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TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVES AND DESIGNS IN POPE'S POETRY

by

PAUL W. McISAAC

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Temporal Perspectives and Designs in Pope's Poetry," submitted by Paul W. McIsaac in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

Time is Pope's field of vision in his satires: his means of understanding man by regarding him as participating in temporal continua. One of these is the private continuum of individual lives limited by mortality. The other is the continuum of human history. In neither case does Pope separate his consciousness of time from his consideration of man; so that he sees time as significant, not in itself, but as the medium of man's fulfillment as a principled and moral creature. Hence, he conceives of individual lives and historical epochs as terminal situations of arbitrary duration in a temporal continuum, during which men and societies must so dispose the present that it accommodates the realization of the human duty to be moral, compassionate, and just.

For Pope, history is the exemplary record of man's attempts at this realization, and he perceives in the pattern of success and failure a cyclical process that assures the regular alternations of golden and iron ages manifesting the extent of man's accomplishment. Parallel with this consciousness of historical cycles is his awareness of literary tradition, which he considers to form itself into cycles of its own, similar to those of history. In both cases, Pope believes that each golden or iron age has a positive or negative centre which acts as a catalyst to draw together the diverse aspects of its power: for example, Queen Anne and the Norman kings, in Windsor Forest; Parnassus and Grub Street in the Essay on Criticism and the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot. However, Pope's confidence in cycles does not always sustain him in his investigations of the moral, social, and cultural calamities of his own time. In his major statement on his age, The Dunciad, Pope moves beyond history to an imaginative vision of a new reality brought about

by the forces of disorder and dullness.

This thesis studies the ways in which Pope uses temporal perspectives and designs in his poetry by concentrating primarily on his interest in his own age, a particular present which he insists on relating to the historical and traditional past and, to a somewhat lesser extent, to the future. The first chapter is an attempt to present the ethical basis of Pope's understanding of time by considering the Essay on Man in relation to satire. The two following chapters deal with Pope's ideas about mythical time and the pathos of the human devices to defy the course of time. Because Pope often makes historical judgements on the basis of cultural evidence, the fourth chapter is concerned with his consciousness of the relation between cultural vitality and the moral health of man and society. The fifth chapter deals with Pope's analysis of the condition of his age in relation to imperishable standards of conduct he finds in the satires of Horace. In general, these chapters consider how Pope's attitudes to time inform his major satires and develop into the apocalyptic vision of The Dunciad, the subject of the last chapter.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Pope's approach to time is not one which sets out to analyze this dimension of human experience, either philosophically, as Augustine does in his Confessions, or imaginatively, as Proust does in Remembrance of Things Past. He accepts time as the sequence of past, present, and future, the context of human progress and decline and, in its close connection with mortality, the matrix of human limitation and of man's responsibility to accomplish within his limitations his task of defining himself as a moral being:

> Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
> Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought;
> His knowledge measur'd to his state and place,
> His time a moment, and a point his space.
> (Essay on Man, I, 69-72)

So conventional a conception of time supports an equally conventional conception of man as a creature self-divided by the conflicts of passion and reason, participating as animal rationale in both the carnal and spiritual orders of creation, and involved, as Mack suggests, in a "triple pattern of glory, ruin, and restoration"[1]:

> He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest,
> In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;
> In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer,
> Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
> Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
> Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
> Chaos of Thought and Passion, all confus'd;
> Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;
> Created half to rise, and half to fall;
> Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
> Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurl'd:
> The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!
> (Essay on Man, II, 7-18)

Pope's contribution to the study of man is the completeness of his

treatment of the ruling passion[2] in his insistence that passion (as self-love), and not reason, is the key characteristic of man and the dynamic basis of human definition:

> Two Principles in human nature reign;
> Self-love, to urge, and Reason, to restrain;
> Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,
> Each works its end, to move or govern all:
> And to their proper operation still,
> Ascribe all Good; to their improper, Ill.
> Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
> Reason's comparing balance rules the whole.
> Man, but for that, no action could attend,
> And, but for this, were active to no end;
> Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,
> To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot;
> Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void,
> Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.
> (Essay on Man, II, 53-66)

What this means is that self-love is the force which directs man to the ends it has itself selected, while reason is the force which so regulates the impulses of self-love that the ends they seek are good ones. Ideally, then, passion and reason should not be in conflict at all. While this theory tends to characterize reason as passive (it is called a "weak queen"), it yet makes of reason the crucial dimension of man's moral activity. Without reason, the impulses of self-love drive man to the meteor-like purposeless activity which accomplishes only destruction. Reason is the faculty of discrimination and judgement: that which makes sense or nonsense of man's mortally circumscribed sphere of action according to its strength or weakness.

Pope emphasizes the restriction of reason to the mortal situation by chastising its arrogant pretense of being able to comprehend what is beyond this situation:

> Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
> The proper study of Mankind is man.
> (Essay on Man, II, 1-2)

The point is not to humiliate man, but to humble him: to bring him to a recognition and acceptance of his nature and limitations as a mortal creature so that he can be a positive force in creation:

> The bliss of Man (could Pride that blessing find)
> Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
> No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
> But what his nature and his state can bear.
> (Essay on Man, I, 189-192)

The first step in Pope's attempt to bring man to this recognition and acceptance is his demonstration of the folly of expecting that nature correspond to man's idea of it as a system characterized by chance and discord. He explains the foolishness of this notion by surveying the whole of nature and discovering in the apparently haphazard operation of nature a system of order upheld by divine love and law in which the tensions of contradictory forces produce a marvellous unity of purpose -- the divine purpose of universal order -- in accordance with the principle of concors discordia rerum. All creation and all natural history are glorious in that they manifest the immanence of God, whose view of the whole, man, who sees but a part, cannot hope to share, although he must assume that the same unity of purpose operates in human life and history as well. Man, therefore, must not presume to scan God, but must study himself in his own position in the Great Chain of Being: as one of myriad interdependent parts of "one stupendous whole" of which God is the soul, or vital principle. Man must accept the necessity of order and involve himself completely in the world he has been given by duplicating, in human love, the divine love which upholds the great order of which he is a part. The brief course of human life from birth to death makes it a matter of urgency that man heed the reasonable interpretation of his lot which Pope outlines: acceptance of his limited

situation will enable him to transform limitation and restriction into a condition of liberty to exhaust the possibilities of his own nature and place.

> Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
> Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
> Submit.
>
> (Essay on Man, I, 283-285)

Pope's central interest is in the great contradictory creature, as he is, and as he can be, given that he is "Born but to die, and reasons but to err." The poet is prepared to grant man no more certainties than the facts of birth and death, hence makes the issues of the Essay on Man the issues of mortality, and life a limited situation of arbitrary duration in which man defines himself by submitting to his mortality and choosing to participate in a cosmic scheme beyond his control and not entirely within the grasp of his understanding.

The self-division caused by the conflict of passion and reason, Pope sees as responsible for the division of man from man and for the division of man from the law and order of nature. The passions are rightly expressed as proper self-love and charity, in the sense of one's desire to minimize pain and achieve the maximum pleasure individually and socially. Reason administers the passions by ensuring that self-love not transform itself into self-obsession and selfishness, or charity into tyranny. Once again, it is a question of order versus disorder, on the individual level of each life and on the collective level of society and history. Pope's history of man in Epistle III of the poem takes account of the power of passion and the weak reign of reason as they have to do with human happiness, "our being's end and aim." The focus of this part of the poem is on what man has made of his place in the universe with his peculiar nature as the sole

intellectual being in the mortal, sub-divine, part of the system. History here functions as an exemplary aid to the collective cultural memory, in that the poet does not present a systematic factual chronology of events so much as a didactic survey of human folly and occasional goodness, dependent for its validity upon assumptions he has outlined earlier in the poem. It is rather like the prophecy of history given Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, with the temporal perspective reversed and the specifics eliminated. Pope does, however, involve himself in the philosophy of history to the extent that he considers the primal stage of man's history, the State of Nature, as the "Reign of God" rather than as the Hobbesian state of war and lawlessness.

Pope does not consider human history in terms of the Fall. Man's pride is blamed for his folly in separating himself from the rest of terrestrial creation and arrogating to himself superiority to and power over this part of creation by virtue of his reason. Pride brings forth the state of constant warfare; nature compels battered man to study the social organization of the lower levels of creation and to confess, in humility, the shaky foundations of his glory:

> Mark what unvary'd laws preserve each state,
> Laws wise as Nature, and as fix'd as Fate.
> In vain thy Reason finer webs shall draw,
> Entangle Justice in her net of Law,
> And right, too rigid, harden into wrong;
> Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.
> Yet go! and thus o'er all the creatures sway,
> Thus let the wiser make the rest obey,
> And for those Arts mere Instinct could afford,
> Be crown'd as Monarchs, or as Gods ador'd.
> (Essay on Man, III, 189-198)

The course of history is thus the groping attempts by a humanity crippled by pride to achieve that social organization which manifests the divine system of order. Man establishes himself socially in his

determination to subdue the impulses of war by erecting protective structures of order and law effective in leading man to happiness to the extent that they mirror the providential operation of divine order and law in the universe. The vital principle of good government is unity, the perfect simultaneous operation of self-love and social, within the divine scheme. Hence, monarchy and patriarchal government in their original state proceed on a principle of love and establish no discontinuity between the divine and the profane: the leader of a people is the mortal surrogate of an immortal God of law and love. Ideally, love is the medium which keeps society in a sort of colloidal stability, but the mixture is coagulated and rendered inert by fear.

Tyranny proceeds from the pride of leaders who would reinterpret the surrogate condition as condoning the unbridled assertion of law without love: the leader rules by fear and attempts to establish fear as the vital principle of a universe ruled by a multiplicity of gods whose attributes mirror the tyrant's demonic characteristics, "Rage, Revenge, or Lust." The point of extreme discontinuity between God and man is this complete withering of the social bond by fear, and so the fragmented society re-establishes its unity through the protective pooling of the self-love of its individuals in social love dedicated to security and peace:

> For, what one likes if others like as well,
> What serves one will, when many wills rebel?
> How shall he keep what, sleeping or awake,
> A weaker may surprise, a stronger take?
> His safety must his liberty restrain:
> All join to guard what each desires to gain,
> Forced into virtue thus by self-defence,
> Ev'n Kings learn'd justice and benevolence:
> Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd,
> And found the private in the public good.
>
> (Essay on Man, III, 273-282)

Pope is interested not only in what man is, but also in where he is, existentially and socially. The point of the Essay on Man is to place man in his proper definitive situations, mortality and society; hence, the poem's use of history is exemplary and didactic, intended to clarify for man his historical misinterpretation of himself as a kind of terrestrial god who can redefine the glorious system of which he is but a part:

> God, in the nature of each being, founds
> Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds:
> But as he fram'd a Whole, the Whole to bless,
> On mutual Wants built mutual Happiness:
> So from the first eternal ORDER ran,
> And creature link'd to creature, man to man.
> Whate'er of life all-quick'ning aether keeps,
> Or breathes thro' air, or shoots beneath the deeps,
> Or pours profuse on earth; one nature feeds
> The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.
> (Essay on Man, III, 109-118)

As an abstract of man, the Essay works within the broad categories of memory (as history), sight, and expectation by taking its position in a generalized present wherein the world is seen as

> A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
> A Wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot,
> Or Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
> (Essay on Man, I, 6-8)

Man is as he has always been since the end of the State of Nature; hence he lives in a kind of perpetual present: an abstraction with countless individual mortal proofs. Man is not perfect, but perfectible, and as a creature who can fall, does fall; for every part of the whole participates in the perfection of the system by possessing the degree of perfectibility God permits it. Thus, man's happiness in his present existence depends not upon the power of unchecked reason to redefine his nature as godlike, or upon his power to acquire in the brief space of his life the sensual and material rewards of greed and ambition, but

rather upon his expectation, his hope, of a future reward for a life lived correctly, within the bounds of his human nature. Man must therefore reverence the present, his mortal situation, as the sphere of self-knowledge. He must involve himself in his world by endeavoring to live virtuously -- that is, by obeying the law of love and moderation. To live the virtuous life Pope outlines as man's responsibility liberates man from the pains of self-division and enables him to exhaust the potential of the health, peace, and competence which element true happiness.

Pope's idea that a kind of Golden Age was the first stage of human history supports his theory of history as being cyclical. Eliade, in The Myth of the Eternal Return, advances the thesis that man has a tendency to react to the "terror of history" by convincing himself that it is possible to "return" to an idyllic beginning: a "sacred time" from which man has fallen into the "profane time" of history. Primitive man accomplishes the return ritualistically; civilized man, nostalgically. The nature of the sacred time is familiar through pastoral poetry as that special period of human experience when life was marked by concord and joy in which all of creation participated. Pope's version of that time in the Essay on Man is so designed that it manifests the perfect operation of self-love and social:

> Nor think, in NATURE'S STATE they blindly trod;
> The state of Nature was the reign of God:
> Self-love and Social at her birth began,
> Union the bond of all things, and of Man.
> Pride then was not; nor arts, that Pride to aid;
> Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade;
> The same his table, and the same his bed;
> No murder cloath'd him, and no murder fed.
> In the same temple, the resounding wood,
> All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God.
> The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
> Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest:

Heav'n's attribute was Universal Care,
And Man's prerogative to rule, but spare.
(Essay on Man, III, 147-160)

Pope's idea of history suggests that man carries with him the pattern of the state of Nature through the vicissitudes of history, although he can never recapture its original perfection. Time has weakened the union that is the bond of all things, and history proceeds in such a way that man again and again must acknowledge his own responsibility for its terrors and strive to act upon the pattern of perfection he carries with him. History is thus cycles of decline and recovery. The actual perfection of the beginnings can never be recovered, but the memory of that time and its pattern of order remain accessible to man.

The cyclical theory has a neatness in the abstract that appeals to Pope. Throughout his career as a poet, he makes use of the theory to comprehend a grand design behind the apparent chaos of history and, by applying it to literary history, to assure himself that parallel patterns of perfection in the works of the great writers of Greece and Rome exist in the tradition of literature as the lodestars of poetry throughout its travails at the hands of hacks and dunces. But in spite of his theory, Pope cannot bring himself to consider that the troubles of history and literature in his own age are but indications of a downswing in the cyclical progress of history and tradition, to be followed in the course of things by a recovery of lost integrity. In his later satires -- the Imitations of Horace, The Dunciad -- he places the present in the context of history and tradition so as to scorn it, and does not place his confidence in cycles, but implies very strongly that, except amongst a few good people, any pattern of perfection has been lost to man. He comes to see man and his world in roughly

Augustinian terms. Augustine writes of "two cities . . . formed by two loves":

> . . . the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own glory; the other says to its God, 'Thou art my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.' In the one, the princes and the nations it subdues are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying, while the former take thought for all.[3]

Pope's elaborate celebration of the green world of pastoral retreat in the Imitations, and his vision of the mechanical world of the self in The Dunciad, concentrate the significance of the pastoral allusions and satirical reductions throughout his poetry into a complete rejection of the city of man he attempts to understand in the Essay on Man.

A consideration of man in the abstract enables Pope to structure his arguments so that his mode of optimistic confidence in man's ability to know himself and to know how to live properly makes sense. But underlying the optimism is an urgency in Pope's constant awareness of man's mortality and of the absolute necessity of the knowledge he advocates, lest man and his society slip into the chaos and dissolution that are the results of unworking the divine order. Pope's consideration of history as the cyclical pattern of human progress and decline enables him to conceive of civilization and barbarism as the fulfillments of constant potentials one or the other of which is latent or active according to external circumstances. For example, he sees the burgeoning speculative economy of his own age as being an appropriate situation for the triumph of uncivilizing immorality. But Pope comes to conceive of man as being capable of revealing characteristics of behaviour which seem to indicate a reversion to a pre-intellectual and pre-moral

condition which traditional ideas of human nature cannot reach. Such is the condition Pope imagines in The Dunciad. If the Essay on Man demonstrates the beauty of life lived well and properly in love and order within a social and, ultimately, cosmic harmony, then The Dunciad shows man in the condition Pope feels he reaches when he departs from the rules of love and order in himself, in his social role, and as a creature who is part of a divine scheme in favour of the self. Pope sees this condition as the unworking of the human definition and presents man in The Dunciad as a gallery of grotesques. The two poems thus investigate polar possibilities for man, in philosophical abstraction and in imaginative overstatement. Neither can in itself, however, accommodate man as he is: subject, in the area between the positive and negative poles, to their contradictory attractions. This is the terrain of Pope's social satires.

For the satirist, time is a dynamic process which has brought forth the present to which he reacts, and the present is the medium of his desperate anger over the timeless folly of man. More than any other poet, he views man in the context of the present and visible world, locating himself in what Milton calls "the visible diurnal sphere",[4] and lamenting all that man has lost in the morass of history, usually by referring to the supposed virtues of earlier times.[5] By comparing the corruptness of the modern world with the spontaneous peace and joy of Golden Ages, or with the grandeur of more heroic times than the present, the satirist establishes a retrospective temporal perspective in which the world, to use Hall's representative judgement, is seen as "Thriving in ill, as it in age decays,"[6] a judgement not completely repudiated by philosophies of progress. A world conditioned to be

optimistic, but whose hopes have been constantly frustrated, is ripe for despair. Usually, the satirist uses his own sense of despair constructively, perceiving by means of this morally terminal condition the sick beauty of man, and painting with anger and compassion both the sickness and the beauty, so that man might see himself.

The satirist's consideration of man in time involves regarding time in terms of fixed determinations -- past, present, future -- hence, in terms of presence and transience. For the purposes of his criticism, he may temporarily isolate the present by reducing time to the present and visible and ironically granting, as Swift does in A Tale of a Tub, the arrogant claim of the present to be the consummation of time and history, but this isolation serves to illuminate the terrifying vulnerability of the presumptuous present to its own reduction by time. The satirist does not presume to define time in terms of the present or past or future alone, but concentrates on the evidence of man's activity and passivity in time as well as on man's reactions to the activity of time in his life. For this reason, he must disarm man by shattering the protective illusions of the present and thus force him to acknowledge that he exists in a perspective defined by the common mortality of all things through all time.

Pope considers human time in terms of the conventional ages of man by cutting away the pretensions and arrogance of man and presenting him as the lost child he truly is:

> Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
> Pleas'd with a rattle, tickl'd with a straw:
> Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,
> A little louder, but as empty quite:
> Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage;
> And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age:
> Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before;
> 'Till tir'd he sleeps, and Life's poor play is o'er.
> (Essay on Man, II, 277-282)

Pope's attitude to time is that of the humanist. In his book, The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism, Paul Fussell states that the humanist "tends to believe that, in all the essentials, human nature is permanent and uniform, quite unchanged by time or place;"[7] hence, his mistrust of innovation and novelty, his strong veneration for the past, and his alarm over "an almost unbearably perverse equation of the eternal with the stylish, the beautiful with the pretty, [which] projects the kind of imaginative corruption inevitably wrought by modernism."[8] Regret over the past thus necessarily involves condemnation of the present;[9] for history and tradition participate critically in the work of a poet like Pope by striking at the roots of wickedness and pretension in a corrupt present through their active or allusive presence in his works. This principle of contrast reinforces the elegiac aspect of satire by clarifying the necessary distinction between "what is essential to man and what extrinsic and temporary"[10] in terms designed to throw into relief the chaos and inhuman mechanistic order, which are the enemies of humanism,[11] by comparing them with the supposed harmony and moral order of earlier times. Pope does not, until The Dunciad, show any signs of taking these opinions to their logical conclusion -- a bleak conviction that man can only get worse and worse as time goes on -- and even in that poem, he is working with an imaginative hypothesis rather than with an idea he can substantiate completely satisfactorily. Pope nowhere else investigates man's lot as abstractly as he does in the Essay on Man, but the theories of the inter-relation of reason and self-love and social he expounds in that poem, and his theory of historical cycles, operate more or less subliminally throughout his satires, so that he sees in human affairs a progressively greater weakening of reason's discriminating and

directing powers and a correspondingly greater strength in unchecked self-love. He fears the power of the city of the self, but in his investigation of it in The Dunciad he portrays Satire and History preserving their strength amid the disorder of dulness. These two forces preserve the pattern of order and, at the same time, devastate the world of self-obsession that has wounded morality and wit and threatens to unwork culture and civilization.

As the critic of the present and visible world, a satirist like Pope can draw upon the resources implied in his triple designation as a "public, social, and classical"[12] poet. In his public character, Pope, like Dryden before him, is the critical voice of a troubled society, exhorting man to realize the necessity of distinguishing between culture and anarchy, wit and nonsense, civilization and barbarism. His exhortation involves his classical character, in that Pope upholds the Ancient position in the conflict between tradition and modernism in his refusal to accept that the course of time necessarily has brought about the improvement of man and his powers which the moderns claim. Maynard Mack writes of the classical orientation of Pope's position:

> The Roman background . . . is a standard that can be used two ways: for a paradigm of the great and good now lost in the corruptions of the present, as in the comparison of George II with Augustus Caesar; or for the headwaters of a stream down which still flow the stable and continuing classic values.[13]

Pope's familiarity with the classical writers and his belief in the relative uniformity of human nature throughout historical change allow him to use the classical background not only to satirize George II, but also to provide a parallel temporal dimension in his satirical survey of the present in the Imitations of Horace. The standards of Horace and the nature of the world in which these standards operate have not been affected by time, as far as Pope is concerned. The ancient and

can be updated so that he speaks in English about a specifically English situation without losing any of the potency of his arguments about man in general and his enduring folly.

Pope's satire is directed to convincing man of his present responsibility: as a moral being who must accomplish within the brief time of his life the essential balance of the carnal and the spiritual, and as a social being who must implement the law of charity in the operation of his society. It is within these contexts that Pope offers his own expression of a number of conventional attitudes to time as it affects individual men and women as well as societies, as it destroys or preserves. The general nature of these attitudes partakes of the old theme of the vanity of human wishes in a world of mutability and uncertain stability, so that his satirical reflections on this theme are tempered by a kind of elegiac compassion. Behind the folly of beautiful women attempting to defeat time by cosmetic means is the pathos of the inevitable decay of beauty and youth. Pope cannot do more than to counsel good sense and good humour as defences against the ravages of ageing, and insist that beauty renews itself through time. Thus, in the Epistle to a Lady the restless women motivated by their desire for pleasure and power as beauties are offered a prophetic vision of the future they can expect if they fail to make good use of time by developing the resources of sense: the sad and weary round of the ghosts of beauty who haunt the scenes of their former glory as if driven to exacerbate the pain of having lost the only resources they had, the physical ones, while new beauties reign. In The Rape of the Lock, Clarissa offers a similar prophecy during the uproar after the Baron's assault on Belinda by placing her in a continuum of beauty, both mythically, [illegible]

vation of her lock beyond the realm of change, and artistically, through this poem in her honour. However, even the art of the poet cannot guarantee preservation. In the Epistle to Mr. Jervas, Pope is forced to admit that he can but preserve what can be described, and in the Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady he goes even further, and doubts the enduring power of the description:

> Poets themselves must fall, like those they sung;
> Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
> Ev'n he, whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
> Shall shortly want the gen'rous tear he pays;
> Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
> And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart,
> Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
> The Muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more!
> (Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady, 75-82)

Pope's methods of dealing with the futility of human ambitions are historical, exemplary, and biographical. From history and literary tradition, and from his own age, he draws examples, parallels, and type-figures to represent the positive and unfortunate aspects of time about which he writes. In Windsor Forest, the poem which deals most explicitly with historical time, the course of English history, the lives of the English kings, and the myths of the Golden and Iron Ages give Pope illustrations of the long-range implications of policies of government which set out to wither the bonds of social love and destroy order. In his Epistle to Mr. Addison, the fall of the Roman empire into fragments of memory -- coins, statues, ruined buildings -- is made an exemplary lesson to England to make good its inevitably limited time of power by ensuring that it pays a proper tribute to the future by preserving the memory of its greatness. Imitating Chaucer in The Temple of Fame, Pope emphasizes the vulnerability of cultural achievement to oblivion in his picture of

the names constantly inscribed upon, and melting away from the temple's wall of ice. To show how time levels the most powerful of men, he presents a somewhat melodramatic, but effective, interpretation of the Duke of Buckingham's fate, in the Epistle to Bathurst:

> In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,
> The floors of plaister, and the walls of dung,
> On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
> With tape-ty'd curtains, never meant to draw,
> The George and Garter dangling from that bed
> Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
> Great Villiers lies -- alas! how chang'd from him,
> That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!
> Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud alcove,
> The bow'r of wanton Shrewsbury and love;
> Or just as gay, at Council, in a ring
> Of mimick'd Statesmen, and their merry King.
> No Wit to flatter, left of all his store!
> No Fool to laugh at, which he valu'd more.
> There, Victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
> And fame; this lord of useless thousands ends.
> (Epistle to Bathurst, 299-314)

Biography does not provide all of Pope's examples. He is willing to submit his own life as evidence to support the positive positions of probity and moderation in his satires on the consequences of man's absorption in appetites and possessions. In the Imitations and in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, he places his personal experience of the importunities of dunces in the autobiographical context of the warfare of the wit's life. Autobiography is one aspect of Pope's method of dealing with present time. While time, both human and historical, occupies an important place in Pope's work, he does not always structure his poems so that they manifest an obvious temporal pattern at every stage. In the series of satires that makes up the Imitations of Horace, for example, Pope's interest is in the specific texture of the present, so that the temporal perspective on this present consists of allusions, both elegiac and historical, within the general allusive framework of Horace's original

poems. Thus, while a major intention of the Imitations is to bring Horace up to date and to compare the classical and modern Augustan ages, the greater part of Pope's attention is given to the condition of the present in itself.

Time is contextual for Pope: the context of man's moral, social, and cultural responsibility to achieve ethical and artistic victory over its corrosive effects. It is a perilous context, in that

> Life can little more supply
> Than just to look about us and to die . . . .
> (Essay on Man, I, 3-4)

The consistency of Pope's general attitude to time as this great context sustains the often apparently contradictory individual attitudes -- time destructive, time regenerative and stabilizing -- in his poems. As I have said, the Essay on Man and The Dunciad are expressions of extremely opposed human possibilities: the positive and the negative. These two poems can thus serve as the co-ordinates of Pope's study of human nature, and the substance of their arguments about man in time can accommodate the positive and negative judgements that characterize Pope's criticism of man in his satires. In the following chapters, I shall study the important ideas and designs of time in Pope's poetry as they participate in his criticism of human nature and human society, and as they contribute to the final great temporal vision of an apocalypse in The Dunciad.

CHAPTER TWO: GOLDEN TIME

Although Pope's development as a satirist shows him tending more and more to indulge himself in millennial or apocalyptic visions, he also laments what man has lost in the course of time and, in a somewhat conventional way, meditates upon the process of time itself. As the poet of the present condition of man and society, the satirist sees time always in terms of permanence and transience. The fluid nature of the present is an aspect of the fluid nature of time; but the past, at any rate, has settled sufficiently to sustain, as precedent, the lessons of history the critical poet teaches to an age that is pure dynamic temporal process, and what history cannot accomplish, the less scientific, but no less psychologically effective, traditional myths can. The Golden Age offered us by poets is more a state of mind than an age that can be located in time, a conviction that there must have been an age of primal innocence rather than anything historically verifiable, but its appeal is none the less urgent for its mythic character, and in the work of a satirical poet like Pope, it can serve as a psychological support for the positive position of his criticism.[1]

Even so disillusioned an actor in history as Swift was moved to outrage by the final couplet of Congreve's "Letter to Viscount Cobham":

> Believe it, Men have ever been the same,
> And all the Golden Age, is but a dream.

Although Swift is prepared to concede "that there may be an equal quantity of virtues always in the world, but sometimes . . . a peck of it in Asia, and hardly a thimble-full in Europe,"[2] nevertheless he considers

Congreve guilty of "a vile and false moral . . 'that all times are equally virtuous and vicious' wherein he differs from all Poets, Philosophers, and Christians that ever writ."[3] The concept of the Golden Age implies not an historical perspective, then, but rather emotional and intellectual engagement with a complex idea: what Eliade calls "sacred time", retrospectively envisioned and cherished, "at once primordial and indefinitely recoverable" and a consolation in the midst of the vicissitudes of "profane, chronological time".[4] Strictly speaking, the Golden Age is outside of time: an age of eternal spring and perfect harmony between man and nature. Hence, its place in the satiric vision, where, through the temporal associations of pastoral allusion, the satirist can express obliquely the extent to which man's folly has disrupted the delicate balance of order which, ideally, allows man, with his limited but possible grandeur, to style himself the mirror of nature.

Pastoral allusion contains the concept of the Golden Age and transmits it subliminally. Thus, as Brower has shown, the glory of Belinda in The Rape of the Lock is shadowed and made poignant in its transience by Pope's graceful and subtle allusions to a time when the world made gay by a nymph's smile was all of nature, and not just a beau monde.[5] The more obvious use of the country-city pattern by Fielding in Tom Jones allows the countryside to symbolize the resources of innocence and goodness to which man can always turn in the disabling moral sickness and discontent of civilization, as symbolized by the city: sacred country, profane city. The same subliminal process can operate non-satirically, of course, though no less didactically. Goldsmith's Deserted Village at once uses sacred and profane time and space in the

poet's recollection of the changes wrought by progress on Auburn; and Pope's Windsor Forest can be understood as a series of politically biased variations on the theme of sacred and profane time.

Although Golden Ages are considered to have great emotional and intellectual relevance to the prisoners of history, part of their peculiar power derives from the irrelevance of time to them. The Golden Age of the past can be populated and described; its associations can resound in a profane context. But any narration of the age imperils its integrity and mystery because narration requires the sequential temporal ordering of experience: narration here imposes time on what is timeless and forces the Golden Age to acknowledge both the perfection of the beginning and the fall into time. The imposition of time challenges the self-sufficiency of the Golden Age. Ideally, the Golden Age should look inward, upon itself, content in its perfection. Narration of the age brings with it the complex associations of time. One thinks of Watteau's Gilles staring sadly into time, the idyllic world behind him.

A somewhat less common subject than the Golden Age of the past is the millennial Golden Age of the future, the most famous treatment of which is Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, in which all of nature rejoices and is reborn in the rebirth of Astraea. Prophetic visions of this sort require seeing the world as becoming perfectly happy because it will no longer be what it now is. The disrupted harmony between man and nature will be restored and the tensions and limitations of time will be eliminated. Perhaps because the perceptions of poetry require the disruptions and the tensions, millennial visions tend to exhaust themselves in joyous hypotheses and exultant ejaculations, the beauty of the words stimulating what the imagination cannot quite comprehend. The millennial vision

functions most satisfactorily -- as does that of the Golden Age of the past -- in a context where it can clarify or emphasize a didactic point about the folly of man in history. Thus, in the Epistle to Burlington, Timon's villa, the symbol of "inverted Nature," is located, nostalgically and prophetically, in Pope's vision of Nature's eventual triumph over her torturers:

> Another age shall see the golden Ear
> Imbrown the Slope, and nod on the Parterre,
> Deep Harvests bury all his pride has plann'd,
> And laughing Ceres re-assume the land.
> (Epistle to Burlington, 173-176)

Pope's most thorough treatments of the Golden Ages are in the Pastorals, Messiah, and Windsor Forest, the three works which contain his most explicit treatments of time as a concept, as opposed to the elegiac and increasingly apocalyptic vision of his later poetry. These poems show Pope dealing with temporal perspectives which will operate importantly, but usually allusively, in his later work, and help us to understand where he locates himself, both intellectually and emotionally, in time.

That Pope should have bothered with pastoral has far more to do with his self-consciously Virgilian pose[6] than with any unexhausted energy to be found in the form. There is no evidence in Pope's sequence that the intellect of the poet has discovered very interesting applications of the pastoral world to general human experience, beyond the commonplaces of the pastoral tradition, and his remarks in the Discourse on Pastoral Poetry indicate what he considers to be proper to the form: his eclogues, he says, will comprise "all the subjects which the Critics upon Theocritus and Virgil will allow to be fit for pastoral."[7] This is hardly the statement of a poet determined to break new ground, but it is

very definitely the statement of one determined to place himself in a tradition:

> since the instructions given for any art are to be deliver'd as that art is in perfection, they must of necessity be deriv'd from those in whom it is acknowledged so to be.[8]

To depart from the strictures of Aristotle and Horace, to defy the practice of Theocritus and Virgil, is to run the risk of producing those deracinated pastorals which Pope ridicules in his Guardian essay on Ambrose Philips: those bucolic romps with regional dialects, the idylls of an Age of Lead.

Whatever enduring virtues Pope's Pastorals have are the results of the great care he took over the design and the versification,[9] and not of any substantial variations of the traditional form. "The range of pastoral is indeed narrow," Johnson writes, "for though nature itself, philosophically considered, be inexhaustible, yet its general effects on the eye and on the ear are uniform, and incapable of much variety of description."[10] The whole point of Pope's attempt at pastoral is to release what potential variety remains in the limited range of the form, and this he accomplishes primarily in the beautiful, if somewhat too refined, poetry of description in the sequence, and in his complex organization of time.

Pope preserves the traditionally poignant central theme of pastoral, love and death, and his attitude to time is the one conventional to the form. In his discussion of Poussin's Realm of Flora, Panofsky comments on the idea of metamorphosis which underlies the pastoral preoccupation with love and death:

> we must bear in mind that the extinction of one beauty means the genesis of another and that unending love is at the bottom of all those tragic deaths, which therefore do not signify annihilation but metamorphosis.

The temporal organization of Pope's sequence is such that two views of love intersect: the shepherds experience the joys and pains of mortal love in the context of nature's love, expressed in her inexhaustible creative vitality. Pope orders his pastorals in such a way that their thematic direction is to the emblematic "Time conquers All, and we must Time obey" in "Winter", the poem which concentrates the ideas of extinction and metamorphosis and at the same time resolves the temporal perspectives which operate in the sequence. The emblem implies a final commitment to the power of time, and the temporal organization of the suite an ultimate understanding of the degree of pleasure and pain that can be experienced in time.

The central thematic perspective in the Pastorals is based upon the neo-classic theory of the form, deriving from the eclogues of Virgil and the critical opinions of Aristotle and Horace, and promulgated principally by Rapin.[12] According to this view of the genre, pastoral must be "an 'imitation' of the action of a shepherd living in the Golden Age":[13]

> The original of Poetry is ascribed to that age which succeeded the creation of the world: And as the keeping of flocks seems to have been the first employment of mankind, the most ancient sort of poetry was probably pastoral . . . .
>
> If we would copy Nature, it may be useful to take this Idea along with us, that Pastoral is an image of what they call the Golden Age.[14]

It is on the basis of the perspective afforded by the Golden Age that Pope attempts to explicate "the general moral of innocence and simplicity, which is common to . . . authors of pastoral,"[15] although he does not provide the juxtaposition of pastoral innocence and "civilized" experience which makes sense of the moral. The world Pope creates in the sequence is perfect of its kind: a world where "all art is nature and all nature art, where every lament is an elegy, every scene a variation,

every feeling a lyric."[16] But the poems do not suggest or seem to invite an imaginative escape into a golden world, but rather a dependence on the temporal associations of a familiar genre and a determination to allow aesthetic response to conventional machinery to take the place of full engagement with the idea of sacred time. One's response to the poignancy of the shepherds' experience and to their final sombre confrontation with time lacks the emotional intensity that might have been possible if the poems had satisfactorily conveyed an impression of a blessed time, forever lost but always alive in the memory. Pope's shepherds strike conventional attitudes in a deliberately artificial world which, as Brower suggests, is closer to the fête champêtre than to the simple grandeur of the Golden Age.[17]

Pope arranges his Pastorals in a scheme based upon Spenser's Shepheardes Calender. In the Discourse on Pastoral Poetry, Pope expresses his admiration of Spenser's work:

> The addition of a Calendar to his Eclogues is very beautiful . . . . He compares human Life to the several Seasons, and at once exposes to his readers a view of the great and little worlds, in their various changes and aspects.[18]

But Pope faults Spenser's twelve-month division of his pastorals for its repetitiveness: the poet has been obliged

> to repeat the same description . . . for three months together; or when it was exhausted before, entirely to omit it . . . . The reason is evident, because the year has not that variety in it to furnish every month with a particular description, as it may every season.[19]

What Pope substitutes for Spenser's division of the Shepheardes Calender into twelve poems for twelve months is a division into four poems, one for each season. In this way, he makes good his remark in the Discourse that some acknowledgement must be made of "the several ages of man, and the different passions proper to each age."[20]

Within the seasonal division, Pope further arranges time so that the progress of the year is simultaneously the progress of a day: Spring-morning, Summer-afternoon, Autumn-evening, Winter-night. The effect of this arrangement is to dovetail two conceptions of time as the image of eternity. The diurnal scheme, a progress from dawn to midnight, when another day begins, is a small circle of time within the larger circular progress from Spring to Winter, when another year begins. But while the day and the year are renewed (and in their renewal is time's), there is a strong sense at the end of the sequence that human participation in these cycles is purely linear. The tension in "Winter" derives from the parallel presentation in that poem of the potency of Time as "the divine principle of eternal and inexhaustible creativeness"[21] and of mortality. Human experience becomes a series of intense presents which, once past, cannot be recovered experientially, but only mnemonically, ritualistically. The sacred time forever lost is "remembered" imaginatively; the past receives man's consecration. Thyrsis, on behalf of all the shepherds, bids farewell to the world, and the farewell suggests that the pastoral paradise is gone forever. The Golden Age thus becomes the complex symbol of the immanence of all time and eternity in human life and of the poignant endurance of man in the face of the ravages of time:

> All, to re-flourish, fades;
> As in a wheel, all sinks, to re-ascend:
> Emblems of man, who passes, not expires.[22]

The thematic and temporal patterns with which Pope works in the Pastorals are established suggestively in the first poem, "Spring", whose form is the conventional singing-contest of pastoral. The songs of Daphnis and Strephon celebrate the mortal beauty of Sylvia and Delia,

a beauty powerful enough in the eyes of the smitten shepherds to subdue the beauty and power of Nature:

STREPHON.

All Nature mourns, the Skies relent in Show'rs,
Hush'd are the Birds, and clos'd the drooping Flow'rs;
If Delia smile, the Flow'rs begin to spring,
The Skies to brighten, and the Birds to sing.

DAPHNIS.

All Nature laughs, the Groves are fresh and fair,
The Sun's mild Lustre warms the vital Air;
If Sylvia smiles, new Glories gild the Shore,
And vanquish'd Nature seems to charm no more.
("Spring," 69-76)

With their limited diurnal view, Strephon and Daphnis perceive an important truth, that love is the principle of life, but their immersion in present joy prevents them from recognizing that the principle is transcendent, in that it defies easy definition in terms of human pleasure and delight. The diurnal view of things in the sequence belongs to the shepherds and emphasizes both the human isolation in the present and the limitations of human understanding of love and death. The two shepherds make graceful equations of spring and love and joy, but they are not aware of the deeper implications of much that they say and do, although, of course, one does not expect shepherds in this kind of pastoral to show the degree of awareness expressed by the speakers in, say, The Shepheardes Calender or Lycidas. Daphnis' rather facetious prayer to Love as the contest is about to begin contains, in a line, the whole painful experience of the singers in these poems:

Thy Victim, Love, shall be the Shepherd's Heart.
("Spring," 52)

He has offered as his stake in the contest a bowl on which are carved symbolic figures representing the seasons and the signs of the zodiac.

His understanding of the figures is limited. While he correctly identifies the "Four Figures rising from the Work" as representing "The various Seasons of the Rowling Year," he does not commit himself on the rest of the design:

> And what is That, which binds the Radiant Sky,
> Where twelve fair Signs in beauteous Order lye?
> ("Spring," 11, 39-40)

What Daphnis offers is, symbolically, time, although he is not conscious of offering more than the bowl itself and his comprehension of the figures is restricted to the modest "skill in astronomy" which Pope considered it useful for a shepherd of the Golden Age to have.[23] Both sets of figures symbolize the measurement of time's passage: the seasonal division of the year into four periods based on the changes in the earth's position in regard to the sun, and the astrological division emphasizing the influence of the celestial motions of the moon, the sun, and the planets on the fortunes of man throughout the year. At this point in the suite, although the shepherds are aware of the sympathetic connection between man and nature, the only emotions they seem to feel are the happy ones. They cannot themselves register unhappiness. Sadness is a rainy day, and love makes of life an endless spring. The developing understanding of time in the sequence is to be measured emotionally. The difficulties of human love convince the shepherds that there is no connection between human fickleness and natural change. What they perceive as a lack of sympathy in nature is, in fact, the most portentous sign of the disintegration of their world. The death of the idyll is the fall into time, and the knowledge the shepherds gain is of the benign implacability of Love and its agent, Time. Pope's careful design of time in the sequence permits us to

participate emotionally in the idyll without allowing us to commit ourselves to timelessness, and, at the same time, in the action of the shepherds, it narrates the transition from perfect, because timeless, beginnings to the necessary, if painful, commitment to time. The diurnal, seasonal, and astrological measurements of time in the poems serve to order the emotional measurement in which we participate, and ensure that there is no denial of time: "Time conquers All, and we must Time obey."

All of this suggests that the world of Pope's pastorals, in spite of his intention, is not really part of a Golden Age at all, except in the limited sense that the action is set in "that age which succeeded the creation of the world."[24] Indeed, Pope's idea of what constitutes "a perfect image of that happy time" has more to do with decorum than with imaginative verisimilitude:

> So that we are not to describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceiv'd then to have been; when the best of men follow'd the employment . . . . And an air of piety to the gods should shine thro' the Poem, which so visibly appears in all the works of antiquity: And it ought to preserve some relish of the old way of writing; the connections should be loose, the narrations and descriptions short, and the periods concise . . . .
>
> We must . . . use some illusion to render a Pastoral delightful; and this consists in exposing the best side only of a shepherd's life, and in concealing its miseries.[25]

What shadows Pope's attempt at a Golden Age is the emotional misery which enters the sequence in "Summer," intensifies in "Autumn," and finds some relief in "Winter." Once the joyousness of "Spring," with its celebration of love and life, has ended, the poems are concerned exclusively with love and death.

In "Summer," Alexis sings the perplexity of the unpractised heart, and Love, in Pope's introductory homage to Garth, is equated with disease. Music helps to sustain Alexis in the lack of sympathy he

finds in the girl he loves is his confidence in the continued sympathetic connection between himself and Nature:

> Ye shady Beeches, and ye cooling Streams,
> Defence from Phoebus', not from Cupid's Beams;
> To you I mourn; nor to the Deaf I sing,
> The Woods shall answer, and their Echo ring.
> The Hills and Rocks attend my doleful Lay,
> Why art Thou prouder and more hard than they?
> ("Summer," 13-18)

As in "Spring," the heart's happiness sees love in terms of eternal springtime, but in "Summer," the heart's sadness sees its absence in terms of spring's opposite:

> The sultry Sirius burns the thirsty Plains,
> While in thy Heart Eternal Winter reigns.
> ("Summer," 21-22)

The hopelessness of Alexis' situation is evident in his abandonment of song, symbolized in his rejection of Colin's flute. It little rewards him that "the rural Throng," the satyrs, Pan, and the nymphs, applaud his song when the one for whose love he sings is disdainful. His perplexity derives from his naive awareness that while love is the principle of life in the world around him, it is of deadly potential in human relations:

> This harmless Grove no lurking Viper hides,
> But in my Breast the Serpent Love abides.
> ("Summer," 67-68)

This couplet echoes Daphnis' "Thy Victim, Love, shall be the Shepherd's Heart" in "Spring" and introduces Alexis' beautiful tribute to the love he sings, the love that is creative of happiness and beauty, the love the shepherds fail to find between human beings:

> Where-e'er you walk, cool Gales shall fan the Glade,
> Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a Shade.
> Where-e'er you tread, the blushing Flow'rs shall rise,
> And all things flourish where you turn your Eyes.
> Oh! how I long with you to pass my Days,
> Invoke the Muses, and resound your Praise!

> Your Praise the Birds shall chant in ev'ry Grove,
> And Winds shall waft it to the Pow'rs above.
> But wou'd you sing, and rival Orpheus' Strain,
> The wond'ring Forests soon shou'd dance again,
> The moving Mountains hear the pow'rful Call,
> And headlong Streams hang list'ning in their Fall!
> ("Summer," 73-84)

Alexis' song foreshadows the paeans to Daphne, the goddess of love and beauty, in "Winter," the poem which resolves the theme of love and death and suggests that the relief Alexis seeks is to be found through confidence in the transcendent love Daphne embodies.

Hylas and Aegon, in "Autumn," complain of unrequited love as "the fleet Shades glide o'er the dusky Green," and the quality of their unhappiness and their way of expressing it do not differ very much from those of Alexis in "Summer." What distinguishes "Autumn" from "Summer" is the contrast between the outcomes once the complaints have been voiced. Alexis, in "Summer," is left in his sorry state:

> On me Love's fiercer Flames for ever prey,
> By Night he scorches, as he burns by Day.
> ("Summer," 91-92)

In "Autumn," Hylas finds relief from his sorrow when his Delia returns, but Aegon's more mournful strain goes unanswered. While Hylas and Alexis have been inspired by love's absence to glorify the joys attendant upon its presence, Aegon's concentration is completely on love's absence. Hence, the more sombre tone of his complaint and its imagery of death in the midst of the fecundity of Nature:

> Resound ye Hills, resound my mournful Lay!
> Beneath yon Poplar oft we past the Day:
> Oft on the Rind I carv'd her Am'rous Vows,
> While She with Garlands hung the bending Boughs:
> The Garlands fade, the Vows are worn away;
> So dies her Love, and so my Hopes decay.
> Resound ye Hills, resound my mournful Strain!
> Now bright Arcturus glads the teeming Grain,
> Now Golden Fruits on loaded Branches shine,
> And grateful Clusters swell with floods of Wine:

> Now blushing Berries paint the yellow Grove;
> Just Gods! shall all things yield Returns but Love?
> ("Autumn," 65-76)

The degree of Aegon's alienation from life is clear in his repudiation of his duties as a shepherd and in his determination to abandon the pastoral world, which he now sees as being blighted by Love:

> I know thee Love! on foreign Mountains bred,
> Wolves gave thee suck, and savage Tygers fed.
> Thou wert from Aetna's burning Entrails torn,
> Got by fierce Whirlwinds, and in Thunder born!
> ("Autumn," 11. 89-92)

His denial of love, in his despair of ever understanding it, amounts to a denial of life. As the poem ends, Aegon is planning to commit suicide, choosing death over life. This is the most extreme reaction in the sequence to the pain of living. The theme of human mortality thus enters the pastorals just before the poem that concerns the death and rebirth of nature, and emphasizes the short date of human participation in the cycles of nature and the pathetically limited understanding human beings can achieve of love in time.

