

Original Paper

Dylan Thomas's "In Country Sleep": His Paradoxical Sensibility

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Abstract

In "In Country Sleep", Dylan Thomas offers the Yeatsian paradoxical sensibility, the process of magnanimous impersonal art as salvation to the tumultuous Auden who condescends to the mortal levelling charges of conspiracy, war mongering, tilting and toppling against him as his performance as an artist of Yeatsian pagan altruistic art songs has undone his success, popularity and appeal among the contemporary poets. Auden, despite the loss of his grandeur, continues with the Eliotian metaphysical process of aesthetic amoral art song that has made him great in the early phase. The time-conscious political poets of the thirties, while heading towards the romantic ideals of their early phase, mounts up their rage against Thomas for his deviation in the later art songs from his early poems of pity. The young Movement poets commend Auden's early poem for the parable of pure poetry and aesthetic success and defends his avenging move against Thomas. The introductory poem implies that it is Thomas's introspective process of individuation and integration, coherence and co-existence, his paradoxical sensibility, his tragi-comic vision of Grecian altruistic art song that guards his sober and benign functioning as an ardent emulator of the pagan altruistic tradition of Hardy, Yeats, Houseman and Blake, as a poet of reconciliation, harmonization and cosmopolitan culture analogous to his functioning in the early poem 18 Poems.

Keywords

sensibility, inclusiveness, transcend, altruistic, damned, metamorphical, metaphysical and pagan

1. Introduction

The chief characteristic features and value of the twentieth century poetry are irony, inclusiveness, and complexity. These criteria, however, do not merely indicate qualities of craftsmanship; they reflect a sensibility, a particular way of experiencing reality. T.S. Eliot perceives:

April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers. (*Collected Poems* 53)

The poetry of John Donne and others in the metaphysical tradition, whom Eliot regards as his predecessors, is said to have achieved the “fusion of two element” (*English Critical Tradition* 173), thought and feeling. Eliot brings out his metaphysical ironic sensibility different from the contemporary poet D.H. Lawrence’s romantic lyrical sensibility and W.B. Yeats’s self-introspective pagan sensibility “and I will show you something different from either ... your shadow at morning striding behind you ... or your shadow at evening rising to meet you ... I will show you fear in a handful of dust” (*ECP*). But “fusion” of thought and feeling seems to be an inexact formula to Lawrence and Yeats.

Eliot’s observations on the poet’s impersonality and his metaphysical sensibility emphasize the need for integration of emotion and intellect, and here Lawrence notes his sharp disagreement with Eliot. “I am so tired of the limitations of their Infinite ... I am so sick of the pretensions of the Spirit ... I am so weary of pale-face importance” (Lawrence 11). What the modern metaphysical poetry of Eliot achieves is not merely a sensuous or emotive apprehension of thought, it also achieves a cerebral apprehension of emotion according to Lawrence:

Say, in the sound of all your machines
And white words, white-wash American,
Deep pulsing of a strange heart
New throb, like a stirring under the false dawn that precedes the real. (DHL)

Lawrence describes himself a romantic personality, “your brittle, super-sensual arrogance ... tosses the crape of red across your brow and down your breast ... as you draw yourself upon yourself in insistence”. (63)

What really distinguishes the pagan poet Yeats who admits “Homer is my example and his unchristened part” (Yeats, *Collected Poems* 215) is a capacity for objectifying and subjecting to analytical scrutiny one’s own experiences and feelings. This power of self-analysis is the highest manifestation, or, development of consciousness, and man’s unique privilege according to him:

I long for truth, and yet
I cannot stay from that
My better self disowns,
For a man’s attention
Brings such satisfaction
To the craving in my bones. (*YCP* 231)

Yeats perceives that the increase in awareness that he associates with the process of individuation results not simply in an extension of the external frontiers of human knowledge, man also looks inward, confronts the mystery of his own fellow-being's suffering and works for their reconciliation and regeneration:

He it has found shall find therein
What none other knows,
And give his own and take his own
And rule in his own right;
And though it loved in misery
Close and cling so tight,
There's not a bird of day that dare
Extinguish that delight. (*YCP* 234)

The individuated man liberated from the shackles of medieval bondage releases the mind's creative potentialities through the cyclical process of birth-in-death, transfiguration and transformation of man's sorrow into tragic joy. This awareness of individual identity developed through various stages into increasing degrees of self-consciousness, and lapsed, as in Eliot's intellectual poetry, into self-rumination and self-expression in Lawrence's poetry. Yeats perceives:

Everything that man esteems
Endures a moment or a day.
Love's pleasure drives his love away,
The painter's brush consumes his dreams;
The herald's cry, the soldier's tread
Exhaust his glory and his might:
Whatever flames upon the night
Man's own resinous heart has fed. (*YCP* 181)

The aesthetic amoral impersonal art and the ironic sensibility expressed in Eliot's poetry and other forms of modernistic literature has its spiritual ancestry in metaphysical symbolism, but it is more sophisticated, more urbane, and more complex and the vicarious impersonal art and the paradoxical sensibility as implicit in Yeats's poetry has its roots in Grecian altruism which is more arcadian, more cosmopolitan, and more paradoxical.

What happens in Yeats as an introspective poet of individuation and integration is that the mind operates simultaneously at two levels of reconciliation and regeneration and he witnesses a co-operation and coalescence of emotion and cerebration, "no dark tomb haunter once; her form all full ... as though with magnanimity of light ... yet a most gentle woman". The heart is involved in experience and suffers, while an alert intelligence, conscious of itself, analyses and weighs the extreme experience of his contemporary poets, "in a breath ... a mouthful held the extreme of life and death".

The result is an inclusiveness, “substance ... composite” arising out of a recognition of the complexity of experience, of the pressure of the total context upon a particular situation or mental state, “propinquity had brought ... imagination to that pitch where it casts out ... all that is not itself” (*YCP* 289). The aesthetic effect of Yeats’s moral disinterestedness may be a deepening of poignancy in contrast to Eliot’s aesthetic amoral disinterestedness, “all sleek and new” and Lawrence’s sensual ecstasy, “heroic reverie”.

The vision, again, in Eliot’s mature poems is ironic, “thoughts long knitted into a single thought ... a dance-like glory that those walls begot”, and irony has many forms in his early poems. Detached perception of one’s own predicament may sharpen the sense of incongruity, and in such situations, the comic sense blends with the tragic. The attitude of the poet or, the speaker ceases to be affirmative; the awareness of disparate elements and contrarities complicates response and prevents any simple resolution, “and half a dozen in formation there ... that seemed to whirl upon a compass-point ... found certainty upon the dreaming air...” (*YCP*). The quick shifts of tone and attitude, the telescoping of images and heterogeneous associations, the dramatization of personal experience may all be subsumed as the features of Lawrence’s poetry under the major premise, “they came like swallows and like swallows went ... and yet a woman’s powerful character ... could keep a swallow to its first intent...” (*YCP*).

Lawrence perceives that Eliot’s design may be inclusive in another sense. Two sets of characters representing contrary approaches may be incorporated in the dramatic structure, and the suggestion is that reality includes both. But if the ironic device produces a delicate equilibrium, it may also help the poet reach forward through a maze of contradictions to a positive state: the vision is tested and questioned, and it may finally survive the fires of experience and ratiocination:

Peace congealed in black lava on the doorstep,
Within, white-hot lava, never at peace
Till it burst faith blinding, withering the earth;
To set again into rock
Grey-black rock. (DHL 15)

However, uncertainty and unresolved tension are more characteristic of Eliot’s poetry than affirmation and faith, “walking like a royal snake down the mountain towards the sea”, and the term irony has a special relevance in this context.

The simultaneity of participation and dissociation, of involvement and dissection explains the many paradoxical heterogeneities in tone and idiom in Yeats’s poetry: the combination of earnest commitment and amused detachment, of levity and profundity, pagan sensibility and altruism, of the language of logical discourse and the language of intense feeling. Describing Yeats’s paradoxical sensibility and his philanthropic impersonal art “giving off hues of life” like as a “strange and sweet-limbed octopus ... like a nude, like a rock-living, sweet-fleshed sea-anemone ... flourishing

from the rock in a mysterious arrogance” (DHL), Lawrence recasts:

Let me sit down beneath the many-branching candelabrum
That lives upon this rock
And laugh at Time, and laugh at dull Eternity,
And make a joke of infinity,
Within the flesh-scent of this wicked tree,
That has kept so many secrets up its sleeve,
And has been laughing through so many ages
At man and his uncomfortablenesses,
And his attempt to assure himself that what is so is not so,
Up its sleeve. (17-18)

However, these characteristics of Yeats’s poetry and thought are not enough to explain his reputation in the twentieth century and his appeal to the modern reader. The modern poets of the fifties establish a link between Yeats’s pagan altruistic sensibility and Dylan Thomas’s sceptic paradoxical sensibility and his altruism, and the manner in which this sensibility enters into and determines the texture of his poetry. Thomas projects in his early poem *18 Poems* man’s inner reality and his own creative perplexities, his cyclical process of life-in-death, the introspective process of making man’s predicament as creation, freedom of man and another man’s freedom, as man’s individuation and integration, “I dreamed my genesis in sweat of death, fallen ... twice in the feeding sea, grown ... stale of Adam’s brine until, vision ... of new man’s strength, I seek the sun” (Thomas, *Poems* 66).

In the last poem *In Country Sleep* analogous to the early poem *18 Poems*, Thomas dwells chiefly on the relation between the metaphysical tradition and the sceptic poetic tradition. Written under the influence of William Blake, the poem in its final form analyses the memories of his own poetry linking nature and human life, his modest and magnanimous functioning in contrast to Auden’s Word-centric functioning and his war mongering, the political and the war poets’s romanticism and the Movement poets’s celebration of Auden’s art and their raging fire against Thomas:

I climb to greet the war in which I have no heart but only
That one dark I owe my light,
Call for confessor and wiser mirror but there is none
To glow after the god stoning night
And I am struck as lonely as a holy marker by the sun.... (*Poems* 63)

The aesthetic implied in the last poem has two aspects. First, poetry of altruistic impersonal art incarnates through the vehicles of word and rhythm, the rhythm or order in nature. Secondly, the aesthetic amoral poet can read the mysterious hieroglyphics of Nature only when he transcends the plane of finite existence and attains to the region of death-centric metaphysical process. Thomas contradistinguishes:

No longer will the vibrations of the sun on
Her deepsea pillow where once she married alone,
Her heart all ears and eyes, lips catching the avalanche
Of the golden ghost who ringed with his streams her mercury bone,
Who under the lids of her windows hoisted his golden luggage,
For a man sleeps where fire leapt down and she learns through his arm
That other sun, the jealous coursing of the unrivalled blood. (*Poems* 108)

In the last poem, Thomas's functioning identical to his performance in the early poem *18 Poems* is free from hatred and fear, revelry of vengeance and violence, ill-will and jealousy and his position as a poet of prudence and benevolence, ignorance and innocence evokes Thomas Hardy's archetypal process of sobriety, sagacity and serenity, "I fled the earth and, naked, climbed the weather ... reaching a second ground far from the stars" and the Yeatsian cyclical process of birth and death, the process of self-reconciliation, self-improvement and self-advancement, "shifting to light, turned on me like a moon ... so, planning-heeled, I flew along my man ... and dropped on dreaming and the upward sky" in repudiation of Auden's metaphysical process of self-purification and immortal art, the Eliotian intellectualism of pure being and pure poetry, "I fellowed sleep who kissed me in the brain ... let fall the tear of time; the sleeper's eye" (*Poems* 67). Thomas's functioning as a poet of identity, self-identity and self-identification or self-evaluation in the last phase is analogous to Blake's singing of the poet's paradoxical sensibility and his pagan altruistic process, his free play and free love, his cosmopolitan culture in contrast to the metaphysical poet's ironic sensibility and his immortal art, his aesthetic amoral impersonal art and his ascetic culture, "he who binds to himself a joy ... does the winged life destroy ... but he who kisses the joy as it flies ... lives in eternity's sun rise" (Blake 47).

Blake envisages a journey of the pagan altruistic creative poet through successive phases, and these phases are, (i) apprehension of the sensuous beauty of nature (feminine charm being part of this beauty), (ii) perception of the principle of harmony working in nature, (iii) and finally, the convergence of the modest poet-the mortal man towards a point of coalescence of frustration and success, unpopularity and popularity, hatred and love, violence and benevolence, malignity and benignity, and revenge and co-existence in which the sober and sagacious mind liberated from the mutable world enjoys the blessings of greatness and eminence which is a repetition on the creative plane of the happiness and contentment enjoyed in the past. He enumerates:

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping

They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed. (Blake 56)

The human poet realizes fully his creative urge only when he completes the ascent from destructive beauty to magnanimous artistic beauty, from monolithic, monochromic sensibility to polylythic, polychromic sensibility, “when wolves and tigers howl for prey ... they pitying stand and weep ... seeking to drive their thirst away ... and keep them from the sheep”, and there is an added implication that poetry is the voice of the modesty and generosity of human poets although this voice has to be rendered in human speech and unified sensibility, “but if they rush dreadful ... the angels, most heedful ... receive each mild spirit ... new worlds to inherit” (Blake).

