

IV THE EARLY MATURE POETRY, ca 1940-55

The complexities of man's fallen condition dominate Hope's early mature poetry; there is little sign of the poetic vision of man's spiritual evolution which is evident in the middle period poetry. Goaded by a residual sense of perfection, the poet repeatedly rails against the shortcomings of human reality and struggles to reconcile the non-rational and rational elements of self. The loss of Eden is a dominant preoccupation but the strength of physical and rational drives, competing with spiritual demands, is so real as to preclude any notion of retreat in search of a lost Eden. By the time of completion of "An Epistle from Holofernes" (1946-55, pp.58-62), and which is not in The Wandering Islands, there is recognition in the poetry that within the human condition lie the means of regeneration of the spiritual wasteland of temporal existence. It is a hard-won perception and a difficult perception to maintain.

Hope's early mature poetry shows some correspondence in preoccupations with Brennan's poetry but, where Brennan's vision appears to have remained personal, concern for humanity underlies Hope's mature poetry, even though his exploration of the human condition is centred on his experience as man and poet. Because he shares Brennan's awareness of man's loss of Eden, Hope responds sympathetically to Brennan's poetry. By 1947, Hope had studied Brennan's work and recognised the body of Brennan's poetry as 'a great myth in which the stages of metaphysical pilgrimage are set forth ... The essence of the theme is the search for complete humanity.'¹

1. Hope, "Books," review of Christopher Brennan : the Man and his Poetry, by A. R. Chisholm, Meanjin, 6, 1, 1947, p.54.

In "Christopher Brennan : An Interpretation", which began as two lectures in 1967, Hope takes issue with Professor Wilkes for Wilkes' failure, *apropos* Brennan, 'to regard the search for Eden as the fundamental human quest, the drive that explains civilization and in the end destroys it.'² Civilisation will be destroyed if it is supplanted by a higher state of being. The human quest for Eden is in response to the spirit's drive to surmount the fallen world. By his response to that drive, man will realise his true being. Man is preconditioned to become a spiritual being because Adam was created in God's likeness.

This aspect of Hope's poetic thinking has some parallels in Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist and Ulysses. Hope shares the concept which Joyce's Stephen voices, "God, the sun, Shakespeare, a commercial traveller, having traversed in reality itself, becomes that self ... Self which itself was ineluctably preconditioned to become."³ Hope labels the quest for Eden a 'human' quest but his poetry identifies it as man's quest. The pre-human condition of Adam was physical but asexual, and with spiritual being. Adam was created an emperor of Paradise and that is the condition which Adam's sons aspire to regain. Because Original Sin made the human condition inescapable, Adam's sons cannot retreat to Eden. It is in the fallen world that man must create Eden anew by spiritualising the world; imagination is his means of doing this and woman's sexuality is the means of release of the male's imagination. On the way in which the imagination allows transcendence, it is convenient to borrow the expression of the idea from Stephen Dedalus: "'In the intense instant of imagination, when the mind, Shelley says, is a fading coal, that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be."⁴ Hope's views on woman's place in this scheme of things, in his poetry for a long time veiled or uncertain, is that she has retained her Edenic nature,

2. Hope, "Christopher Brennan," p.150.

3. Joyce, Ulysses, p.479.

4. Joyce, Ulysses, p.183.

which is rational and sexual, and enjoys that nature in the human state; and he shares the thought of Stephen Dedalus: 'A woman brought sin into the world.'⁵ The view given, possibly flippantly, by Joyce's Stephen, that "'in the economy of heaven ... there are no more marriages, glorified man, an androgynous angel, being wife unto himself'",⁶ does not appear in Hope's poetry but is implicit in the concept of woman as a human being without a spiritual dimension.

Hope has recalled that Yeats was the dominant influence while he was writing The Wandering Islands.⁷ The satires, the use of myth in ways which do not draw on standard associations and the view that modern man does not have the heroic stature of the ancients reflect Hope's concurrence in Yeats' ideas and methods. Yeats' "Vacillations VII" is an expression of the ontological tensions which distinguish The Wandering Islands:

The Soul. Seek out reality, leave things that seem.

The Heart . What, be a singer born and lack a theme?

The Soul. Isaiah's coal, what more can man desire?

The Heart. Struck dumb in the simplicity of fire!

The Soul. Look on that fire, salvation walks within.

The Heart. What theme had Homer but original sin?

The Wandering Islands, and other poems of the 1940s and 1950s not in the first volume,⁸ show how torn Hope was, at the time of the composition of the poems, between the demands of soul, mind, heart and body. The drive to seek out the substance of being, to 'Seek out reality, leave things that seem', repeatedly conflicts with an inescapable awareness of the shadow of being, caused by Original Sin, that is the human experience.

5. Ulysses, p.123.

6. Ulysses, p.201.

7. Hope, in "These are the books that really matter," composed by Mary Rose Trainor, Sydney Morning Herald, 14 August 1982, p.50.

8. e.g. Hope, "Private Screening" and "Phallus," No.1 July, 1943, n. pag.; "Phallus" and "Meditation Music," rpt in Collected Poems 1930-1970, pp.30-1, 27-9.

The poet's first volume overall makes an impact of terror and distaste and conveys responses of fear and loathing occasioned by the facts of human existence. The cruelties and imperfections of man's experiences of temporality are shown in the works of The Wandering Islands (with some exceptions, such as "The Gateway", p.25, and "William Butler Yeats", p.72) to be compounded of the shortcomings of man. Whilst these bearings in the volume undoubtedly take some of their direction from Hope's wide reading, in particular from Milton's Paradise Lost and from Nietzsche, they originate in his own encounter with the world. Because Hope seems to have chosen the epigraph for his late-arrived first poetic child, The Wandering Islands, after the poems it contains were written and selected for inclusion, the epigraph is an appropriate point at which to begin consideration of the Hope poetry of the period ca 1940-55. H. M. Green has recorded that in the typescript of The Wandering Islands, to which he had access when he was writing on Hope for A History of Australian Literature, the epigraph was from Dante's Inferno:

O you who are of sane mind
 Consider the wisdom that appears
 From beneath the veil of these strange verses.⁹

Two points present themselves. The first is that, in choosing those lines, Hope considered the poems of the volume to be instructional, which suggests that the poems were composed by Hope in the spirit as he set about writing the reviews of the 1940s, a suggestion borne out by the poetry. The other point is that the import of the poems is veiled. Hope uses the distancing device of dramatic presentation in most of the poems of The Wandering Islands. There are obviously personal poems, such as "Observation Car" (pp.22-3) and "Ascent into Hell" (pp.31-4); even so, in

9. H. M. Green's translation. The typescript epigraph is in Italian.
 H. M. Green, A History of Australian Literature, Vol. II, 1923-50, p.890.

"Ascent into Hell" the first person narration gives way to third person reportage and in "Observation Car" the 'knock-about farce'¹⁰ works at the level of a painted-on clown's mask. In the majority of the poems, Hope intends to create independent art objects, not statements by their author, even when the poems are designed to be tendentious. The veil of dramatic presentation is a poetic counterpart to the cultivated anonymity that Hope adopted as a schoolboy at Fort Street and, later, when mixing with McAuley's coterie at Sydney University. The dramatic form in which many of The Wandering Islands poems are couched often relies on a central character taken from traditional literature, which serves to some extent in the same way as the symbolism which Brennan employed.

The dramatic form of many of the poems works well but, as a veil, becomes more diaphanous when consideration is given to the epigraph which ultimately introduced the volume. The original epigraph was replaced by lines from McAuley's poem, "Philoctetes",

Men must either bear their guilt and weakness
Or be a servile instrument to powers
That darken knowledge and corrupt the heart,¹¹

and the substitution must have been quite late. H.M. Green indicates no change in the contents of The Wandering Islands from the typescript to the printed work. Particularly because Hope dedicated the book to McAuley, a suspicion that the epigraph is a reproof to McAuley for his embracing of Catholicism at first seems gross. However, after his conversion in 1952, McAuley became smug or sanctimonious about his newly found religion and Hope remonstrated with the sally, "Lambkin : A Fable" (pp.116-122).¹²

10. Judith Wright, Preoccupations, p.190.

11. James McAuley, "Philoctetes," Under Aldebaran (Carlton : Melbourne Univ. Press, 1946), p.25.

12. Coleman, The Heart of James McAuley, pp.55-6. Coleman, "Literary Gang Warfare," pp.6-7, refers to the effects of McAuley's conversion on literary alliances.

The suspicion seems to have substance. Hope and McAuley were frank with each other, at least to the extent that McAuley wrote to Hope details of his praying for Norma, McAuley's wife, and for Hope at the time of Norma's conversion in 1953.¹³ Conceivably, Hope would have felt as free to point the error of McAuley's ways to McAuley as McAuley felt free to pray for Hope's soul. That Hope was flinging McAuley's lines in his teeth is an even more plausible idea in the light of a commentary on McAuley's "Philoctetes" by R. F. Brissenden, in which he notes that McAuley introduced a break in the events of the legend of Philoctetes and ended his poem at that point.¹⁴ The lines Hope used as the epigraph are taken from that section of the poem but are not the whole section. Brissenden suggests that McAuley's concluding lines, spoken by Philoctetes, reflect the poet's pre-conversion struggle against acceptance of Christian belief. The section as a whole shows the sense of Brissenden's suggestion, especially as it echoes Lucifer's '*Non serviam!*' :

The myths are lies.
Men must either bear their guilt and weakness
Or be a servile instrument to powers
That darken knowledge and corrupt the heart.
I shall not go.
Let them resolve the legend as they will.

The foregoing postulate is that there was a very personal motive in Hope's choice of McAuley's lines. On another personal level is the appropriateness of the lines and the legend to the Wandering Islands. Insofar as they match Hope's preoccupation with non-heroic man, the lines are more appropriate than Dante's. McAuley's statement, that Hope found his poetic voice because

13. Coleman, The Heart of James McAuley, p.45.

14. R. F. Brissenden, "The Wounded Hero : James McAuley's Collected Poems 1936-70," Southerly, 32, 4, 1972, p.273. Edmund Wilson, "The Wound and the Bow," in The Wound and the Bow, revised ed. (London : Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1961), n.247, gives a slightly different version of the legend. Brissenden's account has Philoctetes wounded by the poisoned arrow. Wilson says Philoctetes was bitten on the foot by a snake.

of his need to articulate his post-marital disappointment, is convincing but another cause of the poet's personal disappointment was also operating over the period in which The Wandering Islands poems were composed. Some of the poems are, by means of satire, admonitions to society but some are expressions of the poet's 'guilt and weakness'. In his Preface to The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, Hope records that his almost lifelong interest in the Faust legend

has been a quite personal interest amounting almost to an identification with Faustus so that, as a younger man, feeling that I had largely wasted my life and misdirected my powers, I resolved at one time that my epitaph should be his

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough ...