In "Winter" the dead goddess Daphne is equated with Love, and the song of mourning sung in her honour by Thyrsis defines the aspects of Love now vanished in barren winter: the death of Daphne is the death of beauty, pleasure, sweetness, and music. Nature has suspended all of her activity; the world is silent and white in mourning. Life has fled the world. The emotional correlatives of the barren winter world in this pastoral are the conventional ones, but human love with its joys and pains is not the central concern. The development of this theme in the three preceding poems has suggested, in the progressively darkening tone and imagery, a view of human love as something perplexing and enervating, an enigma that cannot be understood in the limited,

present-oriented, purely human context. Hence, the poem is not truly "plaintive", as Spenser's winter pastorals are, because Pope seems less interested in the pathos of human response to the season of death than in the death of nature itself. In "Januarye," Colin Clout sees an analogy between the mournful condition of nature and his own emotional state, but the analogy is supported by his memory of other natural analogies to other emotional states:

> Thou barrein ground, whome winters wrath hath wasted,
> Art made a myrrhour, to behold my plight:
> Whilome thy fresh spring flowrd, and after hasted
> Thy sommer prowde with Daffadillies dight.
> And now is come thy wynters stormy state,
> Thy mantle mard, wherein thou maskedst late.
> (Shepheardes Calender, "Januarye," 19-24)

A sentiment like this, appearing in the first of the twelve monthly poems, suggests that Spenser's year is but one in a pastoral continuity and that the inhabitants of Colin's world have gone beyond the devastating first experience of the death of nature that is Pope's subject in "Winter." This amounts to stating the obvious, of course: that Spenser's pastoral world is not placed in the Golden Age. Thus, in "December" Colin accepts the fact that "all things perish and come to their last end," as the poet explains the emblem of the poem (Vivitur ingenio: caetera mortis erunt), and he says farewell to a world that will continue without him:

> Adieu delightes, that lulled me asleepe,
> Adieu my deare, whose loue I boughte so deare:
> Adieu my little Lambes and loued sheepe,
> Adieu ye Woodes that oft my witness were:
> Adieu good Hobbinol, that was so true,
> Tell Rosalind, her Colin bids her adieu.
> (Shepheardes Calender, "December," 151-156)

The poignancy of Colin's farewell is in his acknowledgement of the people and things that were responsible for his emotional experience.

In Pope's "Winter," however, the last lines express the end of a world rather than that of a year or of a single life. Thyrsis bids adieu to a condition of life which can never be recovered in time:

> Adieu ye Vales, ye Mountains, Streams, and Groves,
> Adieu ye Shepherd's rural Lays and Loves,
> Adieu my Flocks, farewell ye Sylvan Crew,
> Daphne farewell, and all the World adieu!
> ("Winter," 89-92)

The association of the death and transfiguration of Daphne with those of nature emphasizes the newness of the experience of mutability in Pope's pastoral world and shows a clarity of human understanding of the vast beauty of mutability which, in the course of things, will probably develop into the attitude of resignation Colin Clout embodies in "December," but is, at the end of golden time, full of awe over the power of nature to renew itself endlessly.

In the apotheosis of Daphne beyond the world of mutability, the transcendence of love as the principle of eternal and inexhaustible creativeness is defined. Eternal immutable love manifests itself in time through the cycles of life and death in nature which image its power and beauty:

> But see! where Daphne wond'ring mounts on high,
> Above the Clouds, above the Starry Sky.
> Eternal Beauties grace the shining Scene,
> Fields ever fresh, and Groves for ever green!
> There, while You rest in Amaranthine Bow'rs,
> Or from those Meads select unfading Flow'rs,
> Behold us kindly who your Name implore,
> Daphne, our Goddess, and our Grief no more!
> ("Winter," 69-76)

The perspective the shepherds have gained on immutability and mutability enables them to locate themselves in time, whose victims they now realize they are. The harmony of their world has existed because they and nature have responded to the love in each other. Both man and

nature participate in the world of mutability; hence, they maintain their sympathetic connection in death as in life. But nature returns, eternally idyllic as it has been, while man passes, in his understanding of time and his commitment to its power, beyond the idyll. He can return only imaginatively, his perception of its harmony and of his participation in it confused and obscured by his participation in the storms of time symbolized in the constellation to whose influence Thyrsis alludes in the last lines of the poem:

> But see, Orion sheds unwhol'some Dews,
> Arise, the Pines a noxious Shade diffuse;
> Sharp Boreas blows, and Nature feels Decay,
> Time conquers All, and we must Time obey.
> ("Winter," 85-88)

As I have suggested, Pope's Pastorals are not so much imaginative visions of a Golden Age as a suite of variations on the theme of human participation in time. His speculations about time can scarcely be considered profound, although his manner of presenting them involves some interesting problems of temporal design which help to rescue the poems from the rather boring artificiality this genre acquired in the hands of the followers of Rapin and Fontenelle. That Pope shared the general nostalgia for the mythic ages of spontaneous harmony between man and nature is obvious in his frequent allusions to such ages throughout his career as a poet; but when these allusions occur, they function as haunting suggestions of the peace of order that is possible when man accedes to his limitations, not the least of which is his temporal limitation in mortality, rather than as escapes into never-never land.

Ecstasy is to Golden Ages of the future what nostalgia is to Golden Ages of the past, and in the Messiah one is hard pressed to find

the authentic ecstasy of Pope in his imitation of that of Virgil and Isaiah. To be sure, in the Advertisement to the poem, Pope makes no claims of originality. The occasion of the poem was his discovery of certain parallels between Virgil's Pollio and the Book of Isaiah:

> This will not seem surprizing when we reflect, that the Eclogue was taken from a Sybilline prophecy on the same subject. One may judge that Virgil did not copy it line by line, but selected such Ideas as best agreed with the nature of pastoral poetry, and disposed them in that manner which serv'd most to beautify his piece. I have endeavour'd the same in this imitation of him, tho' without admitting any thing of my own; since it was written with this particular view, that the reader by comparing the several thoughts might see how far the images and descriptions of the Prophet are superior to those of the poet.[26]

Setting aside the poet's pious intentions and the question of whether or not Virgil was in some way influenced by Isaiah, we may approach the Messiah as an exercise in the millennial vision which demonstrates both the appeal and the peculiar shortcomings of this way of regarding the future.

Pope's Messiah, as the editors of the Twickenham edition point out, is not an attempt to compete with Isaiah, but rather "to cast the words of a mighty ancient into a form and idiom for his own age."[27] What this involves is seeing the transfiguration of the world by the presence of the Messiah in terms of rather stately joy. This poem, more than any other by Pope, is characterized by the sublime, with its appeal to the sense of wonder through its rapturous and impassioned concentration on the astonishing. Because the poem deals with the transformation of time into eternity, the creations of time are given a heightened reality through the poet's elaborate use of descriptive epithets,[28] so that their dissolution in the presence of the Messiah becomes symbolic of the consummation of time in the pure light of eternity. The consummation of time involves a return of the concord

and peace that existed before man's fall into time, a situation thrillingly unreal in that it contradicts experience:

> The Lambs with Wolves shall graze the verdant Mead,
> And Boys in flow'ry Bands the Tyger lead;
> The Steer and Lion at one Crib shall meet;
> The smiling Infant in his Hand shall take
> The crested Basilisk and Snake;
> Pleas'd, the green Lustre of the Scales survey,
> And with their forky Tongue shall innocently play.
> (Messiah, 77-84)

The mood throughout the poem is of ecstatic jubilation over the impending transformation of the world by the incarnated God, and it is perhaps the nature of ecstasy that it is more concerned with effects than with causes. Certainly, Pope is not departing from Virgil and Isaiah in this respect, but what one misses is the awesome sense of the significant event that sanctifies time as well as transforming it: the very thing that makes both the Pollio and the Book of Isaiah remarkable. In the ecstatic contemplation of the eventual effects of the coming, there is hardly a place for the consideration of tensions between time and eternity that the coming produces, tensions operating powerfully in a poem like Milton's much less ecstatic, but more powerfully suggestive, ode, On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.

Milton's poem locates the birth of Christ exactly in time:

> This is the month, and this the happy morn,
> Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King,
> Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,
> Our great redemption from above did bring . . . .
> (On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, 1-4)

In these first lines, Milton concentrates the paradox of eternity in time not only through the juxtaposition of the adjective "eternal" to the specifically temporal associations of "month" and "day", but also through his allusion to the mystery of the immaculate conception of Christ in a mortal mother. The birth of Christ fulfills the vision of

the prophets, and brings to the world of man Heaven's eternal light, clothed in "a darksome house of mortal clay." Milton's poem celebrates the event by describing both the subjugation of time's chaos by the divine child, and the reverential peace of Nature: the spear and shield are idle; the false gods have been routed; all of Nature is silent before the heavenly music that announces the coming. The music of the spheres presages the dissolution of time by its power to summon the sinless Golden Age:

> For, if such holy song
> Enwrap our fancy long,
> Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold;
> And speckled Vanity
> Will sicken soon and die;
> And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould;
> And Hell itself will pass away,
> And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.
> (On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, 133-140)

Time comes full circle in the new Golden Age of Truth and Justice, but Milton's perspective on this age is across time, so that what he sings is not the fulfillment of Christ's redemption of time, but rather the portentous fact of Christ's birth:

> But wisest Fate says No,
> This must not yet be so;
> The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
> That on the bitter cross
> Must redeem our loss,
> So both himself and us to glorify:
> Yet first, to those chained in sleep,
> The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep . . . .
> (On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, 149-156)

Pope's poem is no less portentous than Milton's, and it very clearly celebrates the responsibility of the "auspicious Babe" for the glorious new Age of Gold, but its rapturous indulgence in description of the accomplishment of the age tends to allow the rich associations of language to usurp the task of the imagination. The point of the com-

trast with Milton's ode is not to argue that both poets intended to do the same thing with a similar theme and that Pope is comparatively unsuccessful, but is rather to emphasize the advantages to a poem inspired by the millennial vision of a substantial grounding. Wordsworth over-reacts to the diction of the Messiah when he castigates it for being "extravagant and absurd,"[29] but he is right in suspecting the ability of rather florid poetry to sustain the grandeur of its impulse without slipping into vulgarity. That Pope avoids this tendency is owing to his complete commitment to the musical potential of the ecstatic vision. The Twickenham editors, with some justification, call the Messiah a cantata, and discuss its structure in musical terms;[30] for if it does not quite capture the mind and the imagination, it does appeal strongly, in the beauty and associations of its images and in the dignified but joyful pace of its numbers, to one's sense of wonder at the power of sound to organize itself into patterns that are emotionally, if not intellectually, coherent.

Windsor Forest is the first poem by Pope in which temporal perspectives are defined in relation to a significant event in history: the Treaty of Utrecht, which brought peace to Britain in 1713. Such is the design of the poem that its pastoral elements bring to the celebration of the peace the idyllic associations of the Golden Age and echo the didactic pastoralism of Virgil's Georgics and Denham's Cooper's Hill, this fusion of associations thus creating the appropriate context for Pope's celebration of the historical Age of Gold over which Queen Anne presides. "Good and golden kings make good and golden ages," Raleigh writes in his History, "and all times have brought forth of both

sorts."[31] Pope arranges time in this poem so that the Stuart present, with its "Peace and Plenty," absorbs in its potency the scattered gold of the past and, in its splendid destiny, subdues the furies of the Iron Ages.

The parallel presentation of sacred and profane times thus confers on the Tory Peace the resounding approbation deserved by the unique event which redeems time, by dissolving the distinction between mythic and chronological times:

> The contemporary moment can be set in the larger context of the historical and mythical past so that it becomes endowed with particular symbolic meaning: in the crudest terms, Windsor Forest under the Tory Peace contains the potentialities of the New Jerusalem, the world's new Golden Age, and the poem prophesies the immanent rejuvenation of man and society under the aegis of Anne. The world of time and space is about to be assimilated into the world of ideality.[32]

Pope makes of Windsor Forest a temporal Elysium subject to the ravages of the kings of Iron Time, but sanctified in its historical role by its power to reclaim its Elysian identity as the domain of the kings of Golden Time. Hence, in the first part of the poem, Pope narrates the chronicle of past time in such a way that the chaos of history is seen as being the result of a destructive tension between man and nature, the opposite of the harmonious confusion of nature itself (concordia discors).[33] It is to the harmonious confusion of activities in the Augustan Age of Gold that Pope directs his chronicle as the crowning point of history: that is, to the Golden Time of the recovered harmony between man and nature. Hence, in the poet's retrospective point of view, history itself becomes a record of time's power to organize its own confusions into harmony. For this reason, Pope passes from his protracted opening view of the concordia discors in the Forest (in the context, what might be called political nature, in that it concentrates the

natural-political analogies which operate in the poem) to a consideration of history in terms of the analogies.

From the vantage point of the glorious Stuart present, Pope views the reign of the Norman kings:

> Rich Industry sits smiling on the Plains,
> And Peace and Plenty tell, a STUART reigns.
> Not thus the Land appear'd in Ages past,
> A dreary Desart and a gloomy Waste,
> To Savage Beasts and Savage Laws a Prey,
> And Kings more furious and severe than they:
> Who claim'd the Skies, dispeopled Air and Floods,
> The lonely Lords of empty Wilds and Woods.
> Cities laid waste, they storm'd the Dens and Caves,
> (For wiser Brutes were backward to be Slaves.)
> What could be free, when lawless Beasts obey'd,
> And ev'n the Elements a Tyrant sway'd?
> (Windsor Forest, 41-52)

The Norman kings, in their relentless indulgence in blood sports, dislocated man by separating him from his necessary contexts: nature, society, and religion. The effect of their reign was not merely to devastate both the land and human society, but the whole harmonious course of life, so that they made of their world a wasteland:

> The Fields are ravish'd from th' industrious Swains,
> From Men their Cities, and from Gods their Fanes:
> The levell'd Towns with Weeds lie cover'd o'er,
> The hollow Winds thro' naked Temples roar;
> Round broken Columns clasping Ivy twin'd;
> O'er Heaps of Ruin stalk'd the stately Hind;
> The Fox obscene to gaping Tombs retires,
> And savage Howlings fill the sacred Quires.
> (Windsor Forest, 65-72)

The justice the Norman kings met was in kind. William I, having laid waste the land, died shortly after falling from a horse while hunting and was denied a place of burial, while his sons, Richard and William Rufus, were both killed during hunts in the Forest.

The death of the Norman kings signalizes the end of an Iron Age and summons the early activity of time to arrange itself into a Golden

Age:

> Succeeding Monarchs heard the Subjects Cries,
> Nor saw displeas'd the peaceful Cottage rise.
> Then gath'ring Flocks on unknown Mountains fed,
> O'er sandy Wilds were yellow Harvests spread,
> The Forests wonder'd at th' unusual Grain,
> And secret Transport touch'd the conscious Swain.
> Fair Liberty, Britannia's Goddess, rears
> Her chearful Head, and leads the golden Years.
> (Windsor Forest, 85-92)

At this point, Pope, again squarely located in the new Age of Gold, takes up the ruinous pastime of the Norman kings, blood sports, and uses it, as "sylvan War," as a metaphor for actual war. The sports that had caused devastation thus become, under the controlling peace of the new age, acceptable outlets for the aggressive instincts man still has, in spite of the glorious peace. Pope's mode of dealing with the present in Windsor Forest is celebratory. Hence, the passages on hunting and fishing during the new Golden Age end with acclaim for Anne, who is now styled a goddess fit to rival Diana, and whose domain can withstand the boast of Arcadia. It is here that Pope places his controversial myth of Lodona, the huntress who, in her eagerness, strays beyond the Forest, is pursued by Pan, and in her anguish, begs the help of Father Thames and Cynthia, who transform her into a stream (the river Loddon, a tributary of the Thames). There is little that can be added to David R. Hauser's admirable study of the significance of the Lodona myth in the poem.[34] Hauser sees the myth as part of a series of complex symbolical figures and situations necessary to the poet's task of making "the ideal space of Arcadia and the ideal time of the mythical Golden Age coalesce with the historical moment."[35] In the return of universal peace under Anne, the Queen is associated with the myth of Astraea:

Now the star Virgo beneath the feet of Boötes, the maiden Astraea once lived among men of the Golden Age and served as judge in their assemblies. In the Silver Age, however, she withdrew from society and spoke to men only to threaten them with punishment for their wickedness. Finally, because of the progressive deterioration of human behavior, she fled to the heavens, where she is still visible but remote and serves as a reminder that man and society have suffered a fall from their former state of perfection.[36]

The reign of Anne is thus the return of Astraea, and the nymph Lodona is her parallel:

As Astraea is driven from Arcadia by the wickedness of men, so Lodona is pursued by Pan's brutish lust; as Astraea is to return to dwell harmoniously among men of the new Golden Age, so Lodona returns to the Forest and participates in its new life by reflecting it and by inspiring the poet-shepherd. The Astraea symbol, moreover, contains within itself the values generated by Lodona -- justice, mercy, immortal achievement, and, above all, cosmic harmony. All the connotations involved in the creation of Lodona are united in this one figure.[37]

As the river Loddon, the metamorphosed Lodona reflects eternally the glory of the Forest and, in paying tribute to great Father Thames, shares in the military and commercial wonders of this place of "earthly Gods."

In his panegyric to Father Thames, Pope brings to a splendid end his celebration of the Stuart present by exalting the glory of the Forest beyond anything the worlds of time and space or of the imagination can offer to rival it:

> Not Neptune's self from all his Streams receives
> A wealthier Tribute, than to thine he gives.
> No Seas so rich, so gay no Banks appear,
> No Lake so gentle, and no Spring so clear.
> Nor Po so swells the fabling Poet's Lays,
> While led along the Skies his Current strays,
> As thine, which visits Windsor's fam'd Abodes,
> To grace the Mansion of our earthly Gods.
> Nor all his Stars above a Lustre show,
> Like the bright Beauties on thy Banks below;
> Where Jove, subdu'd by mortal Passion still,
> Might change Olympus for a nobler Hill.
> (Windsor Forest, 223-234)

Here, Pope places a transitional passage which modulates the tone of

jubilation as it praises the virtues of retirement and seeks amongst the roll of dead poets the proper voice to sing in detail the heroes of England's past and the horror of its strifes, as well as the beauty of the newly peaceful world. Pope manages the tone so skilfully here that in his brief summary of possible historical subjects for the privileged poet he develops in the imagery of the most recent past, that which immediately preceded the reign of Queen Anne, a sense of a history apparently self-infected in its power to accomplish evil. The plague and the Great Fire thus concentrate all of the wickedness of time to be banished by Anne, whose power here is more god-like than it is anywhere else in the poem:

> What Tears has Albion shed,
> Heav'ns! what new Wounds, and how her old have bled?
> She saw her Sons with purple Deaths expire,
> Her sacred Domes involv'd in rolling Fire,
> A dreadful Series of Intestine Wars,
> Inglorious Triumphs, and dishonest Scars.
> At length great ANNA said -- Let Discord cease!
> She said, the World obey'd, and all was Peace!
> (Windsor Forest, 321-328)

Anne's fiat summons Father Thames from his watery bed to speak the prophetic vision of England's triumphant destiny. His presence makes silver of England's waters, while London, as Augusta, rises in gold: the golden city of the new Golden Age. Father Thames addresses his vision to "Sacred Peace," the gift of Anne to England, and to the country's sacred future. His repudiation of the aggressive nations of Europe and his restriction of war, amongst Englishmen, to the relatively harmless games of the "Sylvan Chace" prepare us for his celebration of England as "The World's Great Oracle in Times to come," the oracle of peace. Pope sustains the tone of ebullient confidence so well that even the novelty of pastoral imperialism seems possible and

desirable, at least in the context of a celebratory poem using ideas and associations of the Golden Age. Exploitation becomes the tribute a grateful world pays to a country powerful in peace:

> For me the Balm shall bleed, and Amber flow,
> The Coral redden, and the Ruby glow,
> The Pearly Shell its lucid Globe infold,
> And Phoebus warm the ripening Ore to Gold.
> (Windsor Forest, 393-396)

In the poem's soaring conclusion, the whole world is floating on the seas to Britain to pay homage to the earthly gods of peace, and in its homage is the promise that the reign of peace will be extended throughout the earth:

> Oh stretch thy Reign, fair Peace! from Shore to Shore,
> Till Conquest cease, and Slav'ry be no more:
> Till the freed Indians in their native Groves
> Reap their own Fruits, and woo their sable Loves,
> Peru once more a Race of Kings behold,
> And other Mexico's be roof'd with Gold.
> (Windsor Forest, 407-411)

The extension of the Golden Age to the rest of the world presumably will come about once the new Arcadia is satisfied that sufficient tribute has been paid to its greatness.[38]

Windsor Forest is the first of Pope's poems to be grounded solidly in "the visible diurnal sphere" of his greatest work, and the only one of these poems to be concerned centrally and exclusively with the celebration of present time. As a kind of origin myth, rich with the associations of classical and English poetry and tradition, it recounts the emergence of harmony out of the chaos of history, its optimistic impulse springing from the very real significance of the Peace of Utrecht. The occasional and celebratory nature of the poem justifies the rather baroque extravagance of Pope's imagination as it deals with history, and the beautifully controlled temporal perspectives and

associations tend to neutralize one's sense (particularly strong during Father Thames' speech) that Britain's declaration of peace on the future is not quite so disinterested as one might wish.

It is necessary to assent to the political bias of the poem, if it is to be understood as Pope wished it to be. It is only in Windsor Forest that Pope is completely at ease in the cycles of history. Ages can seem remarkably good and golden when political circumstances jibe with one's political principles, and when a Peace which "has worked more satisfactorily than any other that has ended a general European conflict in modern times" has been negotiated (albeit, as his "one great achievement in the world of action") by a close and powerful friend.[39] As the ally of Bolingbroke in the zenith of Tory power, Pope honours the political brilliance of his friend and the genuine promise attendant upon his accomplishment by creating an idyllic England ruled by a glorified Anne who is treated much as Spenser treats Elizabeth in his April eclogue in The Shepheardes Calender: a figure who presides over the reformation of man and history and symbolizes the harmony of a new golden order in a world that is both pastoral, in its recovery of the peace of the Age of Gold, and heroic, in its victory over the chaos of the Ages of Iron. Pope's vision of a cycle of golden time in this poem is more than balanced by his vision of the cycles of Saturnian-leaden time in the Imitations of Horace and The Dunciad. In the Tory Peace, Pope saw the power of the unique event that rescues time, or seems to rescue it, but he would never again find himself surprised into joy by an England in Walpole's hands, apparently bent on slipping into barbarism.

CHAPTER THREE: HUMAN TIME

The mythico-historical approach to time in Pope's pastoral poetry and in Windsor Forest imposes upon temporal process a pattern devised by the imagination that can subdue, at least in the abstract, the terrors of time's activity by arguing cyclical regeneration and counselling fortitude rather than despair. Mythico-historical time is time as man perhaps would like it to be, recognizing, as he must, that he is mortal and fallible and that he cannot expect the ideal time and space of the Golden Age in the chaos of history. He can look backward to a dream and forward to its reflection as he moves from one to the other, and if he thinks properly about time, there is no descent to death in history, but rather a painful growth to the recovery of his place in the perfection of the beginnings. Man, like Watteau's Gilles, stands between the reality and its reflection, between the beginning and the consummation. But man considered in this way is part of a "pretty invention" of the poets,[1] and is no less so in the Christian variation of the pattern, with its emphasis on man's existential position between the fall and the redemption. He has no proof of the realities which he is told he stands between and, unless he can reconcile himself to conceiving of each life as arbitrary and defined only by birth and final death without prior and postmortem states of the soul, he is forced into hope, all that is allowed the creature of dark wisdom and rude greatness who has very little information about the point of his existence:

Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of Fate,

All but the page prescrib'd, their present state . . . .
(Essay on Man, I, 77-78)

Man becomes part of a poetic or theological process, an actor forbidden to improvise freely his own definition of himself, but who persists in improvising nevertheless, in a desperate attempt to know what he is and how to be, independently of the role forced upon him, until he can recognize neither his assigned reality nor the reality he is trying to create of himself:

We discover . . . that we do not know our part, we look for a mirror, we want to rub off the make-up and remove the counterfeit and be real. But somewhere a bit of mummery still sticks to us that we forget. A trace of exaggeration remains in our eyebrows, we do not notice that the corners of our lips are twisted. And thus we go about, a laughing-stock, a mere half-thing: neither existing, nor actors.[2]

It is to man so distressed that Pope speaks in the Essay on Man by isolating each life in its limited time and space and pleading that each man make much of the time he is given by approaching it rationally, so that it does not become an unbearably painful prelude to disappointment and death. Pope brings to man a definition in terms of total order of which he is a part, so that each life participates in the grandeur of cosmic harmony:

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body, Nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th' aethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns;
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.
(Essay on Man, I, 267-280)

Pope does not deny the suffering that is part of being in time, nor does

he paint lavish pictures of bliss beyond death. He accepts the present state as the proper sphere of man's grandeur and resists the temptation, to which Young succumbs in the Night Thoughts, to exalt the expected after-life ecstatically and make of life nothing more than a protracted physical death followed by harsh divine judgements and limitless, peculiarly empty, space. "In Young," George Eliot writes, "we have that deficient human sympathy, that impiety towards the present and the visible, which flies for its motives, its sanctities, and its religion, to the remote, the vague, and the unknown."[3] Pope does not place man on a death bed and urge him to look forward to the grave: such an attitude to life would seem sacrilegious to him, a repudiation of the privilege of living. In a Guardian essay attributed to him, Pope writes of the "distaste of the World" bred of meditation upon the endless repetition of the cycles of nature, but this distaste should not encourage man to despair: "to enjoy it [the world] as a Rational Being is to know it, to be sensible of its Greatness and Beauty, to be delighted with its Harmony, and by these Reflections to obtain just Sentiments of the Almighty Mind that framed it."[4] Man, trapped in time, is far more aware of the discord out of which the divine harmony of order arises. His perspectives are not eternal. He can look back across the sweep of time and contemplate how much is gone and how little remains, and he can look forward to posterity and make sure that it has more lasting memorials of himself when time has swept his present world away than he has of the great past whose posterity he is. Man has the responsibility not to mar beyond recognition the greatness and beauty of the world he contemplates.

Man is ambitious to preserve a memory of his actions in the

world:

We imagine (Bolingbroke writes) that the things, which affect us, must affect posterity . . . . We are fond of preserving, as far as it is in our frail power, the memory of our own adventures, of those of our own time, and of those that preceded it. Rude heaps of stone have been raised, and ruder hymns have been composed, for this purpose, by nations who had not yet the use of arts and letters.[5]

In the eighteenth century, the double focus of meditation upon the remains of the past and contemplation of posterity is often brought to bear on the present condition of man. Dyer, amid the ruins of Rome, is moved by the example of imperial corruption to refresh his patriotic dedication to the prudence and industry that sustain the fledgling British empire. In The Traveller, Goldsmith, amid the same ruins, finds evidence of the futility of human greatness. Peasants now live where once the Romans dwelt in glory. The instructions of history and the relics of the past give to eighteenth-century man the opportunity to order his own circle of time so that its eventual lesson in history will be of the possibility of stability and justice through reason in its victory over stupidity and barbarism.

Pope comes to consider that the condition of the present cannot sustain any kind of optimism. The impulse to address jeremiads to an age is the peculiar consequence of a satirist's decision to explore the potential of the public voice -- in none of Pope's more personal satires does he suggest, as he does in the Imitations of Horace and The Dunciad, that he is dealing with a sinking ship of fools. In the public satires of poets like Hall or Marston or Pope, one assumes a discontinuity between things as they are in the world and the poet's reaction to them. Moral and rhetorical reactions are mixed together in poems like Virgidemiarum or The Scourge of Villainy or The Dunciad, usually inextricably, as the poet's imagination strives to accommodate the fury the

intensity of his tone indicates. It is the poet's imaginative vision of reality which sustains the extremity of his expression, rather than the historical facts of that reality. Thus, while Pope makes every attempt to secure the living memory of those whom he considers to be the few good men of his time, ironically, it is the vicious whom he condemns to obscurity whose memory is better preserved, because the vicious are characterized in terms of his satiric vision and participate in its imaginative reality, while the good are uncharacterized, set apart from the vision, and conventionally eulogized: they are part of the untransformed factual reality, and their relative flatness suggests that their antitypes, honestly rendered, would be no more alarming than vulgar, ignorant, self-obsessed people are in any age. Pope elevates vulgarity, ignorance and self-obsession to the status of anti-principles in the Imitations and, above all, in The Dunciad, where popular allegiance to these principles inspires a satiric vision of some grandeur: a vision of the contemporary world as having lost all knowledge of any beginning or ending, mythical or theological, so that men wear their fool's rags in a mad time ignorant of the past and irresponsible in relation to posterity. He sees the world, in The Dunciad, as the landscape of ruin brought about by a time, to quote Florus on Rome, that witnesses the crucial confrontation of glory and disaster.[6]

The demands of satires like The Dunciad effectively eliminate any opportunity for meditation on the processes of time, and when the present is offered, as it is in that poem, as a special conjunction of time and space in a new reality, there can be no place for considering it as subject to the same temporal forces which have afflicted civilizations of the past. The temporal allusions in The Dunciad are com-

pletely and deeply elegiac, emphasizing, in their associations of a heroic past and cultural greatness, the extent to which Pope thinks his age has deteriorated. In other, shorter poems, Pope uses the past as counsel for the present without always implying deterioration, and he reflects upon temporal activity as an aspect of the continuum of mutability and regeneration, but such poems are no less elegiac in their use of time.

Two of Pope's epistles examine ambition and preservation in time by means of a double concentration on the past and on the future, but they do not advance particularly optimistic positions and they recognize that time is not always selective in what it sweeps away: posterity, far from assenting to the testimony of those who seek to preserve, is quite capable of being whimsical. An empire may be cherished for its medals, and a beautiful woman may be forgotten despite the best efforts of a painter or a poet. In the epistle "To Mr. Addison, Occasioned by His Dialogues on Medals," time is a relentlessly destructive force which defeats man's attempts to erect enduring monuments to his own greatness. The haunting fact and evidence of the fall of the greatest western empire, Rome, provides the proof of the futility of trying to sow the seeds of memory in the barrenness of time:

> See the wild Waste of all-devouring years!
> How Rome her own sad Sepulchre appears,
> With nodding arches, broken temples spread!
> The very Tombs now vanish'd like their dead!
> (To Mr. Addison, 1-4)

The pitch of the poetry here is stately and lofty, as befits a poem that will advise man to resign himself to the power of time and accept -- indeed, welcome -- the temporal irony that has befallen Rome. The servant of time, warfare in the name of greed or God, has done as much

to level Rome as the gradual action of unassisted time itself. The monuments intended to consecrate through time the great names are now fragments whose intention is so obscured that the chronology of the achievements of the Caesars is as jumbled as the fragments:

> Fanes, which admiring Gods with pride survey,
> Statues of Men, scarce less alive than they;
> Some felt the silent stroke of mould'ring age,
> Some hostile fury, some religious rage;
> Barbarian blindness, Christian zeal conspire,
> A Papal piety, and Gothic fire.
> Perhaps, by its own ruins sav'd from flame,
> Some bury'd marble half preserves a name;
> That Name the learn'd with fierce disputes pursue,
> And give to Titus old Vespasian's due.
> (To Mr. Addison, 9-18)

Man's ambition to survive in his monuments is defeated by time. Faithless columns and crumbling busts are fixed where they were placed, subject to the assault of the years. The memory of Rome's glory is portable through time only in its most concentrated expression, in the medals that express in small circles of metal the pride, power, and extent of the empire:

> A narrow orb each crouded conquest keeps,
> Beneath her Palm here sad Judaea weeps,
> Here scantier limits the proud Arch confine,
> And scarce are seen the prostrate Nile or Rhine,
> A small Euphrates thro' the piece is roll'd,
> And little Eagles wave their wings in gold.
> (To Mr. Addison, 25-30)

Pope's personified Ambition resigns itself to the task of approving the best possible means of securing the enduring fame of greatness. The forums and temples are in ruins; all that remains intact is the medals. But even these small relics, in the hands of antiquarians, run the risk of being prevented from fulfilling their memorial task. Antiquarians value the medals for their rust and for their current value in the antiquary's market. This specialists' cult of the past, of age

for its own sake, obscures what the past has to say and makes of time a field of opportunities for pointless indulgence in the surfaces of things. One thinks of Cornelius in the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus, who exalts the shield on which the infant Martinus is presented:

> "Behold then my Child, but first behold the Shield: Behold this Rust, -- or rather let me call it this precious Aerugo, -- behold this beautiful Varnish of Time. -- this venerable Verdure of so many Ages --"[7]

Cornelius values the shield for its "beautiful Crust", for its "Traces of Time, and Fingers as it were of Antiquity,"[8] and prays that the "Rust of Antiquity . . . may be added to my Son; and that so much of it as it is my purpose he shall contract in his Education, may never be destroy'd by any Modern Polishing."[9] With his contempt for pointless enthusiasms entertained by antiquarians, Pope praises Addison's reflections upon history occasioned by the medals and compares his activity to polishing the coins and reviving the sharpness of their design:

> Theirs is the Vanity, the Learning thine:
> Touch'd by thy hand, again Rome's glories shine,
> Her Gods, and god-like Heroes rise to view,
> And all her faded garlands bloom a-new.
> (To Mr. Addison, 45-48)

Rome's exemplary fate is a call to Britain to see to it that the best of her own civilization be honoured and distributed through posterity. Pope's advice to Britain, which he adopts from Addison, is not whimsical. If modern man ignores his responsibility to history, he will be forgotten. Britain must not be passive in time, and in this rather early poem, Pope, as Howard Erskine-Hill states, seems to have confidence in "man's capacity to transcend the destruction of time, and in his civilized and civilizing duty to do so."[10]

This placing of an age of Roman or British greatness in a tem-

poral continuum whose modes are destruction and ceaseless change emphasizes the importance of a responsible disposition of the present and of the folly of present-obsession. Hence, Pope argues in the Epistle to Bathurst and the Epistle to Burlington that the proper use of riches and appropriate standards of taste function so as to fulfill the present and historical duties of civilization. The self-indulgent extravagance of some and the parsimony of other wealthy men impoverish the present by diverting riches from the constructive responsibility of a civilized society: the welfare of all citizens. The responsible disposition of the present by a civilized society is expressed in those "Great and Public Works" which shall stand as evidence of an age both ordered in itself and sensible of what it owes to history:

> Bid Harbors open, public Ways extend,
> Bid Temples, worthier of the God, ascend;
> Bid the broad Arch the dang'rous Flood contain,
> The Mole projected break the roaring Main;
> Back to his bounds their subject Sea command,
> And roll obedient Rivers thro' the Land;
> These Honours, Peace to happy Britain brings,
> These are Imperial Works, and worthy Kings.
> (Epistle to Burlington, 197-204)

In such enterprises is the just pride of states in their periods of glory, Pope argues; it is this pride which he perceives in the ruins of empire and in the commemorative tokens of power and pride, the Roman coins.

The defiance of time's destructive action on the lasting memory of man's achievements provided by the Roman medals is poignantly forceful in that the vast extent of Roman greatness is concentrated in the small space of pieces of metal, seemingly indestructible units of memory that sum up a whole age. The imaginative contraction by art of the essence of Roman time and space into the medals preserves Rome

through time. Ambition is served, in that its interest, as Erskine-Hill points out, is in "making history" in both senses of the term. "Emphasis is laid less upon a desire for ever greater conquests than upon a desire to be remembered by posterity, a desire that [Rome's] conquests should achieve lasting fame,"[11] that is, in some way conquer time itself. Pope does not suggest that such a conquest is a very considerable victory. The image of Rome is like a fossil of empire: the life is gone, and only the imprint remains. On the broad scale of time and empire, the pathos of what remains can be expressed as Pope expresses it in this poem: in terms of sombre, generalized pity. But in the narrower confines of the individual life, the pathos can lead to a sense of melancholy helplessness. Such is the case in the Epistle to Mr. Jervas, whose tone is characterized by its final couplet:

> Alas! how little from the grave we claim?
> Thou but preserv'st a Face and I a Name.
> (To Jervas, 77-78)

If the thematic principle of the epistle to Addison is imaginative spatial and temporal contraction in the art of the medal designer, in the Epistle to Jervas the principle is imaginative expansion and artistic contraction in the art of the poet and the painter. The poem was occasioned by Pope's presentation to Jervas of Dryden's translation of Fresnoy's Art of Painting, and it works with ideas of translation in terms of the artist's and poet's power to translate the beauty of one age for the appreciation of ages to come in the languages of colours and words. The painter, Jervas, brings to essential life the present living beauty of his subject, while the poet provides verbal commentary on the same beauty. The poem is so designed that Dryden and Fresnoy represent a commentary on the technical side of the creative process

while Pope and Jervas represent the dynamic of the process itself:

> Whether thy hand strike out some free design,
> Where life awakes, and dawns at ev'ry line;
> Or blend in beauteous tints the colour'd mass,
> And from the canvas call the mimic face:
> Read these instructive leaves, in which conspire
> Fresnoy's close art, and Dryden's native fire:
> And reading wish, like theirs, our fate and fame,
> So mix'd our studies, and so join'd our name,
> Like them to shine thro' long succeeding age,
> So just thy skill, so regular my rage.
> (To Jervas, 3-12)

Technical competence and genius give wings to the imagination, which can soar exultantly free of any temporal and spatial constraints in the timeless realm of creation. The work of Dryden and Fresnoy is instructive of this freedom, and the work of Pope and Jervas symbolic of its potential:

> What flatt'ring scenes our wand'ring fancy wrought,
> Rome's pompous glories rising to our thought!
> Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,
> Fir'd with ideas of fair Italy.
> With thee, on Raphael's Monument I mourn,
> Or wait inspiring dreams at Maro's Urn:
> With thee repose, where Tully once was laid,
> Or seek some ruin's formidable shade;
> While fancy brings the vanish'd piles to view,
> And builds imaginary Rome a-new.
> (To Jervas, 23-32)

But this is timelessness in time and a specious freedom:

> How oft' in pleasing tasks we wear the day,
> While summer suns roll unperceiv'd away?
> (To Jervas, 17-18)

The labour of years goes into the expression of beauty as well as the freely soaring action of the imagination, which culls from the splendor of art the proper expression for present beauty. Yet only the outward signs can be portrayed, and very little of the vital reality, if instructive precept alone be followed:

> Yet still how faint by precept is exprest
> The living image in the Painter's breast?

> Thence endless streams of fair ideas flow,
> Strike in the sketch, or in the picture glow;
> Thence beauty, waking all her forms, supplies
> An Angel's sweetness, or Bridgewater's eyes.
> (To Jervas, 41-46)

The imagination must express itself in a restricted field, in a poem or on a canvas, in unstable materials. No words or colours can capture the breadth of the imagination's range; for words and colours are of time. They contract the imagination to images in "breathing paint" and living words:

> Beauty, frail flow'r that ev'ry season fears,
> Blooms in thy colours for a thousand years.
> Thus Churchill's race shall other hearts surprize,
> And other Beauties envy Worsley's eyes,
> Each pleasing Blount shall endless smiles bestow,
> And soft Belinda's blush for ever glow.
> (To Jervas, 57-62)

But it is only the images that live, and technical skill and genius cannot guarantee the potency of paint and words in conveying the primary life they celebrate. Precepts guide practice, and creation is a gamble. The time that rolls by unperceived (To Jervas, 18) as the artist celebrates his subject in the act of creation is the same time that takes away the life he seeks to portray. The women will be known only in images, and the poet's and painter's victory over time will be poignantly limited:

> Alas! how little from the grave we claim?
> Thou but preserv'st a Face and I a Name.
> (To Jervas, II, 77-78)

Pope's consciousness of the pathos of the private experience of time's activities in the Epistle to Mr. Jervas is typical as well of his treatment of time's fools in those poems which deal with the individual's awareness of time's assault on his personal existence and happiness; for the impact of time is, in the end, essentially and most

poignantly personal as it ruins beauty and youth. No amount of observation of the evidence of time's activity amongst former beauties can convince youth of what it must face, and no amount of attention to the cosmetic powers can bring back what is gone forever. Poems about foolish, short-sighted beauties are common in Pope's period and almost always are didactic of good sense: the wise beauty beautifies the mind and spirit so that she can bid farewell to the physical perfections of youth without much more than a stab of regret. This kind of poem is a late and usually somewhat less elegant variation of the traditional carpe diem poem, with the emphasis shifted from advice that the young lady cultivate her youth and seize the sensual advantages of her time of beauty -- the advice one finds in Ronsard, for example, or in Herrick's "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time" -- to instructions in the prudent disposition of youth so that age may be sagacious, if not gay, and provide its own satisfactions independently of wistful memories. The eighteenth-century variations stress the caution they advise by establishing a kind of isolated present of youth which refuses to acknowledge the inevitable process of ageing. Hence, the orientation of these poems is to the future: the satisfactory future of the sensible, far-sighted beauty who develops the mind's resources, and the lonely, possibly ridiculous, future of the vain beauty who directs all her attention to physical appearances.

What the poets are doing in these poems is to take ironic and satiric positions on the human ambition to preserve throughout time some evidence of power and beauty as they are at their zenith. The poets consider that women in particular seem to interpret preservation in terms of keeping alive what is fading constantly -- their youth --

in their dedication to vanity. The careful parody of youth on the face of an ageing woman distorts or destroys whatever memory there might be of her true youthful beauty. The attempt at preserving youth by this means is completely in vain because age cannot be hidden and, without the virtue and intellect which females ought to seek in their youth, there is nothing to sustain women in age. Given this shift in emphasis from the traditional poem of this kind, and the concentration on consequences, the eighteenth-century poems demonstrate a peculiar fascination with decay and with the torment of the aged beauty in her weary and sorrowful round. On one hand, Parnell, in "An Elegy, to an Old Beauty," writes with grace and delicacy of the plight of a woman in her "withering season" by grounding his observations on ravaged beauty in floral imagery and in the traditional association of the cycles of human life and the cycles of nature. His understanding of the pathos of the old beauty's desperate confrontation with the power of time and his compassion in instructing the woman in the use of time are evident in the discretion of his images and tone and in the seriousness of his praise of the virtues of age:

> To some new charmer are the roses fled,
> Which blew, to damask all the cheeks with red;
> Youth calls the Graces there to fix their reign,
> And airs by thousands fill their easy train.
> So parting summer bids her flowery prime
> Attend the sun to dress some foreign clime,
> While withering seasons in succession, here,
> Strip the gay gardens, and deform the year . . . .
>
> Let time, that makes you homely, make you sage;
> The sphere of wisdom is the sphere of age.
> 'Tis true, when beauty dawns with early fire,
> And hears the flattering tongues of soft desire,
> If not from virtue, from its gravest ways
> The soul with pleasing avocation strays:
> But beauty gone, 'tis easier to be wise;
> As harpers better, by the loss of eyes.

The antithesis of Parnell's mellow understanding is Swift's fury and disgust in such poems as "The Progress of Beauty" and "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed". Swift systematically reduces the women in these poems to a level that is virtually beneath humanity and portrays them as monstrous practitioners of the artifices designed to defeat time. What is most frightening is his denial of a coherent temporal dimension to these women. The most that Swift will allow them is an "early self" ("Progress of Beauty," 37), an identity which is purely the hideous physical reality on which they paint a parody of beauty with cosmetics. But Swift's satire cuts two ways in these poems: the women are satirized for their grotesqueness, but men like Strephon in "The Lady's Dressing Room" are castigated as well for preferring to ignore the human truth.

Midway between the gentle and savage extremes of Parnell and Swift's harsher reflections on women are the poems by Young and Pope about the impact of time on beauty, and Swift's birthday poems to Stella. Young's achievement in the Love of Fame has not so much been underestimated as ignored, or else dealt with cursorily as a kind of early parallel, in Satires V and VI, to what Pope accomplished in the Epistle to a Lady. This is not to suggest that Young's sequence has been completely or unjustly neglected. Like his more famous Night Thoughts, the Love of Fame suffers from the poet's verbosity and from the inertia of its images, but above all from what George Eliot isolates as Young's fatal weakness as an artist: his deficient human sympathy.[12] The position Young assumes in these satires is loftily arrogant and hardly suited to the study of a folly whose native soil is the drawing-room (Satire I, 254). Moreover, as George Eliot correctly remarks,

Young's judgements proceed from a "psychological mistake":[13] his conviction that the love of praise is the ruling passion and motivating force of human life. Having pledged himself to this generalization, Young indicts virtually everyone alive, except George I and Walpole, and the peers to whom he dedicates his poems. Young fails to convince one that his often very fine rhetorical flourishes in fact embody anything with the strength of an idea, and not just of an opinion, while his positive positions -- that human beings must study to some end, avoid false modesty and empty politeness, refuse to become addicted to what is singular or odd -- are usually expressed with the uncomforting pomposity of self-righteousness. It is only in the two satires directed to women that Young's imagination manages, at least some of the time, to transform the present and eternal folly of life into strong and vivid poetry.

