the which on earth do
 spring,
In goodly colours gloriously arrayed;
Go to my love, where she is careless laid.
Yet in her winter's bower not well awake;
Tell her the joyous time will not be stayed,
Unless she do him by the forelock take;
Bid her therefore herself soon ready make,
To wait on Love amongst his lovely crew;
Where every one, that misseth then her make,
Shall be by him amerced with penance due.
 Make haste, therefore, sweet love, whilst it is
 prime;
For none can call again the passèd time.⁴⁵

Spenser's elaborate play on the word "love," which is both the lady and, in effect, the king who sends spring as its herald, is echoed in Swinburne's first stanza. (One interesting possibility is that "lovely crew" is echoed in Swinburne's line, "I send my love back to the lovely time.") Swinburne develops a conceit similar to

Spenser's sleeping lady in "A Vision of Spring," where the poet searches for the sleeping "girl-child spring."

But Swinburne's concern is with the Petrarchan tradition as it has developed up to and through the Romantic period. Themes, images, and rhetorical patterns in his poem deliberately echo common Petrarchan conventions. Yet the psychological aspect of the poem is purely Romantic. Petrarchan images and themes are thus transformed through the psychological texture of the poem. The storm at sea, for instance, figures in Swinburne's poem, but unlike the all too present tempest of Wyatt's "My galley, charge with forgetfulness," Swinburne's storm lies in the past. The present sea is a calm repository of past desires:

these,
As at the sea's heart all her wrecks lie waste,
Lie deeper than the sea
(III,97)

As in this image, "A Vision of Spring in Winter" often provides an almost wistful reconciliation of Petrarchan torment without minimizing the depth of loss.

Beneath the surface tranquility of the poem, there is a rich tension between the poet's muted voice and the high style of language and imagery. The immediacy of the poem lies not in the poet's visceral presence, but in the

way Swinburne's muted voice finds its very human range. If Romanticism is in part an attempt to find poetry in the commonplace, "A Vision of Spring in Winter" is a Romantic poem. It does not infuse either language or rhythm with the commonplace, in the manner of Wordsworth or Browning. The "commonplace" in Swinburne's poem lies in the sentiment and the tough-mindedness of its theme. Underlying the poem is a sense of a common fate--death--and a striving toward an unattainable ideal, a universal struggle that is epitomized in the struggle to create art, according to Swinburne:

The nearer . . . an artist's work comes to this abstract perfection of absolute beauty, the more clearly will he see and the more gladly will he admit that it never can come so near as to close with it and find as in things of meaner life, a conclusion set in the act of fruition to the sense of enjoyment, a goal fixed at a point attainable where the delight of spiritual desire may be . . . consumed in the moment of its consummation.⁴⁶

Robert L. Peters, commenting on this passage and on Swinburne's notion of harmony, distinguishes between Swinburne and Shelley:

. . . [T]he ideal remains exclusive; the moments of complete transcendence are far rarer than the enthusiastic Shelley had supposed. Heaven, or "the supernal loveliness" (Poe's phrase), remains, and the struggle to arrive there is rarely won.⁴⁷

"A Vision of Spring in Winter" is permeated with the recognition that in the failure to transcend there is a sweet sense of fulfillment, for the failure opens the poet to what Jerome McGann calls the "fullness of life forever born" in a "continuous process of death."⁴⁸

Failure is the inevitable consequence of the search for an ideal, a search as doomed as it is worthy. While there is no transcendence in "A Vision of Spring," the underlying principles that impel the poet toward an ideal are not diminished, just as the clear image of the solitary, youthful singer-poet in the last stanza is not diminished by the fact of mortality. The unreachable ideal, so integral a part of the Petrarchan tradition, becomes in Swinburne's poem not a cause for complaint, but an inspiration and an impetus towards greater clarity of insight.