The last poem *In Country Sleep* is concerned with issues that have a more immediate bearing. The focal point of the dying Thomas is to extend to the agitated Auden the therapeutic panacea, the process of regeneration that he has offered to the fallen political and the war poets in the past apart from maintaining his own balanced and benign, prudent and benevolent functioning that has made him popular and influential, happy and contented. Thomas briefs:

But blessed be hail and upheaval
That uncalm still it is sure alone to stand and sing
Alone in the husk of man's home
And the mother and toppling house of the holy spring,
If only for a last time. (*Poems* 63)

In contrast, the main concern of the forlorn Auden in the last phase is the Eliotian reality of historical suffering and immortal art which is the *leit-motif*, “ruin and his causes” of his early phase, making “one more move to soothe ... the cureless counted body”, condescending to seek the patronage of the estranged political poets and intensify his charges of conspiracy and war mongering, tilting and toppling against Thomas whose success as an artist of cyclical process and vicarious art songs has unmade his success, popularity, appeal and his grand image as a metaphysical artist among the contemporary poets, “over the barbed and shooting sea assumed an army ... and swept into our wounds and houses”. The young Movement poets, while scorning Thomas's early poem and his Yeatsian art songs of pagan altruism, upholds Auden's early poem, his aesthetic success and defends his avenging move against Thomas, “praise that the spring time is all ... Gabriel and radiant shrubbery as the morning grows joyful ... out of the woebegone pyre”. The last phase of the time-conscious political poets of the thirties and the romantic war poets of the forties move towards the romantic ideals of their early phase that has its bearing on human life in so far as it eschews pain and turns the mind to pleasing luxuries, “the multitude's sultry tear turns cool on the weeping wall ... my arising prodigal ... sun the father his quiver full of the infants of pure fire” (*Poems*).

However, the identical cries of hatred and anger, vengeance and violence of Auden and his friends against Thomas could be attributed to their hopeless career and uncertain future, their anxiety about

immortality in contrast to Thomas's success and hopeful future as a poet of metaphorical and metamorphical process, soundless vicarious impersonal art, "lie still, sleep becalmed, sufferer with the wound ... in the throat, burning and turning all night afloat ... on the silent sea we have heard the sound ... that came from the wound wrapped in the salt sheet". Thomas perceives that Auden suffers due to his metaphysical, existential process of dying, his aesthetic amoral impersonal art, his wild love of metaphysical Eliotian musical avant-gardism and modernism from the early phase till the last phase "we heard the sea sound sing, we saw the salt sheet tell ... lie still, sleep becalmed, hide the mouth in the throat ... or we shall obey, and ride with you through the drowned" and that the realistic and the war poets suffer in their love of Auden's sound pattern due to their seasonal love, their mortal desire for a comfortable, romantic living and their ignorance of Auden's metaphysical process, "under the mile off moon we trembled listening ... to the sea sound flowing like blood from the loud wound ... and when the salt sheet broke in a storm of singing ... the voices of all the drowned swam on the wind" (*Poems* 93).

Thomas's paradoxical vision of pragmatic soundless art song and human reality that makes him popular and influential, great and happy is analogous to Blake's singing of his "holy spring", the image of amelioration, co-existence and happiness:

For where-e'er the sun does shine.
And where-e'er the rain does fall:
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appal. (Blake 67)

Auden's ironic vision of sound-centric metaphysical art songs and metaphysical reality that costs his success, appeal and popularity finds an objective correlative in Blake's song "Holy Thursday":

And their sun does never shine.
And their fields are bleak and bare.
And their ways are fill'd with thorns
It is eternal winter there. (Blake)

The methods Thomas employs in his poetry to incorporate the disparate elements and the results he achieves are diverse. In the early poem *18 Poems*, the almost equal emphasis on the lost love of the chaotic time-conscious poets, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice and the Yeatsian process of transfiguration and transformation, the process of life-in-death and the process of alchemizing tragic sorrow into tragic joy shapes and forms his paradoxical sensibility, "how light the sleeping on this soily star ... how deep the waking in the worlded clouds". Yeats declares his "faith" in the paradoxical functioning for the tragic happiness:

I mock Plotinus' thought
And cry in Plato's teeth,
Death and life were not

Till man made up the whole,
Made lock, stock and barrel
Out of his bitter soul,
Aye, sun and moon and star, all,
And further add to that
That, being dead, we rise,
Dream and so create
Translunar paradise. (*YCP* 167)

Thomas's early poem presents the Yeatsian kind of inclusiveness that submerges the metaphysical inclusiveness. He explains the process of organic form of noble impersonal art and the process of transforming tragic experiences into tragic happiness:

There grows the hours' ladder to the sun,
Each rung a love or losing to the last,
The inches monkeyed by the blood of man,
An old, mad man still climbing in his ghost,
My fathers' ghost is climbing in the rain. (*Poems* 67)

For the young Thomas, however, an experience is not a mere sensation, it includes thought. In Yeats's poetry, one of his axioms is that poetry should strike the reader as the wording of his own highest thoughts, and for him thought is meaningful only when it is emotionally realized and is transformed into a sensation.

In 25 *Poems* Thomas, recalling the Yeatsian metaphorical and metamorphical process, the introspective process of individuation and integration in the early poem, "the death of friends, or death ... of every brilliant eye ... that made a catch in the breath", in contrast to Auden's interior monologue of historical memory of eternal suffering and eternal art, "seem but the clouds of the sky ... when the horizon fades ... or a bird's sleepy cry ... among the deepening shades" (*YCP* 168), evokes the political poets's broken memory as the fallen lovers of Auden's art song, "whispered the affectionate sand ... and the bulwarks of the dazzled quay ... for my sake sail, and never look back ... said the looking land" (*Poems* 34) and persuades them to heed to the Yeatsian introspective process of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation to become artist of paradoxical art song and success:

Now to awake husked of gestures and my joy like a cave
To the anguish and carrion, to the infant forever unfree,
O my lost love bounced from a good home;
The grain that hurries this way from the rim of the grave
Has a voice and a house, and there and here you couch and cry. (*Poems* 78)

Thomas's vision of paradoxical art song, "Altarwise by Owl-light" is in tune with Yeats's tragi-comic vision, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, "rest beyond choice in the dust-appointed

grain ... at the breast stored with seas". Yeats sings of his pagan altruistic vision of paradoxical art song:

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

In the transitional poem, *The Map of Love*, the dual operation of the mind arouses a comic perception adding a flavor to Thomas's poignancy of situation and the war poets's Wordsworthian mental state. He directs the pre-war romantic poets, Roy Fuller, Alan Rook, Keidrych Rhys, F.T. Prince, Alun Lewis and Sidney Keyes, to Yeatsian pagan altruistic impersonal art, to individuate their expression of formlessness, spontaneity and personality as an organic form, "sails drank the wind, and white as milk ... he sped into the drinking dark ... the sun shipwrecked west on a pearl ... and the moon swam out of its hulk" (*Poems*) that has rescued the lost political poets and offered them hope for poetry and promising future, that he has demonstrated in his early poem and his early art song as well and achieved success and popularity among the contemporary poets, "in that proud sailing tree with branches driven ... through the last vault and the vegetable groyne ... and this weak house to marrow-columned heaven" (69). Thomas's paradoxical direction to the ignorant war poets is identical to that of Yeats, "stumbling upon the blood-dark track once more ... then stumbling to the kill beside the shore ... then cleaning out and bandaging of wounds ... and chants of victory amid the encircling hounds" (*YCP* 290).

In the later poem of war time *Deaths and Entrances*, the mental oscillations and uncertainties of the poets of the forties of war time are put to effective use vis-à-vis Thomas's disinterested goodwill and action and his paradoxical sensibility. Thomas explains:

In the fire of his care his love in the high room.
 And the child not caring to whom he climbs his prayer
 Shall drown in a grief as deep as his made grave,
 And mark the dark eyed wave, through the eyes of sleep,
 Dragging him up the stairs to the one who lies dead. (*Poems* 55)

He projects his paradoxical sensibility, "and fire and ice within me fight ... beneath the suffocating night" (Houseman 49) identical to the war poet A.E. Houseman's asocial, apolitical and ahistorical sensibility, his sober and sagacious functioning as an impersonal poet of pagan altruism, "now, and I muse for why and never find the reason ... I pace the earth, and drink the air, and feel the sun ... be still,

be still, my soul; it is but for a season” (AEH 10) which, in turn, recalls his early poem *18 Poems* in contrast to the metaphysical ironic aloofness of the existential Auden and the sentimental functioning of the dilemmatic political and the war poets, their “horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation” (AEH) and their indifferent functioning during the time of war.

In the song “A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London” Thomas shows his empathy and impersonal vicariousness for the child died as a victim of war in contrast to the contemporary poets’s insensibility and their desiring for immortality, “they talk about a time at hand ... when I shall sleep with clover clad ... and she beside another lad” (AEH 8). Thomas explains his pragmatic functioning and his paradoxical love for everyone and everything analogous to his moral disinterestedness in the early poem, “funnels and masts went by in a whirl ... good-bye to the man on the sea-legged deck ... to the gold gut that sings on his reel to the bait that stalked out of the sack” (*Poems*). In the song “Poem in October”, he maintains his pragmatic and paradoxical functioning identical to his asocial apolitical and ahistorical functioning in the early poem, “undishonoured, clear of danger ... clean of guilt, pass hence and home” (AEH 52). Thomas vindicates his neutral cordiality and paradoxical position, “for we saw him throw to the swift flood ... a girl alive with his hooks through her lips” (*Poems*). In the song “Fern Hill”, Thomas, illustrating his own introspective process of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation, suggests to the war poet Prince dreaming of Auden’s immortal art that art song born of the process of life and death, participation and involvement stands real rather than mere dreams or passionate love, “turn safe to rest, no dreams, no waking ... and here, man, here’s the wreath I’ve made” (AEH). Both Auden and Thomas underscore that it is the poet’s way of knowledge, his *modus operandi* that alone ensures the freedom of art song, and that Prince’s dreaming of art song stands as chimerical and fanciful as the political poets as they are ignorant of the process of reconciliation of the irreconcilables, harmonization of their division between private and public love, “all the fishes were rayed in blood ... said the dwindling ships” (*Poems*).

The last poem *In Country Sleep*, as in the apparently disorganized flow of thought in the Movement poetry of the early fifties, resembles the stream of consciousness technique, but the presence of an alert mind weighing the homeward journey of life under the influence of the pagan altruistic poet Blake, his introspective process and his paradoxical sensibility, “hear the voice of the Bard ... who present, past, and future, sees ... whose ears have heard ... the Holy Word ... that walk’d among the ancient trees.... (Blake 57). Thomas explains the underlying relentless process of introspection, transfiguration and transformation, the self-indicating, self-dedicating, self-vindicating consciousness, his paradoxical sensibility and the tragic happiness of his last poem recalling his early poem *18 Poems* “then good-bye to the fishermanned ... boat with its anchor free and fast ... as a bird hooking over the sea ... high and dry by the top of the mast” (*Poems*) in contrast to the *mutatis mutandis* of the contemporary poets of the thirties, the forties and the fifties, “the bows glided down, and the coast ... blackened with birds took a last look ... at his thrashing hair and whale-blue eye ... the trodden town rang its cobbles for

luck” (*Poems*). Thomas sums up his down-to-earth approach and his matter-of-fact operation, his cosmopolitan love as the *leit-motif* of his last phase in contrast to the grumbles and murmurs of the forlorn Auden and the frustrated lovers of Auden’s elegant art:

Down, down, down, under the ground,
Under the floating villages,
Turns the moon-chained and the water-wound
Metropolis of fishes.... (*Poems* 38)

In Auden’s *The Age of Anxiety* and *Nones*, the assimilative and integrating approach, the cordial neutrality is absent, and the analytical mode increases the poet’s perplexities and deepens the tragic vision. Thomas recalls the last phase of Auden being committed to Eliotian religious, existential faith and aesthetic amoral art:

Land, land, land, nothing remains
Of the pacing, famous sea but its speech,
And into its talkative seven tombs
The anchor drives through the floors of church. (*Poems* 39)

The early phase of the Movement poets and their brands of Auden’s impersonal song pattern end in tentative resolutions, or in uncertainty like the other maddened lovers of Auden’s art, “they rip ... the slum of weeds, leaves, barbed coils; they raise ... a body that as the breeze touches it glows ... branding their hands on his bones” (Hughes 43). In the early poems of the Movement poets, Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes, John Holloway, D.J. Enright, Kingsley Amis, John Wain, and Elizabeth Jennings, the oppositions between the drowning Auden and his intellectual sensibility and the dying successful Thomas and his paradoxical sensibility, the Eliotian paradox of death-in-life and the metaphysical sound pattern and the Yeatsian paradox of life-in-death and the soundless vicarious impersonal art are faithfully recorded, and each alternative is questioned and tested, “some, who saw fall, smoke beckons, they jostle above ... they peer down a sunbeam as if expected there ... a snake in the gloom of the brambles or rare flower...” (Hughes). The Movement poets, while imitating Auden’s early poem *Poems*, dream of Auden’s art song, “and schoolroom songs are full ... of boys’ green cuckoos ... piping the summer round” (*Modern Verse* 394). Thomas remembers:

There is nothing left of the sea but its sound,
Under the earth the loud sea walks,
In deathbeds of orchards the boat dies down
And the bait is drowned among hayricks.... (*Poems*)

And it is in this fidelity to the memory of Auden’s thought and feeling, in this dramatization of the creative dilemmas of the lost political poets, the war poets and the Movement poets that Thomas in the last phase departs from the metaphysical and the romantic tradition, and comes closest to the inclusiveness and the free play and free love of the pagan poet Blake who “spins from the bars, but

there's no cage to him" and stands as an artist of noble impersonal art in contrast to Auden's pure aesthetic and immortality according to the young poet Hughes:

More than to the visionary his cell:
His stride is wildernesses of freedom:
The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel
Over the cage floor the horizons come. (4)