If in my age I now think the application to myself inappropriate, I am more aware of the fact that Faustus in one sense stands for the whole intellectual aspiration of man, its successes robbed of their triumph by evil or trivial application and its full ambition never realised, its tower of Babel unfinished and the workmen dispersed.¹⁵

The poet's sense of personal guilt and weakness arising from his conception that he had wasted his talents has been assuaged over time but it was operative in the period in which The Wandering Islands poems were produced. Unexpectedly, his concern to foster man's 'intellectual aspiration' has faltered in the post-1970 poetry. Hope's poetic development in the 1940s, in addition to being prompted by his personal doubts and disappointments, was in response to the aridity he perceived in the cultural and spiritual environment. The latter response has remained active in Hope's poetry but he has come to doubt man's intellectual capacity to appreciate anything beyond the mundane and ephemeral.

The notion that creativity burgeons in the face of adversity is a peculiarly modern idea, though modern commentators have noted the presence of the phenomenon in Classical literature. The German Hellenism which

15. Hope, The Tragical History, p.vii.

began in the eighteenth century is imbued with such perceptions.¹⁶

Nietzsche's writings provide a number of observations on the point. On the invention of the Olympians, Nietzsche writes, 'It was out of the direst necessity to live that the Greeks created these gods ... just as roses bud from thorny bushes'.¹⁷ On "Ennoblement through degeneration", he writes that 'There is rarely a degeneration, a truncation, or even a vice or any physical or moral loss without an advantage somewhere else'.¹⁸ Of the artist, of 'him who is one of Nature's lucky strokes', Nietzsche has written, 'his illnesses are the great stimulants of his existence ... He grows stronger under the misfortunes which threaten to annihilate him'.¹⁹ Heine gives to God the declaration,

Disease was the most basic ground
Of my creative urge and stress;
creating I could convalesce,
creating I again grew sound.²⁰

The clearest statement in Hope's poetry that he shares such views of the artist is given in I of the 1968 sequence, "Sonnets to Baudelaire" (p.234), where he hails Baudelaire as 'the first gardener under God,/who tilled our rotting paradise, from its sod/Raised monstrous blooms and taught my tongue the craft.' The 1940 "Flower Poem" (p.14) is an allied statement, for 'Not this cut flower but the entire plant/Achieves its miracle from soil and wind,/Rooted in dung, dirt, dead men's bones'. Commenting on Sophocles' Philoctetes, Edmund Wilson gives the opinion that 'one feels in the

16. M. S. Silk and J. R. Stern, "German Hellenism," Nietzsche on Tragedy (Cambridge : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), pp.4-9.
17. Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, p.181.
18. Nietzsche, Human, All Too Human, p.138.
19. Nietzsche, The Will to Power, trans. Anthony W. Ludovici, in The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Vol. 15, ed. Dr Oscar Levy (1909-11; rpt New York : Russell and Russell, Inc., 1964), 1003, p.338.
20. Heine, "Schopfungslieder" ("Songs of Creation"), trans. Walter Kaufmann, in Twenty German Poets (New York : Random House, Inc., 1962), p.101.

Philoctetes ... the conception of superior strength as inseparable from disability'²¹ and he notes that in André Gide's Philoctète, 'we come close to a further implication ... the idea that genius and disease, like strength and mutilation, may be inextricably bound up together.'²² In his immediate environment, Hope had the opinions of John Anderson, who agreed with Nietzsche that 'A man does not strive after "happiness".'²³ and asked, 'can "heroic values", can heroism and devotion, be reduced to, or at all accounted for in terms of the pursuit of happiness?'²⁴ Anderson's essay, "The Servile State", ends with 'The servile State is the unopposed State',²⁵ and in 1945 Anderson pronounced that 'The greatest poetry is always heretical.'²⁶ In the everyday world in which Hope moved, he had plenty of wider-scale parallels to his personal disappointments. His early mature poetry was composed in a period when there was an anguished bleakness in intellectual circles in Australia. In painting, there was, for example, the series, Images of Modern Evil, produced from the early 1940s by Albert Tucker.²⁷ McQueen, in Black Swan of Trespass, uses a number of quotations which demonstrate the prevailing tenor of intellectual and political discussion. They include Gleeson's 1940 reference to Surrealism

-
21. Edmund Wilson, "The Wound and the Bow," in The Wound and the Bow, p.257.
 22. Wilson, Wound and Bow, p.259.
 23. Nietzsche, The Will to Power, 930, p.347. John Anderson, "Freudianism and Society," rev. of Superstition and Society, by R. Money-Kyrle, Civilisation, War and Death - Selections from Three Works by Sigmund Freud, ed. John Rickman, "Psycho-analytical Epitomes" Nos. 3 and 4, A.J.P.P., 28, June 1940, p.53.
 24. John Anderson, "Freudianism and Society," p.54.
 25. John Anderson, "Servile State," p.132.
 26. John Anderson, "Poetry and Society," in Art and Reality, p.81.
 27. Haese, Rebels, p.139 and *passim*.

as mankind's 'powerful new weapon for its combat against darkness and evil',²⁸ Anderson's fears, expressed in 1943, about 'How far the process of social regimentation and degeneration will go',²⁹ an Angry Penguins editorial of 1944 which judged that 'over the last generation...artistically, the period can be said to be a "destructive" or a "decadent" one',³⁰ and, in 1951, "A Call to the People" made by State Chief Justices and leaders of the major religious bodies because Australia was in danger 'from the mortal enemies of mankind which sap the will and darken the understanding and breed evil dissensions'.³¹ The lines from McAuley's 1945 poem, "Philoctetes", used by Hope in the epigraph, contain expressions strikingly anticipatory of the section quoted from "A Call to the People". In Ulysses, Joyce had used the same language when he explained, through Stephen, that Shakespeare's plays are dramatisations of his sense of sin: "'But it was the original sin [Shakespeare's seduction by Ann Hathaway] that darkened his understanding, weakened his will and left him with an inclination to evil.'"³² The tensions of the period in which The Wandering Islands poems were written, evident in the poetry, are shared by the poet and provide macroscopic parallels to the poet's individual and private tensions. Not least of these personal tensions was anxiety caused by his sexuality.

It was as a nearly middle-aged to middle-aged *enfant terrible* that Hope first made his mark, from the reviews of the 1940s and the satires

28. Gleeson, "What is Surrealism?" p.30.

29. Anderson, "The Servile State," p.132.

30. Editorial, Angry Penguins, December 1944, pp.2-3.

31. Melbourne Argus, 12 November 1951, p.7.

32. Ulysses, p.200.

and sex poems of the same period. In his 1951 survey, Australian Literature 1900-50, H. M. Green writes of Hope that 'His main preoccupation is with sexual love, and he sees life from somewhat of a Swiftian view'.³³ It was those two aspects which drew most attention when The Wandering Islands was published.³⁴ Critics of the calibre of Vincent Buckley, Douglas Stewart and S. L. Goldberg responded to the whole work,³⁵ drawing attention to Hope's Modernity, lucidity, erudition, insights and prosodic skills, as well as to less positive aspects, but the poems which shocked and amused drew most comment. Since the bulk of the poems in The Wandering Islands is in some degree satirical and in almost all the subject of sex enters, it is more practical to consider the poems loosely grouped according to the preoccupations of the poet which they share than to look at them, for example, grouped as satirical poems, poems about or including sex and personal poems. No commentator seems to have produced a satisfactory analysis of the arrangement of the poems in The Wandering Islands.

S. L. Goldberg essayed a brave and perspicacious analysis of the sections in terms of the distinction of the Romantics among poems in the lyrical, epical and dramatic modes but, as Goldberg points out, it is an analysis which falls down under rigid application.³⁶ The sections will not bear an explication of the poems in terms of the modes, nor does any one section heading apply to all the poems in the section in terms of theme. "The Gateway" (p.25), in "The Wandering Islands" section, is notably lyrical but so is "The Lamp and the Jar" (p.79) in "The House of Ascent" section.

33. H.M. Green, Australian Literature 1900-50 (Carlton : Melbourne Univ. Press, 1951), p.20.

34. cf. Blake Morrison, "Tales of Hofmann," review of A.D. Hope : Selected Poems, sel. Ruth Morse, and five other books. London Review of Books, 20 November 1986, p.11, where the comment is almost wholly given to the eroticism of Hope's early mature poetry.

35. Vincent Buckley, "A.D. Hope: The Unknown Poet," in Essays in Poetry, p.142; Douglas Stewart, "A.D. Hope Arrives," Bulletin, 19 October 1955, p.2; S.L. Goldberg, "The Poet as Hero : A.D. Hope's The Wandering Islands," pp.208-23.

36. S.L. Goldberg, "The Poet as Hero," pp.209-10.

Each has as its theme the liberation of the spirit by physical love. Judith Wright sees "The Wandering Islands" section as dealing 'mainly with particular instances of human relationship or human weakness or human isolation', the "House of Ascent" section as where 'Hope's own world-view and its consequences are more generally set out' and the "Heldensagen" section as 'where the Hope of our popular image deploys his wit, Hope horrid, Hope despairing, and the least attractive of all, Smart Alec.'³⁷ The best that the present writer can offer is that The Wandering Islands is not a *livre composé* and that the section headings offer no more than a guide to some of the major themes in the poetry.

Hope is not a poet of landscape but in a number of important poems of the early mature period landscape imagery conveys his mental and spiritual disorientation. So interdependent are themes and imagery in these poems that the impression arises that the distresses and confusions, so evident in the poetry of The Wandering Islands, are in some measure the outcome of the poet's identification of physical place as a source of stress. "The Wandering Islands" (pp.26-7), by its controlling conceit, conveys the Existential theme of the isolation of human individuals, for whom any lasting 'bridges' to their fellows are impossible. There is the associated theme, that white Australians are spiritually isolated because they are interlopers in this land and exiles from their cultural and spiritual roots. Inconsistencies of reference in the controlling image are subordinated to the force of the overall conceit, established in the opening stanza, of minds as wandering islands. Human individuals are

37. Judith Wright, "Poetry and Possession," The Bulletin, 1 March 1961, p.2.

complex, for the hearts of men reach out to make human contact but, in the closeness of loving union, men's rational apprehension of their singularity is greatest. 'The Mind has no neighbours, and the unteachable heart/Announces its armistice time after time, but spends/Its love to draw them closer and closer apart.'

In stanzas two and three the image develops differently, for the wandering islands do not represent all men and the isolation inherent in intellectual singularity is not borne by all men. The wandering islands are outside normal societies and immune to the interests of such societies:

they turn indifferent shoulders
On the island-hunters; they are not afraid
Of Cook or De Quiros, nor of the empire-builders;
By missionary bishops and the tourist trade

They are not annexed...

The men of fixed purpose, the explorers, ideologists and opportunists, do not share the worldly indifference of the wandering islands. With the introduction of the 'shipwrecked sailor' in stanza four, the metaphor becomes even more complex, for the sailor functions as the image of individual isolation, with the islands providing a descriptive, rather than figurative, setting to the idea. The wit of the conceit obscures some of the meaning, increasing the impression that the poem is a generalised comment on the human condition, in which the force of sexual love alone can effect any measure of alleviation from limited and singular existence in an Existential void. The act of love gives a momentary respite, more exciting than the self-stimulation of the shipwrecked sailor but so transitory as to arouse despair, for 'all that one mind ever knows of another,/Or breaks the long isolation of the heart,/Was in that instant.' In its recognition of the human drive to sexual love as a release from 'geography' or 'institution' the notion is Freudian; in its denial of any lasting salvation from the void of nothingness being available through sex it is also a denial of

Freud's emphasis on the dominance of sex in human experience.