This he accomplishes by freeing himself for the most part from vague generalizations and by seizing upon detail, so that the world in which his character-types move is given a perfunctory, but adequate, complexity and reality:

> Britannia's daughters, much more fair than nice,
> Too fond of admiration, lose their price;
> Worn in the public eye, give cheap delight
> To throngs, and tarnish to the sated sight.
> As unreserved and beauteous as the sun,
> Through every <u>sign</u> of vanity they run;
> Assemblies, parks, coarse feasts in city-halls,
> Lectures and trials, plays, committees, balls,
> Wells, Bedlams, executions, Smithfield scenes,
> And fortune-tellers' caves, and lions' dens,
> Taverns, Exchanges, Bridewells, drawing-rooms,
> Instalments, pillories, coronations, tombs,
> Tumblers, and funerals, puppet-shows, reviews,
> Sales, races, rabbits, and (still stranger!) pews.
> (Satire V: "On Women," 15-28)

What Young does, having sketched his world, is to move commonplace types

such as the frivolous beauty, the ageing beauty, the scandal-monger, the spendthrift, the hypocrite through familiar situations so that he can utter platitudes about them. The vain beauty is advised that "native innocence" rather than affectation is her chief glory (Satire V, 11, 555-560), and that modesty, good manners, and good humour must be her strongest charms. All women are cautioned that "Good breeding is the blossom of good sense" (Satire V, 1, 469). What makes these poems about women of more than passive interest is their absolute lack of compassion and their morbid emphasis on decay and death. Horace's Lyce becomes a time-ravaged crone planning new conquests as she "defrauds the tomb," while undertakers hover around her like emissaries of death as she makes her rounds:

> Autumnal Lyce carries in her face
> Memento mori to each public place . . .
> In vain the cock has summon'd sprites away,
> She walks at noon, and blasts the bloom of day.
> Gay rainbow silks her mellow charms infold,
> And nought of Lyce but herself is old.
> (Satire V, 501-502, 509-512)

What we have in Young is an extreme future-orientation at the expense of the present. For Young, our task is to escape time by exalting the event (death) which frees us of its power and ushers us into eternity. To cherish the visible diurnal sphere and to concern oneself with its transitory beauties is to betray the human destiny in eternity. In his satires on women, there is a very strong and unsettling impression that Young relishes the ugliness and pain he depicts in the women who "give eternity to purchase time" (Satire VI, 486). He can offer them very little consolation in time and refuses to give in to any feeling as generous as compassion.

The superficial similarities between the Love of Fame and the

Epistle to a Lady serve to emphasize the immense superiority of Pope's achievement to Young's. Pope's poem on the characters of women admits the inconsistency of women and attempts to find consistency in inconsistency by examining the contrarieties that run through the "plainest, and most strongly mark'd" characters -- the affected, the soft-natured, the cunning, the whimsical, the wits and refiners, the stupid and silly -- so as to clarify the paradox that "tho' the Particular Characters of this Sex are more various than those of Men, the General Characteristick, as to the Ruling Passion, is more uniform and confined."[15] The idea of the ruling passion, considered on its own terms, those set out in the Essay on Man and the Epistle to Cobham, does not deserve Johnson's charge of moral predestination,[16] or George Eliot's of psychological error.[17] Maynard Mack defines the ruling passion as "the focus of personality":

> Pope is thinking of character as a creative achievement, an artistic result, something built of chaos as God built the world. The ruling passion, which God sends, affords a focal point for this activity. The direction of the character is thus a datum, but what man makes of it, and whether it leads to virtue or vice, depends upon his skill.[18]

Pope reduces character to the ruling passion not by arbitrarily choosing psychological tags that seem to be consistent with the behaviour of the subject, but rather by studying man in terms of the condition, relation, end, and purpose of his being -- that is, in terms of the creative range afforded him in the sphere of his activity as a social and moral being, and not in terms of fixed standards of judgement whose effectiveness may be neutralized at one or another point in the vast range in which he is interested:

> Manners with Fortunes, Humours turn with Climes,
> Tenets with Books, and Principles with Times.
> Judge we by Nature? Habit can efface,
> Int'rest o'ercome, or Policy take place:

By Actions? those Uncertainty divides:
By Passions? these Dissimulation hides:
Opinions? they still take a wider range:
Find, if you can, in what you cannot change.
(Epistle to Cobham, 166-173)

The ruling passions to which Pope reduces the motivations of women are "The Love of Pleasure, and the Love of Sway" (Epistle to a Lady, 1, 210): on the face of it, not really any more immediately convincing than Young's love of fame. But Young's judgement is a generalization based on observation of the empty ritual behaviour of polite society, and he is led to establish the public as the private character; hence, to deny any possible contradiction between the two. Pope, on the other hand, allows his women both public and private dimensions and carefully adjusts the tension between the two so that he can clarify the discrepancy between conduct and motivation, when such a discrepancy exists, and determine, as if by adjusting lenses, the focus of each personality he studies.

The isolated present of these women is given either a diminished or an expanded temporal-psychological context by Pope. In the first lines of the poem, Pope emphasizes that superficial differences amongst women are the only ones that can be stated definitely, so elusive of general definition is woman:

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
'Most women have no Characters at all'.
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguish'd by black, brown, or fair.
(Epistle to a Lady, 1-4)

Combined with this elusiveness of definition is an even more confusing elusiveness of identity which Pope depicts in a brief survey of the personae fashionable women choose to represent them, from myth or pastoral tradition or hagiography, when their portraits are painted.

It is this extravagance of feminine folly that Pope proceeds to paint.

The elusiveness of the poet's subject is symbolized in the materials he drolly selects as suitable for the picture he intends to paint. Because the nature of woman cannot be fixed once and for all, the colours and the canvas must partake of the transience of the subject:

> Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!
> Dip in the Rainbow, trick her off in Air,
> Chuse a firm Cloud, before it fall, and in it
> Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 17-20)

The whole of feminine time is thus reduced to the span of a minute, a kind of indivisible instant that shrinks time to a perilous present and stands, therefore, as evidence of the subjugation and reduction of all time by the power of whim and mood. Having accepted, for the purposes of his study, this extreme contraction of time, Pope proceeds to investigate the complexity of the radical present of women's lives.

The affected characters are granted by Pope a density of experience as frail and thin and shortlived as the bubble-like instants they have chosen as their temporal dimension. Hence, Rufa's lascivious progress through the Park in search of casual sensation is not really so inconsistent as it might seem with her study of Locke: for her, there is no particular difference between deriving pleasures from sensations, and ideas from them, when ideas have as short a date as pleasures, and when a fashionable philosopher can be made to justify a fashionable woman's lewd conduct. Similarly, the radiant appearance by night of Sappho is only superficially at odds with the revolting performance of the "toilet's greazy task"; for Sappho's evening beauty is that of the insect which springs from the dung, lives for a day, then returns to

corruption, and the diamonds on the filthy smock emphasize the moral implications of a life dedicated to the momentary satisfactions of splendid appearances.

The soft-natured define their inconsistency in their inability to cope. A pimple on Silia's nose alters her whole personality in an instant from gentle compliance to raving anger, while Papilla finds the reality of a park not at all equal to her romantic idea of one -- "Oh odious, odious Trees!" (1, 40). The cunning Calypso bewitches men in spite of her lack of virtue and beauty by her great but rather repulsive ability to be wildly inconsistent from moment to moment:

> Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,
> Was not just ugly, and was not just mad;
> Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
> As when she touched the brink of all we hate.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 49-52)

What is disturbing about Calypso is the fact that she does not exist at all apart from her moods. She does not seem to possess any solid grounding in an identity, but endlessly recreates herself as one minute slips into another. Like her, is the whimsical Narcissa, changeable from one minute to the next, neither strong enough to be good, nor imaginative enough to be evil. These first categories of women -- the affected, the soft-natured, the cunning and artful, and the whimsical -- serve in their triviality and emptiness, in their dedication to the Love of Pleasure, as the prelude to Pope's study of more desperately trapped women, dying morally as they live in bondage to the love of both "Pleasure" and "Sway."

The lewd and vicious Philomede's sterility as a human being is suggested in the barrenness of her womb and in the discontinuity between the demands of her conscience and the demands of her appetites. Philo-

medé represents the individual life pledged to the exhaustion of the whim of the moment and, in the process, remorselessly self-devastated. She consumes each minute of her life gluttonously and, in dismembering time, nourishes herself on men:

> What has not fir'd her bosom or her brain?
> Caesar and Tall-boy, Charles and Charlema'ne.
> As Helluo, late Dictator of the Feast,
> The Nose of Hautgout, and the Tip of Taste,
> Critick'd your wine, and analyz'd your meat,
> Yet on plain Pudding deign'd at-home to eat;
> So Philomedé, lect'ring all mankind
> On the soft Passion, and the Taste refin'd,
> Th' Address, the Delicacy -- stoops at once,
> And makes her hearty Meal upon a Dunce.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 77-86)

Like Philomedé, Flavia attempts to exhaust the potential of what she considers to be life by immolating herself in the excess of her energies not directed to any worthwhile end:

> Wise Wretch! with Pleasures too refin'd to please,
> With too much Spirit to be e'er at ease,
> With too much Quickness ever to be taught,
> With too much Thinking to have common Thought:
> Who purchase Pain with all that Joy can give,
> And die of nothing but a Rage to Live.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 95-100)

The women who kill the enemies to fair ones, "Time and Thought" (112), are isolating themselves in the wisdom of foolishness and failing to develop the resources that could sustain them once the time of giving in to giddy impulses has passed. Their folly is of their own creation and counter to the order of Nature; for though Nature has sometimes made a fool,

> a Coxcomb is always of Man's own making, by applying his Talents otherwise than Nature designed, who ever bears an high Resentment for being put out of her Course, and never fails of taking her Revenge on those that do so.[19]

The revenge taken by Nature on the women in the Epistle to a Lady is the reduction of their lives to a condition which recalls

Hobbes's definition of life: "Life it selfe is but Motion, and can never be without Desire, nor without Feare, no more than without Sense."[20] The women respond to life in terms of appetite and aversion, in a perpetual and purposeless motion which acknowledges the reality of only the present. What is past is only a dimly happy, but more usually unhappy, memory, and the future has no reality at all. The whole end of life for them is to use all of what Hobbes considered to be the natural powers (the faculties of the body and the mind) and the instrumental powers (friends, wealth, reputation) to gain power over men and over society, but never over themselves, and their quest for power ends only in death. This is the life of what Pope, in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, calls "the trifling Head, and the corrupted Heart" (327).

Hence, as the Epistle to a Lady develops, the spark-like transience of the moods and whims of the affected and artful characters is replaced by the helter-skelter disorientated activity of Flavia and Philomedé, and then by the desperate motion of Atossa, who, like a figure in Carroll's Wonderland, runs and runs only to stay in the same place, waging war with everybody and leaving herself morally, intellectually, and emotionally bankrupt:

> No Thought advances, but her Eddy Brain
> Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
> Full sixty years the World has been her Trade,
> The wisest Fool much Time has ever made.
> From loveless Youth to unrespected Age,
> No Passion gratify'd except her rage.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 121-126)

Denied, in the end, the power she has sought, and having either alienated or destroyed her friends and relations through her inability to accept people without somehow being in control of them, or through her anger, Atossa is left alone, "Sick of herself thro' very selfishness"

(146), while the power in wealth she has accumulated slips through her fingers and, ironically, comes to the relief of the poor and powerless.

This strange perpetual motion in the stasis of the moment owes its futility to the withered powers of reason and the excessive self-love (to the extreme of monomania) evident in the women Pope portrays in that darkening portion of the poem which precedes the explication of his positive position in satirizing the feminine types. The disorder of the lives of the women is the result of the radical imbalance of their "moving principle" of self-love (Essay on Man, II, 67) and the deliberating and prudent reason. In the Essay on Man, Pope discusses the importance of self-love and reason by drawing two vivid analogies, paralysis and motion, to the effect of the imbalance of these two qualities in human life or, to the activity of one at the expense of the other:

> Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
> Reason's comparing balance rules the whole.
> Man, but for that, no action could attend,
> And, but for this, were active to no end;
> Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,
> To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot;
> Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void,
> Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.
> (Essay on Man, II, 59-66)

In Atossa, and even more in Cloe, selfishness has so corroded the potency of the twin motive forces that the human being suffers the consequences of the withering of both reason and proper self-love. Cloe, lacking a heart, cannot arouse herself to any disinterested activity and lives a life of moral stagnation. There is a pronounced sense of no motion at all in this character, in marked contrast with the frenetic activity of Atossa:

> She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought;
> But never, never, reach'd one gen'rous Thought.

> Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
> Content to dwell in Decencies for ever.
> So very reasonable, so unmov'd,
> As never yet to love, or to be lov'd.
> She, while her Lover pants upon her breast,
> Can mark the figures on an Indian chest;
> And when she sees her Friend in deep despair,
> Observes how much a Chintz exceeds Mohair.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 161-170)

Cloe can neither give nor accept: she has no self to offer or to respond, nothing to reflect upon and nothing to look forward to. She cannot feel; hence, she cannot define herself emotionally. She is an object, an artifact of the moment, and thus the point of Pope's advice to greet the news of Cloe's death without sorrow; for she has existed without living.

Pope introduces his positive position by specifying what are the ruling passions of women -- "The Love of Pleasure, and the Love of Sway" (210) -- and by characterizing women as being rakes at heart (216). What makes sense of this judgement is the passage that immediately follows it, in which Pope explains the instinctive libertinism of women: their anxiety in a world of flux and transience, their dedication to sensuality and to the fullest possible experience of the good things life has to offer. Pope suggests in his analysis of the libertinism of women a kind of contempt for time on their part in the sense that they view life in terms of imprisonment in time, with only youth, in its ability to win the pleasure and sway they crave, hiding the chains of time in its provision of the rewards of power for which they strive. This is rather like a very personal variation of the Golden Age myth in the context of the individual life, with the confused and ragged mummers of time transformed into ageing ladies in peeling make-up and foolishly loud colours. These ladies do not know what they are, and

have repudiated the mind's ability to find and accept a definition or to formulate one. Once their youth has gone, the women are left enchained and desperately seeking to recover the one period of meaning they have found in what, ultimately, seems to be a completely meaningless existence by restlessly moving, moving in their attempts to prove themselves still alive. Old age for such women is surely a kind of death:

> Yet mark the fate of a whole Sex of Queens!
> Pow'r all their end, but Beauty all the means.
> In Youth they conquer, with so wild a rage,
> As leaves them scarce a Subject in their Age:
> For foreign Glory, foreign Joy, they roam;
> No thought of Peace or Happiness at home.
> But Wisdom's Triumph is well-tim'd Retreat,
> As hard a science to the Fair as Great!
> Beauties, like Tyrants, old and friendless grown,
> Yet hate to rest, and dread to be alone,
> Worn out in public, weary ev'ry eye,
> Nor leave one sign behind them when they die.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 219-230)

The ageing women come to realize that without the power youth and beauty brought them, and without the physical resources to command the power, they do not exist in the world they had chosen as the sphere of their life-activities. To fall from youth is to fall into decay and the parody of youth. Moreover, the ambition to preserve what must decay at the expense of the more enduring qualities of goodness and decency ironically earns them complete oblivion. They leave no mark in the world of their existence when they die. Like witches spinning in an infernal trance, the old beauties, like the ghosts of youth, move in a dance of death:

> Pleasures the sex, as Children Birds, pursue,
> Still out of reach, yet never out of view,
> Sure, if they catch, to spoil the Toy at most,
> To covet flying, and regret when lost:
> At last, to follies Youth could scarce defend,
> 'Tis half their Age's prudence to pretend;

> Asham'd to own they gave delight before,
> Reduc'd to feign it, when they give no more:
> As Hags hold Sabbaths, less for joy than spight,
> So those their merry, miserable Night;
> Still round and round the Ghosts of Beauty glide,
> And haunt the places where their Honour dy'd.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 231-242)

The world's final judgement on the women is succinctly expressed: "Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot!" (248).

Pope submits for approval as his idea of the female life correctly lived the woman who is both emotionally and intellectually coherent: even-tempered, averse to fashionable nonsense, dedicated to her family, and serenely self-possessed -- "Mistress of herself, tho' China fall" (268). To the sunshine dazzle of the vain women he has analyzed, Pope opposes the good woman, the one who has mellowed in time and who stands composed and strong in her prime:

> So when the Sun's broad beam has tir'd the sight,
> All mild ascends the Moon's more sober light,
> Serene in Virgin Modesty she shines,
> And unobserv'd the glaring Orb declines.
> (Epistle to a Lady, 253-256)

The stability of temperament and personality Pope praises in Martha Blount is not really a quality he would attribute to women alone. It is, rather, a domestication of the virtues of friendship he cherishes so much. Pope, like Swift in his poems to Stella, sees the good woman as a happy mixture of the best qualities of both sexes, and the inability of either man to respond to good women except in terms of romantic friendship perhaps accounts for the compromise evident in what, from Swift and Pope, is the highest praise. Hence, in the Epistle to a Lady, Pope concludes that the contradictory nature of woman is as true of the good ones as it is of the affected or evil, but in good women the contradictions act, in the tension between male and female character-

istics, according to the principle of discordia concors, to produce "a softer man" (272), while Swift, in "To Stella Visiting Me in my Sickness", writes:

> Say, Stella, was Prometheus blind,
> And forming you, mistook your Kind;
> No: 'Twas for you alone he stole
> The Fire that forms a manly Soul;
> Then to compleat it ev'ry way,
> He moulded it with Female Clay:
> To that you owe the nobler Flame,
> To this, the Beauty of your Frame.
> (85-92)

Both poets celebrate the same type of woman and in the same gently bantering tone. Swift pays tribute to Stella's steadily blossoming intelligence as he playfully mocks her steadily thickening figure ("Stella's Birth-Day, 1718-19"), while Pope gracefully forgets the year of Martha Blount's birth. The same contrast of solid human worth with the vain waste of life which Pope presents at the end of the epistle, Swift states in "Stella's Birth-Day, 1720-21":

> Then Cloe, still go on to prate
> Of Thirty-six and Thirty-eight;
> Pursue your Trade of Scandal-picking,
> Your Hints, that Stella is no Chicken:
> Your Innuendo's, when you tell us,
> That Stella loves to talk with Fellows:
> And let me warn you to believe
> A Truth, for which your Soul should grieve:
> That should you live to see the Day
> When Stella's Locks must all be grey:
> When Age must print a furrow'd Trace
> On ev'ry Feature of her Face:
> Though you, and all your senseless Tribe,
> Could Art, or Time, or Nature bribe,
> To make you look like Beauty's Queen,
> And hold for ever at Fifteen:
> No bloom of Youth can ever blind
> The Cracks and Wrinkles of your Mind:
> All Men of Sense will pass your Door,
> And crowd to Stella's at Fourscore.
> (37-56)

The didactic point of the whole group of poems of warning to foolish

women has no more concise statement than Swift gives it here, although it is Pope, in the Epistle to a Lady, who brings the women to most vivid life by adjusting the tone of his criticism in such a way that his contempt is balanced by pity.

The tone of the Epistle allows compassion to overrule anger and, at the same time, in the character sketches, is full of the urgency of time running out, this urgency thrown into relief by the leisurely pace of the poem as a whole, with its suggestion of a stroll through a portrait gallery. This general pace defines itself in the transitions between the different characters through the speaker's development of the unifying argument of women's inconsistency and re-establishes itself completely in the final portion of the poem, where Pope praises the good sense and good humour of the woman (Martha Blount) whom he has been guiding through the gallery of her sex. The tone of the speaker suggests that if there is not quite world enough and time for woman fully to come to terms with herself, there is, yet, sufficient scope in the range of each life to examine the heart and to strive to achieve a life worth living.

Two shorter epistles by Pope have the same gracefully admonitory tone of the Epistle to a Lady, although they are more directly personal and more inventively witty in their temporal perspectives. In the "Epistle to Miss Blount, on her leaving the Town, after the Coronation," Pope subtly tries to convince the unhappy young lady sunk in pastoral torpor to discard her idea that the time and place of her present situation are unreal as compared to their reality in her happy situation in London at the time of the Coronation:

> She went, to plain-work, and to purling brooks,

Old-fashioned halls, dull aunts, and croaking rooks,
She went from Op'ra, park, assembly, play,
To morning walks, and pray'rs three hours a day;
To pass her time, 'twixt reading and Bohea,
To muse, and spill her solitary Tea,
Or o'er cold coffee trifle with the spoon,
Count the slow clock, and dine exact at noon;
Divert her eyes with pictures in the fire,
Hum half a tune, tell stories to the squire;
Up to her godly garret after sev'n,
There starve and pray, for that's the way to heav'n.
(11-22)

Through Pope's witty overstatement of the girl's plight, there emerges a true enough idea of her unhappiness. The girl's existence in the country has been reduced to marking off time in the tedious pursuits allotted to each part of her day. Her consciousness of clock-time and of the specific span of time to be given to each activity combines with her imprisonment in domesticity to arrest time and contract space in the morass of boredom. And so she brings to her mind the scene of her happiness, the vital time and space of the Coronation, only to have it vanish when she is aroused from her reveries:

Thus vanish sceptres, coronets, and balls,
And leave you in lone woods, or empty halls.
(39-40)

The poet then expresses his belief that the happiness of times and places is dependent upon different frames of reference. The urban happiness the girl misses has been the temporary jubilation of the city in a time of joy, a short break in a busy life of routine and petty vexations as exasperating to the city-dweller as the torpid routine of the country is to the girl. For the poet, the thought of the peaceful expansion of time and the limitless space of the green world is a vision of happiness:

Streets, chairs, and coxcombs rush upon my sight;
Vext to be still in town, I knit my brow,
Look sow'r, and hum a tune -- as you may now.
(ll. 48-50)

The same attitude to time and space in terms of the relativity of happy periods and places characterizes the "Epistle to Miss Blount, with the Works of Voiture," the one poem by Pope in which he explores the hedonistic conventions of the carpe diem tradition. The only things that truly live are the Loves and the Graces which shine through the lines of Voiture's letters long after the man who wrote them has died. Voiture, his letters show, knew how to live: by pleasing with easy art and good-natured wit, by transforming trifles into elegances and, not the least achievement, by coming to terms with the triviality of life itself.

> His Heart, his Mistress and his Friend did share;
> His Time, the Muse, the Witty, and the Fair.
> Thus wisely careless, innocently gay,
> Chearful, he play'd the Trifle, Life, away,
> 'Til Fate scarce felt his gentle Breath supprest,
> As smiling Infants sport themselves to Rest . . . .
> (9-14)

It is this inspired and infantile innocence which the poet claims he chooses as his own goal in life, at the expense of taking life seriously, and he expresses his choice in terms of the proper performance of life, the whole point of which is to achieve and to give as much pleasure as possible:

> Let the strict Life of graver Mortals be
> A long, exact, and serious Comedy,
> In ev'ry Scene some moral let it teach,
> And, if it can, at once both Please and Preach:
> Let mine, an innocent gay Farce appear,
> And more diverting still than regular,
> Have Humour, Wit, a native Ease and Grace;
> Tho' not too strictly bound to Time and Place:
> Criticks in Wit, or Life, are hard to please,
> Few write to those, and none can live to these.
> (21-30)

This is to make of each life a small drama played by ingenious comedians and farceurs for the diversion and applause of others. Life is reduced

to a series of theatrical effects and self- and mutual congratulation on vast playground. Hence, the advice the poet offers the young lady is completely consistent with the child-like innocence he advocates. The forms and rituals of marriage and society, the strait-jacket of custom, are what stifle the joyous outpouring of the "free Innocence of Life" (45); and they must be resisted lest Miss Blount meet the fate of Pamela, who gave her allegiance to the "false Shows" and "empty Titles" of society and thenceforth led a life of restlessness and regret:

> The Gods, to curse Pamela with her Pray'rs,
> Gave the gilt Coach and dappled Flanders Mares,
> The shining Robes, rich Jewels, Beds of State,
> And to compleat her Bliss, a Fool for Mate.
> She glares in Balls, Front-boxes, and the Ring,
> A vain, unquiet, glitt'ring, wretched Thing!
> Pride, Pomp, and State but reach her outward Part,
> She sighs, and is no Dutchess at her Heart.
> (49-56)

It is at this point in the poem that the poet descends from his airy fancies to expound the salutary benefits of good humour to the girl, if she decides to marry after all. The shift in tone here from lightly witty banter to gentle seriousness, and the abrupt transition from regarding life as an innocent farce to regarding it as an exact and serious comedy, force us to acknowledge the subtle self-mockery of the poem's benignly libertine first half, so that the witty delicacy of the first half highlights the grace and gravity of the second and undercuts any tendency to comparative pomposity in the good advice the poet now offers:

> But, Madam, if the Fates withstand, and you
> Are destin'd Hymen's willing Victim too,
> Trust not too much your now resistless Charms,
> Those, Age or Sickness, soon or late, disarms;
> Good Humour only teaches Charms to last,
> Still makes new Conquests, and maintains the past:
> Love, rais'd on Beauty, will like That decay,
> Our Hearts may bear its slender Chain a Day,

As flow'ry Bands in Wantonness are worn;
A Morning's Pleasure, and at Evening torn:
This binds in Ties more easie, yet more strong,
The willing Heart, and only holds it long.
(57-68)

Advice is followed by compliment: what the poet has advised was what won the love of Voiture for the Marquise de Rambouillet, so that the loves and graces live by virtue of their grounding in good humour. As Voiture has immortalized the Marquise de Rambouillet, so Pope, in his poem, immortalizes Miss Blount for possessing similar qualities. The time of youth, the innocent gay farce and its pursuits, is not, ultimately, the climax of happiness. Maturity brings its own more serene joys in its pleasant instruction in the virtues of good sense and good humour.

The temporal perspectives with which Pope works in these three epistles operate in The Rape of the Lock as well, but in this poem the temporal perspectives function within the poet's god-like perspective in which all of time is considered to form a fixed and permanent order: what T.S. Eliot calls "a pattern of timeless moments." In the epistles, the poet accepts the evidence of time's activity, change and decay, as sufficiently definitive of the nature of time; hence, he regards time as divisible into fixed categories of past, present, and future. Part of his didactic task, then, is to reassert the potency of a definition of time he knows is comprehensible to man by virtue of its psychological sense and appeal. Man must not be brought up short by the accomplishment of change, but must remind himself always of its process and of what it takes away.

In The Rape of the Lock, the poet views time tenselessly, so that

while the action manifests the dynamic process of temporal change and takes account of the passage of the present into the past or into the future, the point of view and the general tone of the poem, as well as its carefully allusive mode, are based on an idea of all times being essentially equal and only distinguishable one from another to the extent that some things are before and some after any particular arbitrary present.[21] This is not to say that response to life at any point in the whole of time is the same as it is at any other point, or that the same things in life are important, but the effect of the poem is to suggest that there are, nevertheless, timelessly true conclusions to be drawn about human nature, conclusions not necessarily affected by social and cultural differences. The extra-temporal perspective of the poet recognizes the differences between heroic and mock-heroic periods and thus chooses as its temporal grounding the perspective of an age of heroes: timeless truths about man must be grounded in temporal fact -- the age of heroes is dead among men and an age of triviality triumphant. Man stands in diminished grandeur, a prisoner of time trapped in a moving present that accumulates a past without trying to establish, until it is too late, a future. The poet allows man his poignant understanding of time as present, past, and future, and honours him by translating what is the issue of time in the action to a realm beyond change.

It has been recognized since the poem's first appearance that Pope gives to the transient beauty of Belinda's world its full share of praise, and that, in celebrating her world, he emphasizes its extreme fragility. Youth and beauty enjoy special, but short-lived privileges. The poet, with his timeless perspective on things, uses the present world of Belinda as a prism through which shines the pure white light

of time, breaking into the shimmering colours of beautiful moments in time. Belinda, like the incautious ladies of the epistles, isolates the present and makes it stand for all time. But Clarissa, who voices the positive position of the satirist in the action, sees life as the "long, exact, and serious Comedy" of the "Epistle to Miss Blount, with the Works of Voiture," requiring a solid basis in good sense and good humour. It is she who, in action no less than in statement, precipitates the severe and poignant contrast between time's brief joys and bleak comforts and timelessness. It is she who defines the thematic and didactic import of the temporal perspectives which interact in the poem.

The poet locates himself in the poem subtly and immediately through the ironic detonations of tone and language in each couplet, his temporal perspective being an implicit and important part of the irony:

> What dire Offence from am'rous Causes springs,
> What mighty Contests rise from trivial Things,
> I sing . . . .
> .....
> Say what strange Motive, Goddess! could compel
> A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
> Oh say what stranger Cause, yet unexplor'd,
> Cou'd make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
> In Tasks so bold, can little Men engage,
> And in soft Bosoms dwells such mighty Rage?
> (Rape of the Lock, I, 1-3, 7-12)

The weight of the epic associations of "dire Offence" and "mighty Contests" is, at this point, undercut by the reducing irony of "am'rous Causes" and "trivial Things," this linguistic reduction making immediate allusive sense through its play upon the epic cause of The Iliad -- the abduction of Helen by Paris -- as it contrasts with the mock-epic cause of The Rape of the Lock, although the action has yet to define substan-

tially what this cause is. We are led into the action and the irony by the poet's tone of mock-helplessness before a quite comprehensible human mystery and by his careful choice of epithets, which locate the action socially in a world of punctilio: "well-bred Lord," "gentle Belle." The heroic perspective then expands in the single couplet that marks the transition between prelude and action, to the timeless ironic view of the poet: "little Men," "soft Bosoms," and the "mighty Rage" of which they are capable.

Belinda's day begins at noon, when half the solar day has passed. The sun is timorous because the world he awakens has negated the measurement his activity marks and dissolved all time to a present of the pleasures and pleasurable pains of youth and love, whose sun is Belinda;

> Sol thro' white Curtains shot a tim'rous Ray,
> And op'd those Eyes that must eclipse the Day;
> Now Lapdogs give themselves the rowzing Shake,
> And sleepless Lovers, just at Twelve, awake:
> Thrice rung the Bell, the Slipper knock'd the Ground,
> And the press'd Watch return'd a silver Sound.
> (Rape of the Lock, I, 13-18)

Bells and watches do not measure time in Belinda's world: they announce its beginning.

In Ariel's address to Belinda in her morning dream, with its texture of allusions to Satan's speech to Eve in Book IX of Paradise Lost [22] and, through Milton's epic, to the fall of man, the poet takes up the idea of time's beginning by suggesting the same immediate reason for Belinda's impending fall as for Eve's, vanity, but deliberately trivializes the associations by subtracting vanity from any question of obedience and by making the exaltation of Belinda's power and beauty, in the context of the action, a statement of fact in the terms

of flattery the girl is accustomed to hearing and accepting as truth. Not surprisingly when she wakes up the whole dream vanishes from her mind. The triviality of the innocence from which Belinda will fall, as compared to the immense seriousness of Eve's fall, is suggested in the words Ariel chooses to impress upon the sleeping girl the importance of his warning:

> If e'er one Vision touched thy infant Thought,
> Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught,
> Of airy Elves by Moonlight Shadows seen,
> The silver Token, and the circled Green,
> Or Virgins visited by Angel-Pow'rs,
> With Golden Crowns and Wreaths of heav'nly Flow'rs,
> Hear and believe! thy own Importance know,
> Nor bound thy narrow Views to Things below.
> (Rape of the Lock, I, 29-36)

The innocence of Belinda is childlike ("infant Thought") and can heed only the appeal of fairy-tale lessons and the denatured eroticism of religious folk-tales:

> Some secret Truths from Learned Pride conceal'd,
> To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd:
> What tho' no Credit doubting Wits may give?
> The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.
> (Rape of the Lock, I, 37-40)

The maiden-child identity of Belinda introduces an element of playtime into the poem, part of the reduction of epic action which has its major statement in the game of ombre in Canto III.

Ariel's address also takes the sting from the idea of death by associating the death of women with the pre-fall, or sinless, death promised Adam and Eve: "a soft Transition . . . From earthly Vehicles to those of Air" (I, 49-50). The aerial beings, whose spokesman Ariel is, are the souls of women returned to their first elements, much as Lucretius's substances return to their primordial germs.[23] Hence, termagants become salamanders; prudes become gnomes; coquettes become sylphs.

These spirits enjoy the privilege of assuming what form or sex they please, the better to defend the prerogatives of beauty:

> What guards the Purity of melting Maids,
> In Courtly Balls, and Midnight Masquerades,
> Safe from the treach'rous Friend, the Daring Spark,
> The Glance by Day, the Whisper in the Dark;
> When kind Occasion prompts their warm Desires,
> When Musick softens, and when Dancing fires?
> 'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
> Tho' Honour is the Word with Men below.
> (Rape of the Lock, I, 71-78)

It is the sylphs who guide women through "the giddy Circle" and "mystick Mazes" of society and ensure that a serious thought never enters their heads, nor a serious feeling their hearts. Given that the task and pleasure of the sylphs is to shift "the moving Toyship" of women's hearts, and to encourage them in their joyful immersion in present youth and present laughter, the attempt of Ariel to speak portentously to Belinda is doomed to failure. Belinda's fall will come about through her dedication to those things she and the sylphs consider to be of extreme importance: the keen pleasure of wounds, charms, and ardors caused by her beauty and brought to her mind by the billet-doux which is the first thing she sees when she wakes. Belinda will be undone by achieving thought and feeling, by defining herself as human in secretly responding to the attractions of the earthly lover Ariel will see in her mind as the lock is about to be cut. This is why Ariel cannot be more specific in the dream: as the essence of a life not lived deeply, he cannot comprehend the power of thought and feeling, hence his impotence in the face of the mortal lover's action and of Belinda's private acquiescence to the love the action symbolizes. Belinda, in the end, is not destined to the sylph's embrace. The sun-goddess falls into time and the imperfection of her beauty, once the lock has been cut off, and

her reaction to imperfection, define her as mortal after all, but possessed of all the sad beauty of mortality. In the instant the lock is cut off, time moves.

Thus, at the end of Canto I, the preparation of the goddess, cosmetic priestess of her own beauty, stands as the last full statement of the power of beauty to subdue all time and space temporarily. The "heav'nly Image" that manifests in Augustan London the eternal reality of Beauty commands the resources of the whole world in its "sacred Rites of Pride":

> This Casket India's glowing Gems unlocks,
> And all Arabia breathes from yonder Box.
> The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
> Transform'd to Combs, the speckled and the white.
> (Rape of the Lock, I, 133-136)

Launched at its zenith, the beauty of Belinda does eclipse the day. The second canto of The Rape of the Lock is dedicated to the praise of her beauty and of the beautiful moment in time whose goddess she is. But the vigilance of Ariel keeps before us the threat to the beauty and the moment. Belinda, glorious as the sun, surrounded by nymphs and youths, sails on the Thames, the river of time, to Hampton Court, and bestows on her world the rich compliment of her beauty:

> Bright as the Sun, her Eyes the Gazers strike,
> And, like the Sun, they shine on all alike.
> Yet graceful Ease, and Sweetness void of Pride,
> Might hide her Faults, if Belles had Faults to hide:
> If to her Share, some female Errors fall,
> Look on her Face, and you'll forget 'em all.
> (Rape of the Lock, II, 13-18)

The emblems of the power and fragility of beauty are Belinda's cherished locks of hair, the sight of which has inspired to Baron to attempt cutting them off. The Baron has raised an altar to Love so that he might have its help in securing the locks, and the trophies he offers

as propitiatory sacrifices show the depth of his understanding of the power he invokes:

> . . . ere Phoebus rose, he had implor'd
> Propitious Heav'n, and ev'ry Pow'r ador'd,
> But chiefly Love -- to Love an Altar built,
> Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt.
> There lay three Garters, half a Pair of Gloves;
> And all the Trophies of his former Loves.
> With tender Billet-doux he lights the Pyre,
> And breathes three am'rous Sighs to raise the Fire.
> (Rape of the Lock, II, 35-42)

The transient beauty of the occasion that precedes his attack, and the fragile strength of beauty itself, are conveyed in the trembling sunbeams, melting music, and softened sounds which surround Belinda, and in Pope's description of the attendant sylphs dissolving in light and catching colours from the sun.

Ariel summons the sylphs to their duties around Belinda by reminding them of the great importance of the unseen actions of the fairy deities. In his speech, everything is diminished -- or raised -- to what approaches a common level of seriousness: in an age that pledges its full allegiance to pleasure and to amorous stratagems, the whole universe and all of society are regarded with sublime triviality. Hence, the fairy deities are responsible for the motions of the planets, for variations in the weather, for the continuing power of the British monarchy, and for the cosmetic beauty of fashionable women. With this reinterpretation of the universe and of society, it follows that the values of the world that encourages the reinterpretation in terms of its own triviality are also re-ordered. The loss of virginity and a damage to china are of equal importance; a stain on brocade is as serious as an offence to a woman's honour (II, 105-110). It is at this point in the poem, just before the game of ombre, that the mock-heroic

reduction of values to what is required by the exigencies of the fashionable moment is complete. The doom Ariel's speeches have portended is subliminally contrasted with the fall of Troy, through allusion to Homer and Virgil, and diminished to unimportance in the timeless perspective of the satirizing poet, while at the same time retaining its supreme importance in the narrow compass of the moment.

Thus the game of ombre in Canto III of the poem is preceded by a passage which completes the contraction of time and space to the present of Belinda as she presides at Hampton Court:

> Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs resort,
> To taste awhile the Pleasures of the Court;
> In various Talk th' instructive hours they past,
> Who gave the Ball, or paid the Visit last:
> One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
> And one describes a charming Indian Screen;
> A third interprets Motions, Looks, and Eyes;
> At ev'ry Word a Reputation dies.
> Snuff, or the Fan, supply each Pause of Chat,
> With singing, laughing, ogling and all that.
> (Rape of the Lock, III, 9-18)

As if to emphasize this contraction, there is a very brief expansion to a much less gilded present in the same city, where condemned men are sentenced to death by judges eager for dinner, and merchants return home after a profitable day at the Exchange. The expansion defines precisely what the fashionable idyll ignores, the time of day, and emphasizes the utter unreality of the heroes and nymphs by isolating them completely from the sordid reality of the society whose aristocrats they are. The council of heroes is reduced to a session of gossip and banter, and epic battle to a contest of playing-cards on a green felt field. The trivial grandeur of the moment is complete.

It is Clarissa who brings chaos to this fragile order of things by giving to the Baron the scissors which will uncreate

the perfect world of Belinda by snipping off the lock, and it is Clarissa who will try to establish a proper order in the chaos she has been instrumental in causing by advancing a thesis of good sense and good-humoured resignation to change and to the instability of youthful happiness. For the first time in the action, the characters begin to speak in temporal terms, calling upon the feeble perspectives their immersion in present happiness permits them: empty hyperbole and the life-expectancy of fashionable taste and caprice. The fame the Baron's heroic action will bring to him will endure through gossip and anecdote, then pass into oblivion:

> Let Wreaths of Triumph now my Temples twine,
> (The Victor cry'd) the glorious Prize is mine!
> While Fish in Streams, or Birds delight in Air,
> Or in a Coach and Six the British Fair,
> As long as Atalantis shall be read,
> Or the small Pillow grace a Lady's Bed,
> While Visits shall be paid on solemn Days,
> When numerous Wax-lights in bright Order blaze,
> While Nymphs take Treats, or Assignations give,
> So long my Honour, Name, and Praise shall live!
> (Rape of the Lock, III, 161-170)

After this cry of triumph, the last lines of Canto III express a benign view of time that subtracts from it its conventional destructive power. Time becomes an invisible process which seems to preserve the context of earthly glory, yet it is powerless before the destructive action of fate, which chooses its own time to strike at the might of men and the grandeur of monuments. All of man's glories, even the least of them in the whole range of godly and heroic achievement, Belinda's lock, are vulnerable to the instrument of fate, steel, whether it be a sword or a pair of scissors:

> What Time wou'd spare, from Steel receives its date,
> And Monuments, like Men, submit to Fate!
> Steel cou'd the Labour of the Gods destroy,
> And strike to Dust th' Imperial Tow'rs of Troy;

> Steel cou'd the Works of mortal Pride confound,
> And hew Triumphal Arches to the Ground.
> What Wonder then, fair Nymph! thy Hairs shou'd feel
> The conqu'ring Force of unresisted Steel?
> (Rape of the Lock, III, 171-178)

The arrival of fate marks the departure of Ariel and, in place of his protection, the mischievous action of the gnome, Umbriel. Umbriel undertakes his mock-epic descent to the Cave of Spleen in order to infect Belinda with his own "dusky melancholy" and to bring about the final dissolution of the fragile perfection of her world by the power of spleen. As it is, Belinda's fate will be accomplished once she becomes a staple of common gossip with the dubious immortality such status implies. Thalestris speaks for the whole of polite society when she advises Belinda that she will be friendless: "'Twill then be Infamy to seem your Friend!" (IV, l. 112). The Baron continues to exult in his triumph, and Belinda reacts to the situation by lamenting her own folly in seeking the pleasures of court life and in ignoring the dream-vision of Ariel. But neither she nor her circle can cope with the intrusion of discord into their world, except by arguing and posturing angrily and impotently. Clarissa alone has the intellectual resources to place what has happened in a perspective the circle ought to be able to understand. She argues that "Charms strike the Sight, but Merit wins the Soul" (V, l. 34) by reminding the ruffled aristocrats of the short term of beauty and of its vulnerability to disease and age. Good sense and good humour must be cultivated so that the decline of beauty will not leave women in a barren existence. Disease and age, good sense and good humour are, however, alien to a circle caught up in the deceptive eternity of youth and youthful appearance. No one heeds her words, and the battle rages more fiercely than ever.

The point of Clarissa's failure to move her audience is to emphasize the futility of expecting man, with his extreme present-orientation, to develop a satisfactory time-consciousness until he is forced to do so when he must recognize the action of time in his own life. Clarissa's advice is general; it does not select particular examples, although the example of Belinda in disarray is enough to drive the guests into a polite frenzy, as if they are recognizing a deep and threatening imbalance in what they consider the nature of things. The words the Baron uses to suggest the magnitude of his achievement enforce the fact that the rape of the lock marks the end of the golden age of Belinda. His interest is no longer in her sacred time, but rather in the profane time of history as report, in the gossip and anecdote of fashionable society. And this is a world infected with its own kind of death and history: words kill reputations, and once reputations have been lost, the bearers of them live only in scandalous conversation. Thalestris' prophecy of Belinda's fall from favour is based on the fate of other, earlier, reigning belles, and there have probably been as many prudent Clarissas. The golden age endures through history with fragmentary power to assert itself for brief moments when carefree happy beauties rule, and these small golden ages pass as surely into history as the mythical Ages of Gold did. The same principle that underlies the final poem, "Winter," in Pope's Pastorals -- "Time conquers All, and we must Time obey" — underlies The Rape of the Lock, and the poet in the later poem grants to his small world of transient joy and beauty a tribute similar to that accorded the shepherds in "Winter." In the pastoral, Daphne is apotheosized as the goddess of life and love, of beauty, pleasure, and sweetness. In The Rape of the Lock,

Belinda's lock is elevated to a position among the stars in the night sky as part of the eternal order of the heavens, and thus free from the decays of time, to endure as an emblem of what the poet graciously sees as the most glorious of history's brief golden ages and to be the inspiration of romantic and trivial endeavor through the whole of time:

> This the Beau-monde shall from the Mall survey,
> And hail with Musick its propitious Ray.
> This, the blest Lover shall for Venus take,
> And send up Vows from Rosamonda's Lake.
> This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless Skies,
> When next he looks thro' Galileo's Eyes;
> And hence th' Egregious Wizard shall foredoom
> The Fate of Louis and the Fall of Rome.
> (Rape of the Lock, V, 133-140)

The lock will glow as the memorial of a whole age of fashionable folly and eccentricity, simultaneously praising its occasional splendor and mocking its silliness. Belinda herself will defy the time whose victim she is through the immortality the poet will give to her in his poem. The elegiac ending of the poem concentrates the poet's love and compassion for the creatures of time, in spite of their tragically foolish limitations. Belinda will stand for all the heedless human beauty that lives and dies in the myriad small spaces of time:

> For, after all the Murders of your Eye,
> When, after Millions slain, your self shall die;
> When those fair Suns shall sett, as sett they must,
> And all those Tresses shall be laid in Dust;
> This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to Fame,
> And midst the Stars inscribe Belinda's Name.
> (Rape of the Lock, V, 145-150)

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CYCLES OF WIT

I

Pope is far more interested in the experience of time than he is in the idea of it. He does not indulge in metaphysical or scientific speculations about its nature, but prefers to concentrate on the evidence of its activity in human life, or else to think of it in the poetic-historical terms of the Golden Age, the millennium, and the apocalypse. Hence, the treatment of time in his poetry indicates that he understands temporal process through conventional and related attitudes to it: consolation, in those poems which deal with the decay of youth and beauty; preservation, in the more directly "historical" poems which evaluate the present in the context of the whole course of time; instruction, in the biographical and autobiographical passages usually related in some way to his understanding of the theme of the vanity of human wishes. The point of these attitudes is to counsel the possibility of man's ethical and aesthetic victory over the power of time, within the limitations of his life and in tokens of memory and remembrance.