NOTES

- 1 McGann, pp. 67-70.
- 2 "A Study of Victor Hugo," Bonchurch, XIV, 249.
- 3 "Robert Herrick," Bonchurch, XV, 260.
- 4 Algernon Charles Swinburne, A Study of Ben Johnson, ed. Howard B. Norland (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1969), p. 99-100.
- 5 Pater, p. 153.
- 6 Ibid., p. xvi.
- 7 David B. Morris, The Religious Sublime (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1972) pp. 180-196.
- 8 Immanuel Kant, "Critique of Judgment," trans. James C. Meredith, in The Philosophy of Kant, ed. Carl J. Fredrich (New York: Random House, 1949), p. 300.
- 9 See "Byron," Bonchurch, XV, 126-127.
- 10 Ibid, p. 127.
- 11 Connolly, pp. 64-78, and Peters, pp. 150-164. Connolly quotes Swinburne's use of the terms "inner" and "outer" music in "Notes on the Text of Shelley": "Shelley outsang all poets on record but some two or three throughout all time; his depths and heights of inner and outer music are as divine as nature's and not sooner exhaustible."
- 12 Peters, p. 153.
- 13 Shuster, p. 224.
- 14 Ibid., p. 272.
- 15 John Hollander, "Music and Poetry," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, 1974 ed.

16 In "Byron" (Bonchurch, XV), Swinburne describes "Ode to the West Wind" as "the highest sample" of poetry "where description melts into passion and contemplation takes fire from delight." Swinburne elsewhere refers to Shelley as "the perfect singing-god" ("Notes on the Text of Shelley," Bonchurch, XV), and, in "Percy Bysshe Shelley," Swinburne characterizes the incantory effect of "Ode to the West Wind":

In the autumn of 1819 . . . [Shelley] was moved by the inspiration of external or phenomenal nature at its highest pitch of harmony and Passion to conceive and bring forth one of the supreme poems of all time--the "Ode to the West Wind". . . . The personal cry of suffering and exultation and hope, of rapture and regret and faith, which thrills the matchless music of the verse as with, the very throb of living blood, serves only to quicken and to deepen the effect of the sensuous and supersensual emotion impressed by the glory of nature when most joyous, and expressed in the splendour of song when most sublime (Bonchurch, XV, 339).

17 Percy Bysshe Shelley, The Complete Works (New York: Gordian Press, 1965), III, 293. All subsequent references appear in the text.

18 John Dryden, The Poems of John Dryden (London: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 207.

19 Mark Van Doren, "John Dryden: The Lyric Poet," in Seventeenth Century English Poetry, ed. William R. Keast (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 394.

20 George Saintsbury, "Mr. Swinburne," in Swinburne: The Critical Heritage, ed. Clyde K. Hyder (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), p. 200-203. In this essay, Saintsbury argues effusively Swinburne's natural bent toward velocity:

His muse can 'toll slowly' when she chooses; but she has always an impulse to quicken, and is almost always happiest in quick time. . . . And by degrees Mr. Swinburne developed and perfected that faculty of his which has been

already noticed--the faculty of arranging his measures in a sort of antiphony, where, as in very quick chanting, the alternate lines seem to catch up their forerunners almost before these have finished.

21 Saintsbury, A History of English Prosody, III, 107.

22 M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, (New York: Norton & Co., 1958), p. 94.

23 McGann, p. 148.

24 Ibid., p. 146.

25 Riede, p. 163.

26 Robert Blair, "The Grave," in Eighteenth Century Poetry & Prose, ed. Louis I. Bredvold, et al. (New York: Ronald Press, 1956) p. 522.

27 Saintsbury, Manual of English Prosody, pp. 112-115.

28 Byron, The Works of Lord Byron, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: John Murray, 1898-1904; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1966) III, 22.

29 Ibid.

30 Thomas Campion, The Works of Thomas Campion, ed. Walter R. Davis (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967), p. 22.

31 Ibid., p. 152.

32 McGann, p. 41.

33 John Ruskin, "The Stones of Venice," in The Works of John Ruskin (Library Edition), ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903-1912) X, 209.

34 Ruskin, p. 210.

35 McGann, p. 60.

36 Ruskin, p. 210.

37 Bate, pp. 127-141. Bate credits H.W. Garrod with first advancing the idea that Keats's ode-stanza is related to the sonnet.

38 Bate, p. 131.

39 John Keats, The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Keats, ed. Harold Edgar Briggs (New York: Modern Library, 1951), p. 293.

40 Bate, pp. 129-131.

41 David Perkins, "The 'Ode to a Nightingale,'" in Keats: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Walter Jackson Bate (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 103.