The poem is a universal lament but particular connotations of some of the figurative references give the first half a local application. Mention of Cook and de Quiros directs the reader to understand that it is to the intellectual and imaginative aloneness of Western minds in the geographical isolation of the islands of the south that discussion is directed. Stanzas two and three draw attention to the impenetrable mystique of the exotic or forbidding islands of the Pacific, which 'are not annexed; they claim no fixed position.' Those who settle in Australia, traditionally from Europe, and at least some of their descendants, feel (or have felt) stranded, 'shipwrecked', lonely and dislocated. With stanza five a second idea is merged into the metaphor of wandering islands, that those who live on the islands - and it must be those who migrate, alien people, for the descriptions do not fit indigenous people - are themselves wandering and insular, incurious, indifferent, seemingly numbed. Though alien and so indifferent as not to bother to seek to be forgiven their intrusion - 'Investing no fear in ultimate forgiveness' -, these displaced persons are not immune to Australia's 'beauty and terror'. The 'icebergs' of the line, 'When the icebergs grind them they know both beauty and terror', are the intrinsic qualities of Australia, of which the white inhabitants are aware but not in understanding possession. Our materialistic society is inadequate defence against the strengths of the continent, 'for the social polyps never/Girdle their bare shores with a moral reef'.

Being an Australian has been a burden for Hope and his responses to Australia are mixed. Until the post-1970 poetry there are only infrequent overt references to Australia. Writing in the mid-1960s, Brian Elliott considered that Hope's poetry takes its place in the tradition of Australian landscape art because it 'completes the pattern of Australian poetic emancipation from the landscape obsession', a national pattern shaped by

experience 'in which landscape played an important, original guiding part'.³⁸
 Even so, Elliott uneasily goes on to demonstrate that the sense of local
 landscape was still operative in Hope's verse. Of "The Wandering Islands",
 Elliott considers that Hope's

floating islands ... are nowhere. As we read the poem, we
 could persuade ourselves they have a local habitation
 somewhere in the southern seas. This would be only an
 acknowledgement of the romantic suggestibility of the
 names he mentions - since these do have a local historical
 relevance.³⁹

As Elliott points out, it is the figures in the landscape, not the
 landscape, which engage Hope's attention as a poet.⁴⁰

In his poetry, Hope makes acknowledgement of the continent only in
 relation to white settlement. A relatively late poem, "The Drifting
 Continent,"⁴¹ has reference to the 'ancient land',⁴² but there Hope overlooks
 forty thousand years of Aboriginal occupation; 'Man's landing' on Australia
 is dated as 1788. "The Wandering Islands" is about Australia and white
 Australians and it has an oblique connection with the nineteenth century
 Australian literary tradition⁴³ which expressed the sense of exile experienced
 by white settlers but the public qualities of the poem are matched by its
 significance as a personal poem. Some of Hope's later poetry, especially
 "Hay Fever" and "Tasmanian Magpies",⁴⁴ shows that as a child the poet was
 receptive to the delights of local place, and some unobtrusive imagery in

38. Brian Elliott, The Landscape of Australian Poetry (Melbourne :
 F.W. Cheshire Publishing Pty Ltd, 1967), p.321.
39. Landscape of Australian Poetry, p.326.
40. Landscape of Australian Poetry, p.322.
41. Hope, "The Drifting Continent," in Antechinus, pp.21-4.
42. Hope, "The Drifting Continent," in Antechinus, p.23.
43. Judith Wright, "Australian Poetry to 1920," in Literature of
 Australia, ed. Dutton (1976), p.58.
44. "Hay Fever", "Tasmanian Magpies," in Antechinus, pp.15-4, 15.

the poetry derives from the Australian landscape, but Hope has not been comfortable with his nationality. He has resisted identifying himself as an Australian because of his dislike of vulgar Australian culture. It has been an intellectual resistance, with scarcely any component of response to the mystique of the continent. "Australia" (p.13) is an exception and the acknowledgement in "The Wandering Islands" of the effects on white settlers of the 'beauty' and 'terror' of the continent is atypical. As a personal poem, in which the subject is Hope as both man and poet, "The Wandering Islands" expresses the manifold sense of cultural and spiritual exile he has experienced. The elusiveness of the spirit of the continent, which Hope acknowledges in the essay, "Homo Australiensis",⁴⁵ seems of little personal concern to Hope. His sense of exile is compounded of Romantic recollection of his childhood Australian Arcadia, pastoral but not outback, 'Tasmania, my receding childish island' ("Ascent into Hell", p.32), and awareness of his cultural separation from Europe, with a component of separation from formal religious belief. In "The Wandering Islands", his experience of sexual union as promising but not providing surcease from the 'long isolation of the heart' apparently makes final the severance from Hope of 'Rescue'. It is a singularly bleak ending.

The imagery of "The Wandering Islands" is Gothic, macabre and Surreal. The dislocation of the imagery in stanzas two to five, and the distorted perspective on human beings the imagery offers of the terror and distress of the subconscious, mark "The Wandering Islands" as a poem of its time of making. The words of the artist, Margaret Preston, in 1938, in defence of Surrealist artists for showing "'chaos and horror...in the hard manner

45. Hope, "Homo Australiensis," in Native Companions, pp.225-37.

instead of the soft way",⁴⁶ could be used as a description of Hope's method in "The Wandering Islands"; her remark, that the Surrealists, "Instead of painting from the inner vision, like Rembrandt ... paint from the subconscious," applies to Hope's method in "The Wandering Islands". The ideas of the poem are of the time of its making, in their acknowledgement that reason alone does not direct men's lives: there is also the 'unteachable heart', urging men at a lower, yet strong, level of consciousness than reason, but achieving little more than a definition of men's rational estrangement from the natural world, and spending 'Its love to draw them closer and closer apart'.

There is a link between "The Wandering Islands" and Brennan's "The Wanderer" and, whether *via* Brennan or not, a thematic link between Hope's poem and Arthur Symons' "The Wanderers". Brennan, in his copy of Symons' The Symbolist Movement in Literature, marked the following passage:

All love is an attempt to break through the loneliness or individuality, to fuse oneself with something not oneself....It is a desire of the infinite in humanity, and, as humanity has its limits, it can but return sadly upon itself when that limit is reached.⁴⁷

Hope expresses that theme in the opening stanza of "The Wandering Islands". Brennan's "The Wanderer" is a personal poem and his image is of a wanderer who makes the psychological discovery of 'a landscape of expectation and hope, followed by traumas of disillusion and pain and resolution involving stoicism and endurance.'⁴⁸ Hope's theme partly follows Brennan's theme of disillusionment as the outcome of expectation and hope; it stops short of Brennan's unconvincing resolution, 'I feel a peace fall

46. Margaret Preston, quoted in "Give a Vermilion Dog Its Due - Even If Painted on a Yellow Landscape," Sydney Daily Telegraph, 30 June 1938, p.5.
47. Observation, and quotation from Symons' work, made by G.A. Wilkes in G.A. Wilkes and J.C. Reid, The Literature of Australia and New Zealand (Univ. Park : Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1970), p.79.
48. L.A.C. Dobrez, "Christopher Brennan : The Wanderer," in Australian Poems in Perspective, ed. P.K. Elkin (St Lucia : Queensland Univ. Press, 1978), p.18.

in the heart of the winds/and a clear dusk settle, somewhere, far in me.'

In the final stanza of Hope's poem there is no 'peace', just 'monotonous voices' assuring that despair is the only conclusion. Vivian Smith has proposed that Brennan's "The Wanderer" bears evidence of Brennan's having re-worked the central ideas in Symons' "The Wanderers".⁴⁹ Apart from a shared theme, there is nothing to link Hope's "The Wandering Islands" with Symons' poem but Hope's much later poem, "The Nomads",⁵⁰ shows his reevaluation of some of the ideas in "The Wandering Islands" in line with the theme of Symons' poem. For the wanderers of Symons' poem, 'Theirs is the world, and all the glory of it,/Theirs, because they forego it, passing on/Into the freedom of the elements.'⁵¹ Hope's reevaluation had been made by 1962; the published "Notes on Poetry" include the reflection,

There are people who might be described as nomads of the mind. They find it impossible to settle down within any settled system, in any country or belief, though the advantages of settlement and the power that comes from the corporate ownership and organisation of ideas may be obvious to them. Instead they wander from place to place, learning the language of the settled inhabitants, and often taking on the colour of their civilisation and perhaps contributing something here and there. But they remain fundamentally untouched and untamed. They are not scorers, critics or sceptics, nor are they indifferent or agnostics. They are simply without the urge or the instinct to take root common to most minds. Because of their very lack of interest in acquiring property in ideas, they are born thieves and plunderers of the settled lands, where they may even settle for brief periods. But something always drives them back to the desert. They have their own legends and songs which the city-dwellers develop a craze for. The nomads understand them in another sense, the sense of being too much one with the whole world to identify themselves with any single part of it.

They rarely meet. They do not form societies or alliances and yet in a mysterious way they are in touch with all the other members of their curious tribe. When two of them do meet casually, they recognise each other at once and the bystanders suddenly hear the unknown and guttural language of the wilderness, the speech of men who do not sleep under roofs and whose words never echo back from enclosing walls.

-
49. Vivian Smith, "Christopher Brennan and Arthur Symons," Southerly, 27, 3, 1967, pp.221-2.
50. Hope, "The Nomads," in Antechinus, pp.5-6.
51. Arthur Symons, "The Wanderers," Poem No.XIV, Armoris Victimis, quoted in full by Vivian Smith, "Christopher Brennan," p.221.

It is the forgotten primitive speech of men without possessions, vested interests and family ties, a tongue which is therefore safe from and even inept for argument or persuasion, a language peculiar to poetry.⁵²

There is a stronger case for attributing to Symons the stimulus to the form of expression of the ideas in Hope's "The Nomads" than there is for hypothesising that Brennan's "The Wanderer" bears some imprint of "The Wanderers". If he did apply "The Wanderers" to his own position, then Brennan saw himself as a lonely outcast, shut out from hearth and home, rather than released from the shackles of domestic comfort or social convention. Hope's "The Wandering Islands" envelops any closely personal anguish in the generalised statement about humanity's *angst*. By 1962, Hope had come to appreciate the freedom of those who are intellectual and spiritual wanderers. Hope's later expression of that appreciation in "The Nomads" embodies both Symons' understanding of the joys of untrammelled existence and his own development of the idea to the point of recognition that those who receive life's offerings are participating in Eternity, unlike those who dissipate their lives and look forward and back but fail to receive the present. "The Wandering Islands" documents some confusions of its maker and its sequel, "The Nomads", documents the resolution of those confusions.

To read "The Wandering Islands" in conjunction with "The Nomads", where the nomads are 'simply other', is to engage in a second reading of "The Wandering Islands". R.F. Brissenden, in his commentary on McAuley's "Philoctetes",⁵³ sums up McAuley's presentation of the plight of Philoctetes on the island of Lemnos: 'Philoctetes' suffering on the island is presented as the anguish of a man cut off from the rest of humanity by a sense

52. Hope, "Notes on Poetry," Meanjin, 21, 2, 1962, p.165.

53. R.F. Brissenden, "The Wounded Hero."

of guilt and shame, the reasons for which he does not understand.'