What Pope emphasizes, however, is the fragility of the aesthetic victory when it is claimed on the basis of aesthetic effect in lives dedicated to the preservation of timelessly youthful appearance and behaviour at the expense of the certain ethical victory of a life lived rightly. Aesthetic victory thus has nothing to do with the physical life of man, but rather with what man can create of his experience to stand through time as evidence of the value of his presence in that part

allotted to him, and the evidence might as easily be the record of human beauty as that of vanished imperial grandeur. In any case, the significance of the aesthetic victory derives from the ethos that informs it, so that Pope sees the aesthetic and ethical victories as being related, although neither has any special security in time, and poets have no right to make promises time might not be willing to keep: good men are as likely to meet oblivion as bad ones are; what has been of value in the Roman Empire is jumbled inextricably with what has not been, in the ruins melancholy poets love to contemplate; and one of the first things the dreaming poet in The Temple of Fame sees is inscriptions of names,

> The greater Part by hostile Time subdu'd;
> Yet wide was spread their Fame in Ages past,
> And Poets once had promis'd they should last.
> (32-34)

The relation Pope sees between the aesthetic and ethical victories leads him to approach his own age in terms of its accomplishments in the arts, with an eye to how these accomplishments will testify to the ethos of Augustan and post-Augustan England in ages to come. Pope is concerned with upholding standards he is convinced are right; hence, the aesthetic dissolution brought about partly by extra-moral forces -- the printing press, the dissemination of books by booksellers alert to bourgeois taste -- he equates with the moral dissolution he feels is the result of the abrogation of traditional values. It is very hard to separate effects and causes here, to determine what corrupts what. Pope sees that the booksellers pander to a corrupt popular taste they have themselves helped to create (and have profited by), and he is convinced that their activities have hastened what he considers to be the erosion of the moral fibre of the age in England. There is a logical leap in this line of argument which, in order to be

accepted, requires that one agree with Pope's idea of the interdependence of literature and morality and be prepared to assent to his vision of venal booksellers and bad poets bringing "The Smithfield Muses to the ear of Kings," who, presumably, will be quite happy to preside over the devastation of culture.

For Pope, a convinced traditionalist, the end of poetry is moral instruction, and taste is the index of man's "aesthetic intelligence,"[1] that faculty which enables him to perceive in literature, Nature, which Quintana defines as "the uniformity of law revealed through reason."[2] Nature is the principle of order in things whose attributes of harmony and simplicity must be imitated in the work of art so that the poet achieves that rational structure of immutable truth which marks the genius of the greatest poets:

> First follow NATURE, and your Judgment frame
> By her just Standard, which is still the same:
> Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
> One clear, unchang'd, and Universal Light,
> Life, Force, and Beauty, must to all impart,
> At once the Source, and End, and Test of Art.
> Art from that Fund each just Supply provides,
> Works without Show, and without Pomp presides:
> In some fair Body thus th' informing Soul
> With Spirits feeds, with Vigour fills the whole,
> Each Motion guides, and ev'ry Nerve sustains;
> It self unseen, but in th' Effects remains.
> (Essay on Criticism, 68-79)

It is on the basis of Nature that Pope argues the interdependence of literature and morality and emphasizes the poet's duty to regard his art as one of the highest and most responsible callings in a civilized community. Hence, the potency of the concepts of taste and nature, and the alarm Pope demonstrates over the treason of poetry pledged to the easy material advantages of work lacking the sinew of moral instruction, not to mention genius or talent, but diverting and popular. In his

Discours sur l'Eclogue, Rapin puts forward a caution Pope would approve:

> 'Tis true, Delight is the end Poetry aims at, but not the principal End, as others pretend. In effect, Poetry being an Art, ought to be profitable by the quality of its own Nature, and by the essential Subordination that all Arts should have to Polity, whose end in general is the publick Good . . . .[3]

In the tradition of poetry Pope upholds, instruction and delight are inextricably and harmoniously united through decorum: Dryden's "appropriate wording of truth."[4] The isolation of one element from the other in the public mind by the middle of the eighteenth century may be gauged by the redefinition of decorum as punctilio by a writer like Richardson, who sums up his motivations in writing Clarissa as follows, in a letter to Lady Elchin:

> Instruction without entertainment . . . would have but few readers. Instruction, Madam, is the pill; amusement is the gilding. Writings that do not touch the passions of the light and airy, will hardly ever reach the heart.[5]

To quote Richardson is to acknowledge the way in which the novel emerged as the literary form capable of giving shape to the revolution in popular taste in whose early, rather violent, stages Pope cannot be blamed for recognizing only the decline and dissolution of wit. There was little in the mess from which he recoiled to indicate the emergence of a new form, and there can have been very little evidence in the works of the poets he pilloried of an eventually fruitful revolution in the structure and substance of poetry. Indeed, the new form and the somewhat later new poetry proceeded independently of the hacks and, in the latter case, in reaction against poets like Pope. What it is important to recognize, however, is the way in which the generally levelling action of popular taste brought about the conditions that could accommodate less aridly aristocratic attitudes to literature and its responsibilities.

It may be that Pope's inability to predict the consequences of the disorder he saw around him led to the apocalyptic extravagances of The Dunciad, for his general tendency was to view the history of literature in terms of regular cycles of decline and recovery after an initial Golden Age: very much the way he regards human history in An Essay on Man. But it is one thing to have a theory about cycles, and quite another to be involved in them. The breakdown of standards against which Pope rails was part of technological and mercantile advances, and intellectual movements of the seventeenth century. Pope wrote during a period that derived much of its intellectual impulse from the English understanding of the Ancients vs. Moderns controversy, and although Pope was not directly affected by the controversy,[6] his sympathies were such that the side he took in the siege of Parnassus by the bad poets defined him in the terms of the conflict. This controversy, originally a matter of science and philosophy (the contesting theories postulated, respectively, that man becomes more and more imperfect throughout history, progressively decaying, and that man is part of a cyclical historical process of progress and decline[7] -- in this, at least, Pope is a Modern), had become a matter of learning and aesthetics, with one side upholding the superiority of the great originals, the ancients, over the decadent moderns, and the other supporting the new individualism of artists who had freed themselves from the burden of tradition.

Such was the nature of the controversy that both sides took extreme positions. The Ancients hurled charges of materialism and intellectual poverty at the Moderns, and the Moderns iconoclastically charged irrelevance against the Ancients. The Moderns claimed superiority over the ancient writers in wit, knowledge, and imagination by

virtue of their privileged position in history. Post-classical and post-Renaissance, they claimed the heritage of these traditions and the advantages of the modern spirit of scientific inquiry and invention. But the objection to them was that they tended to cut off their age from the past and trust in the dubious self-sufficiency of the modern period, with its emphasis on the self and on literature as the expression of the self. Paulson comments that Temple regarded the ancients "as being superior to moderns primarily because they built within a context of the wisdom of their predecessors."[8] The supporters of the ancient cause felt that, in their refusal to acknowledge the traditional context, the Moderns had ushered in an age of idiosyncrasy in which the value of literature resided in its novelty and in its ability to divert.

The great fear of the traditionalists was that the triumph of modernism would fragment the contribution of the age to tradition into countless ephemeral eccentricities and hence create a shameful break in the sweep of tradition from classical times throughout history. "For the scribblers are infinite," Temple writes, "that like mushrooms or flies are born and die in small circles of time, whereas books, like proverbs, receive their chief value from the stamp and esteem of ages through which they have passed."[9] The supporters of the ancients considered the essence of classical greatness to be the clear presence of Nature in the works of the ancient poets and, as "Nature Methodiz'd", in the ancient rules of composition that have sustained creative activity since the end of the Golden Age of literature. The Ancients believed that the spread of modernism, with its tacit or arrogantly open rejection of the ancients and its debasement of their rules, threatened with extinction the traditional bearings for writing and

judging correctly. Their acceptance of the importance of literature that reflects the order of Nature led them to perceive in the productions of the moderns a contempt for vital standards of composition and criticism and a tendency to wilful disorder and the unnatural. Hence, in Peri Bathous, Pope, as Martinus Scriblerus, ironically presents himself as the Longinus of modernism, locates the genius of his age in its "happy, uncommon, unaccountable Way of Thinking," and puts forward what must be the task of the poet who wishes to excel in the age:

> He is to consider himself as a Grotesque Painter, whose Works would be spoil'd by an Imitation of Nature, or Uniformity of Design. He is to mingle Bits of the most various, or discordant kinds, Landscape, History, Portraits, Animals, and connect them with a great deal of Flourishing, by Heads or Tails, as it shall please his Imagination, and contribute to his principal End, which is to glare by strong Oppositions, and surprize by Contrariety of Images.[10]

A similar intention, to reform taste and to correct the abuses of modernism, underlies the non-satiric Essay on Criticism. The set of poetic and critical principles collected and organized by Pope in this poem was intended to bring to literature impersonal standards of form and language within which the poet could range free under the guidance of his inspiration, and in relation to which critics of literature could evaluate achievement with justice. The rules were not intended to be iron-clad:

> Some Beauties yet, no Precepts can declare,
> For there's a Happiness as well as Care.
> Musick resembles Poetry, in each
> Are nameless Graces which no Methods teach,
> And which a Master-Hand alone can reach.
> If, where the Rules not far enough extend,
> (Since Rules were made but to promote their End)
> Some lucky LICENCE answers to the full
> Th' Intent propos'd, that Licence is a Rule.
> (Essay on Criticism, 141-149)

But in spite of the possible graces beyond the reach of art, Pope

cautions the moderns against irresponsibly offending against precept lest they transgress the end of precept, which is fidelity to Nature, "the Source, and End, and Test of Art." The point of the standards was to counteract the decadence of expression that was the legacy of the increasingly idiosyncratic style of the seventeenth-century writers and part of the new spirit of individualism. The baroque extravagances of language were producing a tradition in which the distinction between language as a vehicle of meaning and as ornamentation was breaking down. Hence, Pope's insistence in the Essay on Criticism that figures of speech must be appropriate to what they are being applied to. Standards of composition had so deteriorated that expression was becoming stylistic performance, with the sound-values of words overpowering their value as units of meaning.

Pope's concern was part of a general alarm over the condition of the langauge. A distrust of the potency of words as expressions of subtlety and imagination had developed in the seventeenth century under Bacon's influence on learning.[11] Bacon's objection to words was that they led to misinterpretation of nature by inaccurately representing its truths. The rhetorical embellishment of language seduced men into studying words rather than matter. What the new experimental scientists wanted to do was to "reduce language to its simplest terms, to make it as accurate, concrete, and clear an image of the material world as was possible,"[12] by encouraging the development of a direct style in which words would embody things as precisely as mathematical symbols embody quantities. In his History of the Royal Society, Sprat argued for the establishment of a Royal Academy which would assure the accuracy of language ("so many things in an equal number of words"[13]), and in 1664,

the Royal Society selected a committee consisting of Waller, Dryden, and Evelyn, among others, to improve the English language.[14] While this interest in standardizing the language was, in theory, unimpeachable, the policy of simplification, if carried out completely, might threaten the language with a loss of its richness of communicative resource and subtlety, and justify the inertia of an "official" language. Dryden, writing some thirty years after the abortive attempt at founding a language committee, recognized the fate of poetry in a culture that saw fit to encourage the debasement of language:

> For after all, our language is both copious, significant, and majestical, and might be reduced into a more harmonious sound. But for want of public encouragement, in this Iron Age, we are so far from making any progress in the improvement of our tongue, that in few years we shall speak and write as barbarously as our neighbours.[15]

Pope is alert to the dangers of both extremes: the austere plain style and the extravagantly lush. He and Swift, with their customary pessimism, see the condition of learning and literature in their age as catastrophic, and the reflection of the chaos is in the breakdown of language that alarms them. Swift expresses his contempt for scientific reduction of language to precise symbols in Book III of Gulliver's Travels. Gulliver hears of

> a Scheme for entirely abolishing all Words whatsoever: And this was urged as a great Advantage in Point of Health as well as Brevity. For, it is plain, that every Word we speak is in some Degree a Diminution of our Lungs by Corrosion; and consequently contributes to the shortening of our Lives. An Expedient was therefore offered, that since Words are only Names for Things, it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them, such Business they are to discourse on.[16]

In his Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue, Swift argues that only "by the pens of able and faithful historians" can the memory of the reign of Queen Anne be preserved, and yet he despairs, because although her reign "ought to be recorded in

Words more durable than Brass, and such as our Posterity may read a Thousand Years hence, with Pleasure as well as Admiration,"[17] it is unlikely, given the corruption of the language, that anyone will be able to understand the history in a few generations' time. Similarly, in the Advertisement to the Dunciad Variorum, Pope states that the figures in his poem can expect to survive "only in this monument" -- "and here survive they will, as long as the English tongue shall remain such as it was in the reigns of Queen ANNE and King GEORGE."[18]

What Swift and Pope feared was a solid wall of dead language sealing off their age from posterity, with the expression of the age as indecipherable as hieroglyph without a key. Both despised neologism, which they saw as the creation of new words "to express new and odd states of mind,"[19] and both felt that the theory of words as no more than symbols of things had already resulted in the inability of the reading public to respond to the subtleties of language. Hence, in A Tale of a Tub, we are told of the urgent need readers of the first edition had felt for explanation and annotation -- which Swift ironically provides by using Wotton's comments on the Tale. And in the Tale proper, history becomes a series of anecdotes in accordance with the modern technique of conveying "momentous Truths . . . within the Vehicles of Types and Fables."[20] In The Dunciad, Pope takes great pains to assure the efficiency of the key to the procession of forgotten writers and modes which is the substance of his animated tableaux in that poem.

For both writers, the insubstantial foundations of the modern tradition were novelty and extravagance, and the sustaining forces of the tradition were the printing press and the bookseller: technology

and mercantilism. If words had become things, then the registers of words, books, had become things as well, objects to be produced and sold, subject to the laws of supply and demand. This displacement of aesthetic criteria by economic, Pope and Swift saw as part of the modern tendency to separate matter and spirit, and to reject the great tradition extending from the ancients in favour of one whose test of value was tangible proof of present relevance and whose spirit of inquiry was ludicrously empirical in essence. Thus, Homer can be rejected for his failure to have been born in the modern age -- such is the reductio ad absurdum of A Tale of a Tub -- because of his failure to discuss the cabalistic and time-saving accoutrements of the moderns. For the moderns, Homer is just a name, Swift contends, and he satirizes their ignorance by having the Modern Writer in the Tale redefine the greatness of Homer by acknowledging him to be the "Inventor of the Compass, of Gun-Powder, and the Circulation of the Blood."[21] The name becomes more than the symbol of the thing: the Iliad and the Odyssey are Homer, and in The Battle of the Books, we are warned by the bookseller

> to beware of applying to Persons what is here meant, only of Books in the most literal Sense. So, when Virgil is mentioned, we are not to understand the Person of a famous Poet, call'd by that Name, but only certain Sheets of Paper, bound up in Leather, containing in Print, the works of the said Poet, and so of the rest.[22]

Thus, by the time A Tale of a Tub was written, books had become important as things, possessing potency in their very nature as objects. As recently as 1644, Milton had been able to imply in Areopagitica a distinction between books as objects and as manifestations of ideas, their potency consisting in manifested idea:

> For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as the soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them . . . unless warines be used,

as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye.[23]

But by the turn of the eighteenth century, the potency had been displaced. As manifestations of idiosyncrasy, stupidity, and smut, books had to call attention to themselves by presenting the most attractive, marketable appearance and by catching the fancy of the moment. Temple, in his "Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning," had remarked that "the invention of printing has not perhaps multiplied books, but only the copies of them."[24] Temple implies the distinction between the Miltonic idea of books and books as objects, but his opinion about mere quantity does not take into account the steady proliferation of trash in the literary marketplace. It is just as easy to print a bad book as a good one, and much easier to write one, when there are so many editions of good poets to plagiarize and such a low taste amongst the reading public, conditioned and exploited by businessmen responsive to its whims. Hence, in Peri Bathous, Pope satirizes composition by recipe by collecting examples of popular styles from the works of the most fashionable modern poets for the guidance of would-be poets, and in the Tale of a Tub, the Modern Writer repeatedly emphasizes the importance of books as objects and is frantic in the face of the whims of the buying public:

'When I had first thought of this Address, I had prepared a copious List of Titles to present Your Highness (Prince Posterity) as an undisputed argument for what I affirm. The originals were posted fresh upon all Gates and Corners of Streets; but returning in a very few Hours to take a Review, they were all torn down, and fresh ones in their Places: I enquired in vain, the Memorial of them was lost among Men, their Place was no more to be found: and I was laughed to scorn, for a Clown and a Pedant, without all Taste and Refinement, little versed in the Course of present Affairs, and that knew nothing of what had pass'd in the best Companies of Court and Town.'[25]

That books were manufactured, designed according to specifications,

(witness the elaborate preparations of the bookseller in the Tale, and the Modern Writer's concern over what the book ought to be) Pope and Swift would see as the perfectly logical outcome of the contemporary rage for save-alls of composition. "As the book market expands," McLuhan writes in his discussion of The Dunciad, "the division between intellect and commerce ends. The book trade takes over the functions of wit and spirit and government."[26] The stylistic emptiness the Augustan satirists ridicule signifies for them the vast abyss of intellectual and emotional emptiness on the brink of which they feel their age dances. Addison, in the Spectator, No. 166, September 10, 1711, compares the fate of painting, sculpture, and architecture with the fate of books. "The several Arts [paintings, buildings, statues] are expressed in mouldring Materials; Nature sinks under them, and is not able to support the Ideas which are imprest upon it."[27] But books can be reprinted indefinitely:

> If Writings are thus durable, and may pass from Age to Age throughout the whole Course of Time, how careful should an Author be of committing any thing to Print that may corrupt Posterity, and poyson the Minds of Men with Vice and Errour?[28]

Bad writers, Addison concludes, "seem to have been sent into the World to deprave humane Nature, and sink it into the Condition of Brutality."[29] It is this depravity of human nature reflected in many of the writings printed and distributed by booksellers that led the Augustan satirists to consider their age as the end of a long tradition of literary and intellectual integrity and the prelude to a protracted period of anarchy in letters. They saw in the deterioration of language and in the burgeoning book industry a reflection of the catastrophic condition of learning and literature. Wimsatt connects the concern for language with the peculiar sensitivity of the Augustans (especially of Pope, about

whom he is writing) to the various meanings of wit:

> A seventeenth-century equivalent for imagination or fancy ('invention' in Pope's Preface to the Iliad), 'wit' in its favorable connotation is a kind of mental alertness to resemblances (as Locke and Addison discussed it) and also (though neither Locke nor Addison approved thoroughly of this) a kind of verbal smartness, a meaning compressed and pointed in a juncture of words. 'Wit' (esprit), wrote one of the French critics, Père Bouhours, 'is a solid, radiant, object' (C'est un corps solide qui brille).[30]

The deterioration of wit, regarded as imagination and fancy, and as verbal smartness, entailed a corresponding deterioration of wit regarded in terms of mental alertness. The result, at least as far as the alarmists were concerned, promised to be intellectual and cultural death. Pope's alarm extends beyond literature to man's other expressions of himself: music, architecture, gardening -- the whole morphology of a time he sees as being a "Saturnian Age of Lead."

II

In Peri Bathous, Pope ironically formulates an Art of Modern Poetry suited to an age that proudly locates itself on the "Lowlands of Parnassus" and compliments itself on the "flourishing State of its Trade, and the Plenty of its Manufacture":[31]

> it is with great Pleasure I have observ'd of late the gradual Decay of Delicacy and Refinement among Mankind, who are become too reasonable to require that we should labour with infinite Pains to come up to the Taste of those Mountaineers, when they without any, may condescend to ours. But as we have now an unquestioned Majority on our side, procure a farther Vent for our own Product, which is already so much relish'd, encourag'd, and rewarded, by the Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain.[32]

Pope's attack is launched against the "present End" of the wise moderns, profit and pleasure, which Scriblerus sanctions by misquoting Horace: "Et prodesse volunt, & delectare Poetae."[33] Far from saying that the modern age is peculiar in its dedication to the dulness that pleases

and makes profits, moreover, Pope attributes to mankind in general a natural taste for the Bathos which is only particularly strong in the present age, because current taste has not been educated to respond to anything much beyond the jingling rhymes and fanciful silliness, immediate effects that are the antithesis of wit.

Pope recognizes the vulnerability of uneducated taste to failure to progress beyond its childish satisfactions and to corruption at the hands of those who realise that uneducated popular taste is easily pleased and thus court it eagerly. No demands are made on readers eager to buy, and, in turn, no demands are made on poetic genius. A public eager to read finds an industry eager to please. A poet is now someone who is printed and sold in great numbers, and because market conditions dictate creative activity, there is no time for an aspiring writer to perfect his craft, much less face up to whether or not he has any talent. Talent is a matter of shrewd lifting and imitation, the cynical use of existing models, but not as guides to the proper expression of truth. These new Parnassians can neither think nor see.

In Peri Bathous, Pope does not perceive the energy of dulness[34] as clearly as he later does in The Dunciad, but rather the inertia of its accomplishments: the product, not the process, although he does make tentative attempts to define the process, principally by treating it scatologically (rather as Swift treats inspiration and progress in A Tale of a Tub) in terms of a view of modern poetry as "a natural or morbid secretion from the Brain":

> As I would not suddenly stop a Cold in the Head, or dry up my Neighbour's Issue, I would as little hinder him from necessary Writing. It may be affirm'd with great truth, that there is hardly any human creature past Childhood, but at one time or another has had some Poetical Evacuation, and no question was much the better for it in his Health: so true is the Saying, Nascimur Poetae: Therefore is the Desire

of Writing properly term'd Pruritis, the Titillation of the Generative Faculty of the Brain; and the Person is said to conceive. Now such as conceive must bring forth. I have known a Man thoughtful, melancholy, and raving for divers days, who forthwith grew wonderfully easy, lightsome and cheerful, upon a Discharge of the peccant Humour, in exceeding purulent Metre.[35]

The intellectual compost for the blossoming of the "Flowers of the Bathos" is a mixture of peccant humours and the residue of extended contemplation of "the Dregs of Nature" and the achievements beneath mediocrity in the abyss of "the profound." The mind is thus a benighted garden, far from the light of wit, a grotesque place of sub-human imaginings in which what is not found monstrous in nature is made so.[36]

The Bathos proceeds from, and is dedicated to producing, "Tranquillity of Mind," the sleep of madness for Pope in The Dunciad:

> After the other persons are disposed in their proper places of rest, the Goddess transports the King to her Temple, and there lays him to slumber with his head on her lap; a position of marvellous virtue, which causes all the Visions of wild enthusiasts, projectors, politicians, inamoratos, castle-builders, chemists, and poets.[37]

In The Dunciad, Pope's vision of access to the abyss of the Bathos is grandly mock-epic (the ghost of Settle leads Cibber through the underworld), but in Peri Bathous the precipitous descent is facilitated by attention to the principles of bathetic art; in effect, by the poet's choice to live the grotesque dream of the abysmal:

> I grant, that to excel in the Bathos a Genius is requisite; yet the Rules of Art must be allow'd so far useful, as to add Weight, or as I may say, hang on Lead, to facilitate and enforce our Descent, to guide us to the most advantageous Declivities, and habituate our Imagination to a Depth of thinking. Many there are that can fall, but few can arrive at the Felicity of falling gracefully; much more for a man who is amongst the lowest of the Creation at the very bottom of the Atmosphere, to descend beneath himself, is not so easy a Task unless he calls in Art to his Assistance.[38]

What Scriblerus draws attention to in his survey of the art of the Bathos is the ease of the descent to the abyss, the prodigious hardiness of the abysmal flowers, and their popularity. The substance

of poetry -- the immutable truth of Nature -- withers and dies; the accidents -- its forms, conventions, stock devices -- thrive. It is enough to be "poetic"; indeed this is all that is required to be styled a poet, as Scriblerus demonstrates in his catalogue of techniques. The parody of wit is like the madman's parody of sanity. Hence, Pope's association of Bedlam with Parnassus in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot:

> The Dog-Star rages! nay 'tis past a doubt,
> All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
> Fire in each eye, and Papers in each hand,
> They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
> (3-6)

It is this remarkable energy that Pope becomes more and more obsessed with: mad poets weeping over England, youths abandoning respectable careers to assume the identity of the poet, the eventual transformation of the nation that deifies Dulness into a place of darkness. The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot can be regarded as an attempt to undeceive the would-be wits: to convince them of the essential differences between the fact and the condition of being a poet. Thus, throughout the poem, Pope places side by side the outward signs of literary activity -- publication and critical and material profit and loss -- and the substantial and demanding creative action of which the hacks are ignorant. The parallel themes enter the poem by means of an Horatian allusion, the response to which defines obligation as the motivation of many modern writers; not the obligation to be sure that the dignity of literature is being served, nor the traditional moral obligation expressed in Pope's response to Fortescue in The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace --

> P. Not write? but then I think,
> And for my Soul I cannot sleep a wink.
> I nod in Company, I wake at Night,
> Fools rush into my Head, and so I write. --
> (11-14)

but a new, material obligation:

> I sit with sad Civility, I read
> With honest anguish, and an aking head;
> And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
> This saving counsel, 'Keep your Piece nine years.'
> Nine years! cries he, who high in Drury-lane
> Lull'd by soft Zephyrs thro' the broken Pane,
> Rymes e're he wakes, and prints before Term ends,
> Oblig'd by hunger and Request of friends:
> 'The Piece you think is incorrect: why take it,
> I'm all submission, what you'd have it, make it.'
> (Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, 37-46)

The substance of literature becomes that which can capture the fancy of the moment: fashionable pastorals written by men who have never ventured beyond the city, libels of the great and the famous, criticism of worthy poets by bad commentators. The paths to success are adaptability --

> The Bard whom pilfer'd Pastorals renown,
> Who turns a Persian Tale for half a crown,
> Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
> And strains from hard-bound brains eight lines a-year:
> He, who still wanting tho' he lives on theft,
> Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left . . . . --
> (Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, 179-184)

sycophancy to patrons like Bufo --

> Receiv'd of Wits an undistinguish'd race,
> Who first his Judgment ask'd, and then a Place:
> Much they extoll'd his Pictures, much his Seat,
> And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat:
> Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
> He pay'd some Bards with Port, and some with Praise,
> To some a dry Rehearsal was assign'd,
> And others (harder still) he pay'd in kind. --
> (237-244)

and dishonesty --

> That Fop whose pride affects a Patron's name,
> Yet absent, wounds an Author's honest fame;
> Who can your Merit selfishly approve,
> And show the Sense of it without the Love;
> Who has the Vanity to call you Friend,
> Yet wants the Honour injur'd to defend;
> Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
> And, if he lye not, must at least betray:

> Who to the Dean and silver Bell can swear,
> And sees at Cannons what was never there:
> Who reads but with a Lust to mis-apply,
> Make Satire a Lampoon, and Fiction, Lye.
> (291-302)

Pope emphasizes his own separation from "the Race that write" -- "I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their sight" -- and demonstrates, through autobiography, the process which has brought him just success as a committed poet:

> Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
> Dipt me in Ink, my Parents', or my own?
> As yet a Child, nor yet a Fool to Fame,
> I lisp'd in Numbers, for the Numbers came.
> I left no Calling for this idle trade,
> No Duty broke, no Father dis-obey'd.
> The Muse but serv'd to ease some Friend, not Wife,
> To help me thro' this long Disease, my Life . . . .
> (125-132)

He began to publish his poems, not because he thought they would sell, but because of the opinion of men whose judgement he respected (Granville, Walsh, Swift, Garth, Congreve) that he was a true poet. Pope's career has touched upon all the kinds of literary activity he criticizes for poverty of wit in the hands of bad writers: pastorals, about whose "pure Description" he was sufficiently aware to abandon such work for the poetry of sense (his own decision, not affected by Gildon's attack), criticism (not the savage enmity of a Dennis), satire (not the venomous libels of a Hervey). Pope is, of course, indulging himself in self-justification [39] and, as he usually does when he justifies himself, he manages to give the impression that he is the only writer alive with a functioning conscience:

> Not Fortune's Worshipper, nor Fashion's Fool,
> Not Lucre's Madman, nor Ambition's Tool,
> Not proud, nor servile, be one Poet's praise
> That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways;
> That Flatt'ry, ev'n to Kings, he held a shame,
> And thought a Lye in Verse or Prose the same:

> That not in Fancy's Maze he wander'd long,
> But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song:
> That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,
> He stood the furious Foe, the timid Friend . . . .
> (334-343)

What Pope does in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot is to assume the role of the hero battling the cultural Goths. The life of a true wit, as he wrote in 1717, is a "warfare upon earth." The condition of a true writer's life in the modern age is a ceaseless effort to preserve the serenity to create, under the pressure of the external circumstances (personal attack, importuning fools and bores, fashionable trash, sycophancy, the demands of the marketplace) and not any more than absolutely unavoidable participation in those circumstances, inevitable as they are. Pope stresses the distinction between the condition of the false wit's life and that of the true wit's by styling the urban milieu of London the sphere of the hacks and dunces and by locating himself, as the embodiment of true wit, in Twickenham, his imitation of Horace's Sabine farm, with its virtues of retirement and contemplation. It is this conception of the pastoral which tends to supplant allusion to the Golden Age in Pope's later poetry and, possibly because Twickenham is an accessible means of recovering serenity, the satire on the corruptions of the city in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot and the Imitations of Horace does not involve Pope in visions of a hell without egress, like the London of The Dunciad, although the transitional dialogues of the Epilogue to the Satires show an intensification of Pope's fear, throughout the Imitations, that even the rural retreat available to him at Twickenham is being threatened by the expansion of the city's corruption beyond its borders. Even in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, there is a portentous incursion:

What Walls can guard me, or what Shades can hide?
They pierce my Thickets, thro' my Grot they glide,
By land, by water, they renew the charge,
They stop the Chariot, and they board the Barge.
No place is sacred, not the Church is free,
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:
Then from the Mint walks forth the Man of Ryme,
Happy! to catch me, just at Dinner-time.
(7-14)

The threatening city is still at a distance from the garden,[40] however, and in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot Pope is more the professional than the moral poet, although the two cannot be separated as far as he is concerned. There is still a sense that Pope is confident his audience can take advice, and can benefit from his good example.

It is tempting to use the 1742 Dunciad as a vantage point from which one might look back over a consistent attitude to literature and society that evidences a steady evolution of healthy scepticism into despair, but Pope's career will not support such a view. The 1728 Dunciad associates the devastation of the public good with the devastation of wit, but this was written two to four years before the Essay on Man, in which Pope's account of the cycles of decline and recovery in human history is not affected by any conviction that bad literature and corrupt taste have had, or are having, any particular effect on society. Much closer to the truth of Pope's association of dulness and national well-being is his politically aristocratic bias and his contempt for the Whigs and what they represent. Pope's emphasis on the profit motive is double-headed. On one hand, his general concern is with the undermining of "an aristocratic social and political order . . . by money and new financial institutions,"[41] introduced by the Whigs, but he is more particularly alarmed by the extension of the disorder of capitalism into the arts, where it subverts the stability of tradition

by encouraging the ethic of material recompense and sycophancy. Hacks churn out celebratory odes on demand, and the taste of a Timon finds artists eager to satisfy it. The traditional patron-artist relationship in such a society becomes vulgar complicity. The unworking of degree in a corrupt age when dunghill poets pass as seers necessarily, for Pope, involves the uncreation of civilization by the uncreating word. "Without degree, there [is] perpetual struggle and universal disorder."[42]

The cycles Pope could contemplate with equanimity in the Essay on Criticism seemed to give evidence of the steady recovery of tradition in spite of its vicissitudes and of the persistence of order's benign legislation through wit. In the poem, Pope regards wit generally as the creative power vested in the unity of poetic genius and judgement which brings to the expression of truth, sharpness of insight and clarity of conceit. Most important, after genius, is insight, the ability to perceive truth in human experience. Pope feels that the history of poetry has been marked by an initial Golden Age during which the perception of truth, or Nature, was immediate and its expression radiantly clear, followed by regular cycles of decline and recovery of the potency of perception and expression under the impact of the continuing battle between poets and critics, the influence of fashionable ideas about poetry, and the various repressive social forces. Pope unravels the complexity of the cycles by returning over and over again to the first principles of poetry and criticism, as manifested in the writings of the Golden Age, sacred in their purity:

> Still green with Bays each ancient Altar stands,
> Above the reach of Sacrilegious Hands,
> Secure from Flames, from Envy's fiercer Rage,
> Destructive War, and all-involving Age.
> See, from each Clime the Learn'd their Incense bring;
> Hear, in all Tongues consenting Paeans ring!

> In Praise so just, let ev'ry Voice be join'd,
> And fill the Gen'ral Chorus of Mankind!
> Hail Bards Triumphant! born in happier Days;
> Immortal Heirs of Universal Praise!
> Whose Honours with Increase of Ages grow,
> As Streams roll down, enlarging as they flow!
> Nations unborn your mighty Names shall sound,
> And Worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
> (Essay on Criticism, 181-194)

The cycles of disorder he sees as being characterized by improper, or misplaced, reverence in relation to the first principles in the elevation of one or another of the superficial characteristics of poetry over others (the elevation of characteristics of expression over insight); by the abrogation by critics of their role as votaries of "Criticism the Muse's Handmaid" in favour of dictatorial legislation of poetry; and by the effect of fanaticism and lewdness on literature. Moreover, since the end of the Golden Age of classical greatness the forces of disorder have been constant, so that the history of literature has been, and continues to be, marked by the effects of various enthusiasms (excessive emphasis on conceit, on stylistic embellishment; too great a stress on metre; the extremes of ancientism and modernism, etc.); by trends in popular taste (the appetite for lewdness during the Restoration, for example); and by the alternation of repression and license by religious authorities (the "Holy Vandals" in the monasteries, the moral laxity of Socinianism). The task of the poet and the critic is to be the watchdogs of literature in their adherence to the rules ("Nature Methodiz'd") that guarantee the proper expression of truth, and in their vigilance against the forces and enthusiasms that subvert this expression and truth. This task is not the least part of the "warfare upon earth" that is the wit's life, and it is in this task that Pope engages throughout his career; for he believes that the aesthetic and

moral health of a nation is necessarily dependent upon the aesthetic and moral health of its poets, those men who express the truth of nature.

In his earlier work, however, Pope does not react to the strength of the subversive forces in his own time with the hysteria that characterizes The Dunciad. In the Essay on Criticism, he places his own age in the context of historical struggle between wit and disorder and sees it as being no less illuminated by the steady light of a few worthy men (Walsh, Buckingham, Roscommon) than others since the Golden Age have been, and the recent memory of the corruptions of the Restoration and the reign of William III does not shake his confidence in the eternal power of wit to recover its "Fundamental Laws." What characterizes Pope's attitude to the follies of modernism in the Essay on Criticism is the confident scorn of the good poet and critic for the bad, no matter what age the examples are drawn from:

> Where-e'er you find the cooling Western Breeze,
> In the next line, it whispers thro' the Trees;
> If Chrystal Streams with pleasing Murmurs creep,
> The Reader's threatened (not in vain) with Sleep,
> Then, at the last, and only Couplet fraught
> With some unmeaning Thing they call a Thought,
> A needless Alexandrine ends the Song,
> That like a wounded Snake, drags its slow length along.
> (350-357)

This is close to the sort of mockery Dryden directed to Shadwell in "Mac Flecknoe," and, fortunately, Pope never lost the knack of its cooly withering scorn:

> Come harmless Characters that no one hit,
> Come Henley's Oratory, Osborn's Wit!
> The Honey dropping from Favonio's tongue,
> The Flow'rs of Bubo, and the Flow of Y--ng!
> The gracious Dew of Pulpit Eloquence;
> And all the well-whipt Cream of Courtly Sense,
> That first was H--vey's, F--'s next, and then
> The S--te's, and then H--vey's once agen.

O come, that easy Ciceronian stile,
So Latin, yet so English all the while,
As, tho' the Pride of Middleton and Bland,
All Boys may read, and Girls may understand!
Then might I sing without the least Offence,
And all I sung should be the Nation's Sense:
Or teach the melancholy Muse to mourn,
Hang the sad Verse on CAROLINA's Urn,
And hail her passage to the Realms of Rest,
All Parts perform'd, and all her children blest!
(Epilogue to the Satires, Dial. I, 65-82)

The same confident contempt underlies Peri Bathous, although in this satire there is a constant stress on the profitability of mediocrity and the passivity of England in accepting the flowers of the Bathos as specimens of wit. What Pope does not provide anywhere is an extended and coherent exposition of the assumptions that are at the basis of his contempt and fury when he discusses the cultural and social implications of corrupt art. He would agree with Swift that it is "the Talent of [his] Age and Nation, to turn Things of the greatest Importance into Ridicule;"[43] that abuse of the language shows "a natural Tendency towards relapsing into Barbarity;"[44] and that the two reigning evils of the time are "Ignorance, and Want of Taste."[45] But he does not, once he begins to show alarm over the cultural and social implications, do much more than to react with anger and despair, as if he were aware that it is not enough to counsel the wisdom of tradition. He is unarmed for his battle against the depravity of a moneyed society intent upon immediate return and contemptuous of the grandeur of the past, if not against the poets who accede to the depravity. One must not expect satirists to do more than to diagnose the condition of society as they see it, of course, but there is a great pathos in the spectacle of a concerned man and poet who finds that the values he advocates are apparently completely irrelevant to the society he

addresses. The intelligence and sanity he counsels become things into which he must retreat if the poet is to save himself: the spokesman of culture and civilization finds himself an unwilling eremite.

Pope's concern with the preservation of the memory of his age involves his assumptions about the aesthetic and ethical responsibilities of poets much more than it involves any coy flirtation with fame, although he sometimes seems to be protesting too much his submission to the verdict of posterity. In the "Preface of 1717", he wonders:

> In this office of collecting my pieces, I am altogether uncertain, whether to look upon my self as a man building a monument, or burying the dead?
>
> If time shall make it the former, may these Poems (as long as they last) remain as a testimony, that their Author never made his talents subservient to the mean and unworthy ends of Party or self-interest; the gratification of publick prejudices, or private passions; the flattery of the undeserving, or the insult of the unfortunate. If I have written well, let it be consider'd that 'tis what no man can do without good sense, a quality that not only renders one capable of being a good writer, but a good man. And if I have made any acquisition in the opinion of any one under the notion of the former, let it be continued to me under no other title than that of the latter.
>
> But if this publication be only a more solemn funeral of my Remains, I desire it may be known that I die in charity, and in my sense; without any murmurs against the justice of this age, or any mad appeals to posterity. I declare that I shall think the world in the right, and quietly submit to every truth which time shall discover to the prejudice of these writings; not so much as wishing so irrational a thing, as that every body should be deceiv'd, meerly for my credit.[46]

He then proceeds to argue his youth as an extenuating circumstance, and his final statements are interestingly at odds with his own later practice:

> To conclude, if this volume perish, let it serve as a warning to the critics, not to take too much pains for the future to destroy such things as will die of themselves; and as a Memento mori to some of my vain co-temporaries the Poets, to teach them that when real merit is wanting, it avails nothing to have been encourag'd by the great, commended by the eminent, and favour'd by the publick in general.[47]

But the pursuit of fame itself involves the poet's responsibilities, as Pope's sentiments in the Preface show. The poet deserves to be

remembered only if he has not profaned the sacred trust of his calling by devoting his talents to praising what is corrupt. His profanation of the trust means oblivion for himself and for what he writes about. In The Temple of Fame, the dreaming poet sees a temple of ice whose outer walls are a ceaseless activity of inscription and eradication of the names of the suitors of Fame, and whose inner chamber is made up of magnificent sculptures and friezes of the eternally famous, whose

> Names inscrib'd unnumber'd Ages past
> From Time's first Birth, with Time it self shall last . . . .
> (49-50)

The poet's vision concludes with an attitude to fame that Pope held throughout his life:

> Nor Fame I slight, nor for her Favours call;
> She comes unlook'd for, if she comes at all:
> But if the Purchase costs so dear a Price,
> As soothing Folly, or exalting Vice:
> Oh! if the Muse must flatter lawless Sway,
> And follow still where Fortune leads the way;
> Or if no Basis bear my rising Name,
> But the fall'n Ruins of Another's Fame:
> Then teach me, Heaven! to scorn the guilty Bays;
> Drive from my Breast that wretched Lust of Praise;
> Unblemish'd let me live, or die unknown,
> Oh grant an honest Fame, or grant me none!
> (513-524)

Pope is so much convinced that no lasting fame will be granted the poets he reviles that he takes the trouble to provide explanatory notes on their names and accomplishments, particularly in The Dunciad, ironically giving them a kind of dubious renown tangential to his own fame, so that while he is intent on preserving the memory of good men, he nevertheless preserves the memory of the vicious opposition to goodness. The general impression of his satires is one of goodness forced into defensive and punitive attitudes by a corrupt society, and hence disarmed because it must define itself in reaction rather than in

action. Moreover, any exclusively moral opposition to corruption is itself disarmed because of the deadened moral responses of its objects. The structured opposition of satire is the one lethal weapon Pope has. It can strike where the corrupt are most vulnerable, in their public image. "I know nothing that moves strongly but satire," Pope writes to Swift, "and those who are asham'd of nothing else, are so of being ridiculous."[48] Pope's reduction of the corrupt to a bestiary or to ignominiously bizarre participants in a pissing contest not only emphasizes their own moral dehumanization but also denies their actions of any significant human identity at all by isolating their lack of moral resonance, the distinctive characteristic of man as well as of the true wit. So sweeping is Pope's condemnation of his age before posterity, so complete is his repudiation of its emptiness in The Dunciad, that he makes of the age an enormous sound stage in which his own probity resounds. The ethos of the age is thus served: what is worth preserving is the memory of the defensive opposition of goodness to vice, and this requires that the memory of vice be preserved as well.

If Pope never sees his age as the best of times, he does not always see it as the worst. His indignation is likely to push him to extreme despairing attitudes only when there is a specific social enormity as inspiration. He writes to Caryll, at the time of the South Sea Bubble:

> Indeed, I think all the morals that were among us, are gone; that is to say, all the pretences to morals. If ever a nation deserved to be punished by an immediate inflection from heaven, this deserves it; & I think it would be in high presumption upon God's mercy, to hope even He will turn all this, any way, to our good? . . . For my part all I see is ruin and mischief: all I wish is quiet and resignation.[49]

But towards the end of his life, in a letter to the Earl of Marchmont, he has come full circle to the "Preface of 1717" with a statement of

principles that bespeaks the mature man and poet:

> I never had any uneasy Desire of Fame, or keen Resentment of Injuries (except those to his family and friends), & now both are asleep together: Other Ambition I never had, than to be tolerably thought of by those I esteem'd, and this has been gratify'd beyond my proudest Hopes. I hate no human Creature, & the moment any can repent or reform, I love them sincerely. Public Calamities touch me; but when I read of Past Times, I am somewhat comforted as to the present, upon the Comparison: and at the worst I thank God, that I do not yet live under a Tyranny, nor an Inquisition: that I have thus long enjoyed Independency, Freedom of Body and Mind, have told the world of my Opinions, even on the highest Subjects, & of the Greatest of Men, pretty freely; that good men have not been ashamed of me, and that my works have not dy'd before me (which is the case of most Authors) and if they die soon after, I shall probably not know it, or certainly not be concern'd at it, in the next world.[50]

The preservation of personal dignity and integrity in an age when these things seem to count for little is no small victory, and if Pope often seems arrogant in his declarations of his own rectitude, this is probably the effect of the necessary statement of goodness in satire. But the rectitude is an essential part of the poet's involvement in his society: a self-conscious conviction of right the poet brings with him rather than just a reflex attitude dependent upon the stimulus of folly. A social satirist like Pope must be convincingly a part of the society he criticizes, immersed in its present complexity without being swallowed by it, a fate Pope does not always easily escape, particularly when he is arguing the dissolution of culture. Pope is most at ease as a satirist of his own time when he resists apocalypse and adjusts his temporal perspective to accommodate the timeless folly of man as a social creature, in satires like the Imitations of Horace.

CHAPTER FIVE: TIME-TRAVELLING

I

Pope's Imitations of Horace are like variations of the method of satirical anthropology that characterizes such works as Les Lettres Persanes and Citizen of the World; but while Montesquieu and Goldsmith reveal the strangeness and absurdity of European values by placing them in the alien matrix of exotic innocence based upon cultural-geographical, but still contemporary, differences (Uzbek is an eighteenth-century Persian, Lien Chi Altangi a Chinese), Pope confronts his society with its own strangeness as a kind of time-traveller[1] who speaks with the voice of Horace and analyzes and defines the assumptions and values of eighteenth-century society in a matrix no less alien for being that of reason, and with an innocence no less exotic in the poet's refusal to compromise his belief in the fundamental human virtues of honesty and decency. Moral truth is strange in that it is regarded by society as having no application to the present condition of England.