42 McGann, p. 235.

43 Ibid, p. 67.

44 zefiro torna e 'l bel tempo rimena
e i fiori e l'erbe, sua dolce famiglia
e garrir Progne e pianger Filomema,
e primavera candida e vermiglia;

ridono i prati e 'l ciel si rasserena,
Giove s'allegra di mirar sua figlia,
l'aria e l'acqua e la terra è d'amor piena,
ogni animal d'amar si riconsiglia.

Ma per me, lasso, tornano i più gravi
sospiri, che del cor profondo tragge
quella ch'al ciel se ne portò le chiavi,

e cantar augelletti e fiorir piagge
e 'n belle donne oneste atti soavi
sono un deserto e fere aspre e selvagge.

* * *

Zephyrus returns and brings back the fine weather
and the flowers and the grass, his sweet family,
and Procne to her cries and Philomena to her
weeping, and the spring, white and vermillion;

the meadows laugh and the sky grows clear again,
 Jupiter rejoices to look upon his daughter, the
 air and the water and the earth are full of love,
 and to love every creature's thoughts turn again.

But for me, alas, the heaviest sighs return,
 which she draws from my deepest heart, she who
 took away the keys of it to heaven,

and the singing of little birds, and the
 flowering of slopes, and gentle manners in
 beautiful, virtuous women, are a desert and wild
 beasts harsh and savage.

Translated by Stephen Minta; from Stephen Minta, Petrarch
 and Petrarchism: The English and French Traditions (New
 York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 77.

45 Edmund Spenser, The Shepherd's Calendar and Other
 Poems, ed. Philip Henderson (London: Everyman's
 Library, 1965), p. 307.

46 Quoted in Peters, p. 160. From "George Chapman."

47 Peters, p. 160.

48 McGann, p. 235.

CONCLUSION

I have attempted to trace some of Swinburne's uses of Renaissance ode forms and to characterize his ability to transform past poetic tradition in the manner of Renaissance poets. In great measure, this use of Renaissance lyric tradition expands upon practices established by Romantic poets, especially Shelley. It defines Swinburne's lyric mode as one bound to a continually self-transforming tradition, in which form and convention are translated into modern idiom while retaining their historical literary associations. And the Renaissance itself provides him with antecedent lyric models through which he may re-examine Romantic themes.

One of these is nature. Swinburne is one of the last poets of the nineteenth century to treat nature as something other than a backdrop to the idea of fragmentation or the idea of the sacred. "By the North Sea," along with several of Swinburne's late nature poems, is isolated from the greater part of later nineteenth-century poetry, and, indeed, from most twentieth-century poetry, by its ease with the notion that poetry and physical nature are fundamentally tied together. Whether art imitates nature or is analogous to it, that is, organic,

like nature, and therefore the creation of poetic demiurge; whether nature is ultimately beneficent or is the spiritless, Heraclitean flux that must be organized by the creative imagination--these are important questions for Swinburne. Like his Romantic predecessors, Swinburne uses landscape as a gateway to past literary form. He expects, as Keats does in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," that nature itself, whether particular, or, if not identified, at least particularized, can, by holding together the visionary experience, modernize and revitalize old poetic forms.

The Romantics, finding in nature the means to visionary experience, often looked to forms associated with the religious sublime or the classical ode for their nature poems. Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" and Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode" are in the tradition of English Pindarics. Even Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and Coleridge's Conversation poems discuss nature in the English equivalent of heroic verse. More distinctly Romantic, and in the spirit of the revival of Renaissance poetics, are attempts to raise or elevate old poetic forms. Keats's "La Belle Dame" is one example; his is not the first "literary" ballad, but its use of narrative and image to suggest the visionary experience is daring.

Wordsworth calls his experiments with a new, "far more philosophical language," lyrical ballads. Blake uses the unpretentious word song. He draws on the prosodic materials of the Elizabethan song preserved in the Protestant hymnal tradition, a tradition ambiguous in a wholly English fashion as to style, tending toward the high style because of its association with religious purpose, but always influenced by popular poetry, because much Protestant tradition is rooted in the devotional expression of the common man.