The passage from Laurie Lee's poem "The Three Winds" that contradistinguishes the paradoxical sensibility from the ironic metaphysical sensibility of Auden, the dissociated sensibility of the political poets of the thirties, the romantic war poets of the forties and the aesthetic minded poets of the fifties and their maddening love of Auden's grandeur brings out the continuous trend of inclusiveness, sceptic poetic tradition and pagan altruism in Thomas's poetry till the last poem:

Till August sends at last
its brick-red breath
over the baking wheat and blistered poppy,
brushing with feathered hands
the skies of brass,
with dreams of river moss
my thirst's delirium. (MV)

The modern poets of the fifties establish a link between Thomas's poetry of sceptic paradoxical theme, his noble impersonal art and his dramatic art songs of Grecian altruistic vision, his paradoxical sensibility, and the manner in which this sensibility enters into and determines the texture of his dramatic poetry in the last phase. Vernon Watkins, Kathleen Raine, Bernard Spencer, W. R. Rodgers, Lawrence Durrell, and W. S. Graham are all professedly hostile to intellectualism in their critical readings, but their comments on Thomas have been invariably approbatory. Anne Ridler, while seeking to defend Auden and Thomas against the disparagement of modern criticism, devotes himself to Auden as he finds little need to defend the last poem of Thomas, "here he is endured, here he is adored ... and anywhere. Yet it is a long pursuit ... carrying the junk and treasure of an ancient creed... (MV 393). Keith Douglas, who harshly censures romantic vagueness and diffusion, is full of praise for Thomas's paradoxical sensibility, and the qualities that he underlines are earthiness, definiteness, vividness and altruistic impersonal art:

If you enquire how secretly you've come
To mansize from the smallness of a stone
It will appear his effort made you rise
So gradually to your proper size. (417)

Auden's poems also have this paradoxical quality in varying degrees, and it is indeed striking that even several of his earlier verses show the juxtaposition and integration of opposed attitudes enriching the

poetic texture, “the cold thing is how they were ... there at the start of us; and one grey look surveyed ... the builder imagining the city, the historian with his spade” (*MV*). The inclusiveness in Thomas’s poetry is not really worked out as a conscious design, although his poetic development shows increasing reliance on craftsmanship; it seems, on the other hand, from his deep, fundamental honesty, from his keenness to understand the nature of reality, his own inner self and the contemporaries multiple, conflicting aspects, “the warm thing is that that they are ... first promise of the South to the waking travelers ... of the peacock sea, and the islands and their boulder-lumbered spurs” (*MV*).

Thomas projects in his introductory poem “In Country Sleep” the contemporary poets’s creative perplexities and his own inner reality, and he belongs, in the main, to Blakean sceptic poetic and magnanimous tradition in contrast to Auden’s aesthetic amoral impersonal art and his metaphysical tradition. E.J. Scovell remarks:

He is not moved by winds of air
Like the vain boats on the lake.
Lest you think him too a flower of parchment,
Scentless magnolia,
See his living feet under the water fanning.
In the leaves’ self blows the efficient wind
That opens and bends closed those leaves. (*MV* 371-72)

Moreover, the poem implies that Blake’s metaphorical and metamorphical process, his introspective process of individuation and integration, his paradoxical sensibility and his sceptic poetic tradition is identical to that of Hardy, Yeats and Houseman whom Thomas has emulated in his main poetry in defiance of Auden’s metaphysical process and intellectual tradition.

Thomas grapples with various approaches to meet the challenge of the human predicament, and he comes finally to acknowledge the fact that suffering must be undergone to make poetry of innate reality, “of inner themes and inner poetries” (Hardy 140) and to be a tragi-comic poet of human life, “his homely Northern breast and brain ... grow up a Southern tree” (80). But if pain be inescapable in human destiny, this pain must be meaningful through human experience and effort, “man’s enterprise”, “labour is blossoming or dancing where ... the body is not bruised to pleasure soul ... nor beauty born out of its own despair ... nor bleary-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil” (*YCP* 184) as he defies Auden’s metaphysical doctrine that man can be redeemed from his miserable existence through divine Grace. He places reliance on “men that made man of me”, the sceptic poets of inward strength, “about your work in town and farm ... still you’ll keep my head from harm ... still you’ll help me, hands that gave ... a grasp to friend me to the grave” (Houseman 9), and affirms his faith in the potential divinity of each individual being, “O radiant morning, salute the sun ... rous’d like a huntsman to the chase, and with ... thy buskin’d feet appear upon our hills” (Blake 6). Thomas indicates:

Strike and smoothe, for my decks are drums,
 Sing through the water-spoken prow
 The octopus walking into her limbs
 The polar eagle with his tread of snow. (*Poems*)

Besides, Thomas's main poetry repudiates Auden's Eliotian metaphysical theory of impersonality, his theory that a poet has no identity is primarily an aesthetic doctrine as this aesthetic disinterestedness involves a psychic distancing from sensations, which carries with it an assurance of freedom. Thomas emulating Yeatsian process of transfiguration and transformation, envisages another kind of impersonality that is not aesthetic but moral disinterestedness, and is directed towards disinterested goodness and action, sharing the agonies of the fellow-poets "that deep considering mind ... all that you have discovered in the grave ... into the labyrinth of another's being". A detached, amoral artist transcends the human scene, "old lecher with a love on every wind", but a romantically attached poet shares the comforts of mortals, "for it is certain that you have ... reckoned up every unforeknown, unseeing ... plunge, lured by a softening eye ... or by a touch or a sigh..." (YCP 166).

Thomas's occasional dramatic songs, apart from testifying to his Yeatsian mental processes of introspection and individuation, transfiguration and transformation, free play and free love, and pagan altruistic art and paradoxical sensibility, vouchsafes for Yeatsian tragi-comic vision of art song, his disinterested goodwill and action, "and rains down life until the basin spills ... and mounts more dizzy high the more it rains ... as though to choose whatever shape it wills ... and never stoops to a mechanical ... or servile shape, at others beck and call" in contrast to Auden's metaphysical tragic vision of art song and his ascetic aloofness from the predicament of the contemporary poets, "ancestral houses ... surely among a rich man's flowering lawns ... amid the rustle of his planted hills" and the romantic vision of ecstatic existence, "life overflows without ambitious pains" (YCP 169). He makes it more evident of his Yeatsian leaning:

From salt-lipped beak to the kick of the stern
 Sing how the seal has kissed her dead!
 The long, laid minute's bride drifts on
 Old in her cruel bed. (*Poems* 35)

In the last art song that represents the *leit-motif* of all his art songs, his Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, Thomas reaffirms his faith in the *modus operandi* and the *modus vivendi* of Yeats, "driven from home and left to die in fear ... they sang, but had nor human tunes nor words ... though all was done in common as before ... they had changed their throats and had the throats of birds" (YCP 299). In the introductory poem "In Country Sleep" of the last poem *In Country Sleep*, Thomas attempts something very different from his dramatic art song "Over Sir John's Hill" and returns to the sceptic poetic tradition of his main poetry.

In the first part of the poem “In Country Sleep”, Thomas deplores the shrinkage in the range of experience in the contemporary poets casting a wilful glance at the immortal art that they have been dreaming of:

Good-bye to chimneys and funnels,
Old wives that spin in the smoke,
He was blind to the eyes of candles
In the praying windows of waves.... (*Poems*)

Thomas emulates the Blakean process of introspection and individuation and examines his progressive advancement and his sceptic poetic tradition in which he has been reared up in contrast to the contemporary poets’s regression and retreat, estrangement and escapism and their metaphysical and romantic tradition:

But heard his bait buck in the wake
And tussle in a shoal of loves,
Now cast down your rod, for the whole
Of the sea is hilly with whales.... (*Poems*)

The second part of the poem moves along a labyrinth of floating thoughts: diatribes, ecstasies, confessions, and self-doubts come alternately, leaving a tenuous record of the existential Auden’s upsurge in confronting the mighty and perplexing tragic vision of Eliot and the uprising of the Movement poets falling in love with his architectural song. Thomas unfolds:

She longs among horses and angels,
The rainbow-fish bend in her joys,
Floated the lost cathedral
Chimes of the rocked buoys. (*Poems*)

Moreover, Thomas uncovers the designs of the young Movement poets, Larkin and Hughes in the second part of the poem “In Country Sleep”. Larkin’s vast idea of poetry unfolding before Auden makes the Eliotian neo-classical school appear constrictive and coercive according to Thomas:

Where the anchor rode like a gull
Miles over the moonstruck boat
A squall of birds bellowed and fell,
A cloud blew the rain from his throat (*Poems*)

In *The North Ship*, Larkin’s ironic movement echoes, apart from the metaphysical process and aesthetic amoral impersonal art, the fire and fume, the avenging and the killing motif of Auden, “he saw the storm smoke out to kill ... with fuming bows and ram of ice ... fire on starlight, rake Jesu’s stream...” (*Poems* 34-35). Quite contrastingly, the allegorical movement of Hughes is emulous of Thomas’s life-centric metaphorical and metamorphical process, his pagan altruistic impersonal art as his liberating power that links him with Yeats’s *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*:

And nothing shone on the water's face
 But the oil and bubble of the moon,
 Plunging and piercing in his course
 The lured fish under the foam
 Witnessed with a kiss. (*Poems* 35)

What Day Lewis especially notes in the new movement of Hughes and his release of primary affections Thomas's animating process of mutation and transmutation and Larkin's early poems constitute is a withering of Auden's metaphysical process of intensity and immortal art: "It is love's way/To shine most through the slow dusk of adieu./Long may it glow within us, that timeless, halcyon halt/On our rough journey back to clay" (Day Lewis, *Collected Poems* 352).

In the introductory poem "In Country Sleep", the outlines of the poems of Auden, Thomas, Day Lewis, Spender, MacNeice, Fuller, Rhys, Prince, Larkin and Hughes are often blurred, and much of the incoherence arises out of the conceptual imprecision. There is no dominant symbol, and the uncertainties are not held together in a coherent structure; the thoughts and images move in quick succession conducting the reader along a kaleidoscopic sequence of his early poem *18 Poems*. MacNeice explains:

Yes, all you gave were inklings; even so
 Invaluable – such as I remember
 Out of your mouth or only in your eyes
 On walks in blowsy August, Brughel-like December,
 Or when the gas was hissing and a glow
 Of copper jugs gave back your lyrical surprise. (MacNeice, *Collected Poems* 269)

Thomas's paradoxical sensibility seeks to render in verse his drifting thoughts exploring the visionary romantic poetry of the contemporary poets, "a weeping firmament, a sac of waters, a passive chaos" (*DCP* 347). Day Lewis, however, discovers a structural coherence in the apparently unconnected thoughts and shows how hopes of pure poetry alternate with doubt and reassurance in the first part of the poem:

Rhadamanthine moment! Shall we be judged
 Self-traitors? Now is a chance to make our flux
 Stand and deliver its holy mark... (*DCP* 347)

He perceives that the second part projects Auden's metaphysical and visionary, immortal and mortal thoughts keeping themselves aloof, but the objective inclusive mind of Thomas is no longer agitated:

Now, when the tears rise and the leaves crumble,
 To tap the potency of farewell.
 What ark is there but love? Let us embark. (*DCP*)

The introductory poem “In Country Sleep”, thus, comes full circle, the accession to trance in the opening section and the return to it in the second section provide the framework for his shifting thoughts and visions. The mental state of Thomas’s contemporary poets is akin to that of reverie induced by waking sleep. While the Eliotian Auden has been continuous in pursuit of ironic metaphysical sensibility and immortal art and in pacifying the realistic contemporaries of the thirties, Thomas has been distinctive as a poet of metaphorical and metamorphical process, human impersonal art and paradoxical sensibility under the direction of the holy markings of Blake and his sceptic altruistic inclusive mind. This contrasting dramatic scenes could be illuminated with the lines from Blake, “to see a World in a Grain of sand ... and a Heaven in a wild flower ... hold Infinity in the palm of your hand ... and Eternity in an hour” (Blake 88).

2. Reviews

In the last poem *In Country Sleep*, Moynihan observes, “Blake’s influence looms large in Thomas’s attempt to find symbols for the old forms of Chapel and country” (33). Tindall explains that “in the house at Laugharne, Thomas has read his daughter to sleep with folk and fairy tales. However terrible these tales, he says fear no more. Have no bad dreams of wolves, pigs, ganders, or witches; for these are natural or fictive” (275). Munro states that in the last poem Thomas “has given meaning to the human predicament, by imposing on it an all-containing form” and “the form of the poem may be taken as a miniature of the whole pattern of existence” (27). Yeomans perceives “a unified overall poetic vision emerging, one which exists in its own right—without translation” (105).

2.1 Methods and Objectives

However, a metaphorical study of the poem abounding in functional imagery of his own poems as well as the poems of the contemporary poets suggests that Thomas’s poised and benign functioning as a poet of introspective process of individuation and integration, organic form and regeneration, paradoxical sensibility and cosmopolitan culture ensures his success, appeal and popularity in contrast to Auden’s metaphysical process of intensity and immortal art that deprives him of his grandeur, influence and popularity which, in turn, makes him malevolent and violent, aggressive and avenging against Thomas whom he considers as an adversary of his greatness and the divided approach of the political, the war and the Movement poets and their broken dreams and their malignant move for the dethronement of Thomas. This paper, focusing on the contrary *leit-motif* of the contemporary poets concerned and their contra-functioning, purposes to reveal the distinctive position and the paradoxical sensibility of the dying poet Thomas in contrast to the whimpering end of Auden and his metaphysical ironic sensibility and the futility of the other contemporary poets and their dissociated complex sensibility.