Pope approaches society in these poems in terms of continuity: the relevance of the standards of Horace (and Donne) to Augustan England, and the enduring human folly that requires criticism in relation to these standards. The method of definition and analysis Pope uses is puritanical in the most accurate sense, in that he presents the accepted as strange by bringing things back to their original state, or real meaning, in a process that makes them increasingly more alien to their present condition with each step backward -- a kind of reverse metamor-

phosis that accounts for the way things have turned out. Pope emphasizes, moreover, that all stages of the metamorphosis have simultaneous existence in the present, which amounts to saying that eighteenth-century England is a moral and social history of man in temporal miniature. This rather involved process of making the familiar seem strange can be seen concretely in a poem that is not one of the Imitations, the Epistle to Bathurst, in which Pope focuses on the role of money in modern society. Wealth is a condition that sustains privilege and a certain quality of life, but the condition is dependent upon such things as produce and livestock:

> Poor Avarice one torment more would find;
> Nor could Profusion squander all in kind:
> Astride his cheese Sir Morgan might we meet,
> And Worldly crying coals from street to street,
> (Whom with a wig so wild, and mien so maz'd,
> Pity mistakes for some poor tradesman craz'd).
> Had Colepepper's whole wealth been hops and hogs,
> Could he himself have sent it to the dogs?
> His Grace will game: to White's a Bull be led,
> With spurning heels and with a butting head.
> To White's be carried, as to ancient games,
> Fair Coursers, Vases, and alluring Dames.
> Shall then Uxorio, if the stakes he sweep,
> Bear home six Whores, and make his Lady weep?
> Or soft Adonis, so perfum'd and fine,
> Drive to St. James's a whole herd of swine?
> Oh filthy check on all industrious skill,
> To spoil the nation's last great trade, Quadrille!
> (47-64)

Pope's purpose in the Epistle to Bathurst is to analyze the gold standard of society in relation to moral standards. Hence, Pope's dual vision of society in terms of debasement and reduction based on imagery and ideas of historical and moral-reverse alchemy, the alchemical theme substantiated by the series of verbal and intellectual turns upon the signification of gold in tradition and commerce. The principal effect of this theme is to suggest that the modern society which prides itself

on being the highest point of human development in fact has reached the nadir of development in its dedication to luxury and its lust for money. Pope considers a new commercial age of gold that is a vicious parody of the pastoral Golden Age. The pastoral age was golden in a purely figurative sense, in that it was the best of ages, when man in simplicity chose love as the principle of his existence, experienced a profusion of joy and occasional sadness, and regarded death as part of a vast cycle of eternally returning life. The commercial age is golden in the literal sense of the word. Man, no longer simple, chooses wealth as his principle of existence, pledges himself to avarice, and encounters a death that is final: the gold cycle has appropriated the eternally returning power of pastoral love, only in the sense that it is cyclical, of course, but the new cycle is one of death. Riches, indiscriminately distributed, just as indiscriminately kill the moral sense of nations. The metal dug up from the soil is associated with corruption in all of its forms: as paper money which "lends Corruption lighter wings to fly" (70); as capital; as investment. Man has reduced himself to a digger in the earth, and his society to a condition in which it is sustained by graft, avarice, extravagance, waste, and irresponsibility, to the fulfillment of the wizard's prediction to Blunt, with its suggestions of the Biblical deluge:

> 'At length Corruption, like a gen'ral flood,
> (So long by watchful Ministers withstood)
> Shall deluge all; and Av'rice creeping on
> Spread like a low-born mist and blot the Sun;
> Statesman and Patriot ply alike the stocks,
> Peeress and Butler share alike the Box,
> And Judges job, and Bishops bite the town,
> And mighty Dukes pack cards for half a crown.
> See Britain sunk in lucre's sordid charms,
> And France reveng'd by ANNE's and EDWARD's arms!'
> (137-146)

Such a society is marked by the virtual absence of the golden mean and by the perversion of the golden rule ("Each does but hate his Neighbour as himself" (110)), but Pope's investigation of the Cottas, Balaams, and Buckinghams who embody the corruption proceeds in relation to Bathurst and the Man of Ross, each of whom, according to the means at his disposal, embodies the proper use of riches and testifies to the continuity of goodness in his preservation of the mean and the rule.

In the Imitations, the process is far more subtle than it is in the Epistle to Bathurst and more diffusely exemplary, although Pope's treatment of the venality of wealth in the Horatian poems has much in common with the apocalyptic tone of the wizard's prediction and the sordid end of Buckingham, just as his treatment of the abuses of property has the chiliastic tone of the Epistle to Burlington. Pope's temporal perspective in the Imitations is formed by the convergence of two related things: what Mack has discussed as the garden-city design,[2] which entails the location of the Horatian spatial perspective in Augustan England and supports Pope's experiential point of view, and the vocal mask technique, which permits the dead poet, Horace, to defy time's passage, and a living one, Pope, to assume a lofty existential point of view based upon the enduring folly and vanity of man. Denham had written in his Preface to The Destruction of Troy, that it is not the business of the poet

> to translate Language into Language, but Poesie into Poesie; & Poesie is of so subtile a spirit, that in pouring out of one Language into another, it will all evaporate, and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a Caput mortuum, there being certain Graces and Happinesses peculiar to every Language, which gives life and energy to the words . . . [If] Virgil must needs speak English, it were fit he should speak not only as a man of this Nation, but as a man of this age . . . .[3]

Pope manages the convergence of past and present beautifully, principally

through a heavy concentration of eighteenth-century human and social detail, without running the risk of parody of his model.

According to his Advertisement to the Imitations, Pope felt that the assault on the honesty of his motives in writing the Epistle to Burlington and the Epistle to Bathurst required more than a personal rebuttal:

> The Occasion of publishing these Imitations was the Clamour raised on some of my Epistles. An Answer from Horace was both more full, and of more Dignity, than any I cou'd have made in my own person; and the Example of much greater Freedom in so eminent a Divine as Dr. Donne, seem'd a proof with what Indignation and Contempt a Christian may treat Vice or Folly, in ever so low, or ever so high, a Station.

The association of Horace and Donne gives to the sequence of imitations a double focus of the classical and the Christian points of view on the vice and folly that are Pope's areas of interest. The association of the two poets is not particularly to argue the coincidence of moral standards between them and Pope, although this is part of Pope's general design, but rather to provide evidence of the variation in tolerance of moral instruction and criticism of society from one period of history to another so that he can define the peculiar sensitivity of his own age to constructive satire:

> Both these Authors were acceptable to the Princes and Ministers under whom they lived: The Satires of Dr. Donne I versify'd at the Desire of the Earl of Oxford while he was Lord Treasurer, and of the Duke of Shrewsbury who had been Secretary of State; neither of whom look'd upon a Satire on Vicious Courts as any Reflection on those they serv'd in.

What Pope wants to do is to dissociate himself from the charge of libel by associating himself with a tradition of unquestioned honesty and dignity. He associates satire with virtue, and hypocrisy with libel.[4] Hence, his great care to explain himself and to control his tone throughout the poems.

Horace's disapproval and anger, Young had argued, "proceed from

judgment, not from passion,"[5] and the high regard accorded Horace by the neo-classicists required that Pope control the tendency to over-reaction evident in his socio-literary satires. Satire, unlike libel, "attacks vice only to redeem the vicious;"[6] thus the intensity of Pope's negative reaction to his age in the Imitations is grounded in the stability of Horatian judgement, so that it builds evenly to the portentous vision of Vice triumphant in the First Dialogue of the Epilogue to the Satires. The satiric vision can accommodate those who cannot be redeemed as well as those who can, without sacrificing any of its virtuous impulse, and without libelling Horace by associating him with blind vituperation. Horace, for the neo-classical writers, was a "source of guidance in matters of ethics and civility both . . . a nearly unimpeachable moral arbiter and guide, on the level of authority almost with the Scriptures to which his sentiments were so often compared."[7] For Pope to undertake an alliance with Horace is to engage in a project of the highest seriousness and to test his desire to occupy a position in relation to his own society similar to that of Horace to his.[8]

Pope's general attitude to the cycles of time in the Imitations is one of stoic resignation: the more man changes externally, the more he is the same benighted, self-divided creature. Time is regarded autumnally in terms of "The swift hour and the brief prime"[9] of man and his foolish and poignant effort to ignore or to overcome the mortality of his condition:

> Years foll'wing Years, steal something ev'ry day,
> At last they steal us from ourselves away;
> In one our Frolicks, one Amusements end,
> In one a Mistress drops, in one a Friend:
> This subtle Thief of Life, this paltry Time,
> What will it leave me, if it snatch my Rhime?

> If ev'ry Wheel of that unweary'd Mill
> That turn'd ten thousand Verses, now stands still.
> (Imitations, Epis. II ii, 72-79)

The effect of this stoicism is to infuse the satires with an elegiac strain that allows Pope, from time to time, to rise above the hearty contempt of his social criticism and bathe the chaotic human scene with austere compassion. It is by means of this adjustment of tones that Pope can assume with equal ease the roles of exasperated social critic and philosophic comforter. In common with Horace, he admits his involvement in the humanity he chastises, implicitly condemning the libeller as a Pharisee and, again like Horace, his pen is both a weapon of justice and his one defence against the devastations of time. Yeats writes of an old world whose "painted toy" is "Grey Truth":

> Yet still she turns her restless head:
> But O, sick children of the world,
> Of all the many changing things
> In dreary dancing past us whirled,
> To the cracked tune that Chronos sings,
> Words alone are certain good.[10]

In the Imitations, Pope is not concerned, as the shepherd in Yeats's poem is, to lament the vanished joy of the woods of Arcady, but he is as much aware of the poet's power as the custodian of an age's memory. This pastoral conviction, dating from Theocritus,[11] gives to his statements about the poet's responsibility in the cause of justice a resonance consistent with the Arcadian reverberations of the "garden" passages in sequence. Moreover, in The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace (To Augustus), Pope argues the rustic origins of satire so as to justify it, as springing from nature, in relation to the prevailing artificiality of the age. Satire preserves the freedom of rustic raillery and avoids the viciousness of attack that developed out of idyllic mockery when times grew corrupt and human nature malicious:

Hence Satire rose, that just the medium hit,
And heals with Morals what it hurts with Wit.
(261-262)

Pope did not have to imagine the advantages of rural retreat, for his whole life was a pattern of return to the country from the urban chaos of London. As a child, Pope settled with his parents in Binfield, in Windsor Forest, some years after the enactment of repressive legislation against Roman Catholics (among other things, they were forbidden to live within ten miles of London, according to laws passed on the accession of William and Mary to the throne in 1688). As a celebrated young poet in London, Pope reacted to the savageness of Dennis' personal attack on him in Reflections Critical and Satyrical, upon a late Rhapsody, call'd An Essay upon Criticism by retreating to Binfield. It was at Binfield Pope undertook his translation of the Iliad, soon after the accession of George I and the beginning of the Whig ministry; and in 1718, in the financial security given him by the success of the translations of Homer, Pope leased the villa at Twickenham that was his home and philosophical retreat for the rest of his life.[12] What the facts of this brief survey of Pope's urban-rural peregrinations do not reveal is the quality of emotional experience that substantiates the truth of Pope's rural attitudes in the Imitations. He does not merely strike Horatian poses, but makes of the country-retreat passages opportunities for autobiographical reflections, so that the experiential point of view on life in the sequence is grounded in his direct personal knowledge of the slipperiness of man's estate when he places too much trust in the generosity of power and the stability of fortune. Behind the facts of his movements between London and the countryside are his experience of religious oppression and libellous

attack; the imprisonment of Harley and the flight of Bolingbroke after the ruin of Tory power; his unwavering love for his parents; and his dedication to the sanctity of friendship. In love and friendship, and in the contemplative retirement to the green world, is the basis for proper judgement of the disorders of social man Pope sees in the city:

> To VIRTUE ONLY and HER FRIENDS, A FRIEND
> The World beside may murmur, or commend.
> Know, all the distant Din that World can keep
> Rolls o'er my Grotto, and but soothes my Sleep.
> There, my Retreat the best Companions grace,
> Chiefs, out of War, and Statesmen, out of Place.
> There St. John mingles with my friendly Bowl,
> The Feast of Reason and the Flow of Soul:
> And He, whose Lightning pierc'd th' Iberian Lines,
> Now, forms my Quincunx, and now ranks my Vines,
> Or tames the Genius of the stubborn Plain,
> Almost as quickly, as he conquer'd Spain.
> (Imitations, Satire II i, 121-132)

In one of his early poems, the "Ode on Solitude," Pope indulges himself in a wistful dream of bucolic retirement far from the strife of cities and free of the stresses of getting and gathering. His solitude in this poem is that of the philosopher-farmer who considers equally important the cultivation and yield of fields and herds and those of meditation:

> Blest! who can unconcern'dly find
> Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
> In health of body, peace of mind,
> Quiet by day,
>
> Sound sleep by night; study and ease
> Together mix'd; sweet recreation
> And innocence, which most does please,
> With meditation.
> (9-16)

Pope does not sketch in the details of this contemplative retreat in the "Ode on Solitude," but the poem is an interesting preliminary draft of a philosophical position he borrows from Horace later in his life, when his translations of Homer bring him an affluence sufficient to

establish himself at Twickenham. In The Garden and the City, Maynard Mack discusses Pope's poetry of retreat in terms of a tradition of poetry which evaluates "national and individual virtue"[13] from the vantage of contemplative retirement. This tradition, Mack argues, is a "composite of Roman outlines shaped to English seventeenth-century and Augustan circumstances."[14] In other words, although the roots of Pope's retirement poetry are in Horace, or in other classical works such as Virgil's Georgics, these roots have been "nourished and extended . . . by his wide reading in the seventeenth-century poets":

> Essentially, it is their vision of his country [Jonson's, Donne's, Carew's] that he makes his own -- the new Eden, the new Jerusalem, the new Rome. It is their feeling for the life of considerate use that pulses behind much of his social criticism, though the immediate vehicle be Horace. Their picture of the country gentleman living on his estate and so far as possible by it, seeking no city gain or court preferment, radiating through the land practices of provident abundance, occupying a great house 'rear'd with no man's ruin, no man's groan,' caring for his tenants and so loved by them that
>
> all come in, the farmer, and the clowne:
> And no one empty-handed, to salute
> [The] lord, and lady, though they have no sute --
> ("To Penshurst," 48-50)
>
> this is Pope's picture, too, whenever in the satires he allows the positive ideals underlying his criticism to emerge . . . .[15]

Horace's poems and the values they communicate are thus of a literary-philosophical genus of which the country-house poems of the Jacobean and later seventeenth-century poets are variations. Pope draws from both the classical and the more recent traditions the elements of his own philosophical identity: the contented man who argues from his homestead the virtues of absence from the jungle of the city, of serenity, independence, generosity, and an untroubled conscience.[16] What is specifically Horatian about all this is the nature of the relation between the retreat and the city, not just in the sense that Pope appropriates from Horace Roman names for general human types and makes

of London another Rome, and of Twickenham another Sabine farm, but also in the substantially classical understanding of what constitutes personal and civic virtue: moderation and active resignation, in that the philosopher-poet participates intellectually in the world from which he withdraws by means of his informed criticism of its ways, but does not retreat into black misanthropy, and public responsibility in the broadest sense that an hereditary elite must provide moral direction, through its example, to society, while the grandees must so use their wealth that all of society benefits from its benevolent expenditure. The particulars of the world and its ways are English and contemporary, however, so that the present situation resounds in a cross-temporal ethical context.

What is interesting about this pattern is that the more restricted Pope's satire is to the specifically English scene, without classical reverberations, the less convincing it is -- as, for example, in his imitations of Donne's second and fourth satires, published with the imitations of Horace. In the satire on lawyers (Satires of Dr. Donne: II), for example, there is just enough of the traditional human paranoia about the law to sustain Pope's criticism, but these lawyers are the practitioners of the "Giant-Vice" in a London that is Hell (1-6), and we are not given the information that would support this opinion of the law, unless we are prepared to accept as satisfactory evidence the poet's vision of the tide of corruption encroaching upon the nation:

> In shillings and in pence at first they deal,
> And steal so little, few perceive they steal;
> Till like the Sea, they compass all the land,
> From Scots to Wight, from Mount to Dover strand.
> And when rank Widows purchase luscious nights,
> Or when a Duke to Jansen punts at Whites,
> Or City heir in mortgage melts away,
> Satan himself feels far less joy than they.

> Piecemeal they win this Acre first, then that,
> Glean on, and gather up the whole Estate:
> Then strongly fencing ill-got wealth by law,
> Indentures, Cov'nants, Articles they draw;
> Large as the Fields themselves, and larger far
> Than Civil Codes, with all their glosses, are . . . .
> (83-96)

There is a certain sordid power in this, but much more of the crank than there is of the satirist. There is no sense of how people are affected by the blind rapacity of the law in this passionate concern over mortgages and indentures affecting acres and estates, except in the elegiac allusion to the vanished stability of the feudal past. The thinness of the satire in this poem is made clear by comparison with the humanized (through autobiography redolent of the classical ideals of retirement) demonstration of the encroachments of the law in a poem like Pope's imitation of the Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace (To Bethel).

The approach to time supported by the rural passages and autobiographical reflections in the Imitations attempts to encompass the significance of each life in terms of the distinction between what man needs and what he wants. In the Epistle to Bathurst, Pope had reduced the importance of money to its ability to provide the basic necessities of life:

> What Riches give us let us then enquire:
> Meat, Fire, and Cloaths. What more? Meat, Cloaths, and
> Fire.
> Is this too little? would you more than live?
> Alas! 'tis more than Turner finds they give.
> Alas! 'tis more than (all his Visions past)
> Unhappy Wharton, waking, found at last!
> What can they give? to dying Hopkins Heirs;
> To Chartres, Vigour; Japhet, Nose and Ears?
> Can they, in gems bid pallid Hippia glow,
> In Fulvia's buckle ease the throbs below,
> Or heal, old Narses, thy obscener ail,
> With all th' embroidery plaister'd at thy tail?
> (81-92)

In the Imitations, Pope broadens his perspective to include -- as well as wealth -- property, rank, social institutions, and art, all of which he considers in terms of insatiable appetites and to which he opposes the life of moderation whose context is the rural scene. Pope is a chastened country mouse in these poems, bent on resisting the call of the city cousins:

> 'But come, for God's sake, live with Men:
> Consider, Mice, like Men, must die,
> Both small and great, both you and I:
> Then spend your life in Joy and Sport,
> (This doctrine, Friend, I learnt at Court.)'
> (Imitations, Satire II vi, 178-182)

In the urban world, Pope sees the context of dishonesty: the hypocrisy which has compelled him to be circumspect in his satires, using type-figures instead of real names, and considering whether or not he ought to delay publication until after his death, lest he invite reprisals. The countryside is the sphere of honesty, where men are not compromised by their public identities ("Chiefs, out of War, and Statesmen, out of Place") and where the "Feast of Reason" nourishes man with the knowledge that there is little more of value that each man can do in his life than to learn to die.

II

The establishment of a consistent point of view on society requires more than relying on the traditional associations of the city-country opposition or arguing the merits of considering human time in terms of lives devoted to moderation. What Pope does is to adjust his temporal perspectives so that his reflections on the particularities of human experience are accommodated by the broadly existential and

elegiac view of man in general. Pope recognizes that man misdirects his energies by devoting them to the pursuit of power, in the foolish belief that power is the same as happiness. In the Essay on Man, Pope identifies happiness as a "Plant of celestial seed" whose growth or withering depends upon man's cultivation of virtue and whose precise definition is cause for revealing argument:

> Ask of the Learn'd the way, the Learn'd are blind,
> This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind;
> Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,
> Those call it Pleasure, and Contentment these;
> Some sunk to Beasts, find pleasure end in pain;
> Some swell'd to Gods, confess ev'n Virtue vain,
> Or indolent, to each extreme they fall,
> To trust in ev'ry thing, or doubt of all.
> (Essay on Man, IV, 19-26)

A similar attitude to happiness underlies the Imitations, but these poems, unlike the Essay on Man, do not consider man in the abstract; hence, the terms of reference for Pope's investigation of happiness are drawn from the particularities of human experience in his own age rather than from broadly representative categories of human action, although he is careful to place the particularities within such categories, the better to support the adjustment of attitudes implicit in the regular transitions from the here-and-now to the timeless.

The poem that most clearly demonstrates these adjustments and transitions is the imitation of the Sixth Epistle of the First Book of Horace (To Mr. Murray). This poem is an exposition of the advantages of following the principle Nil Admirari: avoid tricking yourself into admiration or wonder over things that are not worthy of such responses. Pope begins the poem by paraphrasing Creech's translation of Horace:

> 'Not to Admire, is all the Art I know,
> To make men happy, and to keep them so.'
> (1-2)

His theme stated, Pope then defines the perspective in which he intends to view the vain endeavours of man and the attitude he intends to adopt. He chooses a lofty universal perspective and an attitude of resignation to the inscrutable wisdom of God in his control of creation:

> This Vault of Air, this congregated Ball,
> Self-centred Sun, and Stars that rise and fall,
> There are, my Friend! whose philosophic eyes
> Look thro', and trust the Ruler with his Skies,
> To him commit the hour, the day, the year,
> And view this dreadful All without a Fear.
> (5-10)

The profound wonder of God's purposes in the cosmic scheme permits the poet to diminish the earth to a "Vault of Air, [and] congregated Ball" and disarms admiration for the transient glories of the human estate:

> Admire we then what Earth's low entrails hold,
> Arabian shores, or Indian seas infold?
> All the mad trade of Fools and Slaves for Gold?
> Or Popularity, or Stars and Strings?
> The Mob's applauses, or the gifts of Kings?
> Say with what eyes we ought at Courts to gaze,
> And pay the Great our homage of Amaze?
> (11-17)

Pope's advice is to free oneself absolutely from any kind of interest in the folly of human ambitions, for these derive their dynamism from the significance granted them by the attention they command and get. The only possible response, Pope seems to be arguing, is the indifference of the stoic:

> Whether we dread, or whether we desire,
> In either case, believe me, we admire;
> Whether we joy or grieve, the same the curse,
> Surpriz'd at better, or surpriz'd at worse.
> Thus good, or bad, to one extreme betray
> Th' unbalanc'd Mind, and snatch the Man away;
> For Vertue's self may too much Zeal be had;
> The worst of Madmen is a Saint run mad.
> (20-27)

Whatever their other virtues, it is doubtful whether stoics make very good satirists. While Pope acknowledges the value of the stoic

attitude to life, he places himself with sceptics (Montaigne and Shippen), a hedonist (Aristippus), and the saint of moderation (St. Paul) when he engages in his analysis of a world he cannot prevent from claiming his wonder, but in the epistle To Mr. Murray the exalted attitude enables him to outline the definitive categories whose particular manifestations he studies in the other imitations. Pope reduces man's folly to his insatiable appetite for the ultimately slight rewards of wealth, fame, power and place, gluttony, and sensual excess. Man squanders himself in his desire and pursuit of what is foolishly in excess of what he requires in order to be happy:

> Rack'd with Sciatics, martyr'd with the Stone,
> Will any mortal let himself alone?
> See Ward by batter'd Beaus invited over,
> And desp'rate Misery lays hold on Dover.
> The case is easier in the Mind's disease;
> There, all Men may be cur'd whene'r they please.
> Disdain whatever CORNBURY disdains;
> Be Virtuous, and be happy for your pains.
> (54-62)

The counsel to be virtuous involves approaching the things man usually considers to have the ability to give happiness without any sense of admiration. The virtuous man questions the emblematic significance to society of such powerful abstractions as fame, wealth, license, power and place. Pope analyzes these things in relation to his belief that all of them are characterized by a futility to which man willingly enslaves himself and by a capacity so to enthrall man that he becomes powerless to control the relentless destructive energy of the totem conditions of society, so fascinated is he by their associations of power.

Thus, the fame which men long for is an arbitrary condition that conceals the silence of time and the obscurity most of its suitors

have encountered, although men as worthy as Murray, whatever the effect of time on their individual memory, may at least be laid to rest in a place of honour:

> Yet Time ennobles, or degrades each Line;
> It brighten'd CRAGGS's, and may darken thine;
> And what is Fame? the Meanest have their day,
> The Greatest can but blaze, and pass away.
> Grac'd as thou art, with all the Pow'r of Words,
> So known, so honour'd, at the House of Lords;
> Conspicuous Scene! another yet is nigh,
> (More silent far) where Kings and Poets lye;
> Where MURRAY (long enough his Country's pride)
> Shall be no more than TULLY, or than HYDE!
> (44-53)

So potent is wealth that it disarms moral judgement, as if the effort of building the "golden Mountain" justifies the ruthlessness of the acquisitive instinct, and permits the rich man to buy the pedigree that can erase the vulgarity of his impulses:

> A Man of Wealth is dubb'd a Man of Worth,
> Venus shall give him Form, and Anstis Birth.
> (81-82)

Power, paradoxically, is slavery to the vagaries of fashionable reputation, what passes for honour in a society addicted to the authority of grey eminences (97-109). No less enslaved is the glutton, the result of whose excess is to envy the poor their hunger and thirst (110-117), while the voluptuary, in his pursuit of sensual pleasure, transforms himself into a beast (118-125).

Pope defines the goals of men as he thinks they really are, as opportunities for vanity, folly, and futility, but the satire in his definitions is not particularly harsh, possibly because the point of view he adopts is, if not quite that of a god contemplating a divine comedy, very much that of a philosopher contemplating the human one. His envoi, composed of allusions to two not notably genial fellow

satirists, advises love and laughter as the properly sane responses, short of the stoic indifference he earlier seemed to be considering, to the Bedlam of human life:

> If, after all, we must with Wilmot own,
> The Cordial Drop of Life is Love alone,
> And Swift cry wisely, "Vive la Bagatelle!"
> The Man that loves and laughs, must sure do well.
> (126-129)

There is no way in which this conclusion can be interpreted as a retreat into a benign attitude of passive amusement. The loftily philosophical attitude of this poem serves to establish a timeless perspective in which the activities of man resolve themselves, again and again, into the same futility. Time, the path traced out by transience, is the locus of this futility, and time for Pope in these poems is the process of death, not in a morbid sense, but in one of some grandeur: for while all living things die, only man is aware of his mortality; hence his entire life must be shaped by this awareness.

Reflecting upon her mother's death, Simone de Beauvoir rails against the tyranny of the fact of mortality, which man cannot bring himself to accept as necessary:

> we are all mortal; at eighty you are quite old enough to be one of the dead . . . .
> But it is not true. You do not die from being born, nor from having lived, nor from old age. You die from <u>something</u>. The knowledge that because of her age my mother's life must soon come to an end did not lessen the horrible surprise . . . . There is no such thing as a natural death; nothing that happens to man is ever natural, since his presence calls the world into question. All men must die: but for every man his death is an accident and, even if he knows it and consents to it, an unjustifiable violation.[17]

While Pope, as a Christian, can justify death theologically, he would accept the dreadful pathos of de Beauvoir's reflections; for man alone can be said to live in relation to death, in that he alone has knowledge of it. Pope would not accept that death is not natural, but his

acceptance of its naturalness involves him in an attitude to death that is closer to that of the stoics: to be free of the fear of death, keep the fact of death ever in mind. The somewhat chilly consolation of such an attitude permits the pitying love and laughter he advises at the end of the epistle To Mr. Murray. All of the poems can be read as exhortations to man to remember that he must die, and there is a constant intertwining of reflections upon time and death.

It is within the timeless perspective demonstrated in To Mr. Murray that Pope approaches the particularities of experience in his world. The two poems that give him the opportunity to define his satirical position in the sequence are The First Epistle of the First Book of Horace (To Mr. Bolingbroke) and The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace (To Mr. Fortescue). In the epistle To Mr. Bolingbroke, Pope rather sardonically presents himself as his own valedictorian, prevented in the "Sabbath of [his] days" from devoting himself to preparing to die by the call made upon his critical responses by the lunacy of the age:

> Farewell then Verse, and Love, and ev'ry Toy,
> The rhymes and rattles of the Man or Boy:
> What right, what true, what fit, we justly call,
> Let this be all my care -- for this is All:
> To lay this harvest up, and hoard with haste
> What ev'ry day will want, and most, the last.
> (17-22)

Pope's concern over the necessity of preparing himself for death is not just that of the scrupulous man, but also that of the ageing poet who fears galloping "Pegasus to death" (14). The poet's genius, like everything else that is human, can decline and lose its potency, he argues, all the more so when the critical poetry he has devoted himself to writing has had so little apparent effect. Thus, the concerns of

the man must override those of the poet:

> Long, as to him who works for debt, the Day;
> Long as the Night to her whose love's away;
> Long as the Year's dull circle seems to run,
> When the brisk Minor pants for twenty-one;
> So slow th' unprofitable Moments roll,
> That lock up all the Functions of my soul;
> That keep me from Myself; and still delay
> Life's instant business to a future day:
> That task, which as we follow, or despise,
> The eldest is a fool, the youngest wise;
> Which done, the poorest can no wants endure,
> And which not done, the richest must be poor.
> (35-46)

Pope presents himself as a judge preparing to defer to an infallible higher judgement by putting himself in order, practising sceptical openness to advantages that can be derived from apparently contradictory sources -- Montaigne and Locke, Aristippus and St. Paul -- while he attributes to the medium of his own judgement, satire, the relatively feeble powers of primitive charms and incantations, and offers it to a sick world like a quack making his pitch:

> Say, does thy blood rebel, thy bosom move
> With wretched Av'rice, or as wretched Love?
> Know, there are Words, and Spells, which can controull
> (Between the Fits) this Fever of the soul:
> Know, there are Rhymes, which (fresh and fresh apply'd)
> Will cure the arrant'st Puppy of his Pride.
> Be furious, envious, slothful, mad or drunk,
> Slave to a Wife or Vassal to a Punk,
> A Switz, a High-dutch, or a Low-dutch Bear --
> All that we ask is but a patient Ear.
> (55-64)

Rhymes and words and spells, Pope is saying, can cure temporarily the symptoms of the world's sickness, but a true cure requires the radical measure of submission to virtue and wisdom:

> 'Tis the first Virtue, Vices to abhor;
> And the first Wisdom, to be Fool no more.
> (65-66)

However, these measures are subversive of the prevailing values of

avarice and power:

> Here, Wisdom calls: 'Seek Virtue first! be bold!
> As Gold to Silver, Virtue is to Gold.'
> There London's voice: 'Get Mony, Mony still!
> And then let Virtue follow, if she will.'
> (77-80)

Thomas E. Maresca has written of the epistle To Mr. Bolingbroke that Pope pictures England "as very nearly a miniature Inferno: the concentric rings of corruption spread outward from a vicious and devil-like king, through court and nobles, through rich and poor, to encompass the entire life of the nation. Beast-king, the incarnation of sin, rules the Hydra-mob."[18] Hence, a king's honour becomes a wily minister; the richness of the English language has been reduced to the "modern language of corrupted Peers" speaking court slang; wealth and rank entitle their possessors to hear the castrati in the presence of kings and courts:

> Adieu to Virtue if you're once a Slave:
> Send her to Court, you send her to her Grave.
> (118-119)

The general population is no less venal or oblivious of the necessity of heeding the call of wisdom and virtue. "Alike in nothing but one Lust of Gold," they are only more grossly bestial than their masters:

> Their Country's wealth our mightier Misers drain,
> Or cross, to plunder Provinces, the Main:
> The rest, some farm the Poor-box, some the Pews;
> Some keep Assemblies, and wou'd keep the Stews;
> Some with fat Bucks on childless Dotards fawn;
> Some win rich Widows by their Chine and Brawn;
> While with the silent growth of ten per Cent,
> In Dirt and darkness hundreds stink content.
> (126-133)

Pope sees a whole nation bent on transforming itself into a herd of animals: men who are also beasts. The degeneration is such that Pope must determine whether the redefinition of its nature to which society agrees can support an appeal to conscience and decency, so resistant

are these qualities to presentation as appetite satisfactions, the chief motive forces of the age. Pope comes close to seeing his society as morally dead in its bestial vitality; hence, his reluctance to answer Bolingbroke's summons to the satirist's duty. He prefers, like Candide, to remain in his garden, for gardening is the most philosophical of occupations for Pope: a bulwark against the incoherence of mind that afflicts him when he takes the time to reflect upon the anarchy of the world from which he flees. The poem thus resolves itself in a variation of a persistent dilemma in the Imitations. While Pope sees that man has become generally bestial in his denial of reason and moderation, he sees as well that there are still some good men, the standards for evaluation of true humanity. Both definitions of man are simultaneous and equally true, so that his effort must be to consider two kinds of definition: the one that defines man as being, basically, a rational animal, and the one that sees him as being, at the very best, an animal capable of reason but refusing to develop his capability, to put the matter in Swiftian terms. The definitive roots of the good man can be traced back, from any of his actions, to reason, and those of the vicious man, to bestiality. Each, moreover, manifests his nature in his actions, so that the good are presented by Pope as what they are, men, while the vicious demonstrate the evidence of their relation to brutes through a moral-reverse metamorphosis to beasts. In such circumstances, the satirist must consider carefully the relevance of his critical art, when he seems to be preaching to those already converted or in no need of lessons in virtue.

The diagnostician and doctor of society Pope feels the satirist must be, must settle for being a quack who applies the short-term

measure of public embarrassment to a morally terminal situation. Something of this compromise lies behind Pope's decision to avoid using types instead of real names in his satire, in spite of the advantages satire on types has:

> F. A hundred smart in Timon and in Balaam:
> The fewer still you name, you wound the more;
> Bond is but one, but Harpax is a score.
> (Imitations, Satire II i, 42-44)

In 1734, Pope drafted a letter to Arbuthnot in which he considered the advantages to satire of potent exemplary types:

> To attack Vice in the abstract, without touching Persons, may be safe fighting indeed, but it is fighting with Shadows. General propositions are obscure, misty, and uncertain, compar'd with plain, full, and home examples: Precepts only apply to our Reason, which in most men is but weak: Examples are pictures, and strike the Senses, nay raise the Passions, and call in those (the strongest and most general of all motives) to the aid of reformation. Every vicious man makes the case his own; and that is the only way by which such men can be affected, much less deterr'd: So that to chastise is to reform.[19]

Less than a month later, however, Pope wrote, again to Arbuthnot:

> But General Satire in Times of General Vice has no force, & is no Punishment: People have ceas'd to be asham'd of it when so many are joined with them; and tis only by hunting one or two from the Herd that any Examples can be made.[20]

The two opinions in these letters form the basis of Pope's self-explanatory imitation of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace (To Mr. Fortescue), in which Fortescue attempts to reason Pope out of honesty by advising caution. Pope is exasperated -- and affronted -- by people who suggest he has been too harsh on a usurer (Peter Walter), a debauchee (Francis Charteris), and a fool (Lord Hervey). For Pope, honesty is the whole raison d'être of satire -- the active, cauterizing honesty of the good man who has no reason to wish his own life to be approached euphemistically, but who has every right to deal plainly with the hypocrisy and immorality of a society fit for noting but to provide

material for ridicule:

> Satire's my Weapon, but I'm too discreet
> To run a Muck, and tilt at all I meet;
> I only wear it in a Land of Hectors,
> Thieves, Supercargoes, Sharpers, and Directors.
> Save but our Army! and let Jove incrust
> Swords, Pikes, and Guns, with everlasting Rust!
> Peace is my dear Delight -- not Fleury's more:
> But touch me, and no Minister so sore.
> Who-e'er offends, at some unlucky Time
> Slides into Verse, and hitches in a Rhyme,
> Sacred to Ridicule! his whole Life long,
> And the sad Burthen of some merry Song.
> (69-80)

In this poem, Pope reduces man to his aggressive instincts (81-90) and, joining the fray, chooses as his own mode the virtuous aggression of satire, which will not be blunted by fear of the reprisals of wickedness. The active honesty of satire will reveal the baseness and hypocrisy of an age of vice by considering the age in an alien context, that of its enemy, virtue:

> P. What? aim'd for Virtue when I point the Pen,
> Brand the bold front of shameless, guilty Men,
> Dash the proud Gamester in his gilded Car,
> Bare the mean Heart that lurks beneath a Star;
> Can there be wanting to defend her Cause,
> Lights of the Church, or Guardians of the Laws?
> Could pension'd Boileau lash in honest strain
> Flatt'rers and Bigots ev'n in Louis' Reign?
> Could Laureate Dryden Pimp and Fry'r engage.
> Yet neither Charles nor James be in a Rage?
> And I not strip the Gilding off a Knave,
> Un-plac'd, un-pension'd, no Man's Heir, or Slave?
> I will, or perish in the gen'rous Cause.
> Hear this, and tremble! you who 'scape the Laws.
> Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave
> Shall walk the World in credit, to his grave.
> (105-120)

In his reference to Boileau and Dryden, Pope places himself (as he does also in assuming the mantle of Horace) in a great tradition of heroic opposition to vice now fallen on more than usually bad times, but neither the temptation of retirement nor the thought of death can prevent him from carrying on the fight, no matter how madly futile it seems:

> Whether the darken'd Room to muse invite,
> Or whiten'd Wall provoke the Skew'r to write,
> In Durance, Exile, Bedlam, or the Mint,
> Like Lee and Budgell, I will Rhyme and Print.
> (97-100)

If Fortescue's caution is well advised in terms of legal precedent for measures taken against satirists (143-149), then Pope will be circumspect by containing his criticism in the form of an acceptable literary precedent, the Horatian epistle:[21]

> P. Libels and Satires! lawless Things indeed!
> But grave Epistles, bringing Vice to light,
> Such as a King might read, a Bishop write,
> Such as Sir Robert would approve --
> F. Indeed?
> The Case is alter'd -- you may then proceed.
> In such a Cause the Plaintiff will be hiss'd,
> My Lords and Judges laugh, and you're dismiss'd.
> (150-156)

The Imitations update and preserve Horace, associating the stability of his truth with the continuity of virtuous opposition to the falsity of human values. Pope approaches this falsity by concentrating on money, property, and social rank with its attendant gradations of power as the satisfactions of variously destructive appetites, ultimately irrelevant to what he considers to be the true meaning of life. This critical perspective is grounded in the rural point of view on the significance of these appetites and their satisfactions, and in Pope's autobiographical attitude, so that his reflections on them can be used as ways of approaching time, life and death. Two of the Imitations consider appetites in basic and fairly gross terms, one of them, the Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace (To Mr. Bethel), in terms of simplicity, and from a completely rural-autobiographical point of view, and the other, the Second Satire of the First Book of Horace (Sober Advice from Horace), in determinedly crude modern terms.

The form of the Second Satire of the Second Book suggests a fragment of a symposium on moderation in which an overly eager speaker, Bethel, attempts to spin an opinion into a philosophical position. This is not to say that Pope rejects the opinion and submits it to diminishing irony when he replies to it, but rather that he seems to consider that Bethel's flat statement on moderation as the ground between an absolute opposition of simplicity and gluttony is too easy to accommodate the idea of moderation. Bethel argues that eating has become an elaborately pompous ritual quite irrelevant to its natural function:

> Oldfield, with more than Harpy throat endu'd,
> Cries, 'Send me, Gods! a whole Hog barbecu'd'
> Oh blast it, South-winds! till a stench exhale,
> Rank as the ripeness of a Rabbit's tail.
> By what Criterion do ye eat, d'ye think,
> If this is priz'd for sweetness, that for stink?
> When the tir'd Glutton labours thro' a Treat,
> He finds no relish in the sweetest Meat;
> He calls for something bitter, something sour,
> And the rich feast concludes extremely poor:
> Cheap eggs, and herbs, and olives still we see,
> Thus much is left of old Simplicity!
> (25-36)

He rejects as equally viciously misguided the plundering of nature by gourmet-gluttons and the miserliness of Avidien and his wife, urging the "blessings Temperance can bring" to physical and social health:

> Between Excess and Famine lies a mean,
> Plain, but not sordid, tho' not splendid, clean . . . .
> . . . . . .
> He knows to live, who keeps the middle state,
> And neither leans on this side, nor on that:
> Nor stops, for one bad Cork, his Butler's pay,
> Swears, like Albutius, a good Cook away;
> Nor lets, like Naevius, ev'ry error pass,
> The musty wine, foul cloth, or greasy glass.
> (48-49, 61-66)

Bethel is nostalgic for the days of "old Simplicity:"

> Why had not I in those good times my birth,
> E're Coxcomb-pyes or Coxcombs were on earth.
> (97-98)

He considers that self-interested luxury and extravagance are no defence against the charge of wanton irresponsibility, but indeed can become curses:

> When Luxury has lick'd up all thy pelf,
> Curs'd by thy neighbours, thy Trustees, thyself,
> To friends, to fortune, to mankind a shame,
> Think how Posterity will treat thy name;
> And buy a Rope, that future times will tell
> Thou hast at least bestow'd one penny well.
> (105-110)

Bethel's discourse on gluttony thus becomes an opportunity for yet another statement on the proper use of riches:

> Then, like the Sun, let Bounty spread her ray,
> And shine that Superfluity away.
> Oh Impudence of wealth! with all thy store,
> How dar'st thou let one worthy man be poor?
> Shall half the new-built Churches round thee fall?
> Make Keys, build Bridges, or repair White-hall:
> Or to thy Country let that heap be lent,
> As M**o's was, but not at five per Cent.
> (115-122)

What Pope does in Bethel's speech is to argue, in the very basic terms of gluttony and temperance, the transformation of simplicity into sophistication, so that he establishes the associative grounds of his criticism. He associates simplicity with retirement and moderation, and sophistication with thoughtless involvement in the new Age of Gold and irresponsible excess. The words he gives himself in the poem are far more mellow and expansive in their communication of what the idea of moderation involves than those he attributes to Bethel. Pope uses autobiographical time distinctions so that he can emphasize the utter necessity of moderation and detachment from the complexities of a world no longer simple, but complicated by the financial -- that is, socially rapacious -- forces implied in the terminology of taxation: the terms of an insatiable financial gluttony that has altered the whole meaning

of comfort and stability as surely as obsession with the epicurean delights of the table has obliterated nourishment and health. Pope prefers to regard financial tyranny and proscription as opportunities for the purest liberty, as merely external limitations powerless to affect the peace of personal happiness:

> In South-sea days not happier, when surmis'd
> The Lord of thousands, than if now Excis'd;
> In Forest planted by a Father's hand,
> Than in five acres now of rented land.
> Content with little, I can piddle here
> On Broccoli and mutton, round the year;
> But ancient friends (tho' poor, or out of play)
> That touch my Bell, I cannot turn away.
> 'Tis true, no Turbots dignify my boards,
> But gudgeons, flounders, what my Thames affords.
> To Hounslow-heath I point, and Bansted-down,
> Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own:
> From yon old wallnut-tree a show'r shall fall;
> And grapes, long-ling'ring on my only wall,
> And figs, from standard and Espalier join:
> The dev'l is in you if you cannot dine.
> Then chearful healths (your Mistress shall have place)
> And, what's more rare, a Poet shall say Grace.
> (133-150)

Pope implies very strongly that no man ever owns anything, in spite of his tendency to delude himself otherwise, that we are all tenants, existentially, and that the sooner man comes to terms with this fact, the more content he will be:

> Fortune not much of humbling me can boast;
> Tho' double-tax'd, how little have I lost?
> My Life's amusements have been just the same,
> Before, and after Standing Armies came.
> My lands are sold, my father's house is gone;
> I'll hire another's, is not that my own,
> And yours my friends?
> (151-157)

The whole concept of property is for Pope meaningless, just a bureaucratic phantasm whose significance has more to do with money than with people, a most potent metaphor for the steady metamorphosis of the garden into the financial jungle, and for time's utter disregard for

rank and privilege. The gold-cycle of time is relentlessly destructive of the very things it offers -- power, privilege, possessions -- because it embodies itself contractually in leases, mortgages, bonds, and promissory notes that bind men and threaten ruin rather than in the natural experiential cycles of simple life and death:

> What's Property? dear Swift! you see it alter
> From you to me, from me to Peter Walter,
> Or, in a mortgage, prove a Lawyer's share,
> Or, in a jointure, vanish from the Heir,
> Or in pure Equity (the Case not clear)
> The Chanc'ry takes your rents for twenty year;
> At best, it falls to some ungracious Son
> Who cries, my father's damn'd, and all's my own.
> Shades, that to Bacon could retreat afford,
> Become the portion of a booby Lord;
> And Hemsley once proud Buckingham's delight,
> Slides to a Scriv'ner or a City Knight.
> Let Lands and Houses have what Lords they will,
> Let us be fix'd, and our own Masters still.
> (167-180)

The imposition of the language of finance on the things that have traditionally been the embodiments of health, ease, and competence -- the land, the home, the family -- is like a shadow cast by a vast consuming bird of prey, so that the countryside becomes a place of diminishing light in which a few good people philosophize as something of value dies. Yet again, one is confronted by Pope's tendency to paint himself into apocalyptic corners, although in these poems it is more a matter of Pope's carrying Horace to an extreme he feels the modern condition of things can support. Both poets elevate the advantages of contemplative retreat and simplicity of life-style over the destructive energies of the urban scene because contemplation and simplicity can more easily provide the moral direction they support. Pastoral retreat is, for them, an intimation of certainty: the fixed pattern of mutability within the natural order of birth, flourishing, and decay

which makes gardening a philosophical occupation and contrasts strikingly with the crazily arbitrary death impulses of the golden city. An intimation of certainty is an intimation of eternally generating life. The city is the sphere of eternally generating and non-productive energy, of appetite and gratification.