Swinburne, like Shelley, sometimes blurs the distinction between lyric and ode, attempting in this Romantic tradition of elevating forms to find the sublime in the common lyric. While Swinburne is clearly sensitive to distinctions among genres (his lambasting of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" centers on a genre distinction), the impulse to purify and to elevate is one his most Romantic traits, for it aligns him not only with Blake and Shelley, but with the whole Miltonic-Renaissance tradition.

Swinburne's use of nature as subject is one means by which he elevates slight lyric forms like the triolet of "To a Seamew" and the Dolores stanza of "By the North Sea." Nature is the highest subject of poetry, Swinburne suggests in his essay on Byron. Poets like Byron and

Shelley who delight in nature are "strongest" when they "recall or suggest the wide and high things of nature; the large likeness of the elements; the unmeasureable liberty and the stormy strength of waters and winds." Byron and Shelley do not merely write about nature; they share its energy:

Their passion is perfect, a fierce and blind desire which exalts and impels their verse into the high places of emotion and expression. They feed upon nature with a holy hunger, follow her with a divine lust as of gods chasing the daughters of men. Wind and fire, the cadences of thunder and the clamours of the sea, gave to them no less of sensual pleasure than of spiritual sustenance.¹

So the "wide and high things of nature" create passion that allows the poet to approach the highest, purest expression. This is one of Swinburne's clearest descriptions of how sublime nature poetry is created. Typically, his mythographic analogy is to pagan experience: great poets are like "gods chasing the daughters of men." The Romantic experience of nature is equally erotic, he suggests. It is also an arena in which the spiritual and the sensual meet.

The Romantic myth of nature informs much of Swinburne's poetry. So, too, does the Renaissance tradition of ode-making. As several critics have pointed out,

Swinburne's Romanticism is not subjective, personal mythmaking. The "self" in much of his lyric poetry is essentially faceless, the voice impersonal, and the approach oracular. For this reason, Swinburne's frequent use of Renaissance ode forms--many of which were derived from earlier native song forms--is fitting. Catherine Ing, in Elizabethan Lyrics, draws a distinction between "impersonal" song and the "personal" lyric in English poetry. The Elizabethan song is anonymous, public, and representative of a generalized emotional state. The personal lyric, common, says Ing, in Romantic poetry, is private, subjective, and representative of intensely particularized emotion. The first type is "a voice from the invisible," the second, a "speech of a personality."² Ing's distinction is somewhat artificial--she admits that most lyrics have elements of both types--but it helps characterize the relation between song and verse in Renaissance poetry. The Renaissance poets seem to have found song forms useful for experiments in high-style, public verse. One of Swinburne's great insights into Romantic poetry is that the Romantic literary lyric may still retain an objective, "impersonal" and, in essence, oracular voice through an appeal to the Renaissance tradition of the ode.

NOTES

¹ "Byron," Bonchurch, XV, 125-127.

² Catherine Ing, Elizabethan Lyrics (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968), p. 17

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Works

(Swinburne)

Swinburne, Charles Algernon. The Complete Works. Ed. Sir Edmund Gosse and Thomas J. Wise. New York: Russell & Russell, 1968.

_____. New Writings by Swinburne. Ed. Cecil Lang. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1964.

_____. The Poems. London: Chatto & Windus, 1904.

_____. The Swinburne Letters. Ed. Cecil Lang. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1964.

_____. Swinburne Replies. Ed. Clyde Kenneth Hyder. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966.

_____. Swinburne: Selected Poetry and Prose. Ed. with an introduction by John D. Rosenberg. New York: Modern Library, 1968.

Secondary Works

Abrams, M.H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York: Norton, 1958.

Aeschylus. Plays. Trans. H.W. Smith. 2 Vols. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1926.

Alighieri, Dante. The Odes of Dante. Trans. H.S. Vere-Hodge. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

Altick, Richard D. "Four Victorian Poets and an Exploding Island," Victorian Studies, III (1960), 249-260.