Brissenden adds that the title, The Wandering Islands, 'now perhaps acquires an added resonance.'⁵⁴ Brissenden sees the epigraph as 'an affirmation of lonely stoicism which was certainly in keeping with his [Hope's] own view of man.' It is easy to conceive of Philoctetes on Lemnos, as presented by McAuley, as the archetypal 'wandering island', especially as he does not know why he is called upon to suffer, but why 'guilt and weakness' too? Hope's 'wandering islands' are 'hurt'; they 'are not exempt from ordinary grief'; they sense 'despair'. It is the poet, as the type of artists in general and as himself as a man who is also a poet, who suffers guilt and shame. That the poems in the volume attest the poet's sense of guilt, or shame and weakness, becomes more apparent when "The Wandering Islands" is read as a *cri de coeur* of the poet. He, like other visionaries, is different. His mind 'has no neighbours'. He is drawn to intimate human contact but that only emphasises his otherness. Such as he do not live by the standards or ideals of ordinary men and do not invest fear in 'ultimate forgiveness'. They are like the soul and self in Brennan's "The Twilight of Disquietude": 'Out beyond good and evil are we blown'. Unable to shield themselves with ordinary *mores*, they have no barriers against the onslaughts of deep feeling. Sexual fulfilment is tempestuous and brief, with none of the romantic trappings of love affairs, but it is the only human communication they experience. The poem overall treats a plural subject, 'wandering islands', but ends with one, the 'shipwrecked sailor', who knows "'The Rescue will not take place.'" The shipwrecked sailor is the poet Hope, identifying himself as a human being without temporal orientation and without even the dream that physical love will

54. R.F. Brissenden, "The Wounded Hero," p.273.

anchor him to mundane reality. The poem is an apologia for behaviour and attitudes which are commonly expected to cause shame in those who exhibit them or which are explained by others as personal weaknesses in those afflicted. Read in this way, "The Wandering Islands" reveals the poet as torn between the demands of the confining world of social convention and the limitless world of intellectual and spiritual aspiration. The poem affirms its maker's need to be 'simply other' but there is not yet the declaration of will which comes with the 1948 poem "Pyramis or The House of Ascent" (pp.67-8).

As it is the title poem of the volume, "The Wandering Islands" must have been seen by its author to express ideas which were significant in relation to the contents of the volume as a whole. Although critics have considered that the title poem deals with the plight of despiritualised modern man, isolated from the natural world and from his kind,⁵⁵ the Existentialist theme which dominates the poem, there is the second theme of the poet's alienation from society. The poem is Modernist in its Freudian overtones, the Surrealist straining of the logic of its controlling image and the Surreal details of the imagery, and the Existential anguish it expresses. It is traditional in theme - Donne declared that "No man is an island", Arnold that we are "Yes! in the sea of life enisled" - but Modernist in treatment of theme. The form of the work, no less than these aspects, indicates the tensions under which the poet was composing, for the poem is formally organised in quatrains of alternately rhyming lines but the broken rhythms and absence of metrical pattern place it with

55. e.g. W.A. Suchting, "The Poetry of A.D. Hope : A Frame of Reference," Meanjin, 21, 2, 1962, p.154; Gustav Cross, "The Poetry of A.D. Hope," in The Literature of Australia, ed. Geoffrey Dutton (1964), p.379.

Modernist verse. The nexus between "The Wandering Islands" and "The Nomads" shows a continuum in thematic development. Not least in that development are aspects of Hope's considerations of sex, from the desperation in the application of the wandering islands image, 'An instant of fury, a bursting mountain of spray,/They rush together, their promontories lock', to the nomad's assertion that 'love for me/Is a wayward lightning, a chance felicity'. "The Wandering Islands" is a public poem but in a study of Hope's poetry its expression of the poet's unresolved suffering makes it more important as a personal poem.

Hope's omission of "Australia" (p.13) from The Wandering Islands may indicate some uncertainty in his critical judgment of his work, especially as he offered "Necrophile"⁵⁶ to his publishers as one of his selections for the volume.⁵⁷ "Australia" is an important poem and has retained its effectiveness sufficiently for Geoffrey Serle to use its most telling point as the title for his discussion of Australian cultural dilemmas, From Deserts the Prophets Come.⁵⁸ The theme of white Australia's cultural aridity, evident but not prominent in "The Wandering Islands", dominates the first five stanzas of "Australia". For that reason the poem is of particular interest, especially as the final two stanzas utter so eloquently the hope that Australia will be the place for the beginning of a regeneration of spirit. The threat of European war gave the metaphor for the colour of eucalypts, 'In the field uniform of modern wars', which suggests one reason for the disenchantment with traditional Western culture announced in the poem. By the time Hope was selecting works for The Wandering Islands, his estimate of the aridity of Australian culture

56. Hope, "Necrophile," in Poets of Australia, ed. George Mackaness, p.198.

57. C. Matters, "The Poetry of A.D. Hope and J. McAuley," p.1.

58. Geoffrey Serle, From Deserts the Prophets Come : The Creative Spirit in Australia 1888-1972 (Melbourne : William Heinemann Australia Pty Ltd, 1973).

had been very guardedly modified, at least as regards literature. In 1954, when he was establishing the first full-year University undergraduate course in Australian Literature, he was prepared to admit that, while Australia 'has produced few outstanding writers, it has already a respectable and growing body of writing to show.'⁵⁹ Hope may have deemed it impolitic to re-publish "Australia" at that point in his career or he may have considered that the poem was being sufficiently exposed.⁶⁰ The complexity of the issues in "Australia" is reflected in a comment made by Hope in 1986, 'I sometimes say that that poem follows me round like a bad smell.'⁶¹

"Australia" was first published in 1943, in a special "Nationality Number" of Meanjin,⁶² notwithstanding Hope's already published strictures against consciously nationalist art, but it was composed during the 1930s, as Hope describes in the 1986 interview with Kuch and Kavanagh.⁶³ National identity was a lively Australian issue by the end of the 1930s, when Australians were being readied to serve again in a European war; the incursion of Modernist ideas aroused reactionary responses in some Australians and excited others to enthusiastic experimentation. McAuley, in his 1938 poem, "Envoi", notes, 'The men are independent but you would not call them free.' Behind a note in the catalogue of the Contemporary Art Society's 1942 exhibition, that 'we Australians are a free, virile and creative people',⁶⁴ lies the several years of faction fighting about Modernist art which extended beyond the artists involved.⁶⁵ Active behind

59. Hope, "Australian Literature and the Universities," p.165.

60. "Australia" was reprinted four times, 1944-52. There have been numerous subsequent reprintings.

61. Hope, "Daytime Thoughts," p.230.

62. Hope, "Australia," Meanjin, 2, 1, 1943, p.42.

63. Hope, "Daytime Thoughts," pp.229-30.

64. Quoted in Haese, Rebels and Precursors, pp.76-7.

65. Robert Hughes, The Art of Australia, pp.128-32.

those contemporary dilemmas is the sense of a land whose spiritual secrets are inimical to the 'second-hand Europeans' who pullulate 'Timidly on the edge of alien shores' ("Australia").

Hope has recorded that by 1972 his attitude to Australia had become so much that of James McAuley's relation as a man and a poet to Australia', as McAuley expressed that relation in his 1938 poem, "Envoi", that 'I almost forget at times that he, and not I, actually wrote it.'⁶⁶ It is unlikely that when Hope wrote "Australia" he shared McAuley's 1938 identification of himself with his country. McAuley claims Australia, 'I am fitted to that land as the soul is to the body' ["Envoi"]. In "Australia", Hope shows himself to be much less certain in his attitudes. The lyrical, hopeful note of the ending of "Australia" is a graceful *volte-face* which points to a hunger and a passion in the young poet for a *milieu* in which his idealism could flourish, a passion shared, for example, by the Jindyworobaks, the Angry Penguins and contemporary painters, but the means to expression of Hope's idealism was unclear to him, other than that it must be through poetry. The degeneracy of European civilisation was epitomised for him in the complexities of Modernism. The divided sense of self of the poet is as apparent in his poetry as his divided sense of place.

The contradictions and frustrations of the *persona's* experience of time and place are expressed in "Observation Car" (pp.22-5). The *persona* is the poet at the age of thirty-five. Early stanzas provide evidence of Hope's assimilation of Australian landscape into his poetic consciousness more clearly than does most of his poetry. He uses the method of a semi-abstract painter, such as Fred Williams, to convey the essence of the countryside by dabs of undetailed form against an impressionistic background.

66. Hope, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," in Native Companions, p.14.

The telegraph poles which 'slithered', the 'grazing sheep' and the hills which are the 'dead spit' of each other evoke the landscape with the economy born of familiarity. The colloquialism, 'dead spit', establishes the European-Australian's response of boredom with the monotonous scenery in keeping with the poet's purpose of imaging boredom with self and with life. Hope had absorbed the landscape so completely as to be able to abstract its indifference to the white man and he turns that understanding to account in his imagery.

The poet's concern in "Observation Car" is not with the country but with frustration at his failure to realise his youthful poetic aspirations. The landscape is incorporated into the metaphor of the train trip which provides an image for the poet's expectations and disappointments. Selective exaggeration to give a compressed and amusing illustration of the damages the schoolgirl sustains as time bowls her along towards the grave allows the poet to make a self-mocking observation. The active interest of the *persona* in the schoolgirl at her 'lollipop blonde' stage reveals that Hope feels the attractions of woman to be a source of his failure to achieve his poetic aim. The lines about the schoolgirl are more than caricature. They approach Surrealism in their distortions and express the poet's perception of woman as a delusive distraction. The cleverness of the metaphors in "Observation Car" draws attention to the self-mockery that gives the poem a moving quality which a thoroughly self-indulgent confessional poem would lack. The moving quality comes from the poet's uncertainty as to whether his distress at not having realised his vocation to be 'the Eater of Time, a poet', should be taken seriously by himself or will be taken seriously by readers of the work. The poem is as much an example of Freudian revelation as it is an exercise in self-analysis.

Use of landscape to image a state of mind is fully exploited in "Ascent into Hell" (pp.31-4), in which a particular landscape is integral. Hope uses a selected set of memories, of the most formative place of influence in his childhood, to provide the features of his mental landscape at a point in his life when he felt compelled to emit a primal scream. "Ascent into Hell" is more personal and moving than "Observation Car" but it leaves the reader with the feeling of having pried, a response of conditioned reflex to the taboo subject of sexuality. There is a note of self-pity in line two, where the poet describes himself as of 'second-rate purpose and mediocre success' - an expression of the feeling of which he has later described as being 'that I had largely wasted my life and misdirected by powers'⁶⁷ - but the poem is affectingly open in its expression of terror. "Ascent into Hell" exhibits the influence of Freud's theories, especially of the theory of the etiology of adult psychoses from repressed infantile sexuality. It is the most autobiographical of Hope's poems published to date, to which the 1973 poem, "Hay Fever",⁶⁸ provides a lyrical counterpoint, both in theme and recollections of childhood.