3. Discussion

The introductory poem “In Country Sleep”, as the ultimate ideal, has both amplitude and particularity, and renders the whole gamut of experience, “the high four ... winds, from the dousing shade and the roarer at the latch ... the pouncing boughs ... to the thorn” (*Poems* 80), the futuristic existential Auden, the dreaming realistic poets of the thirties, the war poets of the forties and the Movement poets of the early fifties. The implication seems to be that such paradoxical poem combines visionary quality with realism according to MacNeice:

Look at these snapshots; here you see yourself
Spilling a paint-pot on a virgin wall
Or boisterous in a sailing-boat or bubbling
At a Punch-and-Judy show or a music –hall
Or lugging Clausewitz from a public shelf
To make your private notes, thumbing and doubling.... (*MCP*)

Thomas’s appreciation of the passive and the active war poets is however, qualified by certain reservations as he perceives that the death of the poets of pity Lewis and Keyes in the battlefield is, indeed, a debasement of the humanitarian ideal of their predecessors Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, but their aestheticism marks a distinct phase in their active journey, especially in the posthumously published poems in contrast to the romantic contemporary war poets, “lie fast and soothed ... safe be and smooth from the bellows of the rushy brood” (*Poems*).

The war poet Prince’s thought in “Soldiers Bathing” takes another direction, chiefly under the influence of the existential poet Emily Bronte, “my dear, my dear ... out of a lair in the flocked leaves in the dew dipped year ... to eat your heart in the house in the rosy wood”. In the early poem *Poems*, fear and love contrasted with silence and gentle sounds presage a new upsurge in the poetic firmament, “fear or believe that the wolf in a sheepwhite hood ... loping and bleating roughly and blithely leap”. In the poem “Soldiers’ Bathing” Auden becomes a negative force, “never and never, my girl riding far and near in the land of the hearthstone tales, and spelled asleep” (*Poems* 79), and Bronte’s belief in the paradox of life-in-death, the romantic existential art gives a sense of controlled power, what Day Lewis calls, “Time has not altered here the rhythms I was rocked in ... creation’s throb and ache” (*DCP* 278). Prince’s contemporary impassive war poets’s predilection seems to be luscious sweetness of Edmund Blunden. Two ideals especially in respect of technique are in Fuller’s poem *Epitaphs and Occasions* juxtaposed: energetic stillness of Thomas, and the romantic sentimental manner of Blunden, “sleep, good, for ever, slow and deep, spelled rare and wise”. Fuller’s last phase restates the Wordsworthian ideal of his early phase. In *The Black Season*, Rhys who seeks to encompass the manifold realities of existence reaffirms that pain and ugliness should be excluded from poetry. This exclusive ideal is an inheritance from the Wordsworthian romanticism, but it is also consonant with Blunden’s view of life and poetry, “my girl ranging the night in the rose and shire ... of the hobnail tales” (*Poems*).

The enchanted romanticism inducing a slumberous trance is introduced again in the last phase of the political poets of the thirties, and their poems evoke the romantic atmosphere of the poems written in the early phase. In *An Italian Visit*, Day Lewis's horizon widens again, and his mind is stirred by a sudden agitation and bewilderment. He emerges as a man of "ruling passion"; his twenty years of struggling and perilous adventure fail to daunt his romantic spirit:

All the more reason for going with a *tabula rasa*,
Not trailing clouds of vainglory or the old tin can of conscience.
Granted we cannot entirely escape ourselves, and granted
That up to a point we can only what we're bound to look for,
Still, there is such a thing as simple impressionability,
A scene in which form and colour are more than mere dreams of our senses.... (DCP
311)

The concrete form of "a loving cup" of Edward Thomas who "never has burned or bowed to popular gods, when fame beckons ... modestly melts in the crowd" spreads awfully "the crowd of your haunting fancies ... the streams, airs, the dews ... the soldier shades and the solacing heartbeams" (DCP 282) before Day Lewis's wondering gaze.

In *The Edge Being* without conscious deliberation, Spender reaches towards Shelley's concept of imagination that would work into a vast design the intricate reality of the human situation; the concern with "human islands under their seas have roots ... spread through the multitude's fretful blood ... and to passionate childhoods" (28) marks a clear departure from the last phase to the early phase emphasizing on the pleasurable aspects of life. He expresses his sense of guilt at his failure to strike a blow:

I lacked
That which makes cities not to fall
The drop of agonizing sweat which changes
Into impenetrable crystal upon crosses
Which hear cathedrals.... (26)

In MacNeice's *Holes in the Sky*, the fever of agitation, however, wears off and produces a feeling of exhaustion, and with the thought of fatal flight of Icarus in his mind, "conscious of waste of labour, conscious of spite and hate ... of dissension with his neighbor, of beggars at the gate..." (MCP 266). He shows the topsy-turvy of the poets of the thirties as a whole:

How was it then? How is it? You and I
Have often since we were children discussed death
And sniggered at the preacher and wondered how
He can talk so big about mortality
And immortality more. But you yourself could now

Talk big as any – if you had the breath. (*MCP* 267-268)

MacNeice seeks relief in humble diversions and in the romantic poetry of John Clare, “out of a saint’s cell ... the night bird lauds through nunneries and domes of leaves” (*Poems*). Thomas finds that the political poets, disappointed with the alleged deviation of his later art songs from the element of pity of his early poem *18 Poems*, shift their love to the romanticism of their early phase, “never, my girl, until tolled to sleep by the stern ... bell believe or fear that the rustic shade or spell ... shall harrow and snow the blood while you ride wide and near...” (*Poems*).

The fallen realistic poets of the thirties Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice, having completely liberated themselves from the influence of the ambiguous sound pattern of Auden and Thomas, the dilemmatic war poets, Fuller, Rook and Rhys freeing themselves from the ennui and boredom of the laborious process of unrealistic, unnatural and impersonal influences of Auden and Thomas, finally move to the Wordsworthian individualism and subjectivism as a hope for poetry in their last phase, “tired of this northern tune ... the wind turn soft ... blowing white butterflies ... out of the dog-rose hedges...” (*MV*). Thomas perceives that the *leit-motif* behind the realistic and the war poets’s love and hate of impersonality, their change of heart is due to the “casualty” of their personal interests, “good-bye, good luck, struck the sun and the moon ... to the lost fisherman on the land” (*Poems*). Wordsworth defends this kind of “casualty” as a value in the famous sonnet “The World is Too Much with Us”: “The world is too much with us; late and soon,/Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers/Little we see in Nature that is ours...” (601). Hughes attributes the disastrous failure of the political poets to their impulsive and conflicting love between the personal and the artistic patterns, “far above the trees, between the washing hung out ... they wait with interest for the evening news” (Hughes 43). The necessity of social comforts has been the root cause of the “casualty” of the war poets’s love of impersonal, immortal art, “the hare that hops up, quizzical, hesitant ... flattens ears and tears madly away and the wren warns” (Hughes).

The Movement poets are carried away from things of delicate beauty, and their thoughts take a different direction, “but conscious also of love and the joy of things and the power ... of going beyond and above the limits of the lagging hour” (*MCP*). In the poem “Warning to Guest”, John Holloway perceives that Auden’s feeling of religious awe implies dedication to a pursuit that is not distracted by pragmatic considerations. Thomas’s kind impersonal art and paradoxical thought give way to striking contrast and challenge where “the strong tide has flowed ... right to the tunnel underneath the road ... along the formless dune” (*Contemporary Verse* 314). The analogies “against the flare and descent of the gas ... I heard an old woman in a shop maintain this fog comes when the moon is on the wane” (313) indicate a sudden awakening from repose. In “Against Romanticism”, Kingsley Amis sees in Auden awe is mingled with delighted animation, “to please an ingrown taste for anarchy ... torrid images circle in the wood ... cramming close the air with their bookish cries”, and Thomas’s whisperings of unseen presences revealing the secrets of poetry, “sweat for recognition up the road”, reverberate in

human hearts, “a traveller who walks a temperate zone ... woods devoid of beasts, roads that please the foot” (329).

To Elizabeth Zennings of *Poems*, Auden’s state of grandeur akin to the metaphysical ideal of poetry seems realizable, “out of my window late at night I gape ... and see the stars but do not watch them really ... and hear the trains but do not listen clearly”. Thomas’s awareness of a vital archetype and the world is attended by self-evaluation and humility. The lines “inside my mind I turn about to keep ... myself awake, yet am not there entirely” suggest the vastness of the realm of poetry that Thomas explores. Zennings’s bafflement, “my thoughts about it divide ... me from my object” recalls Thomas’s experience as witnessed in the early poem, “something of me is out in the dark landscape” (CV 359). The initial stupefaction of Auden, D.J. Enright perceives in the poem “A Poor Little Lonely Child Whose Parents Have Gone to a Cultural Festival”, is followed by a sense of participation in the universal orchestration, and Thomas assigns to himself the function of an earthly medium communicating the voice of poetry since the beginning of his poetic career, “this night and each night since the falling star you were born ... ever and ever he finds a way, as the snow falls” (*Poems* 80).

In the poem “Time Was”, John Wain finds that Auden in his poetry considers himself till the end of his artistic career only a passive vehicle, but the thought of individual talent, the individual role is also simultaneously present, “a mind ago I took the stones for clay ... and thought a man could foot it like a beast ... but animals have no hard words to say ... we too were shielded once, but that has ceased” (CV 355). From the inception, Auden thinks of his own equipment, and this brings to his mind the different stages through which he must necessarily pass to prepare himself adequately for the great task. The first stage is one of total surrender to the god of song, Walter de la Mare, the poet of Nature; he must dissolve his self and be a part of the historic tradition. “A daisy gleams as coldly as a star/And flints are hard because I know they are” (356). In the second stage, the historic mind turns to the inner life represented successively by the historical consciousness of the artist Eliot, “Time was I watched the minnows in the brook”. This interiority prepares the mind for the early phase of *Poems* (1928), *Poems* (1930) and *Look Stranger!* in an ironic way: the mind receives impressions of the outside world, and enriches its own spiritual resources: “Tonight my breath acknowledges its hosts --/The living man is cradled by his ghosts” (CV). In the transitional middle phase, the active, existential mind is directed to concrete, objective reality:

Time was I thought that ghosts were tame as hens
And flew no higher than a man could leap,
And that when death had smashed the spirit’s lens
The lonely body cried itself to sleep.
Nor mind but marrow set my error right.
My veins grew round like saplings to the light. (CV)

The passage is significant for it implies that this is the first time that Auden in *Another Time* recognizes the need to present life in its totality, to render multiple experience. Only by comprehending the complex nature of reality can one achieve transcendence and immortality: the twin images of Atlas and Icarus reflect Auden's aspiration in *The New Year Letter*.

The triumphant affirmation is followed by a sudden doubt that the aspiration may not be realized, "I wonder why I was born dismayed ... what was the shape that gibbered through the room?" (CV). The thought of the brevity of his poetry forces a pause "I think I lay and trembled in the womb ... as mindlessly as rags flap in the wind ... my soul knew guilt before my body sinned" (CV). In *For the Time Being*, Auden's uncertainty is further expressed in the image of Simeon, "I cupped my eyes: nine seasons I lay prone ... now, looking up, I find the world has grown" (CV). This doubt, however, proves momentary, and faith in poetry of suffering, poetry as a passive medium in the last phase of *The Age of Anxiety*, "I writhed: I opened: suffering was life", and hope in the logocentric structural tradition of Eliot asserts itself in *Nones*: "Now let my fossils lie: no more retreat:/My hopes are sharp as glass before my feet" (CV). Thomas recasts what Wain renders as the Word-centric Auden's pilgrimage of suffering and progress and Larkin's struggling to recapture the artistic process of Auden:

As the rain falls, hail on the fleece, as the vale mist rides
Through the haygold stalls, as the dew falls on the wind-
Milled dust of the apple tree and the pounded islands
Of the morning leaves, as the star falls, as the winged
Apple seed glides,
And falls.... (*Poems*)

In the poem "Autumn Chapter in a Novel", however, Thom Gunn projects the brewing conflicts, the brooding "fighting terms" between Auden's phono-centric poetry, his timeless pattern of death-in-life and Thomas's soundless poetry, his cyclical pattern of life and death. The successive images—"time held off the natural heat", "the sun is distant", "a tutor's indignation works on air", and "sap draws back inch by inch"—suggest that life centric Thomas fulfills himself in significant moments:

They leave at last a chosen element,
Resume the motions of their discontent;
She takes her sewing up, and he again
Names to her son the deserts on the globe,
And leave thrust violently upon the pane. (CV 377)

Thomas's stance of arrested motion of life of birth and death and epiphenomenal meaning suggests an energy and purposiveness that marks a distinct break from Auden's existential manner of anxiety, fear, menace and his epistemological meaning. Auden's transcendental ideal in the last phase would imply rejection of concrete human realities, of what Day Lewis describes as "Arno endlessly into the loom of oblivion flows" (351). Contrastingly, the continuous line of inclusiveness and noble impersonal art in

the last poem *In Country Sleep* marks a further movement in Thomas's attitude of ignorance and innocence, benignity and benediction to the contemporary poets's cry of revenge and violence, hatred and death, malignity and malediction, "and falls, and flowers in the yawning wound at our sides ... as the world falls, silent as the cyclone of silence (*Poems*). The world of pain and benevolence is poignantly real. This reality of life overwhelms Thomas's consciousness, and the contrast with Auden's visionary ideal makes Thomas's experience all the more intense. Auden's pursuit of appearance and reality, pure aesthetic and immortality has also been in the nature of a challenge which Thomas takes up for an exclusive analysis in the second part of the poem "In Country Sleep".