- Arnold, Matthew. Poetry and Criticism. Ed. Dwight Culler. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961.
- Attridge, Derek. Well-weighed Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Metres. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- Banville, Théodore de. Petit traité de versification français. Paris: Le Clère, 1872.
- Bate, Walter Jackson. The Stylistic Development of Keats. New York: Humanities Press, 1962.
- Beach, Joseph Warren. The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth Century Poetry. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
- Beare, William. Latin Verse and European Song: A Study in Accent and Rhythm. London: Methuen, 1957.
- Blair, Robert. "The Grave." In Eighteenth Century Poetry & Prose. Ed. Louis I. Bredvold, et. al. New York: Ronald Press, 1956.
- Blake, William. Poetry and Prose. Ed. David V. Erdman. Garden City: Doubleday, 1970.
- Bloom, Harold. The Visionary Company. Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1961.
- Bridges, Robert Seymour. Milton's Prosody. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.
- Byron, Lord. The Works of Lord Byron. Ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge. London: John Murray, 1898-1904; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1966.
- Bush, Douglas. Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry. New York: W. W. Norton, 1963.
- _____. Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry. New York: W.W. Norton, 1963.
- Campion, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Campion. Ed. Walter R. Davis. Garden City: Doubleday, 1967.
- Carew, Thomas. Poems. Ed. Rhodes Dunlap. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949.

- Chew, Samuel C. Swinburne. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966.
- Child, Ruth C. The Aesthetic of Walter Pater. New York: Macmillan, 1940.
- Cohen, Helen Louise. The Ballade. New York: Columbia University Press, 1915.
- Coleridge, Samuel T. Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century. Ed. Roberta Florence Brinkley. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.
- _____. The Complete Poetical Works of Coleridge. Ed. E.H. Coleridge. London: Oxford University Press, 1912.
- Collins, William. Poems of William Collins. Ed. Christopher Stone and Austin Lane Poole. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.
- Connolly, Thomas. Swinburne's Theory of Poetry. Albany: State University of New York, 1964.
- Creek, Herbert L. "Rising and Falling Rhythm in English Verse." PLMA, 35, i (New Series, 28, i), 1920, pp. 76-90.
- Cowley, Abraham. The Complete Works in Verse and Prose. Ed. Rev. Alexander B. Grosart. New York: AMS Press, 1967.
- Crashaw, Richard. The Poems: English, Latin and Greek. Ed. L.C. Martin, 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- Curtius, Ernst R. European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963.
- Dakyns, Janine R. The Middle Ages in French Literature, 1851-1900. London: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- DeLauria, David, J. Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold, and Pater. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969.
- Denommé, Robert T. The French Parnassian Poets. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972.

- Dodds, E.R. The Greeks and the Irrational. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- Draper, John, W. The Funeral Elegy and the Rise of English Romaniticism. New York: Octagon Books, 1967.
- Drayton, Michael. Works. Ed. J.W. Hebel et al. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931-41.
- Drummond, of Hawthornden, William. The Poetical Works. Ed. L.E. Kastner. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1913.
- Dryden, John. The Poems of John Dryden. Ed. James Kinsley. London: Clarendon Press, 1958.
- DuBellay, Joachim. Les Regrets and La Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française. Ed. S. de. Sacy. Paris: Gallimard, 1967.
- Duerksen, Roland A. Shelleyan Ideas in Victorian Literature. The Hague: Mouton, 1966.
- Eliot, T.S. The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism. London: Methuen, 1964.
- English Renaissance Poetry. Ed. John Williams. Garden City: Doubleday, 1963.
- Frazier, Sir James George. The Dying God. London: Macmillan, 1911; rpt. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966.
- Garrod, H.W. Keats. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926.
- Gautier, Théophile. Poésies Complètes. Ed. René Jasinski. Paris: A.G. Nizet, 1970.
- Goldin, Fredrick, ed. and trans. Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères. Garden City: Doubleday, 1973.
- Good, John Walter. Studies in the Milton Tradition. New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1967.
- Gosse, Sir Edmund. The Life of Algernon Charles Swinburne. London: Macmillan, 1917.