"Ascent into Hell" invites consideration as an application of the technique in psychic therapy pioneered by Arthur Janov, even though Janov did not publish The Primal Scream until 1970,⁶⁹ having drafted the first written version of his theory about 1957.⁷⁰ Janov was trained in a Freudian psychiatric clinic⁷¹ but later came to disagree with some of Freud's theory about neurosis.⁷² It seems easy to identify what Janov

67. Hope, A Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, p.vi.

68. Hope, Antechinus, p.57.

69. Arthur Janov, The Primal Scream : Primal Therapy : The Cure for Neurosis (1970; rpt New York : Pedigree Books, 1980).

70. Primal Scream, p.7.

71. Primal Scream, p.10.

72. Primal Scream, p.20.

would label as Hope's 'Primal scene'.⁷³ 'Again he is standing in his father's study/Lying about his lie, is whipped, and hears/His scream of outrage, valid, to this day.' "Ascent into Hell" traces a series of 'Primal experiences', as Hope works his way 'down the time ladder' in the way described by Janov.⁷⁴ Hope reaches his 'enormous Birth-gate' (p.34), guided, apparently, by subconscious prompting, rather than ordinary memory. What "'pure need'" - Janov's term⁷⁵ - had Hope? What 'single feeling' - Janov again⁷⁶ - caused Hope to 'scream'? The answers come pat : his need to rid himself of guilt caused by his sexuality. These comparisons and answers all seem too pat but they have an uncanny quality, because the poem of Hope, the psychologist-poet, resembles so closely the processes in the therapy later outlined by Janov. There are other comments and comparisons which could be made but the above is a sufficient indicator of the similarities between Janov's theory and Hope's poem. Such a book-derived comparison by a lay-person must be, at best, amateurish, at worst, impertinent, but the comparison offers a teasing co-incidence. It becomes more teasing when lines from Max Harris' 1941 "The Pelvic Rose", are also considered : 'If with anaesthetic scream/I pause at the base of the spiral staircase, epileptic/vision of death at the birthplace of sowing.'⁷⁷ The shared concepts and imagery are striking.

The danger in reading individual items in Hope's writings as straight autobiography is brought home when "Ascent into Hell" is set against Hope's later prose accounts of his childhood in which he delights in recalling the ordered serenity of his childish years. David Campbell reads the lines

73. Primal Scream, p.29.

74. Primal Scream, p.95.

75. Primal Scream, p.95.

76. Primal Scream, p.91.

77. Harris, "Pelvic Rose," p.26.

in "Ascent into Hell" about the lying and whipping as Hope's recalling of 'a troubled childhood in the shadow of a Tasmanian country church'.⁷⁸ Diverse recollections by Hope signify both the strength of the shaping consciousness of a writer on his material and reinforce Hope's insistence that a poem is autonomous.

The Hope family home and its setting in the Macquarie valley in Tasmania are presented in the first half of "Ascent into Hell" with a startling grotesquerie. The gum trees 'roar' and the poplars 'shiver', the same poplars about which the poet as an undergraduate wrote lovingly in "Trees". In "Ascent", they are the forest outside the Hell of Dante's Inferno, in which the traveller loses his way, a symbolic loss of will.⁷⁹ H.M. Green notes three references to the Inferno in Hope's "Ascent into Hell" : the title, the first line, 'I, too, at the mid-point, in a well-lit wood', and the ending, part of the inscription on Hell's gate, which Green translates as 'Through me you enter among the nation of the lost'.⁸⁰ The 'too' of Hope's opening line refers also to T.S. Eliot's "East Coker". In his later poem, "Home Truths from Abroad", Hope has Eliot say, 'This is what those bad, last years I cried : / "So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years - / Twenty years largely wasted ...'⁸¹ There is a self-congratulation in Hope's "Home Truths", an expression of thankfulness that he, as poet, avoided the pitfalls of free verse.

The landscape of "Ascent into Hell" is taken from literature and from the childhood landscape held in Hope's memory. As at times it must have been to the boy Hope, it is threatening and nightmarish. In his

-
78. David Campbell, "The Brutal Mouth of Song," rev. of The Wandering Islands, by A.D. Hope, Southerly, 17, 1, 1956, p.91.
79. Hughes, Heaven and Hell in Western Art (London : Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968), p.172 : 'Medieval and Renaissance art ... abounds in Dark Woods'.
80. Green, A History of Australian Literature, Vol. II, 1923-50, p.890.
81. Hope, "Home Truths from Abroad, or Dante and Virgil answer Mr T.S. Eliot," in A Book of Answers, p.90.

middle years, it comes to him as nightmares within nightmares. The imaginative extensions of reality which were childhood's troubled dreams were then as real as the trees and both are still real in adult dreams. In "Observation Car", Hope rues his inability to realise 'Now', remembered experience amplified 'through the trumpet throat of vertiginous perspective'. The perspective on his childhood which "Ascent into Hell" gives is vertiginous in the extreme but it is not the perspective longed for in the earlier poem and not a view of experience which will provide a defence against time. It is an employment of the method of psycho-dramatisation which Stephen explains in the Hamlet discussion in Ulysses and which, when he wrote "The Esthetic Theory of James Joyce" in 1943, the year in which "Ascent into Hell" was begun, Hope read as being the cutting of oneself off 'from the forces in one's society which tend to dominate opinion and behaviour.'⁸² Far from being separated by time from the forces which dominated him as a child, in "Ascent into Hell" Hope confronts a remembered vortex of facts and fabulous fears which sucks him down into its record of horrors. The poem is a most distressed and private statement. As the poet grew up, his imagination and memories now tell him, he ascended inevitably to the Hell of his present.⁸³

Memories unfold and remembered night noises crowd in suffocatingly. Boyish fantasies about World War I still haunt him. Stern his father may have been and the child's guilt about 'Lying about his lie' is still active in the poet's mid-life but the child's indignity at being whipped, perhaps for being imaginative, is 'valid to this day'. Hope re-lives the experience of babyhood as in his memory the little fellow 'fingers his stump of sex'

82. Hope, "Esthetic Theory," p.102.

83. Lyndy Abraham, "A.D. Hope and the Poetry of Allusion," Australian Literary Studies, 9, October 1979, pp.172-4, considers the 'ascent' aspect of the poem more literally.

and invents naughty exploits. For the adult, engagement in sexual activity continues to cause guilt but it remains an irresistible solace. Through sexual activity he feels that his inclination to evil is satisfied. Hope's poem relentlessly defines the diminution of his battered soul but, the poet's later works testify, he has been able to revive. McAuley sees "Ascent into Hell" as 'the first real conquest of the poet's difficult material',⁸⁴ by which he assumedly means that it signifies Hope's bringing together of his subjective material and the ordering control of poetic form. Elsewhere, writing about "Pygmalion", McAuley comments that 'such subjective material, charged with violent emotions rendered explosive by inhibition, threatens the maintenance of artistic control'.⁸⁵ The subjective nature of Hope's material in "Ascent into Hell", together with his identification of hell as a state of mind and as a state which exists in this world, marks the poem as Modernist.

The treatment of the material reflects the poet's consciousness of the Fall. His fear, 'my unseen guide', has taken him back in time and towards the end of the poem his fear asks, 'Who are we, stranger? What are we doing here?' As he imagines his birth, the answer comes to him that he is nothing in a Hell of Existential Nothingness, for in his imagination his birth appears to have been into the Hell Dante builds in the Inferno, over the gates of which is the inscription, "*per me, / per me si va tra la perduta gente*", Through me, you enter among the nation of the lost.⁸⁶ No other event recounted in the poem, not even the whipping, is a spiritual crisis of the magnitude that the poet sees his birth to have been. Had he not been conceived as a human being, his spirit would not have been directed

84. McAuley, Map of Australian Verse, p.178.

85. McAuley, "The Pyramid in the Waste," p.102.

86. Translation, H.M. Green, A History of Australian Literature, Vol. II, 1923-50, p.890, footnote 3.

into the Hell which is human existence. Judith Wright has judged that 'in "Ascent into Hell", the poet's object is to emphasise his own anguish and self-pity, to blackmail the reader, as it were, into sympathy.'⁸⁷ Although a valid judgment, it overlooks the point that the poem achieves its purpose of creating an ordered exploration of a set of ideas. However, in 1984 Hope acknowledged the truth in Judith Wright's judgments of thirty years before : 'she gives me [in Preoccupations in Australian Poetry] the rounds of the poetic kitchen in a very perceptive way'.⁸⁸ Entirely subjective as is the material he draws on in "Ascent into Hell", Hope selects and arranges it into a controlled and coherent statement. He has described Surrealist works as 'incantatory logorrhea'⁸⁹ but he could have been expected to have a more tolerant attitude to Surrealist art, because of his association with James Gleeson and because he has used Surrealist techniques himself quite often. In "Ascent into Hell" he uses dreams, probably both sleep and waking dreams, either because they are inescapable or in a deliberate effort to harrow his subconscious. That the poem is not 'the formless babble and vomit of the poet's subconscious mind'⁹⁰ is because of the exercise of conscious control over his material. Although Hope's reaction against Freudian subjectivity in art is made apparent in "Rawhead and Bloody Bones" (p.41), it was some years before his theory behind the reaction, gradually qualified, was given any real definition in print. Before that could happen, Hope had to evaluate for himself his responses to one of the methods of modern art; "Ascent into Hell" is such an evaluative exercise. The poem is, first of all, Hope's conscious attempt to do for himself what modern art attempts to do for society, to make the

87. Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, p.192.

88. Hope, Directions, p.1.

89. Hope, "Poetry and Platitude," in Cave and Spring, p.15.

90. Hope, "The Discursive Mode," in Cave and Spring, p.5.

viewer or reader confront with reason the chaotic impressions of raw experience, so that order and meaning can be adduced. The lop-sided view of Hope's mental landscape given by "Ascent into Hell", concentrating on the violent and macabre, shows Hope's Romanticism as strongly as it shows a disregard of his training in psychology, which, one could expect, would have inculcated a more balanced approach to self-analysis. "Ascent into Hell" concentrates into one poem the despair in the poetry of Hope's early mature years. It represents an extreme in Hope's initial struggle for a 'synoptic view',⁹¹ which was for an overview of his mental landscape, but it is a characteristic work in that it orders the chaos of his mental landscape by identifying its features, and tries, by imposing rhyme, to elicit reason.

Not all Hope's poetic soul-searchings of the 1940s have obviously Freudian undertones. The 1948 poem, "The Sleeper" (p.74) has a lugubrious opening: 'When night comes, I get/Into my coffin'. This excursion into the mind of an habitual threatener of suicide is reminiscent of the 1925 student piece, "The Corpse" but it conveys a real terror of the unknown, whereas "The Corpse" is wholly histrionic. Having contemplated suicide, the Sleeper decides not to shoot himself because he is afraid of what Eternity might hold. The neurotic sentiments of "The Sleeper" contrast with the reasoned statement, made a few years earlier in "Rawhead and Bloody Bones" (p.41), that introspection unmediated by the conscious mind is self-cannibalism. The Oxford Dictionary defines 'Rawhead' as 'The name of a nursery bugbear, usually coupled with BLOODY BONES'.⁹² Joyce

91. Hope, "Poetry, Prayer and Trade," in Cave and Spring, p.96.

92. The Concise Oxford definition is more expansive : 'a nursery bugbear, death's head & cross-bones, (attrib. of narrative style etc.) crudely horrible'.

uses the expression in the nighttown sequence in Ulysses, when the ghost of Stephen's mother appears and urges him to "'Repent!'" :

STEPHEN

(Panting) The corpse-chewer! Raw head and
bloody bones!