In Sober Advice from Horace, just beneath the urbane pose Pope assumes as he counsels prudent sexual satisfaction is his sense of the new terms of reference sexual life has acquired. The imagery of the poem is both economic and genital: sex is transaction and risk, with pleasure roughly similar to that of financial speculation. Hence, the poet's remarks on such presiding nymphs as Constantia Philips and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (Fufidia) call for the new erotic language of the marketplace:

> Con. Philips cries, 'A sneaking Dog I hate.'
> That's all three Lovers have for their Estate!
> 'Treat on, treat on,' is her eternal Note,
> And Lands and Tenements go down her Throat.
> . . . . . .
> With all a Woman's Virtues but the P-x,
> Fufidia thrives in Money, Land, and Stocks:
> For Int'rest, ten per Cent. her constant Rate is;
> Her Body? hopeful Heirs may have it gratis.
> (11-14, 17-20)

London becomes a city of animals in rut, with lover-speculators risking their security in the very act of reward. The model of their heroic risk is John Ellis, castrated after the fulfillment of his ambitions:

> What push'd poor Ellis on th' Imperial Whore?
> 'Twas but to be where CHARLES had been before.
> The fatal Steel unjustly was apply'd,
> When not his Lust offended, but his Pride:
> Too hard a Penance for defeated Sin,
> Himself shut out, and Jacob Hall let in.
> (81-86)

Pope pays satiric homage to the heroes and to the impulse and anatomy that make all men potential heroes in a context that requires no into-

lectual or emotional grandeur, but merely an adequately functioning physiology:

> Suppose that honest Part that rules us all,
> Should rise, and say -- 'Sir Robert! or Sir Paul!
> Did I demand, in my most vig'rous hour,
> A Thing descended from the Conqueror?
> Or when my pulse beat highest, ask for any
> Such Nicety, as Lady or Lord Fanny?'--
> What would you answer? Could you have the Face,
> When the poor Suff'rer humbly mourn'd his Case,
> To cry, 'You weep the Favour of her GRACE?'
> (87-95)

Prudence, in such perilous circumstances, consists not in resisting "that honest Part," but in modesty of ambition. If an aristocratic woman is nothing more than "A Thing descended from the Conqueror," then all that sets her apart from the rest of womankind is her lineage. It is the mind that discriminates, not physiology, and a man must learn not to confuse the pleasures of ambition and those of sexual desire. Far better to keep them in separate compartments, admitting the hypocrisy involved in confusing them:

> First, Silks and Diamonds veil no finer Shape,
> Or plumper Thigh, than lurk in humble Crape:
> And secondly, how innocent a Belle
> Is she who shows what Ware she has to sell;
> Not Lady-like displays a milk-white Breast,
> And hides in sacred Sluttishness the rest.
> (106-111)

In a society that seems to sustain itself by sexual transaction and dealing, where "A Lady's Face is all you see undress'd," the whore and the madam are the most honest people to be found (a not unlikely situation, given the harshness of Pope's attitude to what he sees as the necessarily hypocritical moral basis of capitalistic society):

> at N--dh--m's(,) your judicious Eye
> May measure there the Breast, the Hip, the Thigh!
> And will you run to Perils, Sword, and Law,
> All for a Thing you ne'er so much as saw?
> (133-136)

Nature, sense, and reason -- all adapted to the situation at hand -- compel Pope to advise prudence in the name of the only honesty that functions here, physiological honesty:

> Has Nature set no bounds to wild Desire?
> No Sense to guide, no Reason to enquire,
> What solid Happiness, what empty Pride?
> And what is best indulg'd, or best deny'd?
> If neither Gems adorn, nor silver tip
> The Flowing Bowl, will you not wet your Lip?
> When sharp with Hunger, scorn you to be fed,
> Except on Pea-Chicks, at the Bedford-head?
> Or, when a tight, neat Girl, will serve the Turn,
> In errant Pride continue stiff, and burn?
> I'm a plain Man, whose Maxim is profest,
> 'The Thing at hand is of all Things the best.'
> (143-154)

The bawdy spirit of Sober Advice from Horace cannot disguise the futility of the energies it backhandedly celebrates. In this poem, as in all of the Imitations, Pope seems to be regarding the world as having fallen into a new cycle of ceaseless sterility, manifested in its dedication to everything that denies the honesty and decency he associates with true vitality. The presence of Horace detaches this general attitude from the specific Augustan situation and makes of it a timeless satirical response to human society, as if both cycles have been proceeding all through history, only with the sterile one drawing more and more fools into its course as time goes on. Hence, as a kind of time-traveller, Pope can confirm the persistence of folly, and as a satirist (the man who is always a stranger in a strange land), he can, like Uzbek and Lien Chi Altangi, attempt to deepen his society's understanding of itself by confronting that society with values that have become so strange as to be meaningless. Obviously, his good does not depend on doing this: he already has the moral direction he counsels and the rural spot to which he can retreat.

In the Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace, Pope assembles his themes and arranges his temporal perspectives definitively, so that the poem is a kind of recapitulation of all of the Imitations, although, like them, it does not have the inspirational core that makes the First Epistle of the Second Book (To Augustus) the most fully realized poem in the sequence. The Second Epistle disposes Pope's several centres of interest spatially in the contrast between London and rural retreat, and temporally in the autobiographical and philosophical reflections on human existence. As in the epistle To Mr. Bolingbroke, Pope presents himself as being reluctant to heed the summons of critical responsibility, although in the Second Epistle, it is not so much the necessity of preparing for "Life's instant business" that explains Pope's reluctance as it is his sense of futility and waste of time. Somewhat mock-cynically, he argues that he has already made his packet in poetry; hence, according to the prevailing standards, he has found the only kind of success that matters. Poetry as the expression of essential truth struggles under the oppression of intolerance. Denied the historical freedom of his art, the poet is forced to practise truth privately and under duress, much as Roman Catholics must. His own experience of his Catholic father's conduct in an oppressive situation has enabled Pope to recognize the madness of expecting more than further revenues from his art:

> But (thanks to Homer) since I live and thrive,
> Indebted to no Prince or Peer alive,
> Sure I should want the Care of ten Monroes,
> If I would scribble, rather than repose.
> (68-71)

But just as the legal measures enacted against Roman Catholics deprive them of everything but their religious definition, so do the measures

of time deprive Pope of everything but his definition as a poet. He has, in the end, nothing else but his injured art (72-79). Moreover, the sectarianism of poetry relates the poet even more to the disadvantaged Catholic. The voice of his truth is as lonely as that of theirs:

> But after all, what wou'd you have me do?
> When out of twenty I can please not two;
> When this Heroicks only deigns to praise,
> Sharp Satire that, and that Pindaric lays?
> (80-83)

The stress and confusion of London as the sphere of social and poetic activity manifest themselves in that city's devotion to clock-time and its mad obliviousness of distance. Time and space shrink to the demands of frenetic activity:

> My Counsel sends to execute a Deed;
> A Poet begs me, I will hear him read:
> In Palace-Yard at Nine you'll find me there --
> At Ten for certain, Sir, in Bloomsb'ry-Square --
> Before the Lords at Twelve my Cause comes on --
> There's a Rehearsal, Sir, exact at One. --
> (92-97)

The city is importunity and exasperation:

> How shall I rhime in this eternal Roar?
> How match the Bards whom none e'er matched before?
> (114-115)

To come to London is to confront the poets of the roar and their vulgar poetic protestantism. The great tradition having been silenced, these new priests of the muse distribute the spoils amongst themselves like savages who eat the hearts of great warriors to achieve their powers:

> Thus we dispose of all poetic Merit,
> Yours Milton's Genius, and Mine Homer's Spirit.
> Call Tibbald Shakespear, and he'll swear the Nine
> Dear Cibber! never match'd one Ode of thine.
> Lord! how we strut thro' Merlin's Cave, to see
> No Poets there, but Stephen, you, and me.
> Walk with respect behind, while we at ease
> Weave Laurel Crowns, and take what Names we please.
> 'My dear Tibullus!' if that will not do,
> 'Let me be Horace, and be Ovid you.

> Or, I'm content, allow me Dryden's strains,
> And you shall rise up Otway for your pains.'
> (135-146)

There is, however, in poetry as in life, a "better Art to know the good from bad" that flourishes quietly amid the self-infatuation and preserves the standards of truth Pope upholds. The good poets recognize the demands of art and devote themselves to their calling with a seriousness that makes the preening poets of the grove seem all the more egregiously false. They draw from all the resources of the linguistic tradition, and contribute to this tradition, so as to insure the proper and clear expression of truth, not the slang wisdom of courts that dies as it is born, or the sycophancy to the present fashion of self-proclaimed effortless genius. But, in an age fond of bad poets and resistant to truth, Pope wonders whether it is really worth the trouble to concentrate on recovering poetry from the abyss into which it has sunk, when the health of his own soul seems increasingly to be of far greater importance to him than the condition of art in the age.

Pope seems to associate the condition of poetry with the moral condition of the city, and to find it impossible to think coherently about either unless he is away from them:

> Soon as I enter at my Country door,
> My Mind resumes the thread it dropt before;
> Thoughts, which at Hyde-Park-Corner I forgot,
> Meet and rejoin me, in the pensive Grott.
> There all alone, and Compliments apart,
> I ask these sober questions of my Heart.
> (206-211)

The rural Pope draws his strength from his reflections upon dispossession, both actual and existential. Man owns nothing, and his foolish belief to the contrary makes him a slave to an ultimately shattering illusion. Property is the most fragile of accommodations, a merely

accidental condition of life that claims so much of our attention that we are prevented from coming to terms with ourselves as mortal creatures of a mortal world in which any idea of permanent possession is tragically arrogant:

> The Laws of God, as well as of the Land,
> Abhor, a Perpetuity should stand:
> Estates have wings, and hang in Fortune's pow'r
> Loose on the point of ev'ry wav'ring Hour;
> Ready, by force, or of your own accord,
> By sale, at least by death, to change their Lord.
> Man? and for ever? Wretch, what wou'dst thou have?
> Heir urges Heir, like Wave impelling Wave:
> All vast Possessions (just the same the case
> Whether you call them Villa, Park, or Chace)
> Alas! my BATHURST! what will they avail?
> Join Cotswold Hills to Saperton's fair Dale,
> Let rising Granaries and Temples here,
> There mingled Farms and Pyramids appear,
> Link Towns to Towns with Avenues of Oak,
> Enclose whole Downs in Walls, 'tis all a joke!
> Inexorable Death shall level all,
> And Trees, and Stones, and Farms, and Farmer fall.
> (246-263)

Pope argues the necessity of disenchantment from the outward signs of possession -- ostentatious wealth, the gold, gems, and expensive tastes that man tricks himself into reverencing as enduring evidence of his power. These things cannot be compelled to symbolize in perpetuity a power subject to time's measures of oblivion and arbitrary distribution of property. Pope is not Lear in his reflections upon dispossession: his own moral certainty is such that he stands outside of the reflecting range of the mirror he holds up to man. Pope's attitude to man's illusory accommodations in time does not lead him to Lear's vision of man's terrifying vulnerability and isolation. The tone of Pope's reflections is elegiac and regretful. While Lear could see all men as dispossessed kings, Pope personalizes his image of man's weakness by offering his own physical frailty and smallness as exemplary of man, and as an

occasion for one of the statements of moral complacency to which he is often, irritatingly, prone:

> What is't to me (a Passenger God wot)
> Whether my Vessel be first-rate or not?
> The Ship it self may make a better figure,
> But I that sail, am neither less nor bigger.
> I neither strut with ev'ry fav'ring breath,
> Nor strive with all the Tempest in my teeth.
> In Pow'r, Wit, Figure, Virtue, Fortune plac'd
> Behind the foremost, and before the last.
> (296-303)

The rather priggish self-righteousness of this statement seems, as is often the case with Pope, to be the result of a deliberate, and difficult, confrontation with the forces of disorder that has yielded a position of specious stability maintained by a determined effort to view life as a long, exact, and serious comedy played by the rules. But there is more than enough insight into disorder to suggest that Swift's view of life as a farcical tragedy might have just as much validity:

> With Terrors round can Reason hold her throne,
> Despise the known, nor tremble at th' unknown?
> Survey both Worlds, intrepid and entire,
> In spight of Witches, Devils, Dreams, and Fire?
> (310-313)

Pope's perspective on old age in this poem is consistent with the perspective in the other poems. Beyond the prime of life, man must be prepared to abandon external ambitions in favour of seeing to the demands of the soul's health. But the gentle autumnal philosophizing in a garden that seems to be Pope's standard of conduct in the other poems is here replaced by something that amounts to urgent moral weeding:

> Has Life no sourness, drawn so near its end?
> Can'st thou endure a Foe, forgive a Friend?
> Has Age but melted the rough parts away,
> As Winter-fruits grow mild e'er they decay?
> Or will you think, my Friend, your business done,
> When, of a hundred thorns, you pull out one?
> (316-321)

The point seems to be to leave life in a condition fit to support whatever it will receive from succeeding generations:

> Learn to live well, or fairly make your Will;
> You've play'd, and lov'd, and eat, and drank your fill:
> Walk sober off; before a sprightlier Age
> Comes titt'ring on, and shoves you from the stage:
> Leave such to trifle with more grace and ease,
> Whom Folly pleases, and whose Follies please.
> (322-327)

The best of Pope's imitations of Horace, The First Epistle of the Second Book (To Augustus), is the least characteristic of them in that it does not attempt to bring the age into philosophical focus but accepts its significance as a folly of history for which any temporal contrast is necessarily ironic: times can hardly ever have been so severely out of joint as they are in George II's England, or art so vacuous, or public virtue so seriously deficient in excellence. In The Education of a Christian Prince, Erasmus uses as an image of the Christian Prince's importance in society the fountainhead which must be a source of pure waters or else cause clogging and collapse of the tributary systems it nourishes. In Pope's imitation of the First Epistle of the Second Book, George II is the princely fountainhead of a system that has gone beyond clogging and collapse into sterility: no waters flow at all. Pope seems to consider the king a man without qualities, too unimaginative and too banal to be evil, except in his stupid passivity, and too dull and too ineffectual to rule, but ideally constituted to be the figurehead of an age of dulness and banality. Hence, Pope ironically addresses George as

> Wonder of Kings! like whom to mortal eyes
> None e'er has risen, and none e'er shall rise .
> (29-30)

and subjects him to a series of ironic contrasts with kings and heroes

of history and myth -- Edward, Alfred, Hercules -- so glorious that ordinary mortals were unable to bear their living greatness without envy, but willing to consecrate their dead glory through time:

> Oppress'd we feel the Beam directly beat,
> Those Suns of Glory please not till they set.
> (21-22)

What is wondrous about George is that he has found the hero's full measure of praise while he is still alive and without having done a single brave or wise thing -- indeed, there can never have been an age when the king has matched his people's expectations so satisfactorily. George is the presiding dunce in a nation of flattering fools.

The poem is a critique of what the poet's importance to the nation and to its king has become and, more subtly, a celebration of the resilience of poetry in the face of constant ill-treatment. Pope begins by evaluating the taste that prefers dead folly to living worth in poetry and decrees immortality by a kind of statute of limitations:

> If Time improve our Wit as well as Wine,
> Say at what age a Poet grows divine?
> Shall we, or shall we not, account him so,
> Who dy'd, perhaps, an hundred years ago?
> End all dispute; and fix the year precise
> When British bards begin t' Immortalize?
> 'Who lasts a Century can have no flaw,
> I hold that Wit a Classick, good in law.'
> Suppose he wants a year, will you compound?
> And shall we deem him Ancient, right and sound,
> Or damn to all Eternity at once,
> At ninety nine, a Modern, and a Dunce?'
> 'We shall not quarrel for a year or two;
> By Courtesy of England, he may do.'
> (49-62)

It is the facile and ill-informed critical attitude to dead poets that bothers Pope, and the presumptuousness of critical judgement that proceeds from the popular misconception that what has lasted must be perfect:

All this may be; the People's Voice is odd,
It is, and it is not, the voice of God.
To Gammer Gurton if it give the bays,
And yet deny the Careless Husband praise,
Or say our fathers never broke a rule;
Why then I say, the Publick is a fool.
But let them own, that greater faults than we
They had, and greater Virtues, I'll agree.
(11. 89-96)

He concludes that it is not admiration for past greatness, but envy of present worth that underlies the rage for "the mighty Dead". These reflections are the prelude to an overview of the state of literature and taste in the age. Pope begins the survey with an historical allusion to Charles II and his effect on the arts as a variation of his theme of the monarch's will and the state of letters in a nation. With the Restoration, an enthusiasm for the arts began at court under the immediate influence of the king:

In Days of Ease, when now the weary Sword
Was sheath'd, and Luxury with Charles restor'd;
In every Taste of foreign Courts improv'd,
'All by the King's Example, liv'd and lov'd.'
Then Peers grew proud in Horsemanship t'excell,
New-market's Glory rose, as Britain's fell;
The Soldier breath'd the Gallantries of France,
And ev'ry flow'ry Courtier writ Romance.
Then Marble soften'd into life grew warm,
And yielding Metal flow'd to human form:
Lely on animated Canvas stole
The sleepy Eye, that spoke the melting soul.
No wonder then, when all was Love and Sport,
The willing Muses were debauch'd at Court;
On each enervate string they taught the Note
To pant, or tremble thro' an Eunuch's throat.
(11. 139-154)

The transmission of this enthusiasm to the levels of society below the aristocracy has resulted in a vulgar "Poetick Itch," an epidemic of activity; for everyone can speak, and many can write. Thus everyone considers himself equipped to be a poet:

He serv'd a 'Prenticeship, who sets up shop;

Ward try'd on Puppies, and the Poor, his Drop;
Ev'n Radcliff's Doctors travel first to France,
Nor dare to practise till they've learn'd to dance.
Who builds a Bridge that never drove a pyle?
(Should Ripley venture, all the World would smile)
But those who cannot write, and those who can,
All ryme, and scrawl, and scribble, to a man.
(181-188)

Poetry as a pastime is a good pacifier for men who might otherwise cause trouble, but the true poet can be a public benefactor by reforming the taste, purifying the language, and instructing public morality. Unfortunately, Pope sees no such benefactors in the present age, but only a vast number of hacks happily filling their purses as they desecrate the muse of comedy and reduce the theatre to a spectacular side-show:

Ah luckless Poet! stretch thy lungs and roar,
That Bear or Elephant shall heed thee more
While all its throats the Gallery extends,
And all the Thunder of the Pit ascends!
Loud as the Wolves on Orcas' stormy steep,
Howl to the roarings of the Northern deep.
Such is the shout, the long-applauding note,
At Quin's high plume, or Oldfield's petticoat,
Or when from Court a birth-day suit bestow'd
Sinks the lost Actor in the tawdry load.
Booth enters -- hark! the Universal Peal!
'But has he spoken?' Not a syllable.
'What shook the stage, and made the people stare?'
Cato's long Wig, flowr'd gown, and lacquer'd chair.
(324-337)

In this age of corrupt popular taste and rhymed idiocy under a dunce's reign, Pope's plea to the king that he choose an honest laureate, one free of the present-day poets' malady of writing with an eye on a pension or on a place, and willing to give to posterity the living image of the king and the reality of his rule, seems a lethal challenge that has no chance of being accepted:

Oh! could I mount on the Maeonian wing,
Your Arms, your Actions, your Repose to sing!
What seas you travers'd! and what fields you fought!
Your Country's Peace, how oft, how dearly bought!
How barb'rous rage subsided at your word,

> And Nations wonder'd while they dropp'd the sword!
> How, when you nodded, o'er the land and deep,
> Peace stole her wing, and wrapt the world in sleep;
> Till Earth's extremes your mediation own,
> And Asia's Tyrants tremble at your Throne . . . .
> (394-403)

In the last lines of the poem, Pope very subtly separates honesty from flattery, consigning the profanations of the celebratory muse George has inspired to the only access to posterity they deserve:

> Besides, a fate attends on all I write,
> That when I aim at praise, they say I bite.
> A vile Encomium doubly ridicules;
> There's nothing blackens like the ink of fools;
> If true, a woful likeness, and if lyes,
> 'Praise undeserv'd is scandal in disguise:'
> Well may he blush, who gives it or receives;
> And when I flatter, let my dirty leaves
> (Like Journals, Odes, and such forgotten things
> As Eusden, Philips, Settle, writ of Kings)
> Cloath spice, line trunks, or flutt'ring in a row,
> Befringe the rails of Bedlam and Sohoe.
> (408-419)

The conclusion could not be more devastating: the virtues of George II can inspire poetry worthy to be preserved only as wrapping paper and not likely to have more than the life-expectancy of remainders in used-book shops.

III

The Epilogue to the Satires is a bridge between the satiric mode and principles of the Imitations and those of the 1742 Dunciad, with the apocalyptic fourth book that throws the first three books (substantially the same as they are in the 1728 Dunciad) into deeper, more sombre significance. There is, of course, ample precedent for the ferocity of the satire in the final Dunciad. Literary abuses and bad taste inspire Pope, throughout his career, with the fury of the true believer sensi-

tive to blasphemy. Poetry is for him the expressive medium of the soul, an index of the moral sense of individuals and nations: convictions that lead one to consider his genial opinion in the Imitations that bad poets are harmless as honest imitation of Horace rather than as the expression of something he really believes himself. In a matrix of philosophical resignation and contemplative retreat there is no place for devastating anger directed at hacks, although a poem like the First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace can accommodate a chilly contempt for them. But in the Imitations, Pope does not press the moral and social implications of corrupt art; rather, he deals directly with questions of ethics and society on moral grounds that are not as likely to be as shifting as aesthetic ones. There is a degree of certainty in moral standards that aesthetic ones do not have: there is, after all, no reason why neo-classicism should be the only possible theory of literature, although the neo-classicists were fortunate, for propaganda purposes, in having literary adversaries who, for the most part, seemed to give credence to their claim to be the arbiters of poetry. What Pope does is to make moral standards literary ones, so that just as a man's actions define him morally, so also do a poet's works, and just as a nation's policies define its public virtue, so also do its tastes.

The Epilogue is a justification of satire against impertinent censure, and a definition of what the nature of satire must be in Pope's age. In contrast with the satiric mode of the Imitations, in which Pope assumed the voice of Horace without questioning the degree of authority this assumption conferred on his criticism, in the Epilogue, Pope is forced to analyze the politics of satire and he concludes, without actually repudiating Horace, that the kind of prudence the Roman

satirist exemplifies is perhaps too politic for the conditions with which the satirist must deal in the England of the late 1730's. The "impertinent Censurer" takes Pope to task for diminution of his poetic powers:

> You grow correct that once with Rapture writ,
> And are, besides, too Moral for a Wit --
> (Epilogue: Dial. I, 3-4)

and accuses him of betraying the spirit of the poet (Horace) whom he imitates:

> His sly, polite, insinuating stile
> Could please at Court, and make AUGUSTUS smile:
> An artful Manager, that crept between
> His Friend and Shame, and was a kind of Screen.
> (Epilogue: Dial. I, 19-22)

Pope is being politic himself in allowing the interlocutor to overstate Horace's prudence by associating him with Walpole and implying that he was a Roman version of the modern Gazeteer. The claim is too ridiculous to honour with a rebuttal, but the poem develops a concept of satirical honesty that takes Pope away from Horace's effective but cautious mode into an attitude of refusal to see the point of attacking vice in the abstract through abstract "characters". Pope, in the Epilogue, considers that serious opposition to vice necessarily involves identifying its embodiments by name, without screens and circumlocutions:

> P. How Sir! not damn the Sharper, but the Dice?
> Come on then Satire! gen'ral, unconfin'd,
> Spread thy broad wing, and sowze on all the Kind.
> Ye Statesmen, Priests, of one Religion all!
> Ye Tradesmen vile, in Army, Court, or Hall!
> Ye Rev'rend Atheists!
> (Epilogue: Dial. II, 13-18)

But such general satire makes nonsense of the advice to practise it:

> F. Scandal! name them, Who?
> P. Why that's the thing you bid me not to do.
> (Epilogue: Dial. II, 18-19)

The Censurer advises a caution so great and so perverse that satire ceases to exist: it is all right to attack the great, when they are in disgrace, or the officially sanctioned targets of abuse in the age -- religion, honesty, men of principle. What satire must not do is operate in the spheres of folly and vice that make sense of it:

> Laugh then at any, but at Fools or Foes;
> These you but anger, and you mend not those:
> Laugh at your Friends, and if your Friends are sore,
> So much the better, you may laugh the more.
> To Vice and Folly to confine the jest,
> Sets half the World, God knows, against the rest;
> Did not the Sneer of more impartial men
> At sense and Virtue, balance all agen.
> Judicious Wits spread wide the Ridicule,
> And charitably comfort Knave and Fool.
> (Epilogue: Dial. I, 53-62)

Above all, public figures in their time of glory and those who possess hereditary power by virtue of their aristocratic birth must be immune to attack. Ideally, the term "aristocracy" refers to a government led by individuals of intellectual and moral excellence, whose primary interest is the welfare of those they govern. In reality, however, the aristocrat is marked, not necessarily by superior intelligence or morality, but by noble lineage, social rank, and ownership of land. This confusion of the substantial and the accidental does not occur to the Censurer, who seems to consider that the secondary characteristics of aristocracy embody a superiority and privilege Pope feels have withered away to leave a power group characterized by insufferable arrogance, self-interest, and shamelessness. Aristocracy is now excellence in vice, and government consists in providing the worst possible examples of moral poverty to a people apparently eager to emulate its betters. But while traditional aristocracy functions (at least, ideally) so as to provide willing direction to the growth in virtue of the people it

governs, the new order, with its false values and prestige based upon power rather than upon moral and intellectual excellence, is reluctant to dilute itself with "the streams of inferior humanity."[22] The "Dignity of Vice" must not be lost, Pope concludes with devastating irony:

> Ye Gods! shall Cibber's Son, without rebuke
> Swear like a Lord? or Rich out-whore a Duke?
> A Fav'rite's Porter with his Master vie,
> Be brib'd as often, and as often lie?
> Shall Ward draw Contracts with a Statesman's skill?
> Or Japhet pocket, like his Grace, a Will?
> Is it for Bond or Peter (paltry Things!)
> To pay their Debts or keep their Faith like Kings?
> (Epilogue: Dial. I, 115-122)

Consistent with his attitude in the Imitations, Pope holds that only the virtuous man is free, although, paradoxically, public virtue has been stripped of all honour:

> Vice is undone, if she forgets her Birth,
> And stoops from Angels to the Dregs of Earth;
> But 'tis the Fall degrades her to a Whore;
> Let Greatness own her, and she's mean no more:
> Her Birth, her Beauty, Crowds and Courts confess,
> Chaste Maidens praise her, and grave Bishops bless:
> In golden Chains the willing World she draws,
> And hers the Gospel is, and hers the Laws:
> Mounts the Tribunal, lifts her scarlet Head,
> And sees pale Virtue carted in her stead!
> (Epilogue: Dial. I, 141-150)

True to virtue, the satirist is carted, too, and from the vantage point of the tumbrel watches the triumphal progress of Vice dragging England's genius, heritage, promise, and virtue in the dust (150-168):

> While Truth, Worth, Wisdom, daily they decry --
> 'Nothing is Sacred now but Villany.'
> (169-170)

The Censurer doubts whether things have gone quite so far, and accuses Pope of libelling the age. Pope's answer to the charge is to claim prophetic powers based on his careful study of omens:

> Vice with such Giant-strides comes on amain,
> Invention strives to be before in vain;

> Feign what I will, and paint it e'er so strong,
> Some rising Genius sins up to my Song.
> (Epilogue: Dial. II, 6-9)

But dire prophecy, no matter how much circumstances seem to accommodate themselves to it, is dependent upon satire on the actions of the great, the Censurer cautions, and satire must be polite when it deals with them and with the parvenus to greatness. Can Pope find no one to praise among the mighty? Courtiers deserving praise get it, Pope replies, good men banished by vice, and honest men in any station, but he is not claiming simplistically that the virtuous man is the man who has no power, although lack of power is far more favourable to virtue. Power can corrupt the best of men, but it is with present and actual corruption, rather than theoretical, that Pope is concerned. The Censurer cannot understand the passionate intensity of the anger over corruption in power of someone like Pope, who has no part to play in the power games, and who repudiates in disgust the activities of the hacks who flatter power. A venal priest dishonours his vocation, and flatterers can desecrate truth, but how does this affect Pope, whose private virtue is intact? Pope interprets any offence against truth and virtue as an offence against honest and virtuous men, no matter where the offence occurs:

> Ask you what Provocation I have had?
> The strong Antipathy of Good to Bad.
> When Truth or Virtue an Affront endures,
> Th' Affront is mine, my Friend, and should be yours.
> Mine, as a Foe profess'd to false Pretence,
> Who think a Coxcomb's Honour like his Sense;
> Mine, as a Friend to ev'ry worthy mind;
> And mine as Man, who feel for all mankind.
> (Epilogue: Dial. II, 197-203)

The outrageousness of a situation in which a man, the satirist, is feared more than God -- the Censurer never once acknowledges the moral

basis of Pope's position -- is compounded by the powerlessness of divine retribution as a threat sufficient to bring men to an understanding of the corruptness of their affairs. Men fear only the loss of face; hence ridicule is the instrument of divine justice and can at least discredit individual vicious men, if not reform them, in league with honesty:

> O sacred Weapon! left for Truth's defence,
> Sole Dread of Folly, Vice, and Insolence!
> To all but Heav'n-directed hands deny'd,
> The Muse may give thee, but the Gods must guide.
> Rev'rent I touch thee! but with honest zeal;
> To rowze the Watchmen of the Public Weal,
> To Virtue's Work provoke the tardy Hall,
> And goad the Prelate slumb'ring in his Stall.
> (Epilogue: Dial. II, 212-219)

In the last lines of the poem, Pope adopts the heroic tone of the besieged champion of virtue and honesty, his defiance no doubt heightened by his awareness of what the threatened censorship of the press would mean to honesty. Censorship would give legal sanction to the lies and distortions that have gained favour in England; just ridicule and honest satire would die. Vice in her triumphal car is the harbinger of the new deity: Dulness.

In a note to the last line of the Second Dialogue, Pope writes:

> This was the last poem of the kind printed by our author, with a resolution to publish no more; but to enter thus, in the most plain and solemn manner he could, a sort of PROTEST against that insuperable corruption and depravity of manners, which he had been so unhappy as to live to see. Could he have hoped to have amended any, he had continued those attacks; but bad men were grown so shameless and so powerful, that Ridicule was become as unsafe as it was ineffectual. The Poem raised him, as he knew it would, some enemies; but he had reason to be satisfied with the approbation of good men, and the testimony of his own conscience.[23]

Until the 1742 Dunciad, most of Pope's satires are as much definitive of satiric principles as they are critical of moral shortcomings, so much so, that definition and criticism are mutually explanatory. Pope

appeals to justice with some confidence that the principles of justice are comprehensible to a civilized society, no matter how much it seems bent on negating them, but in the Imitations, there is a sense that they are comprehensible only to a very few people, most of whom do not have positions of power, and that there are very great difficulties in providing virtuous example in what appear to be universally vicious circumstances. There is a degree of intensity in this attitude that suggests the over-reaction of the basically optimistic man forced to concede that actual man dishonours all the beautiful theories of his nature and conduct, but Pope can hardly be accused of inventing the follies he attacks. Things as they are can support an endless series of didactic satires like the Moral Essays or the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot or the Epilogue to the Satires, but Pope's outrage is such that it requires (and can sustain) an imaginative vision that comprehends all definition and criticism in a single act of creation. It is not enough for him to show society, as he does in the Imitations, that it has become a bizarre pageant of tinsel insects and brutes in contrast with the few good and honest men who, miraculously, still exist to demonstrate human normality. He must substantiate his despair by creating a world that refuses to accommodate the normality. The Dunciad becomes the fulfillment of his vocation as a moral poet. Pope styles himself the last of poets, the last artist dedicated to expressing truth and reason, carted with virtue, and watching the triumphant repudiation of the human definition in the ceremonial games of moral and cultural traitors before the deity of nonsense.

CHAPTER SIX: APOCALYPTIC TIME

The attitude to culture which Pope embodies throughout his career as a critical poet insists upon the social implications of art and taste to a degree that suggests a kind of aesthetic ideology, substantially conservative in its appeal to the authority and accrued wisdom of history and tradition, and perhaps peripherally reactionary in its refusal (or, more accurately, its inability) to accommodate itself to the new commercial and technological matrices of art. These new matrices are essentially quantitative. The printing press and the retail selling of books maximize numbers and profits by catering to a debased popular taste the book publishers have encouraged by issuing libels and trash, while the nouveaux riches, like Timon in the Epistle to Burlington, can buy ostentation and erect monuments to their affluence and presumed importance. But there is an inevitable effect on the quality of art when its inspiration is the profit motive. A Gresham's Law of art can drive good work out of favour, and the lax enforcement of legal restrictions on the activities of book publishers endangers the public honour of some men and assaults the privacy of all:

> We shall next declare the occasion and the cause which moved our Poet to this particular work. He lived in those days, when (after providence had permitted the Invention of Printing as a scourge for the Sins of the learned) Paper also became so cheap, and printers so numerous, that a deluge of authors cover'd the land: Whereby not only the peace of the honest unwriting subject was daily molested, but unmerciful demands were made of his applause, yea of his money, by such as would neither earn the one, or deserve the other: At the same time, the Liberty of the Press was so unlimited, that it grew dangerous to refuse them either: For they would forthwith publish slanders unpunish'd, the authors being anonymous: nay the immediate publishers thereof lay

sculking under the wings of an Act of Parliament, assuredly intended for better purposes.[1]

Pope feels that the technological and economic forces that operate in modern literature encourage an ethic of cultural and social irresponsibility because they have the power to dilute the potency of tradition by offering as poets to a gullible public such writers as Blackmore and Eusden, and to disseminate the public images carefully concocted by hacks like Arnall to conceal the venal truth about men in power. All of this is, for Pope, part of "that insuperable corruption and depravity of manners"[2] which led him to abandon constructive satire after the Epilogue to the Satires; but while he provides enough information to support his charges of corruption and depravity, there is no evidence that these were any more insuperable in his own age than in any other. What does set his age apart from earlier ones, however, is the degree of potential, but unrealized, public awareness of corruption. It is this failure which inspires his own campaign of harsh honesty in his satires and which leads him to inquire into the moral breakdown he feels publications image, just as his sense of the decline of the tradition of wit as the expression of reason and truth inspires him to satirical scrutiny of the modern school of semi-literate scribblers whose inability to think or to feel does not prevent them from assuming the status of poets. The two things are necessarily linked for Pope. Moral and aesthetic breakdown promises anarchy.

Thus, in The Dunciad (1742), Pope is the poet of what he considers to be an imminent reality which he perceives in the dishonesty and depravity of the powerful and in the general corruption of taste in the land. In common with the conviction of other responsible critics in his age, he considers that "taste in the arts [is] . . . symptomatic

of social and moral health. The tawdry poet [is] an uncivilizing force and a liking for his wares [carries] the threat of barbarism."[3] It is important, of course, to be aware that the early eighteenth century had no concept of non-literature or of non-books. "[Pope] lived in an age which still tended to regard everything that appeared in print as literature; and even when he is satirizing his scribblers he still pays them the compliment of treating their work as bad literature."[4] The reason why there should be so many tawdry poets, why so many people should care to read them, and why a poet like Pope should be so alarmed is, for Pope, the collapse of moral and aesthetic authority which has sanctioned individual interest and idiosyncrasy as acceptable substitutes for social responsibility and reason. A century after The Dunciad was written, Arnold wrote of the corrosive effect of an ethic based on self-interest:

> Now, if culture, which simply means trying to perfect oneself, and one's mind as part of oneself, brings us light, and if light shows us that there is nothing so very blessed in merely doing as one likes, that the worship of the mere freedom to do as one likes is the worship of machinery, that the really blessed thing is to like what right reason ordains, and to follow her authority, then we have got a practical benefit out of culture. We have got a much wanted principle of authority, to counteract the tendency to anarchy which seems to be threatening us.[5]

Pope, too, associates ruthless self-interest with mechanical behaviour and structures. In social terms, self-interest finds its corroboration in the power structure: a vast organization which is a vicious parody of the aristocratic ideal, based upon wealth, privilege, and property, protective of itself rather than socially responsible, and careful to preserve its smooth operation by redefining society in terms of its own impersonal energies. Hence, Pope's satire on the acquisitive instinct ("There London's voice, 'Get Mony, Mony still!'"), on the

sophisticated language of dispossession for the benefit of a financial establishment (mortgages, jointures, excises, for example), and on the deliberately arranged immunity of the powerful to attack (the Gazeteers, the dangers of naming people in satire) in the Imitations. In Pope's social satires, men are infallibly predictable in relation to their motives. Like the bored citizens of an exhausted civilization in Cavafy's "Waiting for the Barbarians", the English nation seems so enervated, morally and culturally, that it is incapable of resistance to the spread of dulness: "The barbarians, when they come, will do the legislating" ("Waiting for the Barbarians," 7).

If a corrupt power structure based upon a now-decadent ethic of government, the aristocratic, must be appraised in relation to the former reality of that ethic (this is done ironically by Pope, who carefully attaches such epithets as "great Patricians" to the mighty whom he satirizes), then a corrupt literature must be appraised in relation to the standards of wit and the authority of the poetic tradition. "Whatever the distortion or adulteration of the classical resources," Aubrey Williams writes, "the Augustan age was a period in which the literary pretensions and attainments of even the least accomplished writer inevitably called for evaluation in the light of classical models."[6] It is this kind of evaluation to which Pope submits modern poetry in such poems as the Essay on Criticism and the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, and the principles of evaluation in these poems characterize Pope's attitude to the literary accomplishment of his age in The Dunciad. The quality of literature indicated in his references to monsters learning to crawl on poetic feet testifies to the extent of the decline from the Golden Age of Homer and Virgil,

and to the profanation by the moderns of the "sacred altars" of the ancient poets. The monstrosity of the poems indicates the accelerated gestation of wit by writers who ignore the classical practice (enunciated by Horace) of patient creation and judicious publication. Just as government has become the mechanical operation of a powerful elite, so also has poetry become the noisy machinery of non-wit, in which words are not the signs of intellectual action, but of the inanimate secretions of a plumbic brain whose products are, to say the least, "equivocal", in Pope's sense of that term. In a letter to Wycherley, Pope writes that true wit is "a perfect conception, with an easy delivery."[7] In his satire on false wit in The Dunciad, he stresses the monstrosity of most modern poetry and discusses the creative process amongst the moderns in imagery of fetal and natal abnormalities.[8] —Poverty of wit expresses itself in the inability of the modern poets to think, in their lack of imagination, and in their ignorance of the truths which poetry must convey. Their energies are therefore purely mechanical: plagiarism, obscenity, outrageous flattery of the unworthy but powerful, and the disposition of words in nonsense patterns rather than in complex structures of thought.

Together, society and poetry seem to be conspiring to hatch a race of monsters: to redefine and uncreate man until he is but a thing in a world of things. Such, for Pope, is the dangerous adventure of disorder, and to assent to the adventure is to refuse to be human. To accept the ethical inertia of a materially acquisitive society independent of the authority of reason and virtue is to accept a materialistic reinterpretation of man and his world; for in the absence of this authority there is a suspension of moral order in favour of a

self-subsistent mechanical world of minds given over to sensations which cannot be transformed into thoughts, of the atrophy of conscience, where the insubstantial (matter) is considered to be the substance of reality. The satirical imagination deals with this world by stylizing its materialism:

> Whenever ideas are reduced to things and life to mechanics in the satiric world, there always follows a magnification of the unworthy and a multiplication of the number of things. The result of this is inevitably the jumble. Taken together, these tendencies indicate a loss of some sensible belief about the nature of reality, and they lead on to a world in which the real is buried under messes of the unreal.[9]

Hence, in The Dunciad, Pope presents a chaotic muddle of the human and the non-human, imagines people behaving like charged particles in the magnetic field of Dulness, and gives human names to new and wondrous varieties of cacophony:

> Now thousand tongues are heard in one loud din:
> The Monkey-mimics rush discordant in;
> 'Twas chatt'ring, grinning, mouthing, jabb'ring all,
> And Noise and Norton, Brangling and Breval,
> Dennis and Dissonance, and captious Art,
> And Snip-snap short, and Interruption smart . . . .
> (Dunciad, II, 235-240)

Pope's contemporary, Swift, shares his alarm over the apparently insuperable corruption. Ian Watt writes that their concern over the "unheroic and disordered" state of their world leads them to the conviction that "history [has] moved beyond them, chaos really threaten[s], and the only possible posture [is] public denunciation and an unremitting rearguard action."[10] Both writers regard their age as an anomaly of history: as a time of negative accomplishment so powerful that it threatens to disrupt the orderly historical process of attainment and decline by initiating a new history of ceaseless erosion of traditional moral authority. The withering of this authority prevents man's

recognition of his moral nature as it discredits moral sense. Man refuses, or is unable, to delve beyond "the surface and the rind of things" and makes of external appearances, of things, his reality. Rachel Trickett writes of the eighteenth-century conception of history:

> History as a moral discipline, showing man in his particular and general nature, recording the passage of time and revealing the causes and effects of action, was close to the eighteenth-century idea of literature, not only in theme but in pattern, as it is seen in such forms as the didactic satire and the novel of the period.[11]

Since history is the conscious effort by man to make sense of human time in relation to moral criteria, then history has been repudiated in their age, as far as Swift and Pope are concerned. Pope's Dunciad ends in universal darkness, while Swift's Tale of a Tub postulates an "Abyss of Things." Both works are concentrated attacks on the moral breakdown of the age as it manifests itself in the cultural expressions (primarily literature) of the time; both are, in a very true sense, historical works based on extravagantly imaginative philosophies of history which are responses to what these writers consider to be an era of extravagant depravity and wickedness. In his study of The Dunciad, Aubrey Williams writes that "the fundamental procedure [of Pope in the poem] is the use of artistic deterioration as the metaphor by which bigger deteriorations are revealed."[12] That this metaphor should have been used by Pope, and by Swift in A Tale of a Tub, is hardly surprising when one considers their devotion to literary art as the expression of a healthy culture, and their tendency to "read time" through literature. The abuse of literature is what inspires both writers to investigate the decline of culture, and they connect this decline with man's strong present predilection for folly in the absence of significant moral direction in society. Orwell writes, in

"Politics and the English Language":

Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely. A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the sloveniiness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.[13]

Since literature is words, and since words must be the vehicles of meaning, then the value of literature as a cultural expression depends upon the ability of men to use words in such a way that they image complex thought -- principles, judgement -- as well as the legitimate efforts of the imagination. Words, and their disposition as literature, indicate the creative intellectual potential of societies. Otherwise, they are noise and nonsense. Swift, in The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit, discusses the failure of the church in its duty to inform society ethically by satirically discoursing on canting:

> it is frequent for a single Vowel to draw Sighs from a Multitude; and for a whole Assembly of Saints to sob to the Music of one solitary Liquid. But these are Trifles; when even Sounds inarticulate are observed to produce as forcible Effects. A Master Work-man shall blow his Nose so powerfully, as to pierce the Hearts of his People, who are disposed to receive the Excrements of his Brain with the same Reverence, as the Issue of it. Hawking, Spitting, and Belching, the Defects of other Men's Rhetorick, are the Flowers, and Figures, and Ornaments of his. For, the Spirit being the same in all, it is of no Import through what Vehicle it is convey'd.[14]

Pope's Peri Bathous is devoted to collecting the strange flowers of bathos: those poems which demonstrate an inert and repugnant character as excremental as the productions of the spirit's operation. In A Tale of a Tub, the Modern Writer voices the exaltation of the dangerous foolishness Orwell studies to the status of a dominant and complex principle of human behaviour of which bad literature is but the most

easily accessible expression. In The Dunciad, the context of Pope's survey of vicious society is his imaginative picture of the implications of Cibber's elevation to the laureateship. Swift and Pope alone do not repudiate history. Their works will communicate to posterity the reality of an age their authors are determined to scorn. Their convictions about the anomalous position of their age in historical time permit Pope and Swift to create in their works the most complex and imaginative temporal perspectives and structures before Sterne in Tristram Shandy. Considered together, The Dunciad and A Tale of a Tub say a great deal about the very acute consciousness of the Augustans of the place of their age in tradition and about the nature of their satiric vision, which is dependent upon their consciousness of time and history and is expressed in terms of the peculiarly Augustan cultural configuration.

II

The intention of the Modern Writer in A Tale of a Tub is to place himself in the great tradition of learning and literature by justifying himself before the silence of Time and Posterity. The intention of Swift is to deny him a place by justifying the silence. Hence, Swift, as satirist, unites himself with the silence of Time and Posterity, forming a perspective in which the Modern Writer cannot be permitted to exist, while the Modern Writer desperately sifts through the ruins of culture in his era to find his justification. In relation to the perspective, the Modern Writer and Swift are mutually comprehensive: the Modern Writer would vindicate not only himself but all

ungifted moderns in his act of self-justification, while Swift would imply in his exclusion of the Modern Writer from the perspective the exclusion of all the hacks for whom the Modern Writer is spokesman.

Such is the nature of the irony in the Tale that the satire derives from our perception of two understandings of the perspective in which the subject matter is placed: that of the Modern Writer and that of Swift. These different understandings involve two conceptions of history. The Modern Writer initially recognizes that both time and space are the co-ordinates of existence; hence his alarm in the "Epistle . . . to Prince Posterity" over the ravages of Time on the productions of his age. His principal concern is over the immediate oblivion that seems to be the fate of these productions: their loss to memory and sight so soon after their publication. What he is most acutely conscious of is the mortality of the "immortal" works of his contemporaries. Immortality is a matter of declaration for the moderns, requiring no attention to the extended tradition. Thus, the Modern Writer is frustrated by the relentlessness of Time in extinguishing the Grub Street works. Having isolated his tradition from the context of the historical tradition, he insanely argues that Time has no right to exert his power over the Grubbian works:

> 'But the concern I have most at Heart, is for our Corporation of Poets, from whom I am preparing a Petition to Your Highness, to be subscribed with the Names of one hundred thirty six of the first Rate, but whose immortal Productions are never likely to reach your Eyes, tho' each of them is now an humble and an earnest Appellant for the Laurel, and has large comely Volumes ready to shew for a Support to his Pretensions. The never-dying Works of these illustrious Persons, Your Governour, Sir, has devoted to unavoidable Death, and Your Highness is to be made believe, that our Age has never arrived at the Honour to produce one single Poet.'[15]

The temporal dimensions of the Tale clarify the writer's sense of urgency. In the "Epistle . . . to Prince Posterity" he mentions the

futility of his attempt to provide proof of the abundance of learning and wit to the Prince:

'When I first thought of this Address, I had prepared a copious List of Titles to present to Your Highness as an undisputed argument for what I affirm. The Originals were posted fresh upon all Gates and Corners of Streets; but returning in a very few Hours to take a Review, they were all torn down, and fresh ones in their Places: I enquired after them among Readers and Booksellers, but I enquired in vain, the Memorial of them was lost among Men, their Place was no more to be found: and I was laughed to scorn, for a Clown and a Pedant, without all Taste and Refinement, little versed in the Course of present Affairs, and that knew nothing of what had pass'd in the best Companies of Court and Town.'