- Hamar, Enid. The Metres of English Poetry. London: Methuen & Co., 1930.
- Havens, Raymond D. The Influence of Milton in English Poetry. New York: Russell & Russell, 1961.
- _____. "Structure and Prosodic Pattern in Shelley's Lyrics." PLMA, 65 (December, 1950), pp. 1076-1087.
- Heath-Stubbs, John. The Ode. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Henderson, W.B.D. Swinburne and Lander. A Study of their Spiritual Relationship. London: Macmillan, 1918.
- Herbert, George. Works. Ed. F.E. Hutchinson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Herrick, Robert. The Complete Poetry. Ed. J. Max Patrick. Garden City: Doubleday, 1963.
- Hieatt, Constance B. The Realism of Dream Vision. The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1967.
- Hill, Christopher. Milton and the English Revolution. New York: Viking Press, 1977.
- Hollander, John. "Music and Poetry." Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. 1974 ed.
- _____. The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry 1500-1700. New York: Norton, 1970.
- _____. Vision and Resonance. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Houghton, Walter E. The Victorian Frame of Mind. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Hunt, Clay. Lycidas and the Italian Critics. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Hyder, Clyde Kenneth. Swinburne: The Critical Heritage. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970.
- Hyder, C.K. Swinburne's Literary Career and Fame. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1933.

- Ing, Catherine. Elizabethan Lyrics: A Study in the Development of English Metres and their Relation to Poetic Effect. London: Chatto & Windus, 1968.
- Johnson, Samuel. Samuel Johnson's Literary Criticism. Ed. R.D. Stock. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1974.
- Jonson, Ben. Poems. Ed. B.H. Newdigate. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Critique of Judgement." Trans. James C. Meredith, in The Philosophy of Kant. Ed. Carl J. Fredrich. New York: Random House, 1949.
- Keats, John. The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Keats. Ed. Harold Edgar Briggs. New York: Modern Library, 1951.
- Lafourcade, Georges. La Jeunesse de Swinburne. Oxford: University Press, 1928.
- _____. Swinburne: A Literary Biography. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.
- _____. Swinburne's 'Hyperion' and other Poems; with an Essay on Swinburne and Keats. London: Faber and Gwyer, 1928.
- Langbaum, Robert. The Poetry of Experience. New York: Norton, 1957.
- Leavis, F.R. "Shelley." In English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism. Ed. M.H. Abrams. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Lee, Sidney. The French Renaissance in England. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.
- Longinus. On the Sublime. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts. London: Cambridge University Press, 1907.
- Lyra Graeca. Trans. J.M. Edmonds. 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heineman, 1927-1931.
- McGann, Jerome. Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

- Maddison, Carol. Apollo and the Nine: A History of the Ode. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960.
- Martz, Louis L. Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton's Poetry. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.
- Milton, John. The Complete Poetry. Ed. John T. Shawcross. Garden City: Doubleday, 1971.
- _____. The Poems of Mr. John Milton; the 1645 Edition, with Essays and Analysis. Ed. Cleanth Brooks and John Edward Hardy. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951.
- Minta, Stephen. Petrarch and Petrarchism: The English and French Traditions. New York: Harper & Row, 1980.
- Morris, David B. The Religious Sublime. Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1972.
- Murray, Gilbert. The Classical Tradition in Poetry. New York: Vintage Books, 1957.
- Nicolson, Marjorie. John Milton: A Reader's Guide to his Poetry. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1963.
- Ovid. Metamorphosis. Trans. Frank Justus Miller. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1951.
- Partridge, A.C. The Language of Renaissance Poetry: Spenser, Donne, Milton. London: Andre Deutsch, 1971.
- Pater, Walter. The Renaissance. New York: New American Library, 1959.
- Paterson, Linda M. Troubadours and Eloquence. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Patrides, C.A. Milton and the Christian Tradition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- _____. ed. Milton's Lycidas: The Tradition and the Poem. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1961.
- Pattison, Bruce. Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance. London: Methuen, 1948.

- Pearson, Lu Emily. Elizabethan Love Conventions. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966.
- Perkins, David. "The 'Ode to a Nightingale.'" In Keats: A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Walter Jackson Bate. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice - Hall, Inc. 1964.
- Peters, Robert L. The Crowns of Apollo. Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 1965.
- Peterson, Douglas. The English Lyric from Wyatt to Donne. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Pindar. The Odes. Trans. Sir John Sandys. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1937.
- The Pre-Raphaelites and their Circle. Ed. Cecil Lang. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.
- Prince, E.T. The Italian Element in Milton's Verse. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933.
- Raymond, Meredith. Swinburne's Poetics: Theory and Practice. The Hague: Mouton, 1971.
- Ridenour, George M. "Swinburne In Hellas: 'A Nympholept,'" Victorian Newsletter. Fall (1983), 4-8.
- _____. "Swinburne on 'The Problem to Solve in Expression,'" Victorian Poetry. 9 (1971), 129-44.
- _____. "Time and Eternity in Swinburne: Minute Particulars in Five Poems," ELH. 45 (1978), 107-130.
- Ridley, M.R. Keats' Craftsmanship. New York: Russell & Russell, 1933.
- Riede, David G. Swinburne: A Study of Romantic Mythmaking. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978.
- Ronsard, Pierre de. Poésies. Ed. Louis Terreaux. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1960.
- Rossetti, Christina Georgina. The Poetical Works. Ed. W.M. Rossetti. New York: Macmillan, 1904.