Stephen chooses to escape Hell through 'the intellectual imagination', not by repentance, and utters Lucifer's cry of '*Non serviam!*'⁹³ Anderson draws attention to the passage in a 1930 address on Ulysses, where he uses it to illustrate the theme in the novel of hell ('a state of mind') and the escape from it. Anderson adds that before Stephen 'can enter upon the work of affirmation, he has to escape from his self-alienation, his exile from self'.⁹⁴ Except for the 1930 date, this comment by Anderson could have been made about Hope in his early mature period, when he is struggling to find an intellectual reconciliation of his spiritual self with his temporal self.

"Rawhead and Bloody Bones" is a statement that the poet who is fettered to introspective guilt is in a hell he has made for himself; knowing better than to allow himself such self-indulgence, he deserves no pity. He is enjoying the 'three sins', of incest, a sin of lust, which here is over-love of self, gluttony, dwelling excessively on oneself, and pride, in the form of a perverted love of one's guilt and sense of having been wronged. "Rawhead and Bloody Bones" takes part of its genesis from Hope's distaste for Freudian analysis, with its emphasis on the analysis of sexuality, and part from Aquinas or from Aquinas *via* Joyce and Ulysses. Joyce's Stephen says, "'Saint Thomas, ... writing of incest from a standpoint different from that of the new Viennese school ... likens it in his wise

93. Ulysses, p.549.

94. John Anderson, "Ulysses," in Art and Reality, p.99.

and curious way to an avarice of the emotions. He means that the love so given to one near in blood is covetously withheld from some stranger who, it may be, hungers for it."⁹⁵ Hope's poem gives, 'Incest, Aquinas owns, / Is a form of avarice.' Hope is probably having a tilt at the poet who wrote "Ascent into Hell". By 1948, as "The Death of the Bird" (pp.69-81) indicates, Hope was able, in Anderson's words, to 'enter upon the work of affirmation'. The change to affirmation distinguishes Hope's middle period poetry.

The poet's divided sense of self dominates the early mature poetry. Although his sense of alienation from plebian society and from his country is evident, it is primarily through the poems dealing with sex that the divided sense of self is apparent. The poems are the rites of the difficult passage of the poet towards realisation of his self as a trinity of impulses and needs. The poet's acceptance of the body as an essentially human attribute appears most often in the poetry of his middle period, for example in "The Tomb of Panthesilea" (p.103) and "Vivaldi, Bird and Angel" (p.274), where he uses the Yeatsian notion of the body's sustaining of the soul (Yeats, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul"). In the early mature poetry, the poet's sensibilities juggle the animal, rational and spiritual drives but are rarely able to cope with the operation of all three at once. It is male, rather than masculine, poetry, in which woman is Eve ("To Julia Walking Away", p.37) or sorceress ("Circe", p.71), or a creature of non-rational, instinctual sexuality, for whom sexual fulfilment through maternity is enough ("Lot and His Daughters", pp.76-9). Women are 'lovely frailts' ("To Julia Walking Away"). They are lovely but unchaste and unable to resist temptation. Just as diverse as the reactions of male to female

95. Ulysses, p.194.

are the reactions to male sexual passion, reactions of loathing and desire, guilt and release, censure and praise. Occasionally there is a lyrical elegance (e.g. "The Lamp and the Jar", p.79). Self-loathing, censure and guilt mark "Necrophile"⁹⁶ composed in 1942. The guilt is occasioned by contraception or abortion, which brings 'Murder to the human race'. The subject may be abortion, since 'only if your spirit die/Will the guilt in me be laid'. In its coupling of love with death, of sexual union with murder, "Necrophile" prefigures a theme of "Imperial Adam". The guilt of abortion informs the 1957 poem, "The Walker" (pp.112-13),⁹⁷ where the spirit of the aborted foetus haunts the speaker of the poem and identifies itself:

'Not the living, not the dead
Answers here your call;

'But a witness from the void,
Banned with drug and knife,
Whom your coward heart destroyed
In the gates of life.'

The ironic patterning of the poem on a pseudo-scary children's rhyme heightens its impact. Two earlier poems in which contraception is treated are more impersonal in tone. The love lyric, "Chorale" (p.73), which celebrates the joy and release of sex, ends with a wistfully chiding anti-climax:

Yes our wandering spirits come
From their timeless anguish freed:
Yet within they hear the womb
Sighing for the wasted seed.
Love may not delay too long -
Is the burden of their song.

The dramatic poem, "Massacre of the Innocents" (p.16), has abortion or contraception as subject. The bluntness may be meant to be lessened by

96. Hope, "Necrophile," in Poets of Australia, ed. George Mackaness, p.198.

97. McAuley, "The Pyramid in the Waste," p.102, refers to 'the presumably autobiographical content' of "The Walker".

the parable form of "Massacre of the Innocents" but the imagery precludes any lessening of the horror in the poem. The poem may be read as a satire on conventional responses to masterpieces of art by people who view art works without calling their deeper responses into play. They admire technical skill, noting how it does justice to its subject, but that is all. Stanza one parodies superficiality of response by first comparing Cornelius van Haarlem's work with any picture of a sporting contest where there is an apparently ludicrous degree of inequality between the teams. The last line of stanza one abruptly changes the tone : 'The game is Murder, played as a charade'. This is a painting of murder but viewers fail to register the point, seeing just an *objet d'art*. In the rest of the poem the satire disappears as the tone plunges from the supercilious wit of the opening into black humour. The homiletic point is that the woman is 'Venus as the type of all mammas' and the soldier is the type of all lusty males who are prepared to thwart the purpose of female sexuality by contraception. The killing of the 'fat suckling' by the guard in the painting images 'contraceptive hate'; 'grotesque Abortion' is 'Murder, played as a charade.'

Noel Macainsh gives a reading of "Massacre of the Innocents"⁹⁸ as exhibiting 'The motif of revenge on women, and the reason for it'.⁹⁹ He notes that the poem 'has an allegorical character and so permits of a variety of interpretation' and points out that, taken out of the body of Hope's poetry, it 'might be seen simply as a comment on war as a decimator of population'.¹⁰⁰ His argument continues: 'Nevertheless, the theme of violence against woman, particularly when she is seen as "brood-female",

98. Noel Macainsh, "A.D. Hope's Malthusian Muse: Lubricious Disaster," Quadrant, 209, 29, 3, March 1985, pp.58-63.

99. Macainsh, "Malthusian Muse," p.59.

100. Macainsh, "Malthusian Muse," p.59.

is recurrent and central to the poetry as a whole'. Macainsh's reading of "Massacre of the Innocents", and the case put forward in this study, above, that the poem is an anti-abortion/contraception piece, together indicate the complexity of the theme of sex in Hope's poetry.

Macainsh gives his reading of "Massacre" in the context of an argument that Hope's treatment of woman is as *femme fatale*. He sees that Hope's perception of woman is as 'an invincible seductress, whose will to generation, following the law of Malthus, leads to social and cultural disaster'.¹⁰¹ Some of Macainsh's case is convincing but, in relation to the body of Hope's poetry, its focus is too specific. Hope's view on woman is multi-faceted and it is inseparable from either one or both of the themes of art and of love between man and woman. Woman, and not just as *femme fatale*, is 'central to the poetry as a whole' because woman is central to the poet's complex considerations of the human experience, made from the standpoint of a male who is a poet. The Malthusian argument Macainsh puts forward can be partly supported by the poems to which he refers but other poems negate it. The anti-abortion/contraception poems of the early mature period, "Necrophile" and "The Walker", are not brought into Macainsh's argument. They are in contradiction to the truncated theme of overpopulation in the middle period poem, "Conversation with Calliope", (pp.191-200) on which Macainsh rests a fair part of his argument. The 1970 poem, "The Countess of Pembroke's Dream",¹⁰² does not demonstrate the 'irresistible allure of woman as agent of overpopulation',¹⁰³ especially as Hope has said that he does not condemn the Countess'

101. Macainsh; "Malthusian Muse," p.63.

102. Hope, "The Countess of Pembroke's Dream," in A Late Picking, pp.30-40.

103. Macainsh, "Malthusian Muse," p.60.

libidinous fancies.¹⁰⁴ The poet's chameleon views on woman derive in part from his varying responses to his sexuality and in part from his gradually clarified conviction that woman is a creature of nature, undistinguished by a spiritual dimension in the way man is distinguished, a point which Macainsh does not capture.

Despite these objections to the case Macainsh advances, his comment about Hope's view of woman as *femme fatale* is valid, insofar as Hope's view of woman is exhibited in some of the poetry to the mid-1950s. The poetry also shows the strength of the male sexual drive. A revealing statement is made through "Antechinus",¹⁰⁵ the later period review of the life of the male *Antechinus stuartii*, which is a thinly disguised autobiographical review. The sexual maturity of the marsupial is achieved,

And, if you should survive till next July,
The time is ripe for you to find a mate;
Then, knowing that, having mated, you will die,
Your small, wild heart grows grim with rage and hate,
To hunt and savage all members of your race,
Even the female clutched in your embrace.

"Antechinus" explains much about Hope's poetry but has no Malthusian theme. In "Conversation with Calliope" the Muse says that her main concern is not with mankind's 'anthropophagous dilemma'. Her promise is that 'Some few' poets will survive the impending Doom. Macainsh rests his argument on too few poems, not on the body of Hope's poetry, and not always on sufficiently close examination of the poems he cites. His assessment of Hope's attitudes to woman is perceptive but he neglects the comments on male sexuality and on artists which Hope makes in the poetry.

Human biological fertility, the outcome of the attainment of the forbidden knowledge of creativity gained by Adam and Eve, has posed a problem for Hope, most noticeably in the early mature poetry. There are

104. Hope, Notes, in A Late Picking, p.91.

105. Hope, "Antechinus," in Antechinus, pp.18-20.

some babies in Hope's early mature poetry. There are Cain, 'the first murderer' ("Imperial Adam", pp.83-4) and the 'fat suckling' who is murdered in "Massacre of the Innocents". The sleeping children in "Pygmalion" are a reason for the continuance of a marriage in which love is dead (p.10) and Pasiphae ("Pasiphae", pp.84-5) conceives 'monstrous life'. Others are the foetus conceived of incestuous coupling in "Lot and His Daughters" (pp.76-9) or aborted or never conceived. Over the period in which Hope wrote with horror of abortion or conception, he directed satires against aspects of marriage, the human institution by which children are protected. The poetry Hope produced in his early mature period reflects the tossings and turnings of a sensibility which apprehended keenly whatever aspect of a subject was dominant in his mind at the time he tried to objectify it in poetry. That the procreative act can also be life-denying is one of the ironies of love presented. Other poems show the further irony, that the act of love can contribute to the destruction of the spirit of the participants.