(34-35)

This passionate desire to catch the curiosity of the moment and keep it, to conquer the enemy, Time, who is "'. . . resolved . . . to keep Posterity in almost an universal Ignorance of Modern Studies,'" (31) dictates the range of the Modern Writer's view: there is the moment and eternity. To lose the curiosity of the moment is to be out of fashion; to be out of fashion is to be scorned. If the town forgets so quickly, how can Posterity be expected to remember, unless he is begged to remember by the Modern Writer? The silence of Posterity is ensured by Time's performance of his task as Posterity's governor: he protects Posterity from the assaults of fools and would-be wits. And Swift, as satirist, ensures that the Modern Writer will reveal only the very worst of the corrupt tradition he wishes to graft upon the great tradition.

The disordered mind of the writer is evident in his curious way of playing prosecution to his own defence. He traps himself, unconsciously, in repudiation of his own position when his criticism of the ancients results in his associating them with virtue and health, and the moderns with vice and disease. He connects age with monotony and considers that the reading of the classical works through history

has not been because of their worth, but because of their lack of novelty and variety, so that the classics are like blinkers willingly worn by generations reluctant to welcome the new. Yet he goes on to define health as the "one Thing [which] has always been the same, whereas Diseases are by thousands, besides new and daily Additions; So, all the Virtues that have been ever in Mankind, are to be counted on a few Fingers, but his Follies and Vices are innumerable, and Time adds hourly to the Heap" (50). Thus, the modern age lacks the materials (virtue, courage, justice) to sustain panegyric. He begins the "Digression Concerning Criticks" by insisting that he has been "as cautious as [he] could, upon all Occasions, most nicely to follow the Rules and Methods of Writing laid down by the Example of our illustrious Moderns" (92), but the "True Criticks" he names are "the most Antient of all":

> Every True Critick is a Hero born, descending in a direct Line from a Celestial Stem, by Momus and Hybris, who begat Zoilus, who begat Tigellius, who begat Etcaetera the Elder, who begat Bently, and Rymer, and Wotton, and Perrault, and Dennis, who begat Etcaetera the Younger.(94)

Modernism is thus (contrary to his argument) timeless. He condemns those who claim the art of criticism is completely a modern invention (96), then reverses and allies himself with those he had repudiated:

> Besides, they have proved beyond contradiction that the very finest Things delivered of old, have been long since invented, and brought to Light by much later Pens, and that the noblest Discoveries those Antients ever made, of Art or of Nature, have all been produced by the transcending Genius of the present Age. Which clearly shews, how little Merit those Ancients can justly pretend to; and takes off that blind Admiration paid them by Men in a Corner, who have the Unhappiness of conversing too little with present Things. (96)

The writer madly investigates the antiquity of criticism to prove that it is modern, and its contemporaneity to prove its antiquity.

This disordered mind sustains a distorted understanding of

time, considered apart from its relevance to tradition. The writer seems to be anchoring himself verbally in the moment with his carefully stated exact dates: the modern age comprehends "these last three years" (129); the "Epistle . . . to Prince Posterity" is dated December, 1697; the bookseller remarks that his letter to Sommers was written before the Peace of Riswick; and the Preface is located in "this present Month of August, 1697" (44). Thus anchored, he rails against the destructions of time on the works of the moderns, but he contradicts himself. While he is terrified by the might of tradition, the temporal disposition of intellectual and artistic value, he nevertheless is prepared to offer as mightier the mystique of the Stage-Itinerant:

> Under the Stage-Itinerant are couched those Productions designed for the Pleasure and Delight of Mortal Man; such as Six-penny-worth of Wit, Westminster Drolleries, Delightful Tales, Compleat Jesters, and the like; by which the Writers of and for GRUB-STREET, have in these latter Ages so nobly triumph'd over Time; have clipt his Wings, pared his Nails, filed his Teeth, turn'd back his Hour-Glass, blunted his Scythe, and drawn the Hob-Nails out of his Shoes. (63)

Still, in spite of his bravado, the writer is obsessed with time until he cuts himself off from its sphere of influence entirely. His ploy, early in the Tale, is to go over the head of Time, directly to Posterity. As Philip Pinkus points out in his "Approach to A Tale of a Tub," the Modern Writer's first appearance in the Tale is in a torrent of words,[16] obsequious and determined: the outburst of a parvenu to tradition collaring Prince Posterity like a disgraced courtier and begging his attention. We have been prepared for the grandness of the Writer's presumption by the prelude of the bookseller's dedication to Lord Sommers, the meanness of the bookseller's obsequiousness being beautifully demonstrated through Swift's use of qualifying words and reiterated conjunctions which give to his plea an air of

breathless determination to get everything said before Lord Sommers has a chance to express his contempt:

My LORD,

Tho' the Author has written a large Dedication, yet That being address'd to a Prince, whom I am never likely to have the Honor of being known to; A Person besides, as far as I can observe, not at all regarded, or thought of by any of our present Writers; And, being wholly free from that Slavery, which Booksellers usually lie under, to the Caprices of Authors; I think it a wise Piece of Presumption, to inscribe these Papers to your Lordship, and to implore your Lordship's Protection of them. God and your Lordship know their Faults, and their Merits; for as to my own Particular, I am altogether a Stranger to the Matter; And, tho' every Body else should be equally ignorant, I do not fear the Sale of the Book, at all the worse, upon that Score. Your Lordship's Name on the Front, in Capital Letters, will at any time get off one Edition: Neither would I desire any other Help, to grow an Alderman, than a Patent for the sole Priviledge of Dedicating to your Lordship. (22-23)

The bookseller's concern over what will help to sell a book to the buying public prefigures the writer's concern over what will sell a book to Posterity. Both are hucksters: the name of Lord Sommers will guarantee the success of the book on the market (in the moment); the blessing of Posterity will guarantee the endurance of market-literature in the tradition (in eternity).

In the "Epistle . . . to Prince Posterity", the writer addresses the Prince with a paean of outrageous flattery that expands alarmingly until it bursts into the writer's real concern, his grievance against Time:

SIR,

I here present Your Highness with the Fruits of a very few leisure Hours, stollen from the short Intervals of a World of Business, and of an Employment quite alien from such Amusements as this: The poor Production of that Refuse of Time which has lain heavy upon my Hands, during the long Prorogation of Parliament, a great Dearth of Foreign News, and a Tedious Fit of rainy Weather: For which, and other Reasons, it cannot chuse extreamly to deserve such a Patronage as that of Your Highness, whose numberless Virtues in so few Years, make the World look upon You as the future example of Princes: For altho' Your Highness is hardly got free of Infancy, yet has the universal learned

World already resolv'd upon appealing to Your future Dictates with the lowest and most resigned Submission: Fate having decreed You sole Arbiter of the Productions of human Wit, in this polite and most accomplished Age. Methinks, the Number of Appellants were enough to shock and startle any Judge of a Genius less unlimited than Yours: But in order to prevent such glorious Tryals, the Person (it seems) to whose Care the Education of Your Highness is committed, has resolved (as I am told) to keep You in almost an universal Ignorance of our Studies. which it is Your inherent Birthright to inspect. (30-31)

The writer is terrified of oblivion, and his terror characterizes his address to Prince Posterity, as the tone varies abruptly from outrage to insolence to desperation:

It were endless to recount the Several Methods of Tyranny and Destruction, which Your Governour (Time) is pleased to practise upon this Occasion. His inveterate Malice is such to the Writings of our Age, that of several Thousands produced yearly from this renowned City, before the next Revolution of the Sun, there is not one to be heard of . . . . (33)

The sycophancy of the Modern Writer in the "Epistle . . . to Prince Posterity" does not dispose us to be sympathetic towards him. The tone of his address lacks confidence. The whole address is shot through with fear and with the dawning certainty that Posterity will not be convinced. In the digressions that follow, the writer gradually drops his sights from conventional immortality and concentrates on the moment, doing everything he can to make sure that his book is in the fashion, and in the process revealing himself to be as much a mercenary as the bookseller. This is especially evident in the "Digression in the Modern Kind", where the writer reveals the cynicism of his motivation as he juxtaposes the desire of modern authors for "an everlasting Remembrance, and never-dying Fame" with a gratuitous mention of the altruistic motivation of being "highly serviceable to the general Good of Mankind."

The Modern Writer's solution to the problem of Time is to eliminate time, sealing off his tradition by creating an existential

ambiance which is completely spatial. What he does, in effect, is to declare the millennium of the "Abyss of Things". In his address to Prince Posterity, the Modern Writer, still recognizing a conception of history as both temporal and spatial, comments on the effect of time on the physical existence of the Grub Street productions:

> Is their very Essence destroy'd? Who has annihilated them? Were they drowned by Purges or martyred by Pipes? Who administered them to the Posteriors of ----? (32)

> What is then become of those immense Bales of Paper, which must needs have been employ'd in such Numbers of Books? Can these also be wholly annihilate, and so of a sudden as I pretend? What shall I say in return of so invidious an Objection? It ill befits Your Highness and Me, to send You for ocular Conviction to a Jakes, or an Oven, to the Windows of a Bawdy-house, or to a sordid Lanthorn. Books, like Men their Authors, have no more than one Way of coming into the World, but there are ten Thousand to go out of it, and return no more. (35-36)

In his Preface, however, he has already begun to move towards his purely spatial conception, freezing time at "this present Month of August, 1697" (44), expressing contempt for the posterity before which he has abased himself, and compounding the isolation of his tradition by insisting that its wit is circumstantial and can be understood only in terms of its circumstances:

> Wit has its Walks and Purlieus, out of which it may not stray the breadth of a Hair, upon Peril of being lost. The Moderns have artfully fixed this Mercury, and reduced it to the Circumstances of Time, Place and Person . . . Now, tho' it sometimes tenderly affects me to consider, that all the towardly Passages I shall deliver in the following Treatise, will grow quite out of date and relish with the first shifting of the present Scene: yet I must need subscribe to the Justice of this Proceeding: because I cannot imagine why we should be at Expence to furnish Wit for succeeding Ages, when the former have made no sort of Provision for ours; wherein I speak the Sentiment of the very newest, and consequently most Orthodox Refiners, as well as my own. However, being extreamly solicitous, that every accomplished Person who has got into the Taste of Wit, calculated for this present Month of August, 1697, should descend to the very bottom of all the Sublime throughout this Treatise; I hold fit to lay down this general Maxim. Whatever Reader desires to have a thorow Comprehension of an Author's Thoughts, cannot take a better Method, than by putting himself into the Circumstances and Postures of Life, that

the Writer was in, upon every important Passage as it flow'd from his Pen; For this will introduce a Parity and strict Correspondence of Idea's between the Reader and the Author. (43-44)

The Moderns -- the writer is their spokesman -- reject the former and future ages on the ground of their irrelevance to the present age. By freezing time at August, 1697, the Modern Writer spatializes time, bringing it under human control. Thus, he declares for the Moderns a privileged position outside the course of time, completely self-sustaining. He need no longer fear oblivion, but can dedicate himself to voicing the panegyric to his age which his tale is: converting the tale into the supreme object. Throughout the digressions in the Tale, he elaborates the aesthetics of the Moderns, in which presentation and appearance are everything. A domestic misfortune has prevented him from presenting a Preface "which by Rule ought to be large in proportion as the subsequent Volume is small" (54). He pays his "due Deference and Acknowledgement to an establish'd Custom of our newest Authors, by a long Digression unsought for, and an universal Censure unprovoked: By forcing into the Light, with much Pains and Dexterity, (his) own Excellencies and other Men's Defaults" (132). He approves the method by which a writer can set up, "For, what tho' his Head be empty, provided his Common-place Book be full . . . [?]" (148). The supreme achievement is a

> "Treatise, that shall make a very comely Figure on a Bookseller's Shelf, there to be preserved neat and clean, for a long Eternity, adorn'd with the Heraldry of its Title, fairly inscribed on a Label; never to be thumb'd or greas'd by Students, nor bound to everlasting Chains of Darkness in a Library: But when the Fulness of time is come, shall haply undergo the Tryal of Purgatory, in order to ascend the sky" (148).

The supreme achievement is to be eternally on sale, but never to be bought, never read; and the "Fulness of time" has arrived. The

apotheosis of book as object is precisely what the Modern Writer sings.

Having stopped time, the Modern Writer can deal with history as if it were a series of anecdotes, a tale to be told in a diverting manner. The allegory we perceive through our appreciation of Swift's intention and implicit position in the Tale is presented as literal truth by the Modern Writer, his account of Peter, Martin, and Jack based on his conception of history as space to be filled up and, therefore, on his idea of the supremacy of objects. The philosophies of Sartorism and Aeolism are based on the separation of matter and spirit. Thus the Sartorists maintain that "those Beings which the World calls improperly Suits of Cloaths, are in Reality the most refined Species of Animals, or to proceed higher, . . . they are Rational Creatures, or Men" (78);

> Others of these Professors, though agreeing in the main System, were yet more refined upon certain Branches of it; and held that Man was an Animal compounded of two Dresses, the Natural and the Celestial Suit, which were the Body and the Soul: That the Soul was the outward, and the Body the inward Cloathing: that the latter was ex traduce; but the former of daily Creation and Circumfusion . . . (S)eparate these two, and you will find the Body to be only a senseless unsavory Carcass. By which it is manifest, that the outward Dress must needs be the Soul. (79-80)

The reality of man is in his material extensions: "Is not Religion a Cloak, Honesty a Pair of Shoes, worn out in the Dirt, Self-love a Surtout, Vanity a Shirt, and Conscience a Pair of Breeches, which, tho' a Cover for Lewdness as well as Nastiness, is easily slipt down for the Service of both." (78) Behind these extensions is only the unsavory carcass. The emphasis of the Sartorists on the importance of the outward appearance of course suggests the importance of the appearance of books to the Modern Writer. Pace Milton, the image of God is as

dead in man as it is in books. Books are objects and man is the clothes he wears:

> 'Tis true indeed, that these Animals, which are vulgarly called Suits of Cloaths, or Dresses, do according to certain Compositions receive different Appellations. If one of them be trimm'd up with a Gold Chain, and a red Gown, and a white Rod, and a great Horse, it is called a Lord-mayor; If certain Ermins and Furs be placed in a certain Position, we stile them a Judge, and so, an apt Conjunction of Lawn and black Sattin, we intitle a Bishop. (79)

Man is not mortal, then. He wears out like cloth; for if the vital principle of his existence, his soul, is subject to the tailor-god, he is little better than the "unform'd Mass, or Substance" which falls into the Hell at the left hand of the Sartorist's deity. He is purely material, a thing to be decorated according to the fashion.

The Aeolists maintain the "Original Cause of all Things to be Wind, from which Principle this whole Universe was at first produced, and into which it must at last be resolv'd" (150). Man, for the Aeolists, is a wind instrument, swelling grotesquely to make sounds:

> But the great Characteristick, by which their chief Sages were best distinguished, was a certain Position of Countenance, which gave undoubted Intelligence to what Degree or Proportion, the Spirit agitated the inward Mass. For after certain Gripings, the Wind and Vapours issuing forth; having first by their Turbulence and Convulsions within, caused an Earthquake in Man's little World; distorted the Mouth, bloated the Cheeks, and gave the Eyes a terrible kind of Relievo. At which Junctures, all their Belches were received for Sacred, the Sourer the better, and swallowed with infinite Consolation by their meager Devotees. And to render these yet more compleat, because the Breath of Man's Life is in his Nostrils, therefor, the choicest, most edifying, and most enlivening Belches, were very wisely conveyed thro' that Vehicle, to give them a Tincture as they passed. (154)

To swell and make noise is the pleasure of the Aeolists, for according to their syllogism, "Words are but Wind; and Learning is nothing but Words; Ergo, Learning is nothing but Wind" (153). That the Modern Writer discusses the Aeolists and the Sartorists without any sense of the corruption of these philosophies indicates their relevance to the

world as he sees and accepts it. The world is a world of things and space and noise, not a realm of the spirit.

For Swift, on the other hand, time is the manifestation of the spirit in history: that which makes sense of the spatial dimension by ensuring that only the best shall endure. Hence, Swift unites himself with Time and Posterity -- with the tradition which the Modern Writer rejects, but which in fact rejects him and his "Corporation". No less than the Aeolists, the Moderns thrive on wind, their poetics apparently based on the Aeolist syllogism. What renders the productions of the Moderns susceptible to oblivion outside the "Walks and Purlieus" of its wit is the utter inertia and flaccidity of their expression, reflecting as it does the utter barrenness of their intellect and imagination. Their creations are all sound and no sense, all form and no substance. In the "Epistle . . . to Prince Posterity," the Modern Writer complains about the actions of Time, which barbarously destroys the productions of the Moderns:

> Some he stifles in their Cradles, others he frights into Convulsions, whereof they suddenly die; Some he flays alive, others he tears Limb from Limb; Great Numbers are offered to Moloch, and the rest tainted by his Breath, die a languishing Consumption. (33)

Only by isolating his age, by declaring it to be history, can the Modern Writer defend his contemporaries from their threatened oblivion. The operative image is confinement -- in the month of August, 1697, and in the cells of Bedlam, the two clearly equated by Swift. The writer's madness consists initially in his rejection of time, in his refusal to admit the inevitable doom of the Grub Street creations. Later in the Tale, we learn of the Bedlam "Academy" from the writer, who announces that he is one of its graduates. The Modern as Bedlamite expounds a theory of happiness -- "a perpetual Possession of being well Deceived" --

that can stand, for Swift, as a definition of the madness of an age wilfully ignorant and swollen with pride.

The key to the mass deception is in the Modern Writer's lunatic elevation of appearance over reality: "Last Week I saw a Woman flay'd, and you will hardly believe, how much it altered her Person for the Worse." (173) Swift feels that modern man prefers to be deluded by the appearance of reason and order, and to be satisfied with easy ways to "wisdom" and contentment. To be happy is not to see the truth; to be unhappy is to see it. To be possessed by deception, curiosity and credulity is to be beyond truth in the realm of the madman: " How fading and insipid do all the Objects accost us that are not convey'd in the Vehicle of Delusion? How shrunk is every Thing, as it appears in the Glass of Nature?" (172) In a world of deception and falseness, the only honest way to be is wilfully and joyfully deluded, the writer argues: "The Serene, Peaceful State of being a Fool among Knaves" (174). Swift endorses the Modern Writer as spokesman for his tradition, endorsing at the same time the writer's panegyric as the proper tribute to a mad age. Swift sees his age as the millennium of madness; so also does the writer. But what must be distinguished are the definitions of madness. The writer approves the happiness of being perpetually deceived. Swift can see that this is indeed how man seems to regard happiness, and he despairs; for to bring the truth to man would be to flay him.

In the Tale, Swift confronts an insane redefinition of man. Man's refusal to deal with his world or with his nature in terms of reason leads to a madness that is roughly equivalent to forgetting how to make fire. The corruption of reason makes of man a mere physical

object incapable of generating any significant relation to anything outside a world of objects, yet fearfully conscious of death (this consciousness the one vestige of his human identity) and unable to conquer it through his systems and arguments. Hence, the Modern Writer's obsession with time on behalf of his age, and his catalogue of man's defences against oblivion, defences calculated to reduce the world, as the Modern Writer reduces time and space, to his own measure. Swift's concentration in the Tale is on the behaviour of man as indicative of his moral nature, which is, for Swift, his human nature. The writer speaks of a "Carcass of Human Nature" empty of reason and stinking in its corruption, and exalts madness as reason: "For, what Man in the natural State, or Course of Thinking, did ever conceive it in his Power, to reduce the Notions of all Mankind, exactly to the same Length, and Breadth, and Heighth of his own? Yet this is the first humble and civil Design of all Innovators in the Empire of Reason." (166-167) The insane desire to deal only in facts, and to reduce everything to systems, is the extension of man's inability to conceive of himself except in terms of the here and now: in terms of the moment and everything that it contains. Hence, the Modern Writer's abstraction from the eternal values of a tradition of learning and literature expands to his statement of man's universal abstraction from the eternal values in relation to which his existence ought to be ordered: "Of such great Emolument is a Tincture of this Vapour, which the World calls Madness, that without its Help, the World would not only be deprived of those two great Blessings, Conquests and Systems, but even all Mankind would unhappily be reduced to the same Belief in Things Invisible." (169) Man prefers the delusion of the appearance of reason

is visionary and enthusiastic:

> But when a Man's Fancy gets astride on his Reason, when Imagination is at Cuffs with the Senses, and common Understanding, as well as common Sense, is Kickt out of Doors; the first Proselyte he makes, is Himself, and when that is once compass'd, the Difficulty is not so great in bringing over others; A strong Delusion always operating from without, as vigorously as from within. For Cant and Vision are to the Ear and Eye, the same as Tickling is to the Touch. Those Entertainments and Pleasures we most value in Life, are such as Dupe and play the Wag with the Senses. (171)

The Modern Writer's reasoning suggests that time is a series of moments and madmen, defiant and contentedly deceived in the face of the standards of judgement and sense and reason advanced by the few, such as Swift. The writer's benign acceptance of praise for his "Divine Treatise" in Section Ten of the Tale justifies itself not only in terms of his specific moment, but in terms of all the moments and madmen throughout history. The writer is confident he has conquered time by restricting it to the dimensions of a particular day in August, 1697, and has no need of appeasing Posterity:

> I do here return my humble Thanks to His Majesty, and both Houses of Parliament; To the Lords of the King's most honourable Privy-Council, to the Reverend the Judges: To the Clergy, and Gentry, and Yeomanry of this Land: But in a more especial manner, to my worthy Brethren and Friends at Will's Coffee-House, and Gresham-College, and Warwick-Lane, and Moor-Fields, and Scotland-Yard, and Westminster-Hall, and Guild-Hall; In short, to all Inhabitants and Retainers whatsoever, either in Court, or Church, or Camp, or City, or Country; for their generous and universal Acceptance of this Divine Treatise. (181-182)

The tension between the Modern Writer and Swift over granting the writer and his school a place in the noble tradition of learning and literature has forced the Tale into purely aural dimensions. The writer, shouting defiantly, exalts the moment and its conquest of time in his assertion of his own tradition, while Swift, implicitly present throughout the Tale, suggests the terrifying dignity of his tradition in his silent disdain. There is no resolution in this satire: only a

deadlock. The writer's parting words suggest that he is an eternal symbol of the corruption of reason, always ready to reappear when the corruption requires a voice: "Therefore, I shall here pause while, till I find, by feeling the World's Pulse, and my own, that it will be of absolute Necessity for us both, to resume my Pen." (210)

What happens in the course of the digressions in the Tale is that the fabric of modern learning is torn to shreds by Swift, who lets the Modern Writer rave on and condemn his age out of his own mouth, in a manner similar to the flaying of the woman and the beau in the "Digression Concerning . . . Madness" so as to reveal the rotten reality of the bogus tradition. This reality revealed, it is an easy step to rending the fabric of human nature. All the writer has is his splendid fancies and delusory happiness, and the implication is that this is all man has, as well. The Modern Writer is furious in his frustration only in the "Epistle . . . to Prince Posterity", when he still seems to be bracing himself for a violent counterblast to his deposition. But the silence of Time and Posterity before his pleased revelation of his own madness and of the aesthetics and philosophy of madness thereafter encourages him to contented and self-satisfied exposition of a reality to which Time and Posterity are irrelevant. Swift's "silence" is as contemptuous as that of Time and Posterity. He clearly feels that the fate of the modern tradition the writer supports will be exactly what the writer says it will be -- oblivion -- in any attempt to appeal its value beyond the narrow circumstances of its creation. However, the parallel theme of the Tale, man's subversion of the empire of reason, is not similarly circumstantial, but rather is the constant activity of a principle of unreason whose modes may be discredited, but whose

substance can never be eliminated. Swift accepts the Modern Writer's definition of madness as being relevant to man in general, and he concludes the Tale with the writer's promise to resume his pen whenever the corruption of reason needs a spokesman. Just as Pope in his development as a satirist must consider whether or not satire can be more than the treatment of symptoms, but powerless to affect the morbid conditions the symptoms indicate, so must Swift come to terms with what appears to be the fruitlessness of his work. Perhaps more than any other English satirist, Swift seems to have been obsessed with the futility of his writings. The irony of the last lines of "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift" is painful in what it implies not only about the position of the satirist, but also about Swift's whole response to life:

> 'He gave the little wealth he had
> To build a house for fools and mad;
> And show'd by one satiric touch,
> No nation wanted it so much.
> That kingdom he hath left his debtor,
> I wish it soon may have a better.

III

The world of Pope's Dunciad is the fulfillment of the "Abyss of Things": a suitable context for an apocalyptic vision whose instrument is the persona of the poem. But while Swift saw nothing as standing steadfast in the chaos of madness celebrated by the Modern Writer in the Tale, Pope very carefully shows history and satire manifesting strength in the face of the degradation of wit, science, and morality by the minions of Dulness:

> But held in ten-fold bonds the Muses lie,

> Watch'd both by Envy's and by Flatt'ry's eye:
> There to her heart sad Tragedy addrest
> The dagger wont to pierce the Tyrant's breast;
> But sober History restrain'd her rage,
> And promis'd Vengeance on a barb'rous age.
> There sunk Thalia, nerveless, cold, and dead,
> Had not her Sister Satire held her head . . . .
> (Dunciad, IV, 35-42)

Pope takes notice of history and satire in order to imply a subliminal theme in the poem: his appeal to the verdict of posterity on the justice of his contempt. It is this contempt which permeates the poem, a work much more openly and particularly abusive than the Tale, and just as ingeniously scatological. The disdainful certainty of the oblivion awaiting the figures in his work characterizes, as well as the poem proper, Pope's surrounding material -- the introductory passages to the Variorum, the notes to both the Variorum and the 1742 Dunciad -- in which the accomplishments of the dunces are catalogued as a record of the art and philosophy of nonsense, much as Swift preserves the stupidity of Wotton by using his commentary on the first edition of the Tale as explanatory notes in succeeding editions. Moreover, the assistance history gives to tragedy and satire to comedy clarifies the dimensions of history and satire in the poem. History becomes an imitation of the painful action of cultural decline and the instrument of pity and fear over this situation. Satire, on the other hand, assumes the inverted shapes of primitive comedy: anti-Dionysian boisterous dialogues and choruses at sterility rites celebrating Dulness.

In his note to the passage about history and satire, Pope (as Scriblerus) clouds the apparent sense of the lines with a brief explanation of why history and satire should come to the assistance of tragedy and comedy: "History attends on Tragedy, Satire on Comedy, as their substitutes in the discharge of their distinct functions: the

one in high life, recording the crimes and punishments of the great; the other in low, exposing the vices or follies of the common people." But then Scriblerus undertakes to explain how history and satire "came to be admitted with impunity to minister comfort to the Muses, even in the presence of the goddess, and in the midst of all her triumphs":

> History was brought up in her infancy by Dulness herself: but being afterwards espoused into a noble house, she forgot (as is usual) the humility of her birth, and the cares of her early friends. This occasioned a long estrangement between her and Dulness. At length, in process of time, they met together in a monk's cell, were reconciled and became better friends than ever. After this they had a second quarrel, but it held not long, and are now again on reasonable terms, and so are like to continue. This accounts for the connivance shown to History on this occasion.

This interpretation of the role of history makes of History's promise a deceiving trick. Yet the poet of The Dunciad is an historian, and the poem is historical. The "crimes . . . of the great" are a substantial part of the work, if not their punishments, as are "the vices or follies of the common people." What prevents The Dunciad from being a hoax is the disposition of history by satire in the poem. The note goes on to praise satire as the one thing that will never be humbled or silenced. If the poet is both an historian and a votary of Dulness, then he is incapable of making historical judgements: the crimes of the great are presented as conventional behaviour for this class, and the follies of the common people as urban folkways. The pacification of tragedy is thus inevitable because tragedy has been deprived of its field of choices and judgements: all is the one dead level about which the historian-poet sings. What happens is that satire absorbs history so that the poem becomes an historical object. What the poet writes is objectified through the commentary in the footnotes and through our perception of the disproportion (unrecognized in the action) between

things as they happen and what they mean. Pope obviously is stating a vast distinction between sacred and profane, or historical, time: there is no access to the realms of order through history, so satire must provide the moral direction to order which history lacks. Scriblerus says of satire that its boldness

> springs from a very different cause [from that of history]; for the reader ought to know, that she alone of all the sisters is unconquerable, never to be silenced, when truly inspired and animated (as should seem) from above for this very purpose, to oppose the kingdom of Dulness to her last breath.

Hence, throughout the poem, historical allusions made in the text by the poet who places the age in a continuum of Dulness-as-history are taken up in the footnotes, so that there can be historical judgement. The history of the Dunciad poet is couched in terms of the signs and devices of Dulness, so that the past becomes a series of portents and the present their fulfillment, with portents and fulfillment offered uncritically as the only indications of the historical purpose of time: to bring forth the reign of the last deity, "Daughter of Chaos and eternal Night." Hence, the interpretation of history by Settle in Book III of the poem, where the importance conventionally given to the periods of order and light in the cycles of history is given to the periods of chaos and darkness. Settle's speech is part of a deliberate intention to conceive of all time in terms of the present as the consummation of history, but his vision flies through the Ivory Gate at the end of the book, an action that denotes falsity[17] and the poet's imperfect understanding of Virgil: he, no less than the participants in the action, condemns himself out of his own mouth. The historical perspective on dulness accommodates very little explicit reference to any opposition to the dunces, but implies its pernicious character

through a series of allusions. The time of Dulness is characterized as a "Saturnian age of Lead," which Scriblerus explains thus: "The ancient Golden Age is by Poets stiled Saturnian; but in the Chymical language, Saturn is Lead." Again, the utter profaneness of present time is contrasted with the sacredness of order. In Book IV, the ancient God of Harmony, priests, and poets, Phoebus, has been replaced by "a modern Phoebus of French extraction" whose temple is the opera-house and whose disciples are the enthusiasts of preaching and singing. The young aristocrat returned from the Grand Tour is styled by his governor a "young Aeneas" who has participated in the subversion of the glory whose site was founded by his illustrious predecessor. Italy has fallen into the effeminacy and enervation that heralds the decline of nations and the triumph of Dulness:

> Or Tyber, now no longer Roman, rolls,
> Vain of Italian Arts, Italian Souls:
> To happy Convents, bosom'd deep in vines,
> Where slumber Abbots, purple as their wines:
> To Isles of fragrance, lilly-silver'd vales,
> Diffusing languor in the panting gales:
> To lands of singing, or of dancing slaves,
> Love-whisp'ring woods, and lute resounding waves.
> But chief her shrine where naked Venus keeps,
> And Cupids ride the Lyon of the Deeps;
> Where, eas'd of Fleets, the Adriatic main
> Wafts the smooth Eunuch and enamour'd swain.
> (Dunciad, IV, 299-310)

Such has been the progress of the young Aeneas. The whole of Europe is falling under the sway of the goddess, and the present condition of states is one of active degeneration. Britain is not alone, Scriblerus affirms, but "in company with all other Nations of Europe."

Because the apocalyptic nature of Pope's satiric vision is more completely elaborated in the 1742 Dunciad, I shall discuss only this final version of the work. The revelations in Books III and IV of the

poem of the triumphant empire of Dulness are the supreme statement by Pope of what he had envisaged in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot and the Epilogue to the Satires. In the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot Pope presents a world run mad with hordes of would-be writers:

> Is there a Parson, much be-mused in Beer,
> A maudlin Poetess, a ryming Peer,
> A Clerk, foredoom'd his Father's soul to cross,
> Who pens a Stanza when he should engross?
> Is there, who lock'd from Ink and Paper, scrawls
> With desp'rate Charcoal round his darken'd walls?
> (15-20)

In this poem, Pope is driven to exasperation by the hordes and wants to bolt his door against them. The tone of the Epistle suggests carefully controlled panic out of which Pope must reason himself with the aid of his friend, Arbuthnot. By the time of the Epilogue to the Satires, however, Pope has gone beyond mere exasperation to cold anger. His intention now is not to reason himself into benignity, but rather to justify emphatically the anger he feels over an age of literary and intellectual poverty. Moreover, in the First Dialogue, Pope expands his view to encompass not only learning and literature, but the whole of a corrupt society whose expressions reflect its decadence. He sees the triumph of vice in his age as the arrival of an age of moral chaos, when virtue is repudiated while vice draws the world in golden chains, and nothing is sacred but villainy (Dial. I, 147-170).

Pope's response to this catastrophe is similar to that of Swift: he creates in The Dunciad a persona who proclaims himself the bard of the modern age, and the vision of the bard is mock-epic. While Pope restricts his field of interest largely to England -- hence preserving the national character of the epic vision -- the spatial and temporal dimensions of the poem emphasize that England is merely the

last stronghold of reason. In Settle's vision of history in Book III, Cibber is the focus of "All nonsense . . . of old or modern date": the inheritor of a tradition of intellectual barbarism whose modes have included Shih Huang Ti's erection of the Great Wall of China to isolate his people, and his burning of all books so as to obliterate the past history of his country; the sack of the Roman empire by the Vandals and Goths; the suppression of learning and literature by the Roman Catholic church, and its destruction of pagan art; and the profanation of the muses by the countless writers whose prince Cibber is. England is thus the terminal situation in the barbaric tradition. The greatness of England -- her science, wit, morality -- has been decimated by the plague of dulness, its goddess the most ignoble of deities, a brooding force of infinite patience which awaits the arrival of its era:

> In eldest time, e'er mortals writ or read,
> E'er Pallas issu'd from the Thund'rer's head,
> Dulness o'er all possess'd her ancient right,
> Daughter of Chaos and eternal Night:
> Fate in their dotage this fair Ideot gave,
> Gross as her sire, and as her mother grave,
> Laborious, heavy, busy, bold, and blind,
> She rul'd, in native Anarchy, the mind.
> Still her old Empire to restore she tries,
> For, born a Goddess, Dulness never dies.
> (Dunciad, I, 9-18)

Of such a magnitude is the situation Pope encounters in The Dunciad that its mock-epic embodiment is offered by Scriblerus in his commentary on the poem as being an appropriate surrogate for the missing link in the epic tradition, the lost comic epic of Homer:

> MARGITES was the name of this personage, whom Antiquity recordeth to have been Dunce the First; and surely from what we hear of him, not unworthy to be the root of so spreading a tree, and so numerous a posterity. The poem therefore celebrating him, was properly and absolutely a Dunciad; which tho' now unhappily lost, yet is its nature sufficiently known by the infallible tokens aforesaid (the remarks of Aristotle and

Horace). And thus it doth appear, that the first Dunciad was the first Epic poem, written by Homer himself, and anterior even to the Iliad or Odyssey.

Now forasmuch as our Poet had translated those two famous works of Homer which are yet left; he did conceive it in some sort his duty to imitate that also which was lost: And was therefore induced to bestow on it the same Form which Homer's is reported to have had, namely that of Epic poem, with a title also framed after the antient Greek manner, to wit, that of Dunciad.[18]

The Dunciad does not, then, mock the epic vision, but makes of mockery a powerful device to give shape to a reality serious enough to command an epic vision.

The principal allusive standards in The Dunciad are Virgil and Milton: Virgil, when the poem submits its action to consideration in terms of heroism, and Milton, when the consequences of the action are revealed to be the fulfillment of a new reality. The action of the poem is "the Removal of the Imperial seat of Dulness from the City to the polite world; as that of the Aeneid is the Removal of the empire of Troy to Latium."[19] This parallel emphasizes the anti-heroism of the present by implying the contrast between an epic of foundation (Aeneas's establishment of Rome, the capital of the classical Augustan age) and a mock-epic of destruction (the establishment of London as the capital of the modern, anti-Augustan age of dulness). But while the action of The Dunciad is a parody of the epic, the poet of the action considers his narration a truly epic undertaking. The variously vulgar and corrupted characters in the poem are disposed in the postures of heroism, but what the poet cannot do is portray the reality of heroism because this world has no values that could sustain heroism. Hamlet asks:

> What is a man,
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.[20]

In this world of beasts and appetites, reality is the death-sleep of

values, so that heroic action is a grotesque shadow of heroic reality.

The Miltonic tonal allusions at the beginning and end of Book IV characterize the poem's significance as an anti-theodicy. The ways of the goddess to man are not justified by the poet because man does not dispute these ways. On the contrary, he has done all in his power to facilitate the coming of the deity, and he rejoices at the disclosure of the antichrist, Cibber. Cibber is the fruition of dulness. He rules by divine right of unbroken succession from Dunce the First through his inheritors, the intellectual barbarians Settle celebrates, all of whose characteristics are inversions of greatness:

> But then it is not every Knave, nor (let me add) Fool, that is a fit subject for a Dunciad. There must still exist some Analogy, if not Resemblance of Qualities, between the Heroes of the two Poems; and this in order to admit what Neoteric critics call the Parody, one of the liveliest graces of the little Epic. Thus it being agreed that the constituent qualities of the greater Epic Hero, are Wisdom, Bravery, and Love, from whence springeth heroic Virtue; it followeth that those of the lesser Epic Hero, should be Vanity, Impudence, and Debauchery, from which happy assemblage resulteth heroic Dulness, the never-dying subject of this our Poem.[21]

Such is the hero who stands at the centre of the poem's action. The participation of "the polite world" in the rites of cultural degradation signifies, for Pope, the unworking of civilization by that class which has profaned its traditional role of moral responsibility by elevating graft and villainy as the supports of the nation. Pope's response to the disorder wilfully embraced by the nation is similar to that of Swift. The architecture of the mock-epic suggests that Pope, like Swift, feels that the insane asylum is the proper symbol for his age. The Cave of Poverty and Poetry is located "Close to those Walls where Folly holds her Throne" (Dunciad, I, 29), but the images of confinement -- the cave, Bedlam -- in The Dunciad exist to emphasize restraints that have been broken: the aberrant and disordered reason

of man is no longer confined in an asylum cell, but extends throughout the land. In Book II, when the goddess proclaims the games, "An endless band/ Pours forth, and leaves unpeopled half the Land" (Dunciad, II, 19-20). Similarly, proper standards of composition and the dignity of literature are destroyed by the followers of Dulness living in the caves (garrets) but influencing the entire nation through their monstrous progeny:

> Hence Miscellanies spring, the weekly boast
> Of Curl's chaste press, and Lintot's rubric post:
> Hence hymning Tyburn's elegiac lines,
> Hence Journals, Medleys, Merc'ries, Magazines:
> Sepulchral Lyes, our holy walls to grace,
> And New-year Odes, and all the Grub-street-race.
> (Dunciad, I, 39-44)

The complicity of the booksellers (Curl, Lintot) in spreading dulness and madness wins for them an honoured place in the heroic games, where they are set in competition for the mirage of a poet, running through filth to capture what does not exist. Juxtaposed to the picture of madness at large is the allegorical tableau of the confinement of wit and morality before the throne of Dulness. In the new reality, these things are subversive of folly, and must be eliminated.

The time is propitious for the proclamation by Dulness of her champion; for the age is the perfect reflection of the chaos whose deity she is. In her literature are the signs of her power:

> Here she beholds the Chaos dark and deep,
> Where nameless Somethings in their causes sleep,
> 'Till genial Jacob, or a warm third day,
> Call forth each mass, a Poem, or a Play:
> How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
> How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
> Maggots half-form'd in rhyme exactly meet,
> And learn to crawl upon poetic feet.
> Here one poor word an hundred clenches makes,
> And ductile dulness new meanders takes;
> There motley Images her fancy strike,
> Figures ill pair'd, and Similies unlike.

She sees a Mob of Metaphors advance,
Pleas'd with the madness of the mazy dance:
How Tragedy and Comedy embrace;
How Farce and Epic get a jumbled race;
How Time himself stands still at her command,
Realms shift their place, and Ocean turns to land.
(Dunciad, I, 55-72)

The disordered understanding of the dramatic unities to which the two last lines allude indicate, as well, the extent of Dulness's sway: she has brought time and space themselves under her power. The goddess chooses Cibber to be her champion, her vicar on earth, because in Cibber are concentrated all the graces of her "wild Creation": plagiarism, stupidity, dulness. He is everything the goddess has patiently awaited, the consummation of the tradition she muses upon (I, 95-106), the perfect embodiment of folly and frenzy:

'All nonsense thus, of old or modern date
Shall in thee centre, from thee circulate.'
(Dunciad, III, 59-60)

The mock-epic treatment of Cibber -- the games, the journey to the underworld -- is the means by which the apocalypse is presented to us. An apocalypse is a consummation of history, a revelation of things hidden from the mortal view of man. Traditionally, the revelation is granted in a time of tribulation to a mortal (in this case, to Cibber) who is permitted to see what is "invisible to mortal sight": the revelation of the deity (Dulness) in its glory, in contrast with its historical humiliation. Hence, in Book III of The Dunciad, the sage tells Cibber that

our Queen unfolds to vision true
Thy mental eye, for thou hast much to view . . . .
(Dunciad, III, 61-62)

In Book III, the major divisions of the apocalyptic vision -- consideration of things past, things present, and things to come -- prepare us

for the revelation of the triumph of Dulness in Book IV. Cibber's descent into the underworld is presented as a dream structured of the suggestions of madness which surround him as he sleeps on the lap of the goddess:

> Hence, from the straw where Bedlam's Prophet nods,
> He hears loud Oracles, and talks with Gods:
> Hence the Fool's Paradise, the Statesman's Scheme,
> The air-built Castle, and the golden Dream,
> The Maid's romantic wish, the Chemist's flame,
> The Poet's vision of eternal Fame.
> (Dunciad, III, 7-12)

The sage presents Cibber with a view of things past and present: the "Sable Flag" of Dulness flying over the conflagrations, devastations, and proscriptions that have marked the progress of Dulness throughout history to her time of triumph. He portrays Dulness as a gradually spreading force which covers the entire world and corrupts all cultures. The point in time and space chosen for the coming in glory of Dulness is the modern age in England, where resistance to her rule is weakest, where the time of humiliation is passing:

> 'And see, my son! the hour is on its way,
> That lifts our Goddess to imperial sway;
> This fav'rite Isle, long sever'd from her reign,
> Dove-like, she gathers to her wings again.'
> (Dunciad, III, 123-126)

Her way has been made straight by her prophets, the dunces:

> 'Now look thro' Fate! behold the scene she draws!
> What aids, what armies to assert her cause!
> See all her progeny, illustrious sight!
> Behold, and count them, as they rise to light.
> . . . . . .
> Behold an hundred sons, and each a Dunce.'
> (Dunciad, III, 127-130, 139)

The poem, then, is a celebration of the prophets of Dulness -- the dunces who have brought her message to the world through the years -- and of Cibber, who is all dunces in one: King Dunce. The stylistic

mayhem and intellectual poverty of their productions have been portents of the reign of Dulness, providing in their consistency through time a symbolical continuity; for Pope would see the monsters and "unfinished things" as embodiments, or symbols, of man's steadily increasing madness and ignorance as he becomes more and more possessed by pride. The time prophesied seems to have arrived. Pride and vice are triumphant, and everyone seems to be obsessed with the desire to flaunt his pride and viciousness. The greatness of science and philosophy, the formidable power of morality, has been trampled in the dust. Such is the victory of ignorance, such the triumph of Dulness.

In the inversion of probability Pope decries in Book I --

> Here gay Description AEgypt glads with show'rs,
> Or gives to Zembla fruits, to Barca flow'rs;
> Glitt'ring with ice here hoary hills are seen,
> There painted vallies of eternal green,
> In cold December fragrant chaplets blow,
> And heavy harvests nod beneath the snow. --
> (Dunciad, I, 73-78)

he implies a metaphor for the inversion of nature that is part of the triumph of madness and ignorance, this natural inversion (drawn from the follies of opera) serving as both the expression of the mind of Cibber and as the enigmatic machinery of the third division of the apocalypse: the mysteries, or "seals," which, when broken, reveal the full nature of the consummation of history "Not touch'd by Nature, and not reach'd by Art" (III, 230). Cibber thus sees in his vision the universalizing of himself:

> All sudden Gorgons hiss, and Dragons glare,
> And ten-horn'd fiends and Giants rush to war.
> Hell rises, Heav'n descends, and dance on Earth:
> Gods, imps, and monsters, music, rage, and mirth,
> A fire, a jigg, a battle, and a ball,
> 'Till one great conflagration swallows all.
> Thence a new world to Nature's laws unknown,
> Breaks out refulgent, with a heav'n its own:

> Another Cynthia her new journey runs,
> And other planets circle other suns.
> The forests dance, the rivers upward rise,
> Whales sport in woods, and dolphins in the skies;
> And last, to give the whole creation grace,
> Lo! one vast Egg produces human race.
> (Dunciad, III, 235-248)

In Cibber are the auspices of uncreation. The perversion of probability, the contempt for principle, the ignorance and the emptiness of the Cibberian tradition have set this age apart for the coming of Dulness in her glory and for the consecration of Cibber as her regent:

> 'Signs following signs lead on the mighty year!
> See! the dull stars roll round and re-appear.
> See, see, our own true Phoebus wears the bays!
> Our Midas sits Lord Chancellor of Plays!
> On Poets' Tombs see Benson's titles writ!
> Lo! Ambrose Philips is prefer'd for Wit!
> See under Ripley rise a new White-hall,
> While Jones' and Boyle's united labours fall:
> While Wren with sorrow to the grave descends,
> Gay dies unpension'd with a hundred friends,
> Hibernian Politics, O Swift! thy fate;
> And Pope's, ten years to comment and translate.'
> (Dunciad, III, 321-332)

The signs indicate not only the triumph of literary dulness, but also the decadence of architecture, the perversion of taste, and the expulsion of criticism. The trend will continue, the vision goes on to explain, until learning will be exiled permanently, and England will be free to exist in Cibberian gloom, following the three mad passions of the doting age: gambling, opera, and whoring (III, 300-304).