- Rossetti, Dante Gabriel. The Works of D.G. Rossetti. Ed. William Michael Rossetti. London: Ellis, 1011; rpt. New York: Adler's Foreign Books, 1972.
- Rossetti, William Michael. Swinburne's Poems and Ballads. London: John Camden Hotten, 1866.
- Ruskin, John. The Works of John Ruskin. Ed. E.T. Cook and A. Wedderburn. London: George Allen, 1903-1912.
- Rutland, William R. Swinburne: A Nineteenth Century Hellene. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931.
- Saintsbury, George. Historical Manual of English Prosody. Ed. Harvey Gross. New York: Schocken Books, 1966.
- _____. A History of English Prosody from the Twelfth Century to the Present Day. 3 Vols. New York: Russell & Russell, 1961.
- _____. "Mr. Swinburne." In Swinburne: The Critical Heritage. Ed. Clyde K. Hyder. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970.
- Sells, A. Lytton. The Italian Influence in English Poetry. London: Allen & Unwin, 1955.
- Shafer, Robert. The English Ode to 1660: An Essay in Literary History. New York: Haskell House, 1966.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. The Complete Works. Ed. Rogert Ingpen and Walter E. Peck. New York: Gordian Press, 1965.
- Shuster, George N. The English Ode from Milton to Keats. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964.
- Simpson, P. "The Rhyming of Stressed and Unstressed Syllables in Elizabethan Verse," MLR, 38 (1943), 127-9.
- Smith, Barbara Hernstein. Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Spenser, Edmund. The Shepherd's Calendar and Other Poems. Ed. Philip Henderson. London: Everyman's Library, 1965.

- Stein, Arnold. "On the Criticism of Milton." In On Milton's Poetry. Ed. Arnold Stein. Greenwich Conn.: Fawcett, 1979.
- Stevenson, Lionel. The Pre-Raphaelite Poets. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972.
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord. The Poems. Ed. Christopher Ricks. New York: Riverside, 1898.
- Tillyard, E.M.W. Milton. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967.
- Tuve, Rosemond. Elizabeth and Metaphysical Imagery. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.
- Untermeyer, Louis. The Forms of Poetry. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1926.
- Van Doren, Mark. "John Dryden: The Lyric Poet." Seventeenth Century English Poetry. Ed. William R. Keast. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Villon, François, Poésies. Ed. Pierre Michel. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1972.
- Warren, Austin. Richard Crashaw: A Study of Baroque Sensibility. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957.
- Wasserman, Earl R. Shelly: A Critical Reading. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971.
- Weismuller, Edward R. "Studies of Verse Form in the Minor English Poems." In A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton. Vol. II, Part Three. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.
- Welby, T.E. A Study of Swinburne. New York: George H. Doran, 1926.
- Wier, Marion Clyde. The Influence of Aeschylus and Euripides on the Structure and Content of Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon and Erechtheus. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1920.
- Wilhelm, James J. The Cruellest Month: Spring, Nature, and Love in Classical and Medieval Lyrics. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.

- _____. Seven Troubadours: The Creators of Modern Verse. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970.
- Wittreich, Joseph Anthony, Jr. "A Poet Amongst Poets," Milton and the Line of Vision. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975.
- _____. The Romantics on Milton. Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1970.
- _____. Visionary Poetics: Milton's Tradition and His Legacy. San Marino: Huntington Library, 1979.
- Woolf, Rosemary. The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
- Wyatt, Sir Thomas. The Complete Poems. Ed. R.A. Rebholz. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.