"Morning Coffee" (pp.24-5) makes satirical comment on the female's ability, through her sexuality, to reduce the courting male, or 'King Leer', the would-be seducer, to a state of dread. "Pygmalion" (p.10) ends with a comment of wistful sadness on the malaise of 'garden suburb' marriage, when 'The vision that once could make the heart rebel' is 'Changed to a song that gives the children sleep'. The bathos of the outcome of romantic love is summed up, at the end of "The Explorers" (p.12), in 'The little brick cottage, the ration of lawn in front/And a kiss at the gate and a pair of trousers walking daily to the office.' The docile patter of the conditioned male's steps accelerates as the last line lengthens, with 'daily to the office' beating out the rhythm of a run. "The Explorers" is one of several of Hope's satires which are directed at materialism and at marriage as a soul-stifling human institution. Often the expression of ideas in these

satires is over-demonstrative but the issues are serious and the poems are sympathetic recognition of the decay of souls in marriage where love decays. "The Lingum and the Yoni" (pp.39-41) develops, but with less indignation of expression, the substance of the last stanza of "The Explorers", taking as its subject the ironic way in which human love in the twentieth century Western world creates its own destruction. Falling in love implies marriage, marriage implies a home, a home exacts its toll of time and money which in turn takes its toll of love. The insistent rhythms of the ballad form match the relentless processes of the destruction of love. The device of conceit, used in "The Explorers", is used again in "The Brides" (p.82), where the proper upbringing of the 'nice young girls' of "The Explorers" is developed in the extended image of the motor car assembly line. It is an amusing, clever, appropriately slick piece of writing which has as the target of its satire society's acceptance of the rituals of grooming of girls as commodities on the marriage market. The combination of writing skill and direct approach to taboo subjects produces poems which make an irresistible demand on a reader's attention. Social *mores* have since altered but the soul-deadening inroads of materialism are more evident in our society than they were thirty years ago; the satires retain point. Despite the shrillness of these poems of social purpose, Hope's horror at the trivialising of sex through social ritual and materialism sounds strongly; so does pity for his fellows who fall victims to institutions made by man. Compassion, not misanthropy, has motivated the poet but the poems express a complexity of emotional reactions. In "The Explorers", for example, there is unexpected recognition that the experience of growing to maturity is for girls one of 'hurt and ignorance', yet the poem has a tone of sniggering voyeurism and there is fear of Eve. As the poet clarifies his ideas on the difference in creative function between the male poet and

woman, some of the concerns of the early mature period fade out of Hope's poetry, but not without death throes. "The Walker" is startling, not so much because it was written in 1957, the same year as "Soledades of the Sun and Moon" (pp.106-110), which registers a great change in mood in Hope's poetry, as because it is Hope's strongest expression of distress about abortion. The disturbing "Agony Column" (p.115), also composed in 1957, is comment on parental tyranny over a child's life. When abortion recurs in the poetry, it is coupled with 'suicide and self-abuse' in the 1959 poem, "A Commination" (pp.148-51), in the context of a disgusted tirade against 'The Advertiser' and 'the Technocrat' who control television programmes. They are the agents of 'this great Sodom of a world, which turns/The treasure of the intellect to dust', so that the human spirit, debased, has recourse to perverse practices. The debasement of spirit by marriage recurs in the 1970 poem, "Clover Honey".¹⁰⁶ The satire in "Clover Honey" is subtle. Strong feeling about marriage as a spiritual hobble is conveyed but the later treatment of the theme is indicative of the refinement in concepts and presentation which the poet achieves over time.

By the mid-1950s, when he reviewed Judith Wright's The Two Fires,¹⁰⁷ Hope considered that biological fertility, which is of the flesh and is demonstrated by woman, is a physical process in which man is 'incidental'.¹⁰⁸ In the 1968 poem, "Advice to a Poet" (p.230), he describes the male as 'The expendable sex'; by then Hope was of the opinion that artistic creativity belongs with the male and is of the spirit, a metaphysical

106. Hope, "Clover Honey," in A Late Picking, pp.23-5.

107. Hope, review of The Two Fires, by Judith Wright, in Native Companions, pp.79-81.

108. Hope, review of The Two Fires, by Judith Wright, in Native Companions, p.80.

process in which woman is incidental. Babies and the everyday world are women's work and works of art the work of men : 'Eve and Eve's daughters are in general concerned with the maintenance of the human race, not with its transcendence.'¹⁰⁹ The further ironic theme from the subject of love, that the expectations of fulfilment through physical love are not met by the reality, which is found in some poems of The Wandering Islands period, is absent from the middle period poetry. These concerns were perhaps more private than social, so that, having somehow resolved his personal distresses arising from marriage, the poet no longer felt a need to find a psychological safety valve by dramatising them in verse. Since a conviction was firming in Hope's mind that Eve and her daughters are concerned with temporality, a less intense preoccupation with sexual union as a subject for poetry could be expected in the poetry of the middle period. As this is not the case, it seems likely that Hope fell in love in the late 1950s, a conjecture supported by sonnet V of "The Planctus" (pp.216-7). Written in 1967, the sonnet is a reverie about the first meeting of the *persona* and his lover 'Ten years ago!', a factual detail in a sequence of personal poems.

In commenting that Hope is 'against' contraception, John Docker has added that 'A dominant image of man's relationship to woman in Hope's poetry is that he is as the sun to her earth. Just as the sun fertilises the land with its warmth, the penis must fertilise the woman.'¹¹⁰ Hope does use the image of man as the sun to woman's earth but it is not a dominant image in his work. He uses the sun-earth image in the 1969 poem, 'When Like the Sun ...' (p.256), to which Docker refers,¹¹¹ but the poem

109. Hope, "Christopher Brennan," in Native Companions, p.155.

110. Cultural Elites, p.52.

111. Cultural Elites, p.53.

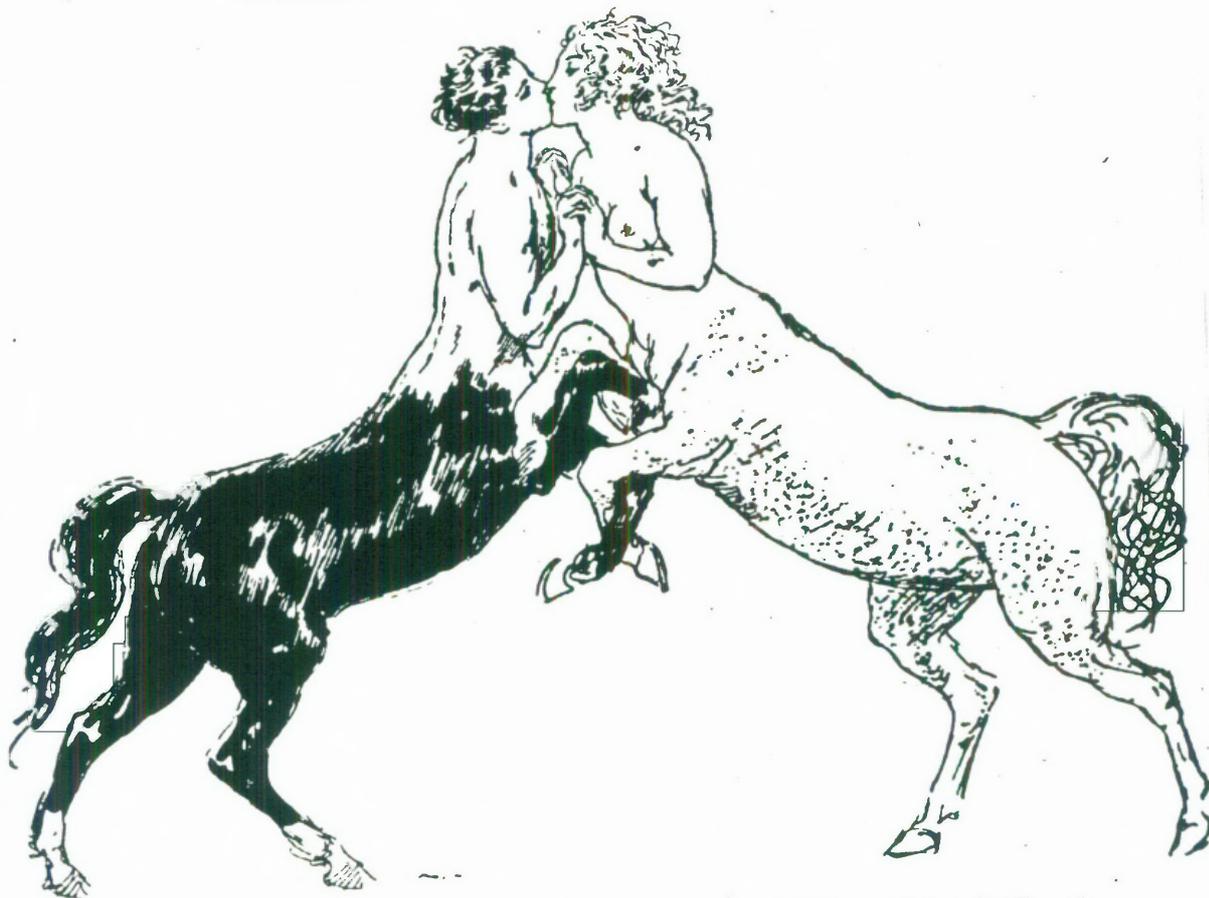


Fig. 2 Norman Lindsay

begins with man as the sun to woman's 'snow', which conveys simply the idea of wooing; Hope is not writing about intercourse as a procreative act but as a means of providing nourishment for the poet's 'song'. It is the woman's body, not its impregnation, which interests him. Her body provides 'that impact from without which frees the image within';¹¹² because the constraints of rationality fall into abeyance during coitus, consciousness rises. In the early mature period some of the poetry does celebrate intercourse as participation in 'the essential rhythms of the universe'¹¹³ but there is nothing, not even in the line, 'Love may not delay too long', of "Chorale" (p.73), which expresses a personal need in the male to fertilise the woman. The end of "Chorale" indicates that there is an aspect to physical love other than the pleasure of the lovers, a purpose additional to sexual desire. Hope's image in "Standardization" (p.11),

Love, which still pours into its ancient mould
The lashing seed that grows to a man again,
From whom by the same processes unfold
Unending generations of living men,

is, for Hope, unusual, for it conveys that, in love-making, a man is participating in the rhythms of nature. In Hope's poetry, woman is not earth to man's sun in the sense that Docker gives when he adds that 'the penis must fertilise the woman.' Docker is on firm ground earlier, when he explains that woman is flesh to man's spirit and her flesh is the fertilising agent in his creativity.¹¹⁴ The image of woman as the earth which nourishes is used in the early mature poetry, as in "The Gateway",

112. Hope, Introduction, Siren and Satyr: The Personal Philosophy of Norman Lindsay (South Melbourne: Sun Books Pty Ltd, 1976), p.6.

113. Cultural Elites, p.52.

114. Cultural Elites, p.50.

where the man is imaged as a tree: 'The tree through the stiff clay at last forces/Its thin strong roots and taps the secret spring' (p.25). Woman is figured in "The Lamp and the Jar" as nourishing oil, the produce of earth (p.79). In Hope's poetry, woman is matter to man's spirit. She is Eve to his Adam.