In the juvenile verse "The Carter's Funeral", Auden recalls the mortal and the immortal nature of experience in the contemporary poetry and yearns for the song pattern, "little enough stays musing upon ... the passing of one of the masters of things ... only a bird looks peak-faced on ... looks and sings". In "Allendale", he learns in his dream that the phantom he has loved so long is the historical minded poet de la Mare and his eternal art, "what look you for, creatures that die in a season ... we care not, but turn to our dreams and the comfort we find there ... asking no reason" (*New Verse* 5). Thomas recasts the earlier Auden: "Night and the reindeer on the clouds above the haycocks/And the wings of the great roc ribboned for the fair!" (*Poems* 80). Sleep or waking trance takes on various significances in Auden's poetry in changing contexts. In *Poems* (1928), the reposeful trance conducts the Oxford Auden to rich contemplation of dialectic poetry, "night and the vein of birds in the winged, sloe wrist ... of the wood..." (*Poems*), in contrast to his contemporary poets's romantic verses. Auden explains his vision of impersonal poetry:

The future shall fulfil a surer vow
Not smiling at queen over the glass rim
Nor making gunpowder in the toproom,
Not swooping at the surface still like gulls
But with prolonged drowning shall develop gills. (*Poems* 29)

In *Poems* (1930), however, sleep becomes the very antithesis of truth under the influence of Eliot, "the surplice ... hill of cypresses" (*Poems*) and Auden sings that "song, the varied action of the blood ... would drown the warning from the iron wood ... would cancel the inertia of the buried" (*Poems* 46). In *Look Stranger!*, it opens up a terribly withering vision, "drives through the night and star—concealing dawn ... for the virgin roadsteads of our hearts an unwavering keel" (12), "mopping and mowing through the sleepless day" (30) and "the river is alone and the trampled flower ... and through years of absolute cold" (68). In *Another Time*, again, sleep in the figurative sense provides a momentary illusion that is finally shattered, "to fresh defeats he still must move ... to further griefs and greater ... and the defeat of grief" (16) and Auden perceives his existential art as "the saga from mermen ... to seraphim ... leaping" (*Poems*), his advancement as "defenceless under the night ... our world in stupor lies ... beleaguered by the same ... negation and despair ... show an affirming flame" (*Another Time*

115) and his future in continuation of his past:

It is their to-morrow hangs over the earth of the living
And all that we wish for our friends: but existence is believing
We know for whom we mourn and who is grieving. (AT 111)

In the poems of the middle phase, *New Year Letter* and *For the Time Being*, dream and waking consciousness are set in sharp opposition, “the gospel rooks! All tell, this night, of him ... who comes as red as the fox and sly as the heeled wind” (Thomas, *Poems*). Auden projects, “and the shabby structure of indolent flesh ... give a resonant echo to the Word which was ... from the beginning, and the shining ... light be comprehended by darkness” (*New Year* 188). The play of sleep and wakefulness, “it was the night of All Souls” (346), is also built into *The Age of Anxiety*: “Illumination of music! The lulled black-backed/gull, on the wave with sand in its eyes! And the foal moves/through the shaken greenward lake, silent, on the moonshod hooves, /In the winds’ wakes” (*Poems*). The sea-image, again, suggests the journey of the metaphysical conceptual mind grappling with the riddle of existence: a strain of music conducts it to Eliot’s intensity of Pentecostal experience in “Little Gidding” in which Eliot suggests that a grasp of historic design through which the past, and the people of past, the rose of life or love and the yew-tree of death live and they are of equal validity as apprehensions of life, “we are born with the dead ... see, they return, and bring us with them ... the moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree ... are of equal duration” (*ECP* 208). But in *Nones* no clear opposition between the two states is implied in the Eliotian Auden’s song pattern, “Holy this moment, wholly in the right ... as, in complete obedience ... to the light’s laconic outcry...” (9). As Thomas recasts: “Music of elements that a miracle makes!/Earth, air, water, fire, singing into the white act” (*Poems*). Larkin, commenting on the Eliotian Auden’s historic sense of poetry, “Time is the echo of an axe ... within a wood” (Larkin, *Collected Poems* 295), unfolds his love of Auden’s impersonal art, “as I stir the stubborn flint ... the flames have left ... and grief stirs, and the deft ... heart lies impotent” (298). The thought that Auden is not merely a passive medium but a conscious, creative agent destined to fulfil a mission urges the young poet Larkin to look forward and survey the work to be done. Larkin perceives:

So every journey that I make
Leads me, as in the story he was led,
To some new ambush, to some fresh mistake
So every journey I begin foretells
A weariness of daybreak, spread
With carrion kisses, carrion farewells. (*LCP* 289)

Thomas perceives that Larkin’s poetic journey takes him successively through the poetry of Hardy, Yeats and Auden, “the haygold haired, my love asleep, and the rift blue ... eyed, in the haloed house, in her rareness and hilly ... high riding, held and blessed and true...” (*Poems* 81). To grapple with the

paradox of death-in-life is to explore the metaphysical process, to interpret the meaning of suffering in human life, “only for turning of the earth in her holy ... heart” (*Poems*). Larkin’s vision of poetry shifts from the earthly plane, “the brain runs on through wildernesses ... of cities. Still the hammered miles ... diversify behind her face” (*LCP* 286) and turns for inspiration and sustenance to the Eliotian Auden’s historical rule and energy in contrast to Hughes’s celebration of Thomas’s Yeatsian sceptic tradition and his paradox of life-in-death. Thomas explains:

Only for the turning of the earth in her holy
Heart! Slyly, slowly, hearing the wound in her side go
Round the sun, he comes to my love I
And truly he
Flows to the strand of flowers like the dew’s ruly sea,
And surely he sails like the ship shape clouds. (*Poems*)

The descriptive phrases of Auden’s historical pattern of death-in-life and Thomas’s cyclical pattern of life-in-death, having their bearing in a dramatic context, are thus almost reconstructed to yield symbolic significances, and in this enactment of Larkin’s poetry Thomas witnesses again the power of Word-centric tradition in Auden’s poetry of the early phase. The sun, the sea and the earth are telescoped in a single vision of beauty: the sea appears as a mighty minstrel playing before the earth, and the music of the ocean recalls Thomas’s songs that dispel the cares of life of the fallen poets. The sea-image and the ocean-music, associated with the poetry of Yeats, haunt Thomas continually—the sea reveals the eternal mystery of nature and creation, a mystery recaptured only by Hughes, and the continually beating waves bring back to Larkin’s mind the rhythmic richness of songs of Auden and his ironic art songs.

Larkin’s references to Auden’s Eliotian song pattern that sees the end of a phase and the beginning of a new vision of pure poetry have now almost a dedicatory accent:

How to recall such music, when the street
Darkens? Among the rain and stone places
I find only an ancient sadness falling,
Only hurrying and troubled faces,
The walking of girls’ vulnerable feet,
The heart is its own endless silence kneeling. (*LCP* 301)

Larkin’s adaptations from the early poems of Auden reinforce his speculations regarding the truth of human existence and the problem of pain. He recalls in Auden’s poetry and in the miseries of Auden’s life the strange working of destiny; the mystery that is only grasped by one who has transcended this temporal plane “submission is the only good ... let me become an instrument sharply stringed ... for all things to strike music as they please” (*LCP*). Hughes observes that Larkin’s prayer would not be successful, “he might well wring his hands ... and let his tears drop ... he will win no more prizes ...

with fantails or pouters” (Hughes 16).

In Hughes’s language Larkin finds a dramatic rendering of his own experience, the parallelism and contrast giving it both intensity and a relative impersonality, “with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox ... it enters the dark hole of the head ... the window is starless still; the clock ticks ... the page is printed” (Hughes 7). For Hughes this means a release from immediate experience and also a heightening of experience in the maiden volume of poems *The Hawk in the Rain* under the direction of Thomas’s gentle impersonal art and paradoxical sensibility. The modern poet Laurie Lee describes the falling of Auden and the rising of Larkin worshipping Auden’s aesthetic amoral art and the dying of Thomas as a great poet of moral disinterestedness and the rising of Hughes under the influence of Thomas:

The hard blue winds of March
Shake the young sheep
And flake the long stone walls;
Now from the gusty grass
Comes the horned music of rams,
And plovers fall out of the sky
And filling their wings with snow. (MV 394)

Larkin notes Thomas’s movement from Auden’s monumental pattern and impersonal art to Yeats’s cyclical pattern and warm impersonal art, the architectonic quality enhancing the dramatic effect as “only an image fancied in conceit” and half-sound, “I can half-believe ... the soundless river pouring from the cave ... is neither strong nor deep” (LCP 277).

Hughes’s brief comment on Thomas, “on a short fierce fuse” indicates, more than anything else, the zealous devotion of a disciple following the footsteps of his master with animation and enthusiasm, though not without discernment:

Not in boredom –
The eye satisfied to be blind in fire,
By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear –
He spins from the bars, but there’s no cage to him. (Hughes 4)

What particularly appeals to him is Thomas’s mastery of the right phrase, his image making power. It is significant that many of the phrases and images Hughes underlines convey the sense of arrested motion, “at a cage where the crowd stands, stares, mesmerized ... as a child at a dream, at a jaguar hurrying enraged ... through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes”. Hughes also shows interest in movement, in the succession of time, “over the cage floor the horizons come”. He discovers the tired beauty of Auden identical to that of his political contemporary poets, “fatigued with indolence, tiger and lion ... lie still as the sun” and also hears shrieks of the realistic and the romantic war poets as sceptic born dissolute prisoners, “the parrots shriek as if they were on fire, or strut ... like cheap tarts to attract the stroller with the nut”. Hughes’s phrase “his stride is wildernesses of freedom” and especially

the word “stride” shifts the perspective from the sublime to the earthly and suggests the essential humanity of the poet Thomas. His statement “more than to the visionary his cell” is a value-judgement; the comparative further implies that the focus of reality is the human situation, ‘the world rolls under the long thrust of his heel’. Thomas recasts the introspective process of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation, pagan altruistic impersonal art in rejection of Auden’s metaphysical process and immortal art, “he comes to take ... her faith this last night for the unsacred sake ... he comes to leave her in the lawless sun awaking ... naked and forsaken to grieve he will not come” (*Poems*).

Thomas’s art songs suggest discord and if the human situation is more intensely real, the harmonious universe of Auden’s early verses would appear somewhat illusory, “the boa-constrictor’s coil ... is a fossil. Cage after cage seems empty, or ... stinks of sleepers from the breathing straw ... it might be painted on a nursery wall” (Hughes). Thomas also shows an attempt at a reconciliation of contrary virtues: romantic abundance or magnificence and concentration, constructive ability; adequacy of expressiveness and inexhaustible suggestiveness. The art songs of Auden and Thomas have been showing that their response is principally confined or directed to these contradictory qualities, the Eliotian immortal vision of metaphysical process and aesthetic amoral art vis-a-vis the Yeatsian mortal vision of cyclic process and Grecian altruistic art according to Hughes’s disinterested reading that Thomas recasts as closing lines of the poem “In Country Sleep”: “And you shall wake, from country sleep, this dawn and each first dawn,/Your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun” (*Poems*); it is also the response of Larkin, the young, maturing poet, to Auden’s tragic vision of art song and Hughes to Thomas’s tragi-comic vision of art song.

Hughes finds that Thomas’s interest in the succession of time is indicated in his art songs and in quick paces hours move towards final moment; he marks each notation indicating the passage from night to dawn. Thomas’s art songs indicating movement or succession of time does not, however, evince his interest in temporal sequence that characterizes the romantic poetry and his attention is focused more on atmospheric shifts, or the structural beauty that symbolizes Auden’s metaphysical art songs. His occasional art songs are implicit of his pictorial and sculptural effect of individual images achieving a balance of movement and motionlessness, his Yeatsian introspective process of endurance and tolerance, his pagan altruistic soundlessness, “between the streams and the red clouds, hearing curlews ... hearing the horizons endure” (Hughes 9). Hughes traces the continuous presence of the historical pattern of death and birth, aesthetic amoral impersonal art and tragic vision of ironic metaphysical sensibility in Auden’s poetry:

This house has been far out at sea all night
The woods crashing through darkness, the booming hills
Winds stampeding the fields under the window
Floundering black astride and blinding wet

Till day rose.... (Hughes 34)

The qualities Auden seeks and appreciates in poetry are intensity, feeling and expression, roundedness of imagery, and depth of experience and thought, universal in essence but assimilated into his own phono-centric consciousness.

Hughes also witnesses the contradistinction of Thomas's art songs moving through life pattern of birth and death, vicarious impersonal art and the tragi-comic vision of paradoxical pagan sensibility right from the beginning to the end:

We watch the fire blazing,
And feel the roots the house move, but sit on,
Seeing the window tremble to come in,
Hearing the stones cry under the horizons. (Hughes)

As a matter-of-fact, Thomas's poem "In Country Sleep" that recalls the memory of his art songs of Audenesque structure, "the fearful symmetry", his Yeatsian paradoxical sensibility, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his success and influence, popularity and greatness in defiance of the Eliotian Auden's immortal vision of art song and his intellectualism stands as an objective correlative of Blake's song "The Tiger":

Tiger! Tiger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry? (59)

Auden, having lost his grand image of being the unrivalled ruler of metaphysical artist of structural song, "fearful symmetry" among the contemporary poets, becomes a victim of fear and hatred, grumbles and murmurs, violence and vengeance against Thomas. His songs of modernism and musical avant-gardism proves as a terror to the political poets when they imitate the song pattern without undergoing the metaphysical process and get their career "burnt" with "the fire". Then, they start cursing Auden with complaints with which the curse Thomas when he deflects from his early poem of pity and aspires for Auden's immortal art in his later art songs, "dare seize the fire". The passive war poet Prince finds that Auden's Eliotian immortal art song as a thing of awe and wonder, "dread hand ... dread feet". The impassive war poets Fuller, Rook and Rhys dare not "grasp" Auden's art as they find that his metaphysical process of intensity as "dread grasp" and his aesthetic amoral distance as "deadly terrors clasp". The Movement poets as lovers of Auden's artistic structure sympathize with his innocent fall and raise their war cry and vengeance throwing "down their spears" (Blake) in support of their celebrant's murderous designs against Thomas.