The persona celebrates Cibber and the portents; Pope sees the installation of Cibber as Poet Laureate as the perfect conjunction of madness and dulness. In the Argument to Book IV of The Dunciad, Pope states that his purpose is to show "the Goddess coming in her Majesty to destroy Order and Science, and to substitute the Kingdom of the Dull upon earth." The final destruction of order and science takes

place after the testimony of the prophets of Dulness who have been preparing the nation for their goddess's arrival. It is in this part of the poem that Pope offers his most substantial criticism of the moral and intellectual disorder of his age, and the seriousness of his concern is evident in the opening lines of the book, which are an heroic, rather than a mock-heroic, invocation establishing the imminent fulfillment of the signs and portents presented earlier in the poem:

> Yet, yet a moment, one dim Ray of Light
> Indulge, dread Chaos, and eternal Night!
> Of darkness visible so much be lent,
> As half to shew, half veil the deep Intent.
> Ye Pow'rs! whose Mysteries restor'd I sing,
> To whom Time bears me on his rapid wing,
> Suspend a while your Force inertly strong,
> Then take at once the Poet and the Song.
> (Dunciad, IV, 1-8)

Appropriately, for the rites ordained to consecrate folly, the star associated with madness and the public recitation of poetry in ancient Rome shines on the coming of a new reality, the effect of whose deity is to eclipse the old order:

> Now flam'd the Dog-star's unpropitious ray,
> Smote ev'ry Brain, and wither'd ev'ry Bay;
> Sick was the Sun, the Owl forsook his bow'r,
> The moon-struck Prophet felt the madding Hour:
> Then rose the Seed of Chaos, and of Night,
> To blot out Order, and extinguish Light,
> Of dull and venal a new World to mold,
> And bring Saturnian days of Lead and Gold.
> (Dunciad, IV, 9-16)

In a new world in which even the quality of light is changed (a world of things half-visible in darkness), Dulness presides over the extinction of intellectual and moral order (the confinement and persecution of wit, science, rhetoric, morality, the muses), and, as the anti-dynamic of the new reality, draws to her cause three classes of men which represent the degree of folly Dulness enjoys in England: the absolutely dull,

who have no will to resist; the passive and lacklustre, who have so weakened their wills that they are involuntarily drawn to Dulness; and, most serious, the sycophants and hypocrites who flatter the great (the "sons" of Dulness) and abuse the importance of social and aesthetic responsibility (IV, 71-100). Out of the inert mass formed by this confluence develop the processions of the dull, each procession and spokesman symbolizing some aspect of his society whose corruptions Pope feels might contribute to the anarchy he envisions. Book IV is thus encyclopedic of Pope's pre-occupations as a satirist throughout his life as a poet, moving gradually from concentration on contingent effects of dulness to an attack on the substantial follies which make necessity of contingency, so powerful is the vital principle of dulness.

The first two major groups are the literary critics and the educators. The critics reshape tradition to please Dulness by killing the spirit and mutilating the expression of the great writers, and take care that each successful suitor of fame will carry a dunce-parasite as editor or commentator. An image Pope uses (Medea's rejuvenation of Aeson) suggests what he considers to be the effect of the activity of dulness in critics. Medea drained away Aeson's blood by cutting his throat, then refilled his veins with a magic fluid in order to restore him to youth. Pope considers that the ignorance of dull critics prevents them from recognizing the vigor of true wit in the great works: they must make these works conform to their own ideas of what literature must be by slashing them and emending them; but unlike Medea, they have no magic rejuvenating fluid. They dismember, but cannot revive.

A similar blood-letting occupies the attention of schools,

where words are divorced from sense to the degree that their significance as units of meaning and as elements of the expression of thought withers away completely in rote learning and pointless exercises in writing technically perfect, but imaginatively dead, word patterns to pass as poetry:

> 'Since Man from beast by Words is known,
> Words are Man's province, Words we teach alone.
> When Reason doubtful, like the Samian letter,
> Points him two ways, the narrower is the better.
> Plac'd at the door of Learning, youth to guide,
> We never suffer it to stand too wide.
> To ask, to guess, to know, as they commence,
> As Fancy opens the quick springs of Sense,
> We ply the Memory, we load the brain,
> Bind rebel Wit, and double chain on chain,
> Confine the thought, to exercise the breath;
> And keep them in the pale of Words till death.'
> (Dunciad, IV, 149-160)

Memorized poems become "Verbal amusement": impressive sounds to indicate an education. The response of the goddess to Busby's manifesto is to yearn for a pedant-king, the inversion of the philosopher-king celebrated by Plato. Given the nature of the educational theories promulgated by Busby, it seems likely her wish will be granted, and a new James ascend to power

> To stick the Doctor's Chair into the Throne,
> Give law to Words, or war with Words alone,
> Senates and Courts with Greek and Latin rule,
> And turn the Council to a Grammar School!
> (Dunciad, IV, 177-180)

This rule by scholastic and grammatical ingenuity makes of politics the science of forms empty of meaning and responsibility. Scriblerus comments, in his footnote on these lines alluding to James I:

> Wilson tells us that this King, James the first, took upon himself to teach the Latin tongue to Car, Earl of Somerset; and that Gondomar the Spanish Ambassador wou'd speak false Latin to him, on purpose to give him the pleasure of correcting it, whereby he wrought himself into his good graces.
>
> This great Prince was the first who assumed the title of Sacred

Majesty, which his loyal Clergy transfer'd from God to Him. 'The principles of Passive Obedience and Non-resistance (says the Author [Bolingbroke] of the Dissertation on Parties, Letter 8) which before his time had skulk'd perhaps in some old Homily, were talk'd, written, and preach'd into vogue in that inglorious reign.

Skilful manipulation of verbal ambiguity can justify the loss of liberty and the arbitrary sway of a tyrannic monarchy.

The universities, which might be expected to devote themselves to the elucidation of ambiguity in the interest of the nation whose future leaders it educates, instead carry on the principles of the schools. Aristarchus (Bentley) offers to Dulness as proof of the loyalty of the universities their obsession with hair-splitting over words --

> 'Tis true, on Words is still our whole debate,
> Disputes of Me or Te, of aut or at,
> To sound or sink in cano, O or A,
> Or give up Cicero to C or K.
> (Dunciad, IV, 219-222)

"authentic" pronunciation of the languages of Virgil and Plato, and only the most perfunctory interest in what the words communicate. The point of such an education, Aristarchus assures the goddess, is to "bring to one dead level ev'ry mind" (IV, 268). It is in Aristarchus's speech that Pope introduces a major theme of the satire in Book IV: the obsessive interest in parts and wilful ignorance of their relation to the whole. The critic's eye, a "microscope of Wit,"

> Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit:
> How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,
> The body's harmony, the beaming soul,
> Are things which Kuster, Burman, Wasse shall see,
> When Man's whole frame is obvious to a Flea.
> (Dunciad, IV, 234-238)

In the Essay on Man, Pope argues that within the all-comprehending divine perspective man's task is to admit the participation of his own order in the operation of the whole order of the universe without

assuming that the definitive potential (reason) of that order is sufficient to define adequately the whole order in which it is but one potential:

> In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies;
> All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
> Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
> Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.
> Aspiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,
> Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel;
> And who but wishes to invert the laws
> Of ORDER, sins against th'Eternal Cause.
> (Essay on Man, I, 123-130)

Pope's analogical argument allows that instinct in animals is in no way inferior to reason in man, as far as the operation of the whole is concerned, and insists that divine comprehension is beyond man's power:

> But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
> The strong connections, nice dependencies,
> Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
> Look'd thro'? or can a part contain the whole?
> (Essay on Man, I, 29-32)

The critics praised by Aristarchus, and the virtuosi who bicker before Dulness, thus represent the suspension of the human effort to bring man's limited perspective into line with the divine. Their nonsense and the approval it apparently receives from society seem to be predicated upon man's conscious decision to establish his own order as independent of any grander scheme. Any conception of a qualitative order thus becomes perfunctory. Man does stand at the centre of a world of things, and order is most potently quantitative, in catalogues, comparative monetary values of things more or less rare because of the vicissitudes of history, in the proportionate quantities of unusual animal and plant species to common ones. Absorption in the accidental characteristics of the part (flowers, butterflies, coins, antiquities) as ends in themselves is, for Pope, the elevation of the inessential

at the expense of necessary human sympathy and responsibility (Annius pleads with Dulness to make youths value headless statues more than their brides, and to honour the dead princes of antiquity before living rulers) and authentic human identity (the man who chases butterflies apes his prey). Just as the universities conspire to reduce all minds to a dead level, so the virtuosi argue the supremacy of trifling. Dulness approves their efforts by giving sanction to their disposition of nature:

> The common Soul, of Heav'n's more frugal make,
> Serves but to keep fools pert, and knaves awake:
> A drowzy Watchman, that just gives a knock,
> And breaks our rest, to tell us what's a clock.
> Yet by some object ev'ry brain is stirr'd;
> The dull may waken to a Humming-bird;
> The most recluse, discreetly open'd find
> Congenial matter in the Cockle-kind;
> The mind, in Metaphysics at a loss,
> May wander in a wilderness of Moss;
> The head that turns at super-lunar things,
> Poiz'd with a tail, may steer on Wilkins' wings.
> (Dunciad, IV, 441-452)

The arrogance of the part claiming to possess the integrity of the whole and the reduction of the plenitude of nature to a world of things sustain both the establishment of manners emptied of their morally mimetic significance as the proper basis of conduct (the youth returned from the Grand Tour; Paridel, the wastrel) and, far more grievous, the elevation of the self as the principle of human identity. Pope approaches the theme of self-obsession through a rapid satirical summary of mechanistic and Deistic theology. The sceptical clerk rejects the inductive method of explaining the existence of God:

> Let others creep by timid steps, and slow,
> On plain Experience lay foundations low,
> By common sense to common knowledge bred,
> And last, to Nature's Cause thro' Nature led.
> (Dunciad, IV, 465-468)

He and his fellow Deists postulate a mechanical universe which operates like a machine tended by a mechanic-God who does not interfere in its operation, but assures that the machine will not stop:

> We nobly take the high-Priori Road,
> And reason downward, till we doubt of God:
> Make Nature still incroach upon his plan;
> And shove him off as far as e'er we can:
> Thrust some Mechanic Cause into his place;
> Or bind in Matter, or diffuse in Space.
> (Dunciad, IV, 471-476)

The insistence of the materialistic theologians that God be some thing (Hobbes's "subtle or refined matter," More's spirit-as-material-abstraction)[22] gives theological sanction to a world of things, and Pope's summary of their positions has a direct, lunatic coherence similar to that of the Modern Writer in A Tale of a Tub when he discusses Sartorism or Aeolism, or the theologies of Jack and Peter. They have an obsession with "reason" that amounts to driving wedges between the human order and the divine, and between man and nature:

> Find Virtue local, all Relation scorn,
> See all in Self, and but for self be born:
> Of nought so certain as our Reason still,
> Of nought so doubtful as of Soul and Will.
> (Dunciad, IV, 479-482)

In a note to these lines, Pope distinguishes between madness, which ends in "seeing all in God," and dulness, which ends in "seeing all in Self." One thinks of Pascal:

> 3. Deux excès: exclure la raison, n'admettre que la raison.
>
> 4. Si on soumet tout à la raison, notre religion n'aura rien de mystérieux et de surnaturel. Si on choque les principes de la raison, notre religion sera absurde et ridicule.[23]

There is nothing supernatural or mysterious about the God the Deists want:

> Oh hide the God still more! and make us see
> Such as Lucifer drew, a God like Thee:

Wrapt up in Self, a God without a Thought,
Regardless of our merit or default.
(Dunciad, IV, 483-486)

Happiness becomes unthreatened self-obsession: the irresponsible and blissful possession of being well-deceived, and the final, tragic outcome of self-love divorced from charity. Silenus presents to Dulness a youthful embodiment of the "trifling head" and the "contracted heart," and invites the Wizard to extend the cup of self-love (which "causes a total oblivion of the obligations of Friendship, or Honour, and of the Service of God or the Country")[24] to the nation. Hypocrisy and self-infatuation become principles of conduct. Man severs all transcendant relations and reduces mystery to culinary magic:

On some, a Priest succinct in amice white
Attends; all flesh is nothing in his sight!
Beeves, at his touch, at once to jelly turn,
And the huge Boar is shrunk into an Urn:
The board with specious miracles he loads,
Turns Hares to Larks, and Pigeons into Toads.
. . . . . .
Knight lifts the head, for what are crowds undone
To three essential Partriges in one?
(Dunciad, IV, 549-554, 561-562)

The ultimate vision of disorder through pride and venality is contained in the goddess's blessing to her children:

'Go Children of my care!
To Practice now from Theory repair.
All my commands are easy, short, and full:
My Sons! be proud, be selfish, and be dull.
Guard my Prerogative, assert my Throne:
This Nod confirms each Privilege your own.
The Cap and Switch be sacred to his Grace;
With Staff and Pumps the Marquis lead the Race;
From Stage to Stage the licens'd Earl may run,
Pair'd with his Fellow-Charioteer the Sun;
The learned Baron Butterflies design,
Or draw to silk Arachne's subtile line;
The Judge to dance his brother Sergeant call;
The Senator at Cricket urge the Ball;
The Bishop stow (Pontific Luxury)
An hundred Souls of Turkeys in a pye;
The sturdy Squire to Gallic masters stoop,

> And drown his Lands and Manors in a Soupe.
> Others import yet nobler arts from France,
> Teach Kings to fiddle, and make Senates dance.
> Perhaps more high some darling son may soar,
> Proud to my list to add one Monarch more;
> And nobly conscious, Princes are but things
> Born for First Ministers, as Slaves for Kings,
> Tyrant supreme! shall three Estates command,
> And MAKE ONE MIGHTY DUNCIAD OF THE LAND!'
> (Dunciad, IV, 579-604)

The allusion to Walpole in the last lines of the goddess's speech can hardly have been missed by Pope's contemporaries. The social implications of the inversions of moral responsibility and art which make up the substance of The Dunciad, Pope emphasizes in his association of the great with the rites of Dulness -- indeed, the action of the poem is the establishment of Dulness as a deity and as a principle amongst those who are responsible for civilization and culture. Just as Walpole's mistress, Molly Skerret, embodies triumphant Vice in the tableau at the end of the First Dialogue of the Epilogue to the Satires, so Walpole himself is to politics what Cibber is to culture in The Dunciad. The satiric tragedy of the poem is that of the human mind at dead level, obsessed with trifles and the satisfaction of its appetites. Pope envisions man as uncreated by his own will to drown sense and shame, right and wrong:

> Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd;
> Light dies before thy uncreating word:
> Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
> And Universal Darkness buries All.
> (Dunciad, IV, 653-656)

As dark and tragic as Pope's vision of Chaos is, however, it is not quite the vision of a man in a state of despair. While he admits that man is in for a long time of darkness, Pope places his confidence in the power of his satire to act both as a morally definitive history of his age and as a means of vengeance on the dunces. The triumph of

Dulness in the poem is portrayed as a sort of mass possession, a state of hysterical rejoicing over the elevation of Cibber. But the persona, with his mortally immortal vision of things, can perceive that oblivion has not been conquered, and that time waits ominously to punish:

> Ye Pow'rs! whose Mysteries restor'd I sing,
> To whom Time bears me on his rapid wing,
> Suspend a while your Force inertly strong,
> Then take at once the Poet and the Song.
> (Dunciad, IV, 5-8)

Pope, the satirist, stands outside the hysteria, contemptuously allying himself with time by creating in his work the one devastating monument on which the achievements of the Dunciad are inscribed. He rescues them from oblivion in order to make sure that posterity will respond to them with contempt. They stand indicted before posterity, condemned for their arrogance in proclaiming themselves both the spirit of history and its consummation. Pope sees the apocalypse which ends the poem as a calamity of serious proportions, the real consequence of man's enslavement by pride and wilful ignorance and the result of his abandonment of the order of reason and justice and of standards of taste. Clearly, the appointment of Cibber as Poet Laureate could not in itself give rise to so great an alarm: to a vision of total anarchy and disorder. Pope's satire in The Dunciad is satire of signs. The appointment is a portent, and the age has given itself over to delusion and ignorance, as far as Pope is concerned. For Pope, as for Swift, the "Perpetual Possession of being well Deceived" is the condition of man when he has wilfully rejected order and consecrated stupidity and viciousness. The appointment of Cibber is an end of sorts, a cynical affirmation of the way of the world in his age. The apocalypse Pope designs is a fanciful expansion of the power of dulness and ignorance

to its limits. The implication is that the limits have yet to be reached; hence in the fancy there is the warning of satire. Time and satire's resistance have not been affected, nor will they be. The apocalypse can be envisioned by the persona so as to be celebrated, but it is envisioned by Pope so as to be a warning. By fancying the limits of dulness and ignorance, Pope gives advance notice of what can be expected if man persists in his folly.

CONCLUSION

Criticism of Pope, until the modern reassessments of his work, was directed towards his mastery of what Bowles called the "external circumstances in artificial life"[1] and usually rested upon an assumption introduced to Pope criticism by Joseph Warton and affirmed by the critical principles of Romanticism: "wit and satire are transitory and perishable, but nature and passion are eternal."[2] While Warton was prepared to recognize that the circumstances of artificial life are sufficient to sustain serious study of man's ethical nature and thus to concede that Pope is a great didactic and moral poet, "the first of ethical authors in verse,"[3] succeeding critics tended to agree with Wordsworth, who suggested in a letter to Scott that Pope's writings had done "more harm than good" to English poetry.[4] Cowper felt that Pope had made poetry "a mere mechanic art";[5] Southey concluded that although Pope's was the "golden age of poets, . . . it was the pinch-beck age of poetry," when poetry, "or rather the art of versification, which was now the same thing, was 'made easy to the meanest capacity'";[6] and Arnold pronounced Pope's (and Dryden's) work "the poetry of the builders of an age of prose and reason."[7]

There were exceptions to these judgements, of course, and in the exceptions are the early signs of the reasons for the modern approach to Pope as a serious poet of the first magnitude. Johnson's praise of Pope ("If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found?")[8] was followed by commentaries which took to task those critics whose negative judgements of Pope rested upon Warton's assumptions:

We are told by that gentleman Warton that 'Pope's close and constant reasoning had imparted and crushed the faculty of imagination.' . . . No, Dr. Warton; the reasoning faculty is the essence, the vigorous and exalting stem, of the immaterial and immortal man. Reason supplies the ambrosial nutrition and the force which produce the ramifications and the blossoms of imagination.[9]

(Percival Stockdale, Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets)

I saw that the excellence of this kind consisted in just and acute observations on men and manners in an artificial state of society, as its matter and substance . . . .[10]

(Coleridge, Biographia Literaria)

Nature, in the wide and proper sense of the word, means life in all its circumstances -- natural moral as well as external . . . . Pope's discrimination lay in the lights and shades of human manners, which are at least as interesting as those of rocks and leaves.[11]

(Thomas Campbell, Essay on the English Poets)

[Pope] is the moral poet of all civilization; and as such, let us hope that he will one day be the national poet of mankind.[12]

(Byron, Letter . . . on the Rev. W. L. Bowles' Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope)

This preoccupation with the meaning of nature and with the imaginative and intellectual range afforded by a concentration on manners was a necessary preliminary stage to a more thoroughly just appraisal of Pope, but the emergence of positive criticism of his work has had as much to do with making a decision about what can be accommodated within the limitations of anger, the distinctive mode of Pope's poetry of nature and manners. Thomas De Quincey expresses the narrow view in his judgement that Pope's satires arose "in a sense of talent for caustic effects, unsupported by any satiric heart."[13] Ker approaches the modern view that anger is not limiting in his opinion that "the beauty of [Pope's] satiric poetry is its reflection of the whole world":[14] a more than adequate rebuttal to Jeffrey's charge that Pope's poetry is rooted exclusively in the ephemera of "'the visible diurnal sphere'."[15]

Although his criticism of Pope is negative, Jeffrey defines with perfect accuracy the immediate temporal dimension of Pope's satire:

the focus of all of his didactic and moral excellence, and of his consideration of nature and manners. It has become commonplace to substitute for the earlier judgement that Pope is the poet of artificial society the judgement that he is the poet of civilization, either "illuminated by animosity," in Lytton Strachey's rather superficial view,[16] or else by angry compassion and a determination to preserve what he considers to be essential to an accurate definition of man as moral and civiiized. He is, in Geoffrey Tillotson's words, "an historical poet dealing with the social things of his own time"[17] in relation to standards of ethical action he considers timelessly indispensable to any serious consideration of the nature and state of man.

Pope considers that his age is located in a temporal and in an historical continuum. Although the two cannot be cleanly separated, the temporal continuum is the medium of man's ethical definition. Pope makes of the general concept of time an existential context, emphasizing through his concentration on mortality the limitations of man's existence and his responsibility to be human (conscious, moral, compassionate, temperate) within these limitations. The historical continuum is the context of man's action and experience: "the school of example," according to Bolingbroke.[18] Pope's poems can thus be studied not so much as efforts to place the present as to account for its peculiar nature in relation to the positive values Pope considers the continua have maintained. This is not to say that he traps himself into overestimating the past. In Windsor Forest, for example, the past is as much a record of cruelty and oppression as it is the medium of the enduring standards of order and goodness which flourish in an Augustan present; and in The Dunciad, the same general present is considered as

the culmination of a history of the corruption of culture which had its roots in the remote past, with the erection of the Great Wall of China and the profane and saintly vandals of the early modern world. Pope knows man too well to be given to sentimentalizing the past. He does, nevertheless, attempt to understand time nostalgically, in terms of the Golden Age, which provides an imaginative ideal against which the corruptions of profane time can be measured, and he avoids sentimentalizing time by bringing to bear on his commentaries on its activity, both destructive and creative, an elegiac understanding of man's wish to preserve evidence of his presence and his invariably futile stratagems against change.

Pope is neither so gloomy about human existence as Swift is, nor as contemptuous as Young. Young wrote Night Thoughts as a corrective to what he considered to be "the shallow optimism" of writers like Pope.[19] He makes use of "the external circumstances in artificial life" in order to repudiate them in the cause of his passionate celebration of the hereafter in his poem, but he is so egregiously contemptuous of man's mortal existence in his strivings for the sublime that he gains access to some unappealing dimension of animosity in comparison with which, misanthropy is benevolence. George Eliot accurately remarks that Young's definition of man is a matter of shallow ejaculations:[20]

> How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
> How complicate, how wonderful is man!
> . . . . . .
> Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
> An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
> Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
> A worm! a god! — I tremble at myself,
> And in myself am lost!
>
> (Night Thoughts, Night I: "On Life, Death, and Immortality," 68-69, 78-82)

The curious effect of Young's sublime generalizations is to eliminate

the human from his human abstract. Pope and Swift do not shrink from the fact of death, but at least in their works we have the sense of something dying: a creature wretched and noble, vicious and good. Young is content to write a panegyric to death --

> Life is the triumph of our mouldering clay;
> Death, of the spirit infinite! divine!
> Death has no dread, but what frail life imparts;
> Nor life true joy, but what kind death improves.
> No bliss has life to boast, till death can give
> Far greater; life's a debtor to the grave,
> Dark lattice! letting in eternal day. --
> (Night Thoughts, Night III: "Narcissa," 467-473)

and to contemplate an eternity that is like a celestial amusement park:

> What wretched repetition cloys us here!
> What periodic potions for the sick,
> Distemper'd bodies, and distemper'd minds!
> In an eternity what scenes shall strike,
> Adventures thicken, novelties surprise!
> What webs of wonder shall unravel there!
> (Night Thoughts, Night VI: "The Infidel Reclaimed" 1, 153-158)

"His muse never stood face to face with a genuine living human being," George Eliot writes of Young; "she would have been as much startled by such an encounter as a necromancer whose incantations and blue fire had actually conjured up a demon."[21]

It is precisely such a confrontation with living human beings that makes Pope's satires not only chronicles of an age, but commentaries on the living manners of man at any time. His consciousness of death is never so morbid as Young's is, but poignantly human in its awareness of what is lost and gained in life, and of how very little the thought of eternal bliss can give to man except a not infallibly consoling hope. "There is so much trouble in coming into the World," Spence reports Pope as having said on his deathbed, "& so much in going out of it, that 'tis hardly worth while to be here at all."[22]

Swift is the perfect embodiment of Eliade's "terror of history," although he regards historical time much as Pope does: as "the cyclic drama of attainment and failure, with the conflict between good and evil shown in groups of men and within the single man. It was a temporal process of balance and imbalance, what Herodotus and others called 'flux'."[23] He is, however, much more sombrely disposed to feel that man has become progressively worse through time, rather than any better, and this bias permeates his consideration of human time in Gulliver's Travels. When Gulliver visits Glubbdubdrib, the Island of Sorcerers and Magicians, the Governor invites him to summon forth the great figures of history:

> I was chiefly disgusted with modern History. For having strictly examined all the Persons of greatest Name in the Courts of Princes for an Hundred Years past, I found how the World had been misled by prostitute Writers, to ascribe the greatest Exploits in War to Cowards, the wisest Counsel to Fools, Sincerity to Flatterers, Roman Virtue to Betrayers of their Country, Piety to Atheists, Chastity to Sodomites, Truth to Informers. How many innocent and excellent Persons had been condemned to Death or Banishment, by the practising of great Ministers upon the Corruption of Judges, and the Malice of Factions. How many Villains had been exalted to the highest Places of Trust, Power, Dignity, and Profit: How great a share in the Motions and Events of Courts, Councils, and Senates might be challenged by Bawds, Whores, Pimps, Parasites, and Buffoons: How low an Opinion of human Wisdom and Integrity, when I was truly informed of the Springs and Motives of great Enterprizes and Revolutions in the World, and of the contemptible Accidents to which they owed their Success . . . .
>
> As every Person called up made exactly the same Appearance he had done in the World, it gave me melancholy Reflections to observe how much the Race of human Kind was degenerate among us, within these Hundred Years past.[24]

Swift's attitude to time is one which "sees the need for steady reference to the past and future"[25] in an ephemeral present which is the point of convergence of the creative and destructive potentialities of man in time. Hence, in A Tale of a Tub, a radical present of a single day in 1697 simultaneously emphasizes the present-obsession of

the moderns and the dangerous implications of this obsession: the accelerated mutability of an age that refuses to acknowledge its significance as the nexus of the past and the future makes of the world a place of things and dead ideas, the connective thread of the past with the future severed beyond repair.

The Augustan satirists were intent upon the relative merits of their own age's achievements of elegance and refinement and the strength and invention of earlier times.[26] This temporal contrast involves an absorbing interest in the ethical, social, and cultural texture of the present and visible world, but it does not, at least among the best Augustan writers, involve considering the present as a point in civilization beyond which it is impossible to go (the attitude of the moderns satirized by Pope and Swift), or as a point of maximum degeneration just preceding universal catastrophe, although Pope and Swift are prepared to consider the latter possibility for the purposes of satire in The Dunciad and A Tale of a Tub. Pope and Swift make of their anger and scorn the inspirations for a vision of human life that is close to a tragic one in their best work, and vindicates them against the charges of critics like Jeffrey that they are unable to gain access to an understanding of man beyond what can be sustained by the facts of a particular age.

Pope's satire on his age does not have merely the narrow social purpose of urbane reproof or the limited range of diatribe; nor is his participation in his world just that of the gifted critical journalist-poet. Throughout his work, he repeatedly admits that the nature of his engagement in his world involves his identification with the vicissitudes of man's moral consciousness. The soundness of his own moral

nature does not move him to selfish separation from the society he castigates, moreover; for the world must be told of the significance of what it is doing. Even the most overtly "optimistic" of Pope's poems, the Essay on Man, qualifies its optimism by emphasizing that it is a condition of mind earned by man when he pledges himself to the difficult task of self-knowledge rather than to the ease of self-deception, and even an individual life dedicated to self-knowledge, as Pope's was, cannot in itself provide optimistic consolation when the greater number of this individual's fellow human beings seems to be bent upon destroying their capacity to know and to be conscious in their redefinition of man as an unthinking and unfeeling machine. There is nothing transitory and perishable about poetry dedicated to understanding man's eternal decision to extinguish the lights that rescue him from mere being.

Abbreviations

CE	College English
Cent. R.	Centennial Review of Arts and Sciences
ELH	English Literary History
ELN	English Language Notes
Eng. Mis.	English Miscellany
HR	Hudson Review
JAAC	Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism
JHI	Journal of the History of Ideas
JWCI	Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes
MLN	Modern Language Notes
MLQ	Modern Language Quarterly
PQ	Philological Quarterly
REL	Review of English Literature
RES	Review of English Studies
RLV	Revue des Langues Vivantes
SEL 1500-1900	Studies in English Literature 1500-1900
TS	Texas Studies in Literature and Language
UTQ	University of Toronto Quarterly
WR	Wascana Review
XUS	Xavier University Studies
YR	Yale Review

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One: Introduction

[1] Introduction to the Twickenham Edition of An Essay on Man, III-I, 1.

[2] ibid., xxxvi.

[3] The City of God, trans. Dod, XIV, 477.

[4] Paradise Lost, VII, 22.

[5] See Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom, "The Satiric Mode of Feeling: A Theory of Intention," Criticism XI, 2 (Spring 1969), 115-139.

[6] Virgidemiarum, III, Satire 1.

[7] Fussell, The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism, 4.

[8] ibid., 214.

[9] ibid., 283

[10] ibid., 217.

[11] Geoffrey Scott, The Architecture of Humanism, 244.

12 Mack, Introduction to the Twickenham Edition of An Essay on Man, III-I, lxxiv.

13 "'Wit and Poetry and Pope': Some Observations on His Imagery," in Eighteenth-Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Clifford, 34.

Chapter Two: Golden Time

1 Thomas R. Edwards, Jr., "Light and Nature: A Reading of the Dunciad," PQ, XXIX (1960), 458.

2 Letter to Bolingbroke and Pope, 5 April 1729, in The Correspondence of Alexander Pope, ed. Sherburn, III, 29.

3 loc. cit.

4 Eliade, Myth and Reality, 50.

5 Alexander Pope: The Poetry of Allusion, 15-16.

6 A pose, since Pope was beginning his career as Virgil had begun his, with pastoral: a fact of which Pope was well aware.

7 Twickenham Edition, I, 32.

8 ibid., 29.

9 "There is scarce any work of mine in which the versification was more laboured than in my pastorals." Spence's Anecdotes, quoted in Twickenham Edition, I, 50.

[10] Rambler, No. 36, Works, III, 197.

[11] "Et in Arcadia Ego: On the Conception of Transience in Poussin and Watteau," in Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Casirer, ed. Klibansky and Paton, 244.

[12] Twickenham Edition, I, 15-20.

[13] ibid., 15.

[14] Discourse on Pastoral Poetry, Twickenham Edition, I, 23, 25.

[15] ibid., 32.

[16] Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom, 145.

[17] Alexander Pope: The Poetry of Allusion, 28.

[18] Discourse, Twickenham Edition, I, 32.

[19] ibid., 32.

[20] ibid., 33.

[21] Panofsky, Studies in Iconology, 72.

[22] Edward Young, Night Thoughts, Night VI: "The Infidel Reclaimed," I, 687-689.

[23] Discourse, Twickenham Edition, I, 25-26.

[24] ibid., 23.

[25] ibid., 25-27.

[26] Twickenham Edition, I, iii.

[27] Twickenham Edition, I, 103.

[28] ibid., 105-106.

[29] Appendix to the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads (1802), 316.

[30] Twickenham Edition, I, 107.

[31] Quoted by Victor Harris, All Coherence Gone, 134.

[32] David R. Hauser, "Pope's Lodona and the Uses of Mythology," SEL 1500-1900, VI (1966), 465.

[33] For a discussion of concordia discors in Windsor Forest, see Earl Wasserman, The Subtler Language, Chapter IV.

[34] Hauser, "Pope's Lodona and the Uses of Mythology," 465-482.

[35] ibid., 473.

[36] ibid., 479.

[37] ibid., 481.

[38] One of the articles of the peace treaty signed at Utrecht gave to Britain and to the British South Sea Company "for a term of thirty years, the sole right of importing negroes into Spanish America." (The Cambridge Modern History, V, 445.) Pope held shares in the company.

[39] G.M. Trevelyan, England Under Queen Anne, III: The Peace and the Protestant Succession, 250.

Chapter Three: Human Time

[1] Hakewill, Apology for the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World, quoted by Victor Harris, All Coherence Gone, 53.

[2] Rilke, The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge, 194.

[3] "Worldliness and Other-worldliness: The Poet Young," Works, IX: Essays, 61-62.

[4] "On Nature and Death," Prose Works, ed. Ault, I, 138.

[5] "Letters on the Study and Use of History," Works, II, Letter II, 176.

[6] James William Johnson, "The Meaning of 'Augustan'," JHI, XIX (1958), 518.

[7] Memoirs, ed. Kerby-Miller, 103.

[8] ibid., 103.

[9] ibid., 105.

[10] Erskine-Hill, "The Medal Against Time: A Study of Pope's Epistle To Mr. Addison," JWCI, XXXVIII (1965), 296.

[11] ibid., 282.

[12] George Eliot, "Worldliness and Other-worldliness," Works, IX, 61-62.

[13] ibid., 38.

[14] ibid., 10.

[15] Pope, Argument to Epistle to a Lady.

[16] Johnson, Life of Pope, in Lives of the English Poets, II, 280.

[17] George Eliot, "Worldliness and Other-worldliness," Works, IX, 38.

[18] Introduction to the Twickenham Edition of An Essay on Man, III-I, xxxvi.

[19] "On Affectation," essay attributed to Pope by Ault, Prose Works, I, 38.

20 Hobbes, Leviathan, 130.

21 See Gale, The Philosophy of Time, 293-303, for an explanation of this concept of time in philosophical terms.

22 The epithets Ariel uses in addressing Belinda are similar to those used by Satan in his temptation of Eve. Ariel calls Belinda the

> Fairest of Mortals, thou distinguish'd Care
> Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air! (I, 27-28)

and urges her to

> Hear and believe! thy own Importance know,
> Nor bound thy narrow Views to Things below. (I, 35-36)

In Paradise Lost, IX, Satan addresses Eve as "Empress of this fair world," and convinces her that she should be

> A goddess among gods, ador'd and serv'd
> By angels numberless, thy daily train. (IX, 547-548)

23 Of the Nature of Things, trans. Leonard, I, 146-328.

Chapter Four: The Cycles of Wit

1 Thomas R. Edwards, Jr. uses the term "esthetic intelligence" to define sense: "the esthetic intelligence of a cultivated society." This Dark Estate, 68.

2 The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift, 62.

3 Quoted by Basil Willey, The Eighteenth-Century Background, 22.

4 D. Judson Milburn, The Age of Wit, 1650-1750, 120. Milburn bases this summary of Dryden's idea on the following passage from the Preface to Albion and Albanius:

> Propriety of thoughts is the fancy which arises naturally from the subject, or which the poet adapts to it. Propriety of words is the clothing of those thoughts with such expressions as are naturally proper to them: and from both these, if they are judiciously performed, the delight of poetry results. (Essays of John Dryden, ed. Ker, I, 270)

5 Quoted by Miriam Allott, Novelists on the Novel, 90.

6 Maynard Mack, Introduction to the Twickenham Edition of The Iliad of Homer, VII and VIII, lxxviii.

7 See Richard Foster Jones, "The Background of The Battle of the Books," Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope, 10-40.

8 Theme and Structure in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub', 90.

9 "An Essay Upon the Ancient and Modern Learning," in Five Miscellaneous Essays by Sir William Temple, ed. Monk, 38.

10 In Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, ed. Williams, 395.

11 See Jones, "Science and English Prose Style in the Third Quarter of the Seventeenth Century," Studies in the History of English Thought, 75-100.

12 Jones, "Science and Language in England of the Mid-Seventeenth Century," Studies in the History of English Thought, 148.

13 History of the Royal Society, ed. Cope and Jones, 42.

14 Atkins, English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, 43.

15 Dedication to Examen Poeticum, in Essays of John Dryden, ed. Ker, II, 12.

16 Gulliver's Travels, ed. Davis, Prose Works, XI, 169.

17 A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue, Polite Conversation, etc., ed. Davis and Landa, Prose Works, IV, 17.

18 Advertisement to The Dunciad, Twickenham Edition, V, 8.

19 Paulson, Theme and Structure in Swift's 'Tale of a Tub', 24.

20 A Tale of a Tub, ed. Guthkelch and Smith, 66.

21 ibid., 129.

22 The Battle of the Books, ed. Guthkelch and Smith, 214.

23 John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Hughes, 720.

24 Five Miscellaneous Essays, ed. Monk, 38.

25 Tale, ed. Guthkelch and Smith, 34-35.

26 The Gutenberg Galaxy, 305.

27 The Spectator, ed. Bond, II, 154.

28 ibid., 155.

29 ibid., 155.

30 Introduction to Alexander Pope: Selected Poetry and Prose, xxviii.

31 Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, ed. Williams, 389.

32 ibid., 389-390.

33 ibid., 391

34 Alvin B. Kernan, in The Plot of Satire, sees the "central fact" of satire as being "the energy of dulness," 4.

35 Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, ed. Williams, 392.

36 What a Peculiarity is here of Invention? The Author's Pencil, like the Wand of Circe, turns all into Monsters at a stroke. A great Genius takes things in the Lump, without stopping at minute Considerations: In vain might the Ram, the Bull, the Goat, the Lion, the Crab, the Scorpion, the Fishes, all stand in his way, as mere natural Animals: much more it might be pleaded that a pair of Scales, an old Man, and two Innocent Children, were no Monsters: There were only the Centaur and the Maid that could be esteem'd out of Nature. But what of that? with a Boldness peculiar to these daring Genius's, what he found not Monsters, he made so. (Peri Bathous, in Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, ed. Williams, 402-403.)

37 Argument to Book III of The Dunciad.

38 Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, ed. Williams, 394.

39 In the Advertisement to the poem, Pope remarks that it is a "sort of Bill of Complaint" inspired by the attacks of the vicious and ungenerous upon his "Person, Morals, and Family."

40 I use Mack's categories: The Garden and the City: Retirement and Politics in the Later Poetry of Pope: 1731-1743.

[41] Isaac Kramnick, Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole, 4.

[42] ibid., 222.

[43] "A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff," in Bickerstaff Papers and Pamphlets on the Church, ed. Davis, Prose Works, II, 164.

[44] The Tatler, No. CCXXX, 28 September 1710, in Bickerstaff Papers and Pamphlets on the Church, ed. Davis, Prose Works, II, 175.

[45] ibid., 174.

[46] The Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. Butt, xxviii-xxix.

[47] ibid., xxix.

[48] Correspondence, ed. Sherburn, III, 276.

[49] Correspondence, ed. Sherburn, II, 57.

[50] Correspondence, ed. Sherburn, IV, 364.

Chapter Five: Time-Travelling

[1] This time-travelling involves more than imitating Horace, of course. Throughout the sequence, particularly in the pastoral passages, the poetry resounds with suggestions of the country-house tradition of the seventeenth century poets. For a thorough study of the allusions in the Imitations (and in all of Pope's poems), see Brower's Alexander Pope: The Poetry of Allusion.

2 See The Garden and the City.

3 Collected Works, 159-160.

4 Advertisement to the Imitations.

5 Preface to Love of Fame, 56.

6 Maresca, Pope's Horatian Poems, 38.

7 ibid., 15.

8 Patrick Cruttwell, "Alexander Pope in the Augustan World," Cent. R., X, 1 (1966), 19.

9 Housman, Diffugere Nives (Horace: Odes iv 7).

10 Yeats, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd."

11 See Idyll XVI: "The Value of Song."

12 See Norman Ault, New Light on Pope.

13 Mack, The Garden and the City, 96.

14 ibid., 100.

15 ibid., 96.

16 ibid., 100-107.

17 Simone de Beauvoir, A Very Easy Death, 92.

18 Maresca, Pope's Horatian Poems, 172.

19 Correspondence, ed. Sherburn, III, 419.

20 Correspondence, ed. Sherburn, III, 423.

21 Howard Erskine-Hill, in his edition of the Horatian poems, comments on the ambiguity of the ending of this poem:

> The way Walpole is introduced . . . is subtle; it is ironically funny yet disturbing, in a way that Horace's parallel introduction of Caesar was not. It is funny that Fortescue's warning tone should be so quickly changed, at a hint that the all-powerful minister might approve. It is disturbing that a satirist's security should appear to depend on the goodwill of a man who, unlike Caesar Augustus, was disapproved of, not only by the poet and his friends, but also by the great part of the nation.
>
> (Pope: Horatian Satires and Epistles, 131)

22 Pascoe, London of Today, 59.

23 Imitations of Horace, Twickenham Edition, IV, 327.

Chapter Six: Apocalyptic Time

1 Martinus Scriblerus, of the Poem, Twickenham Edition, V, 49.

2 See Pope's note to the last line of the Second Dialogue of the Epilogue to the Satires.

[3] Emerson R. Marks, The Poetics of Reason, 14.

[4] James Sutherland, Introduction to Twickenham Edition of The Dunciad, V, xlv.

[5] Culture and Anarchy, in The Portable Mathhew Arnold, ed. Trilling, 511.

[6] Pope's 'Dunciad', A Study of its Meaning, 12.

[7] Correspondence, ed. Sherburn, I, 2.

[8]
Here she beholds the Chaos dark and deep,
Where nameless Somethings in their causes sleep,
'Till genial Jacob, or a warm third day,
Call forth each mass, a Poem, or a Play:
How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
Maggots half-form'd in rhyme exactly meet,
And learn to crawl upon poetic feet.
(Dunciad, I, 55-62)

Round him much Embryo, much Abortion lay,
Much future Ode, and abdicated Play . . . .
(Dunciad, I, 121-122)

[9] Alvin B. Kernan, The Plot of Satire, 90.

[10] "Three Aspects of the Augustan Tradition": "The Roman Analogy," in The Listener, LXXVII, 1985 (April 13, 1967), 456.

[11] The Honest Muse, 192.

[12] Williams, Pope's 'Dunciad', A Study of its Meaning, 14.

13 In Inside the Whale and Other Essays, 143.

14 Mechanical Operation, ed. Guthkelch and Smith, 281.

15 Tale, ed. Guthkelch and Smith, 33. All subsequent quotations from A Tale of a Tub refer to this edition.

16 Jonathan Swift: A Selection of His Works, 291.

17 In his note to the lines, Scriblerus quotes Virgil:

> Sunt geminae somni portae; quarum altera fertur
> Cornea, qua veris facilis datur exitus umbris;
> Altera, candenti perfecta nitens elephanto,
> Sed falsa ad coelum mittunt insomnia manes.
> (Aeneid, VI, 893-896)

In a note to the first lines of Book III, Scriblerus ironically explains that the speech of Settle on history is no more than a "Chimera of the Dreamer's [Cibber's] brain, and not a real or intended satire on the Present Age, doubtless more learned, more inlighten'd, and more abounding with great Genius's in Divinity, Politics, and whatever Arts and Sciences, than all the preceding."

18 Martinus Scriblerus, of the Poem, Twickenham Edition, V, 48-49.

19 ibid., 51.

20 Hamlet, Act IV: iv, 33-35.

21 Ricardus Aristarchus, of the Hero of the Poem, Twickenham Edition, V, 256.

22 Note to lines 475-476, in Twickenham Edition of The Dunciad, V, 387.

[23] Pensées, Préface Générale, 20.

[24] Pope's note to line 517.

Conclusion

[1] The Invariable Principles of Poetry, quoted in Critics on Pope: 1726-1939, ed. Judith O'Neill, 15.

[2] An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, I, 330.

[3] ibid., II, 403.

[4] Letter to Sir Walter Scott (18 January 1808), in Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, II: The Middle Years 1806-1811, ed. De Selincourt, 191.

[5] Table Talk, line 654.

[6] The Life and Works of William Cowper, 141-142.

[7] "The Study of Poetry," in Poets on Poetry, ed. Norman, 312.

[8] Life of Pope, in Lives of the English Poets, II, 328.

[9] In Critics on Pope, ed. O'Neill, 16.

[10] Biographia Literaria, 9.

[11] In Critics on Pope, ed. O'Neill, 17.

[12] Works of Lord Byron, VI, 377.

[13] "The Poetry of Pope," Collected Writings, ed. Masson, XI, 68.

[14] In Discussions of Alexander Pope, ed. Blanshard, 60.

[15] Edinburgh Review, XXVII (1816), 3.

[16] Pope, 25.

[17] Pope and Human Nature, 66.

[18] "Letters on the Study and Use of History," Letter II, Works, II, 179.

[19] C.V. Wicker, Edward Young and the Fear of Death, 15.

[20] "Worldliness and Other-worldliness," Works, IX, 10.

[21] ibid., 22.

[22] Correspondence, ed. Sherburn, IV, 525.

[23] James William Johnson, "Swift's Historical Outlook," JBS, IV, ii (1964-65), 62.

[24] Gulliver's Travels, ed. Davis, Prose Works, XI, 183 and 185.

[25] Miriam K. Starkman, Swift's Satire on Learning in 'A Tale of a Tub', 9.

[26] I use Johnson's terms: "Whatever be the reason the ancient poets are most admired, it is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature and their followers of art; that the first excel in strength, and the latter in elegance and refinement." (Rasselas, in Johnson: Prose and Poetry, ed. Wilson, 409.)

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