Edwin Muir, contradistinguishing the ever-rising literary reputation of Thomas from the rising and falling of the historical Auden and the continuous falling of the political poets of the thirties, the war poets of forties and the Movement poets of the fifties, attributes all these to their own *modus operandi*

and *modus vivendi* and their *leit-motif*, the cyclical process of birth and death and moral disinterestedness, the metaphysical process of death and life and aesthetic amoral disinterestedness and the romantic process of self-expression and ecstatic existence:

The ancestral deed is thought and done,
And in a million Edens fall
A million 3Adams drowned in darkness,
For small is great and great is small,
And a blind seed all. (MV 357)

G. S. Fraser finds that it is Auden's metaphysical process of historical sorrow and immortal beauty, transgression and transmigration and his metaphysical, ironic sensibility that makes him popular as well as unpopular, great and small, "winter has a diminishing sky ... and a perspective other than retrospect ... that hurts and holds the eye". The political and the war poets' divided approach between love and fear, pity and pathos, fire and ice, the private and the public elements, romantic dreams and impassivity lands them in dissociated sensibility and tragic failures, "winter offers us, for instance... the nerves of a leaf on a puddle of ice ... and the terrible nearness of distance". In the case of Thomas it is his active process of integration and reconciliation of contrary experiences, the introspective process of human predicament, individuation and integration, paradoxical sensibility that makes him great and popular for ever. Fraser explains the distinctive noble functioning of Thomas and his polygonal sensibility in the last phase in contrast to the contemporary poets' avenging manoeuvrings:

Winter does not offer escape
Forward or backward from its final landscape
And on all sides its skies fall
As if the whole world were a theatre
Where the round year had taken its curtain call. (402)

So, the matter of difference is that Thomas functions as an active lover of endurance and tolerance and pagan altruistic tradition, Auden as an entranced, passive lover of metaphysical tradition and eternal beauty and others as tranced, impassive dreamers of romantic tradition and ecstatic existence.

E. J. Scovell perceives that in the last phase Auden's metaphysical pursuit of appearance and reality, past and future stands as historical progress of a pilgrim of tension and restlessness, anxiety and loneliness, the political poets' forward and backward, conflicting moves between present and future ending as victims of broken dreams and digression, ennui and boredom and Thomas's introspection of memories of past, present and future as a forward journey of individuation and integration, self-contentment and happiness despite his vague memories of being betrayed by the contemporary poets whom he has offered salvation and promising hope for poetry and prospective life. He brings out Thomas's active and distinctive functioning as a poet of equanimity and magnanimity, prudence and benevolence in the last phase in contrast to the contemporary poets' functioning amid sleeplessness and

restlessness:

Not at the pillow end of your big bed
 You sleep, but where your wandering head
 Happens to tire and rest. So sometimes, thrown
 Far out on your blue eiderdown,
 You seem a sleeping sea-bird, guarded best
 By yielding to the sea, wild sea its friend and nest. (MV 371)

The introductory poem “In Country Sleep”, thus, reveals Thomas as a poet of paradoxical sensibility, modesty and intellectual honesty, impersonal vicariousness and sceptic poetic tradition analogous to his poetical character in the early poem 18 Poems while suggesting Hughes as an apparent-heir to his poetry of memory and self-analysis “I ... am found ... o let him scald me and drown ... me in his world’s wound” in contradistinction to Auden’s historical tradition, his aesthetic amoral sensibility finding Larkin as the perpetuator of his metaphysical poetry, his pure joy, pure being and war cry against Thomas, “his lightning answers my ... cry. My voice burns in his hand ... now I am lost in the blinding ... one. The sun roars at the prayer’s end” (Thomas, *Collected Poems* 69). In contrast to the contemporary poets’ compulsive urge to retrospective perspective to ensure their future, Thomas demonstrates in the introductory poem that his last poem *In Country Sleep* has been consistently upholding and reinforcing the introspective process of individuation and integration, paradoxical sensibility of his early poem 18 Poems which foresees his success and forward movement as a popular poet till his death, his metaphorical and metamorphical functioning till the last poem with no compulsion to go after Auden’s metaphysical process of historical sorrow and historical art and his Eliotian intellectualism. On the whole, the introductory poem stands as locus classicus of his introspective main poetry of individuation and integration, his Grecian altruistic tradition of Hardy, Yeats, Houseman and Blake and their polygonal sensibility that has undone the grand image of the metaphysical artist Auden and his ironic sensibility, that has been a source of fear and menace to Auden’s power and pride.

4. Result

In the last poem *In Country Sleep*, especially in the titular poem “In Country Sleep” Thomas brings out the distinction between night and dawn, dream and reality, immortality and mortality, death and life, sleep and poetry representing the two aspects, the passive and the active, of the creative mind of the twentieth century poets, although the division is not so simple and sharp. Reflective paradoxical poetry points to a higher reality, according to Blake, in contrast to the intellectual ironic poet’s maddening love for immortal art and metaphysical reality “where the youth pined away with desire ... and the pale virgin shrouded in snow ... arise from their graves, and aspire ... where my sun-flower wishes to go...” But this gradation does not nullify the value of contemplative repose. Blake’s poem “Ah, Sunflower”

underlines the positive and creative aspect of sleep or introspection:

Ah, sunflower, weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime,
Where the traveller's journey is done.... (75)

The introspective aspect of poetry is also conveyed in John Keats's poem "Sleep and Poetry" through a series of comparatives: sleep "is more gentle than a wind in summer", "more soothing than the pretty hummer", "more tranquil than a musk-rose" blossoming "in a green island", "more beautiful than the leafiness of dales", "more secret than a nest of nightingales", "more serene than Cordelia's countenance", and "more full of visions than a high romance". The epithets and associated pictures emphasize seclusion and quietude, generating a trance-like experience. The idea of reverie is carried further in the subsequent phrases: "soft closer of our eyes", "low murmurer", "light hoverer", "wreather of poppy-buds", "silent entangler of beauty's tresses". The invocation to sleep leads to the invocation to poetry of mortal life, "life is but a day ... a fragile dewdrop on its perilous way ... from a tree's summit", and images of still life are replaced by images of moving creatures, particularly of birds—swan, dove, and eagle. The attributes associated with the birds are strangeness, smoothness, and regality. The similes, however, do not seem adequate to convey his vision of poetry, and a query follows: "What is it? And to what shall I compare it?" (Keats 404). This kind of impersonal concern for human reality has been the voice of great poetry and Thomas sings the language of individuation and integration, modesty and magnanimity for the sufferers of immortal art in contrast to Auden's language of sophistication and irony, aesthetic amoral disinterestedness:

There was a saviour
Rarer than radium,
Commoner than water, crueller than truth;
Children kept from the sun
Assembled at his tongue
To hear the golden note turn in the groove,
Prisoners of wishes locked their eyes
In the jails and studies of his keyless smiles. (*Poems* 135).

It is Blake's introspective process of reconciliation and regeneration, his sceptic poetic tradition, his paradoxical sensibility that directs Thomas's last poem *In Country Sleep* to complete his journey of self-discovery in the context of Auden's charges of murderous designs in Thomas's art songs and the political poets condemnation of his later art songs deviating from his early poem *18 Poems* and aspiring for Auden's immortal art. It is Blake's *Songs of Experience*, his polygonal sensibility, his pagan altruistic impersonal art that guides Thomas to endure his predicament and endear himself to his contemporary poets of aggressive approach. Thomas explains the situation:

I turn the corner of prayer and burn
 In a blessing of the sudden
 Sun. In the name of the damned
 I would turn back and run
 To the hidden land
 But the loud sun
 Christens down
 The sky. (*TCP*)

In the opening section of “In Country Sleep”, Thomas focuses on what constitutes his pagan altruistic approach to human reality, his paradoxical sensibility in contrast to Auden’s metaphysical technique, his metaphysical reality and his ironic sensibility while indicating the “damned” state of the realistic and the romantic war poets in the last phase and the dreaming early Movement poets.

Thomas as a traveller of life and a poet of memory enacts in the poem “In Country Sleep” the inner drama of the contemporary poets’s dying vision of pure joy and pure being as well as his own dying vision of poetry of life and death and paradoxical sensibility sharing the ecstasy and agony of the damned lovers of eternal art in contrast to his contemporary poets’s functioning with anger and hatred, vengeance and murderous plans. In this dramatic monologue, his performance is identical to that of the poet Blake and his role as a poet of inclusiveness, “for, washed in life’s river ... my bright mane for ever shall shine like the gold ... as I guard o’er the fold” (Blake 57). In the introductory poem “In Country Sleep”, Thomas revealing himself as a poet of memory and in the last song “Over Sir John’s Hill” as an artist dying for the redemption the dying artist Auden with no memory of his ironic war cry and his sympathizers raging anger for his death for the preservation of his eternal art echo the performance of Blake, “and now beside thee, bleating lamb ... I can lie down and sleep ... or think on Him who bore thy name ... graze after thee and weep” (56-57).

The questioning, uncertainty, and indecision of the realistic poets of the thirties, the romantic war poets of the forties and the visionary Movement poets of the early fifties seem to have relevance in Thomas’s paradoxical sensibility in the poem “In Country Sleep” which posits suffering and lack of certitude as a value, “I wandered through each chartered street ... near where the chartered Thames does flow ... a mark in every face I meet ... marks of weakness, marks of woe”. A passage from Blake remains equally effective in a different context and even acquires an added depth of meaning:

But most, through midnight streets I hear
 How the youthful harlot’s curse
 Blasts the new-born infant’s tear,
 And blights with plagues the marriage-hearse. (Blake 76)

Auden’s dogma is as assertive as his war-mongering while the contemporary poets’ speculation of immortal art leaves the mind open to receive experience and admits of alternative approaches. Thomas

has been believing since the inception of his poetic career that human minds should move each other in contrary directions, should cross each other in multiple points. The poets of the thirties, the forties and the fifties cluster, thus, gives a simultaneous impression of distance and nearness, of fictional illusoriness and intensity of immediate experience and Thomas acquires symbolic richness of paradoxical sensibility, “for my voyage to begin to the end of my wound ... we heard the sea sound sing, we saw the salt sheet tell ... lie still, sleep becalmed, hide the mouth in the throat ... or we shall obey, and ride with you through the drowned” (*Poems*).

In the early poems *18 Poems* and *25 Poems*, Thomas’s vision of metaphorical and metamorphical process, sweet impersonal art and paradoxical sensibility for the salvation of the forsaken and forlorn political poets stands as a transference from Yeats in contrast to Auden’s Eliotian tragic vision of metaphysical process of historical knowledge and historical sorrow, his logo-centric immortal art; his Yeatsian paradoxical sensibility and his tragi-comic vision of impersonal art, his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song contrasts with Auden’s Eliotian tragic vision of perfect pure art or craftsmanship. Thomas recalls:

... and their calves
Are making under the green laid veil
The long-legged beautiful bait their wives.
Break the black news and paint on a sail
Huge weddings in the waves.... (*Poems*)

In the transitional poem, *The Map of Love*, Thomas continues to emulate Yeats and his process of organic form that makes his early poem popular, influential and great. With his Yeatsian introspective process of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation, paradoxical vision of Grecian altruistic art song he persuades the pre-war romantic poets, the dilemmatic lovers of Wordsworth, Auden, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon to be explorative to become great, “over the wakeward-flashing spray ... over the the gardens of the floor ... clash out the mounting dolphin’s day ... my mast is a bell-spire...” (*Poems*).

The Yeatsian modes of approach and operation, the cyclical process of life and death, the pagan altruistic art that Thomas suggests to the war poets does not reflect any intense love for Yeatsian process or hatred for Auden’s Eliotian intellectual process or aversion for the Wordsworthian process. He persuades the metempirical lovers, the poets of dissociated sensibility to choose the road that has made him happy and great as a hope for greatness and happy life. Thomas explains his moral disinterestedness, his disinterested goodness and action with which he discovers his identity as a poet of warm impersonal art and success in the early phase:

Not for the proud man apart
From the raging moon I write
On these spindrift pages

Nor for the towering dead
 With their nightingales and psalms
 But for the lovers, their arms
 Round the griefs of the ages,
 Who pay no praise or wages
 Nor heed my craft or art. (*Poems*)

In the later poem, *Deaths and Entrances*, Thomas has been functioning as sober and sagacious, as modest and moderate, asocial, apolitical and ahistorical, wise and innocent as the war poet A.E. Houseman and as equipoise and empathic as Yeats, as enduring and tolerant as Hardy and as pragmatic and vicarious as he is in the early poem while adhering to the process of becoming and introspection, the process of assimilation of disparate images to achieve the organic form and integration of differences and formlessness in contrast to the functioning of the poets of war time as romantic, ironic and political, “good luck to the hand on the rod ... there is thunder under its thumbs ... gold gut is a lightning thread ... his fiery reel sings off its flames” (*Poems*). Thomas recalls from his memory:

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

As a matter of fact in the poem “In Country Sleep”, Thomas explores how far the evolutionary growth of his polygonal mind allows of individual volition or will in contradistinction to Auden’s polysemous mind and the contemporary poets’s polyphonic mind. He renders the inner convulsions of his contemporary poets against the background of a lost battle and projects his own emergence as a poet of metaphorical and metamorphical process, philanthropic impersonal art and paradoxical sensibility, success and influence, popularity and greatness under the influence of the pagan altruistic tradition:

The whirled boat in the burn of his blood
 Is crying from nets to knives,
 Oh the shearwater birds and their boatsized brood
 Oh the bulls of Biscay and their calves
 Are making under the green.... (*Poems*)

In the allegorical poem *The Hawk in the Rain*, Hughes describes the evolution of Thomas’s pagan altruistic impersonal art from chaos, and the deification of Thomas after a phase of ignorance gives the

story of success and popularity of his art songs, and this throws further light on the conflicting motifs of the contemporary poets, “coming the wrong way, suffers the air, hurled upside down ... fall from his eye, the ponderous shires crash on him ... the horizon traps him; the round angelic eye ... smashed, mix his heart’s blood with the mire of the land” (Hughes 3).

In the poems of war poets of the forties, however, the language of emotion and the language of discourse are juxtaposed and never coalesce, and this separation results from marked shifts in mental states: moments of ascent and moments of descent, ecstasy and withdrawal from ecstasy alternate in the poems of Fuller, Rook, Rhys, Prince, Lewis and Keyes. Thomas perceives:

With men and women and waterfalls
Trees cool and dry in the whirlpool of ships
And stunned and still on the green, laid veil
Sand with legends in its virgin laps.... (*Poems* 36)

The war poets’s self-love and sentiment, fear and isolation, personal comforts and security deprive them of the poet’s way of knowledge to great poetry which, in turn, recalls the words of Blake, “nought loves another as itself ... nor venerates another so ... nor is it possible to thought ... a greater than itself to know” (Blake 79). In his tranced moments, Prince speaks the language of feeling and image and is unaware of the temporal order with its attendant frustrations. This state of ecstasy is immediately followed by a return to actuality; in such moments he employs the language of discourse, and his attempt at vindicating his own situation has a touch of irony. Thomas argues that Prince does not really submit himself to the fires of irony:

The rod bends low, diving land,
And through the sundered water crawls
A garden holding to her hand
With birds and animals. (*Poems* 37-38)

Prince’s ignorance of Auden’s paradox of death-in-life deprives him of his ambition to become an artist like Auden and his love of Bronte’s paradox of life-in-death gives him further hope for poetry. His love and fear, loss and hope recalls the passage from Blake “another maiden like herself ... translucent, lovely, shining clear ... threefold each in the other closed ... O, what a pleasant trembling fear ” (Blake).

Despite his assertion of triumph, Lewis feels inwardly that he is defeated, and an absence of searching self-analysis is noted. Keyes’s last poem produces a dual impression of life and death: while all contraries disappear in his intensity of trance, his argumentations do not have much validity and fail to carry conviction. The interesting thing, MacNeice observes, is that the war poets’s doubt keep slipping from them and steal into their protestations:

Archaic gusto sprouted from a vase
Of dancing satyrs, lips of a Gothic imp

`Laughing down from a church-top, inky fingers
 Jotting notes on notes, and piccolo and tympanon
 Importunate at the circus – but there lingers
 Also a scent of awe, a cosmic pause.... (*MCP*)

Their ignorance of innocent death could be explained in terms of Blake, “to this day they dwell ... in a lonely dell ... nor fear the wolish howl ... nor the lion’s growl” (71). The war poets’s divided approach to great poetry and their unfulfilled dreams are identical to the tragic fall of the political poets of the thirties, “she nipped and dived in the nick of love ... spun on a spout like a long-legged ball” (*Poems*).

In the last phase of the political poets of the thirties, Thomas describes what may be called the exclusive mode, and the experiences conveyed is partial:

And prophets loud on the burned dunes;
 Insects and valleys hold her thighs hard,
 Times and places grip her breast bone,
 She is breaking with seasons and clouds.... (*Poems*)

In *An Italian Visit* Day Lewis intends to, and does indeed, set out again in search of new adventures. The situation is vividly dramatized, the language and the rhythm carry the inflexion of a living voice, and his yearning for travel symbolizing search for knowledge is adequately communicated:

I, merely the sensual man have a scope undreamed of
 By you whom a larger ambition drives to discard or belittle
 Appearance. And so I ask of Italy nothing more than
 Mere foreignness, the shock and buoyant feel of the unknown,
 And quivering over its surface an iridescent path, an
 Arrow to point me, the eternal tripper, away from home. (*DCP 314*)

MacNeice perceives that despite Day Lewis’s magnificence, his monologue reveals an unseemly egotism, and he could scarcely blame an impish reader if he jests at all his pompous perorations, “... and you come in ... jaunty as ever but with a half-frustrated ... look on your face, you expect the show to begin ... but you are too late and cannot accept the proof” (*MCP 267*).

Spender’s attitude in *The Edge of Being* is plainly unsympathetic; he appreciates the virtues of Auden, he recognizes his efficiency and prudence, but the patronizing tone is unmistakable. Thomas comments:

With men and women and waterfalls
 Trees cool and dry in the whirlpool of ships
 And stunned and still on the green, laid veil
 Sand with legends in the virgin laps.... (*Poems*)

MacNeice holds that Spender betrays incomprehension of his own situation as he avoids complexity; the affirmative tone of Spender lacks the necessary authenticity.

That you are too late because you have died too early
And this is under sea. Puzzled but gay
You still come in, come in, and the waves distort
Your smile and chivvy limbs through a maze of pearly
Pillars of ocean death.... (MCP)

MacNeice in *Holes in the Sky* shows greater understanding of the complex pattern of experience; he fully recognizes the passion, yearning, and pain of youth, and this reinforces his vision of life's journey:

However since cannot from this date
Talk big or little, since you cannot answer
Even what alive you could, but I let slip
The chance to ask you, I can correlate
Only of you what memories dart and trip
Through freckling lights and stop like a forgetful dancer. (MCP 268).

So, the worldly-wise political poets's dream of immortal art ends up with depression and dejection that seeks shelter in romanticism with which they begin their poetic career, "till every beast blared down in a swerve ... till every turtle crushed from his shell ... till every bone in the rushing grave ... rose and crowed and fell" (*Poems*). The fall of the visionary poets and their grumbles are reminiscent of Blake's song "A Dream", "troubled, wildered, and forlorn ... dark, benighted, travel worn ... over many a tangle spray ... all heart-broke, I heard her say" (59).

In Auden's early poetry, the thinking process is more vividly unfolded, and the element of ratiocination intersecting the Eliotian sensibility becomes indistinguishable from feeling, "a music hall ... or lagging Clausewitz from a public self ... to make your private notes, thumbing and doubling". In the infirm middle phase, and yet, Tiresias-like, he has a clairvoyant insight into the past, present, and the future. And in the last phase, he submits his situation and the predicament of the whole world of his contemporaries to relentless scrutiny and his historical sense only deepens his distress and vivifies the horror. MacNeice estimates:

Here you are swapping gags in winking bars
With half an eye on the colour clash of beet
Lobster and radish, here you are talking back
To a caged baboon and here the Wiltshire sleet -- here the sack
Of night pours down on you Provencal stars. (MCP).

Encouraged by the conviction that what makes history or meaningful existence for mankind significant is man's conquest of time and nature, that these "given" moments of illumination, though brief, are

sufficient to indicate that the Eternal, and not the flux of time and nature, is the most important thing for human life, Auden like Eliot resolves to continue the quest for “a further union, a deeper communion” with God. Eliot sings “for history is a pattern ... of timeless moments. So, while the night fails ... on a winter’s afternoon, in a secluded chapel ... history is now and England” (*ECP*). Auden’s ceaseless pilgrimage for the City of Jerusalem, the metaphysical immortal art song and his continuous conflict with the sceptic poetic tradition is symbolic of the meaning of Blake’s song “The New Jerusalem”, “I will not cease from mental fight ... nor shall my sword sleep in my hand ... till we have built Jerusalem ... in England’s green and pleasant land” (Blake 212). Thomas sees that there is nothing modern about Auden’s framework of beliefs that gives coherence to the flow of his Eliotian historical consciousness and serves as the criterion of value. The modernity in Auden’s religious or semi-religious poetry lies precisely in Eliot’s integration of intellect and feeling:

Clings to her drifting hair, and climbs;
And he who taught their lips to sing
Weeps like the risen sun among
The liquid choirs of his tribes. (*Poems*)

However, Thomas perceives that while the Movement poets are stirred, and rightly, by Auden’s vigorous affirmation, his metaphysical disputations fail to carry them along with him. In the last phase, Thomas’s pagan cordial neutrality, his Yeatsian mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song makes him more popular and influential and Auden’s metaphysical aesthetic amoral impersonal art, his immortal vision of art song and immortality makes him as unpopular, depressed and discontented as the political poets, the celebrants of his early art songs *Poems*.

In *Nones*, Auden appeals for the patronage of his estranged contemporaries of the thirties to return to his timeless historical pattern assuring them of work of art and eternity, “come back to revive me ... cradling your spark through blizzard, drift and tomb” (*DCP* 298), with a view to confront the “antimythological myth” (*Nones* 13) of the popular Thomas and defeat his hope for immortality, “that, blessed and formidable ... Lady” (23). Recalling his success as a great artist in his early phase, he reaffirms and reassures:

...since
Nothing is free, whatever you charge shall be paid
That these days of exotic splendour may stand out
In each lifetime like marble
Mileposts in an alluvial land. (*Nones*)

In his eagerness to trace a steady development from youth to age and extol the wisdom that comes with maturity, Auden almost ignores the frustrations of old age, and the comforting assurance does not seem comforting enough according to Day Lewis:

Love, more than our holidays are numbered.
Not one day but a whole life is drained off
Through this pinprick of doubt into the dark. (*DCP*)

Auden's structural vision of pure poetry, his tragic vision of amoral aesthetic, his phono-centric vision of immortal art falling in line with the metaphysical functioning of the Georgian poet de la Mare and the intellectual modern poet Eliot is identical to Blake's description of "the Crystal Cabinet", "this cabinet is formed of gold ... and pearl and crystal shining bright ... and within it opens into a world ... and a little lovely moony light" (Blake).

The Movement poet Larkin perceives that Auden's aesthetic amoral impersonal art would succeed, after tidying over the challenges of the pagan poet Thomas, in landing himself on the occidental, the Word—centric historical tradition of Eliot in contrast to the failure of the political and the war poets, "the third ship drove towards the north ... over the sea, the darkening sea ... but no breath of wind came forth ... and the decks shone frostily" (*LCP*). Thomas presents their fond hope:

And steeples pierce the cloud on the shoulder
And the streets that the fisherman combed
When his long-legged flesh was a wind on fire
And his loin was a hunting flame.... (*Poems*)

In the epicrisis "The North Ship", while commenting on the pursuit of pure poetry and the topsy-turvy of the twentieth century poets, Lawrence and Yeats, Larkin hopes that chances are that the epistemological and episcopal Auden would be blessed with immortality as he is pre-ordained in contrast to the grand finale of the ephemeral success of the epiphenomenal Thomas and the failure of the epi-central political and the war poets:

I saw three ships go sailing by,
Over the sea, the lifting sea,
And the wind rose in the morning sky,
And the one was rigged for a long journey. (*LCP*)

Larkin's contemporary poet Hughes perceives that it is Auden's Eliotian death-centric metaphysical process, his ironic phono-centric sensibility and his aesthetic amoral impersonal art that deprives him of his grand image and it is Thomas's Yeatsian life-centric transfigurative and transformative process, his paradoxical sensibility and his tragic joy that makes him a popular artist of art songs:

Arrange his limbs in order, open his eye,
Then stand, helpless as ghosts. In a scene
Melting in the August noon, the burned man
Bulks closer greater flesh and blood than their own,
As suddenly the heart's beat shakes his body and the eye. (Hughes)

In *The Hawk in the Rain*, Hughes perceives Auden as heaving a sigh of relief from his “casualty” and moves forward with the Eliotian art and the Yeatsian Thomas remains distinctively lively and lonely, inclusive and modest, ignorant of the charges of being ironic, murderous and violent, “see the grave of dead leaves heave suddenly, hear ... it was a man fell out of the air alive” (Hughes 43).

Moreover, the political poets, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice of the thirties, the war poet Prince of the forties and the Movement poet Larkin of the fifties have miserably damned in their ambition to recapture the song pattern of Auden. Hughes attributes the sufferings of lovers of Auden’s grand style, their anxiety and loneliness, fear and insecurity, dilemma and conflict, accident and suffering to their lack of knowledge of Auden’s metaphysical process of intensity, their ignorance of Auden’s *modus operandi*. In contrast, Thomas who has emulated the Yeatsian *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*, paradox of life-in-death, mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song proves his mettle and moves into a new epoch which would be one of lasting popularity. Hughes describes Thomas’s art songs as a virtuoso performance of quite dazzling accomplishment rather than a representation of Auden’s metaphysical tradition, his immortal vision of immortal art and immortality:

In din of the crowded streets, going among the years, the faces,
May I still meet my memory in so lonely a place
Between the streams and the red clouds, hearing curlews,
Hearing the horizons endure. (Hughes 9)

The Movement poets’s ironic vision resulting from integration may produce, Day Lewis argues, varied effects. The hush of natural objects so effectively conveyed in the early poems of the Movement poets whom Day Lewis remembers in *An Italian Visit* as “Elegy Before Death: At Settignano”. Not natural objects, but paintings, busts and books produce an eloquent silence; Auden’s undying voice of the dead whisper in the breathless quietness of the night inspires the poets with a zeal for emulation according to Day Lewis:

The sun is setting: the veranda frames
An illuminated leaf of Italy.
Gold and green and blue, stroke upon stroke,
Seem to tell what nature and man could make of it
If only their marriage were made in heaven. But see,
Even as we hold the picture,
The colours are fading already, the lines collapsing
Fainting into the dream they will soon be. (DCP 345)

If Auden’s self- deprecation and keen awareness of his own and the world’s moral predicament heighten his tragic perception of human folly and hollowness and of man’s imminent doom, the effect that Thomas intends in his generous impersonal poetry is predominantly comic with an admixture of pathos. Auden’s clinical diagnosis of the ailments of his own and of the world around him, and his

contrast between “blinded minstrel” and “titivated room”, appearance and reality, between the imposing art and the inner emptiness, is focused in every poem of the Movement poets according to MacNeice:

Of which high company were you,
Outside the cliques, unbothered with fashion,
And self-apprenticed to the trade
Of thinking things anew, stropping the blade
You never used, your multi-coloured passion
Having been merged by death in universal Blue. (*MCP*)

However, the early Movement poets’s moving between their wild love of Auden’s art song, his tragic vision of pure aesthetic poetry and their ironic language of wilderness, vengeance and violence resulting in their whimpering cry, “and fled their love in a weaving dip ... Oh, Jericho was falling in their lungs...”. (*Poems*) is symbolic of Eliot’s comment on the dreaming “hollowmen”, “shape without form, shade without colour ... a paralysed force, gesture without motion” (*ECP* 79). The inactive Movement poets’s division between love and fear recalls Blake’s lines, “they dance around the dying and they drink the howl and groan ... they catch the shrieks in cups of gold, they hand them to one another...” (189).

The complex tone of the monologue of Larkin and Hughes, a sense of sickness and rottenness blending with a sense of the ludicrous determines the images of Auden and Thomas. Larkin has brief moments of Auden’s illusory grandeur, and Hughes identifies himself with the Yeatsian Thomas; but he also possesses an alert intelligence that immediately reveals his real nature and cuts him down to size. Day Lewis recasts their response and receptivity:

Then I thought of our Christmas rose at home—the dark
Lanterns comforting us winter through
With the same dusky flush, the same bold spark,
Of confidence, O sheltering child, as you. (*DCP* 298)

Larkin is continually baffled and enchanted by the life-centric process of Hardy and Yeats and to rediscover the death-centric metaphysical process in Auden’s early poems is both terrifying and reassuring, “the northern sky rose high and black ... over the proud unfruitful sea ... east and west the ships came back ... happily or unhappily” (302). Even in the early phase Larkin shows an awareness of Auden’s burden of mystery though inadequate according to MacNeice:

He begged and you responded, being yourself,
Like Raftery or Homer, of his kind –
Creative not for the counter or the shelf
But innocently whom the world bewilders
And so they observe and love it till their mind

May turn them from mere students into builders. (*MCP*)

Larkin's maiden volume *The North Ship* fails to recapture Auden's musical structure which reminds the failure of the war poet Prince's maiden poem *Poems*, and their grand failure reminds the lines of Blake, "I strove to seize the inmost form ... with ardor fierce and hands of flame ... but burst the crystal cabinet ... and like a weeping babe became..." (Blake 120).

Hughes's early phase shows a perception, identical to that of the early Thomas, of the inner resources of language capable of rendering the totality and particularity of a mood or situation or an experience. And it is this interpenetration of the energetic selves that gives Hughes's monologue its distinctive quality according to MacNeice:

So what you gave were inklings: trivial signs
Of some momentous truth, a footprint here and there
In melting snow, a marginal caress
Of someone else's words, a gentleness
In greeting, a panache of heady wines
Or children's rockets vanishing in air. (*MCP*)

Hughes's maiden attempt *The Hawk in the Rain* that emulates Thomas's poetic process of cyclical pattern, his paradoxical sensibility, his human impersonal art and examines the tragic predicament of human situation and the damned contemporary poets of the thirties, the forties and the fifties stands as a success anticipating his epoch-making poetic career. The emergence of Hughes could be described in the words of Blake, "a weeping babe upon the wild ... and weeping woman pale reclined ... and in the outward air again ... I filled with woes the passing wind" (121).

In the introductory poem "In Country Sleep", Thomas underscores that one significant aspect of his last poem has been the process of self-sacrifice and redemption, altruism and pagan tradition, and that his disinterested goodness and action is built up more on contrast than on conflict and it is interesting to note how this determines and activates the afflicted realistic poets and the affective war poet to hope for harmony and co-existence in sharp contrast to Auden's metaphysical aesthetic and amoral impersonal art that commands the lovers to war and death of the challenger of his greatness. Bernard Spencer contradistinguishes the external invasion of Auden's furies, his murderous ironic designs, the political and the Movement poets' tactical moves of violence against Thomas till his death, "but the salt Aegean ... rolled waves of killing" from Thomas's magnanimity, his ignorance of dramatic conflict and cold war which he treats as internal family feud of differences and contrary motifs, "quarrels of aliens":

In the boulevards of these dead you will think of violence,
Holiness and violence, violence of sea that is bluer
Than blue eyes are; violence of sun and its worship;
Of money and its worship. And it was here by the breakers
That strangers asked for the truth. (*MV* 377)

Spencer regards Thomas's impersonal art of inclusive pattern as his empathic culture, amelioration and co-existence "the warm is that they are ... first promise of the South to waking travellers ... of the peacock sea, and the islands and their boulder-lumbered spurs" in contrast to Auden's art songs of cold aesthetic and immortal art, conflict and violence, envy and hatred, indignation and grave-digging for his adversary,, "the cold thing is ... one grey look surveyed ... the builder imagining the city, the historian with his spade" (378).

In the poem "To the River Duddon", Nicholson contradistinguishing the distinctive functioning of Thomas in the last poem as a poet of Grecian altruistic impersonal art and polygonal sensibility, as "the radical, the poet and heretic" from Auden's functioning as a metaphysical artist of eternal art and the political, the war and the Movement poets's poly-phonic functioning, "knew that eternity flows in a mountain beck ... the long cord of the water, the shepherd's numerals ... that run upstream, through the singing decades of dialect", maintains that Thomas has been emulating since his early poem the identical process of life-in-death, the moral disinterestedness and the sceptic poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats, Houseman and Blake:

He knew beneath mutation of year and season
Flood and drought, frost and fire and thunder,
The frothy blossom on the rowan and the reddening of the berries,
The silt, the sand, the slagbanks and the shingle,
And the wild catastrophes of the breaking mountains,
There stands the base and root of the living rock,
Thirty thousand feet of solid Cumberland. (MV 398)

In the last phase, Auden's situation and concern are very much unlike Thomas's, but in Auden the readers can witness an oppressive consciousness of reality, and in Thomas identification with the moral disinterestedness of Blake reaches a deeper level of perception when he reflects on human misery, injustice or inconstancy and death in the poem "In Country Sleep. " Blake sings:

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine,
The moon, like a flower,
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night. (55)

Mutability is a persistent theme in the last phase of both Auden and Thomas and their thoughts on death become more poignant in their declining health. Auden refers to his discourse on mortality in the poem *Nones*, "... my name ... stands for my historical share of care ... for a lying self-made city ... afraid of

our living task, the dying ... which the coming day will ask" (10), and in the altered context even the platitude of Thomas's vainglorious justice of the peace carries a new depth of focus, "wherever ... the sun shines, brooks run, books are written ... there will also be this death" (49). Commenting on the last phase of the artistic career of Auden and Thomas and their inclusiveness, Day Lewis bids farewell to the impact of their impersonal art, their *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* that haunt the early poems of Larkin and Hughes:

Oh, may my farewell word, may this your elegy

Written in life blood from a condemned heart

Be quick and haunting even beyond our day. (DCP 351-52)

The dying moments of Auden, too, offer a parallel to the dying days of Thomas. The thought of leaving the world deepens Thomas's perceptions of the ultimate end of all kind of poetry, pure, visionary and pragmatic, "whales in the wake like capes and Alps ... quaked the sick sea and snouted deep ... deep the great bushed bait with raining lips ... slipped the fins of those humpbacked tons" (*Poems*). He examines his own dying moments of his momentous poetic career, his happiness and contentment, his eventful paradoxical sensibility, his magnanimous impersonal art offering to the tumultuous Auden the process of salvation that he has offered to the afflicted political and the war poets in the past, "I who hear the tune of the slow ... wear-willow river, grave ... before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken ... stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds sailing" (*Poems* 114) in contrast to the broken-hearted contemporary poets's ironic plans for his death and their aspiration and ambition for eternal art, "my bright yet blind desire, your end was this ... death and my winged heart murderous ... is the world's broken heart, buried in his ... between whose antlers starts the crucifix" (*MV* 374). The malignity of Auden's metaphysical ironic character and the malcontent of the contemporary poets's paroxysmal character originate from their religious, political and romantic influences. In contrast, the magnanimity of Thomas's paradoxical cosmopolitan character evolves from the pagan poetic tradition of Hardy, Yeats, Houseman and Blake and their altruistic poetic culture: "For, oh, my soul found a sunday wife/In the coal black sky and she bore angels/Harpies around me out of her womb!" (*Poems*). The introductory poem "In Country Sleep" projects, in a nutshell, the theme of the last poem *In Country Sleep*, the distinctive and successful functioning of Thomas as an introspective poet of individuation and integration, transfiguration and transformation, paradoxical sensibility and pagan altruistic art songs, success and contentment in contrast to Auden as an artist of metaphysical sensibility and amoral character, anxiety and discontentment and others as romantic poets of dissociated sensibility, broken dreams and budding dreams, "all wholesome food is caught without a net or a trap ... bring out number weight and measure in a year of dearth ... no bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings" (Blake 126).

Thus, the introductory poem "In Country Sleep" implies that it is Thomas's introspective process of individuation and integration, coherence and co-existence, identity and self-identity, his paradoxical

sensibility and his cosmopolitan culture, his tragi-comic vision of Grecian altruistic art song, his *Weltansicht* that guards his success and reputation, his sober and benign functioning as an ardent emulator of the pagan altruistic tradition of Hardy, Yeats, Houseman and Blake till his death, “the sun arises in the East ... cloth’d in robes of blood and gold” in contrast to Auden’s metaphysical process of self-annihilation and immortal art, pure poetry and pure being, impersonality and co-inherence, ironic sensibility and cosmic love, his immortal vision of art song, his *Weltanschauung* and his aesthetic amoral functioning as a passionate worshipper of the Word-centric structural tradition of de la Mare and Eliot and their Word-centric tradition that deprives him of his grandeur and popularity and makes him a victim of anger and hatred, violence and war, “swords and spears and wrath increas’d ... all round his bosom roll’d ... crown’d with warlike fires and raging desires” (Blake 80) and the other contemporary poets’s functioning as poets of *Weltschmerz* and romantic dissociated sensibility that costs their comforts and sleep and makes them malcontent and malignant, “chastity prays for me, piety sings ... innocence sweetens my last black breath ... modesty hides my thighs in her wings ... and all the deadly virtues plague my death” (*Poems* 92).

5. Conclusion

The epitomic introductory poem “In Country Sleep” that introspects the memory of his self-discovering, self-vindicating and self-dedicating process and his functioning as a poet and an artist of transfiguration and transformation, Grecian altruistic art song, paradoxical sensibility, cosmopolitan culture identical to that of his early poem I8 Poems is reminiscent of Blake’s passage, “love seeketh not itself to please ... not for itself hath any care ... but for another gives its ease ... and builds a heaven in hell’s despair” (Blake 66) in contrast to Auden’s discontentment and sadness and his functioning purely as a poet of metaphysical sensibility, aesthetic amoral disinterestedness, metropolitan culture, “love seeketh only Self to please ... to bind another to its delight ... joys in another’s loss of ease ... and builds a hell in heaven’s despite” (66-67) and the other contemporary poets’s hopeless career and their functioning as poets of romanticism and dread memories, “so sung a little clod of clay ... trodden with the cattle’s feet ... but a pebble of the brook ... warbled out these metres meet” (Blake). Thomas’s introspective process of self-awarding, self-guarding and self-rewarding experience of man’s sorrow as his individuation, his contemporary poet’s sorrow as his co-existence, “till our grief is fled and gone ... he doth sit by us and moan” and his mortal vision of Grecian altruistic art song as his paradoxical sensibility make him self-fulfilled and self-contented, wise and innocent, “and can He who smiles on all ... hear the wren with sorrows small ... hear the small bird’s grief and care ... hear the woes that infants bear” in contrast to Auden’s metaphysical process of religious sorrow and immortal architectural art, his metaphysical immortal vision of aesthetic amoral art song, his ironic sensibility and the realistic poets’s conflicting process of political sorrow and the war poet’s personal sorrow and the Movement poets’s aesthetic sorrow that reach the destinations of unfulfilled sorrows and make

them as victims of jealousy and ill-will, hatred and violence, vengeance and war cry, tumultuous sensibility, “he doth give his joy to all ... he becomes an infant small ... he becomes a man of woe ... he doth feel the sorrow too” (Blake 55).

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