In the many Hope poems into which sexual intercourse enters in some degree, it is nearly always the effect of the act on the sensibilities of the male which dominates. "Circe" (p.71) is a partial exception; "The Double Looking Glass" (pp.167-73) and "The Countess of Pembroke's Dream" are exceptions, too. The loss of Eden, says the serpent in the later poem, "What the Serpent Really Said",¹¹⁵ will always be for Adam dramatised by the sexual act: 'The act of love, within its joy, for him/Echo the re-enactment of its loss'. There are poems in which Hope writes with delicacy and delight of the *ekstasis* which love-making can provide for the male. "The Gateway" (p.25) gives no hint of the horrors of love or the sense of sin or guilt which burden so many of Hope's poems of the 1940s. The theme of "The Gateway" is that, through love-making and through 'this city of cells, my body', there is an ecstatic loss of the mundane self and entry into the imaginative and visionary self. "The Gateway" is a poem of joyful celebration of the sexual act but it is not celebration of the act for itself or as an expression of male-female love. It celebrates the release of the creative spirit, the divine spark, which coitus provides, and it amplifies the last line of "The Return from the Freudian Islands" (pp.18-21), 'As first a poet buttoned on his skin'. A poet would be the first to realise the loss Freudian analysis of the 'unacknowledged body' ("Freudian Islands") would entail by its removal of the mystique of sexuality.

115. Hope, "What the Serpent Really Said," in A Late Picking, pp.41-3.

The two most lyrical poems in The Wandering Islands, "The Gateway" (p.25) and "The Lamp and the Jar" (p.79), are about love-making but neither is a love poem. The 'you' in each is woman as the type of the female sex and in neither poem is the woman celebrated as a person. Unlike in "Chorale", there is no mention of the freeing of 'our wandering spirits'. "The Gateway" ends, 'I am the dream and you my gates of entry/The means by which I waken into light'; at the end of "The Lamp and the Jar", the man, 'An unknown king, with my transfigured face,/Bends your immortal body to his delight.' It is explicit in "The Lamp and the Jar" that woman fuels the illuminating lamp of artistic vision of a sexual partner of visionary capabilities. The standard image of Earth as a woman - which Hope uses in "Australia" and "Standardization" (pp.10-11), though Hope's Earth is old - in "The Lamp and the Jar" is adapted to the controlling metaphor of the title. Woman is imaged as a jar in which is stored the nourishing oil, produce of the earth, which provides the 'holy oil' necessary for burning by the creative spirit of the 'unknown king': 'This source alone/Distils those fruitful tears the Muses weep.' The 'I' of the poem is an artist but also a king, an anointed, elect being, with a spiritual significance, potential ruler of the illimitable. Woman's body is 'immortal' because it is generative of the race but that is not the sense in which the word is used in Hope's poem. Woman's body is immortal because from access to it the artist creates art objects which capture the heightened vision afforded him by intercourse. In "The Gateway" and "The Lamp and the Jar" the artist, unmistakably male, through his transfiguration by love-making has the possibility of entry into understanding of matters sacred and eternal; the sense of Original Sin does not intrude. Hope has the speaker of "The Lunch" (pp.250-3) from the later series, "Six Songs for Chloë" (pp.241-53), tell Chloë of:

This love which is both life and art
 Where each of us has played our part
 Of mutual and essential aid
 By which the weak soul comes to be
 Capable of eternity.

In that is recognition of the 'mutual' dependence of lovers but nothing in Hope's concept of a woman's role in her making love with an artist has changed since "Pygmalion", for Hope's Chloë has already conveniently declared:

'You are a poet, I a theme
 Composed to realize your dream.
 I was content to have it so,
 Since I too have my art : to give
 Visions the flesh by which they live.'

Although Hope has said that his awareness of the link between 'sexual feeling - love if you like ... - and the impulse to poetry' began in puberty¹¹⁶ and, in 1976, he applauded Norman Lindsay's making 'the essential connection between the principle of continuity in life and the creative impulse in art; one is the source of the other',¹¹⁷ there is little evidence in his poetry of his concern with 'the principle of the continuity in life'. In his 1955 review of Judith Wright's The Two Fires, Hope records his opinion that, as subjects for poetry, gestation and birth are 'something that only women can deal with.'¹¹⁸ "Imperial Adam" (pp.83-4)¹¹⁹ and "Pasiphae" (pp.84-5) have the procreative act as a subject but neither has as its theme the importance of procreation. The reason for the guilt which attaches to prevention or destruction of infant life is given in "Necrophile". The view of contraception as 'Murder to the human race' in "Massacre of the Innocents" was no doubt occasioned by orthodox humanitarian and ethical reasons but also by the idea of 'despair' which, "Necrophile" presents, is

116. Hope, "Beginnings," in Cratylus, p.8.

117. Hope, Introduction, Siren and Satyr, p.6.

118. Hope, rev. of The Two Fires, by Judith Wright, in Native Companions, p.80.

119. Although the listing of "Imperial Adam" in Collected Poems gives 1952 as its date of composition, it was composed by 1945. McQueen, Black Swan, p.85.

borne by the male in such an act. 'I dig my grave in you' ('Necrophile') holds the knowledge that the act destroys the spiritual health of its perpetrator. Within the poem is the understanding that the act does not kill the spirit of the child aborted or denied conception. A spirit destined for a human body haunts the person who prevents its humanity: 'Only if your spirit die/Will the ghost in me be laid.' The body houses the spirit on its progress to immortality and therefore human life should not be circumvented. Hope's poetic vision gradually becomes that of mankind's movement towards spiritual wholeness. Denial of the spirit by denial of human life is an act against the spirituality of the species and retards the growth of mankind's spirituality. Hope takes up the principle of the continuity of life in "Antechinus",¹²⁰ the meditation on copulation which poses the question: if for a human male the first copulation brought with it death and so were the last, would the cowardly desist? Hope chides the human race for its forgetting of the purpose of copulation; if the act were to signify the end of life,

Would love with us by now have grown a deed
Dared gladly for the continuance of the race
As bearers of that sole immortal seed,
Through which if my own species has forgot,
The River of Life still runs ...?

The question remains unresolved. The penultimate stanza indicates the poet hopes men would so dare. In the final stanza he shrugs off the question as theoretical. "Antechinus" has a late showing of Hope's concern for the continuity of the 'sole immortal seed' of Adam, a concern not treated in comparably direct terms elsewhere in Hope's poetry.

The complexities of the drives of a male to seek a satisfying physical union are reflected in poems which treat the harrowing tussle between the

120. Hope, "Antechinus," in Antechinus, pp.18-20.

questing will and the fettering body. The promises of love or the hopes held for love are unrealised and exacerbate the tensions between will and libido. The romantic illogicality of investing hopes of lasting satisfaction in the idea of love is the theme of "Private Screening",¹²¹ where the waiting lover fantasises about the hoped-for telephone call, the subsequent arrival of the woman and the resulting intimacies. There is no phone call and reality pushes reverie aside. The woman, 'you', is reduced to 'the faceless carcass, the tits and the meaty behind', an admission in which the would-be lover caricatures his longed-for commitment and labels it as adolescent. Disappointment with self is the lover's most obvious reaction, bordering on disgust with his 'impotent will' and potent romanticism. The disappointment masks but does not negate the longing for romantic love which, though mocked, is admitted. A more polished and more pointed treatment of the theme is in "The End of a Journey" (pp.1-2), to which Hope has given the dates 1930-60; R.F. Brissenden says that it was 'substantially written' when Hope was twenty-three.¹²² It treats the themes of "Private Screening", of the romantic illusions emergent from the drive to physical love and of the pointlessness of the demand for faith which sexual love makes, but it is wider in theme. It shows the deadening effects the need for human love has on heroic endeavour and the reduction to non-existence of human love by the heroic achievement of vision. Ulysses' return shows the wasted 'valour' of Penelope's wait and the delusion of love under which the hero laboured to return to her, for the hero who has 'heard the sirens sing' has glimpsed a transcendent reality. He is like the visionary of

121. Hope, "Private Screening", No. 1 July, 1943, n. pag.

122. R.F. Brissenden, "A.D. Hope's New Poems," Southerly, 30, 2, 1970, p.84.

Brennan's "The Labour of Night", of whom Hope writes, 'The vision or the knowledge has destroyed him.'¹²³ The commitment to human love is acknowledged in "The End of a Journey" but regretted as having been the cause of the hero's denial of his access to the gods. At the end of the poem Ulysses is akin to the shipwrecked sailor at the end of "The Wandering Islands", for Ulysses is 'A castaway on so cruel a shore.'

The theme of the strength of male sexuality and its delusions and dangers is recurrent in Hope's early mature poetry. Vincent Buckley has commented that "The Damnation of Byron", 1934-42 (pp.2-6), is a 'profoundly moral poem',¹²⁴ which it is; the label of cautionary tale is as applicable. It dramatises, in terms bordering on the melodramatic, what happens to a male when his sexuality inundates his senses until rationality flees. It is more macabre than "The End of a Journey" and raises sexuality to surreality. The hero has all the women he could imagine; he becomes 'The sullen engine of fecundity'. When 'lust its anaesthesia withdraws' and his rationality returns, he knows that he cannot escape the need to love, that 'even his own society has become/A loneliness, a horror he cannot bear'. He is in a hell created by his sexuality. Byron is a variant of the two characters in Sartre's Huis Clos who can escape neither the unreality they have made of themselves nor each other. The hero of Hope's poem cannot escape his physical self because he cannot escape his need for love; even Death is a woman, 'marmoreal', terrible, inescapable, eternal. His unquenchable lust has delivered his soul into everlasting lust. The animal drives and the cravings of the bodily senses have claimed his soul. "The Damnation of Byron" is an expression of the poet's nightmarish fear of the power of sexuality to vanquish mind and soul.

123. Hope, "Christopher Brennan," in Native Companions, p.158.

124. Vincent Buckley, Essays in Poetry, p.153.

The strength of the sexual urge beyond the male's drives of 'Thought, passion, will' is lampooned in "Phallus" (pp.30-1) but within the self-mockery is fear of the subjugation of the rational and spiritual self to physicality. The penis 'speaks in naked Truth/Indifference for me.' A swashbuckling sexual arrogance contends with awareness of the 'pomp' of the sexual self; the poem is an expression of the confusion of attitudes of a human male who is accorded 'The leashed divinity' of sexual prowess. The last stanza evaluates coitus as a disappointing and deluding experience, affording only 'brief joy' to the male and defeat by misrepresentation for the female. The images are deliberately indelicate and mocking:

Her Bab-el-Mandeb waits
Her Red Sea gate of tears; ¹²⁵
The blood-sponge god dilates,
His rigid pomp appears.

The speaker is his own observer, trying to evaluate his sexual performance objectively, a theme developed in "The Cheek" (pp.37-9). The opening stanzas of "The Cheek" develop from Donne's geographical metaphor, in "The Good Morrow", of two lovers' experience of the making of 'One little roome an every where' by love. Hope's line , 'This bed and we a world, our lamp its sun', uses the same medieval and Renaissance idea of man as a microcosm. Donne carries the cosmic conceit through to the end of his poem, where the two lovers' faces, reflected in each other's eyes, form complementary hemispheres; "The Good Morrow" is about the bliss of fulfilment from love, for love completes the speaker of the poem by affording him physical and intellectual satisfaction. In "The Cheek", Hope uses the eye as a separate image, not part of the cosmic image, and, unlike in Donne's poem, the act of love emphasises the separateness of the drives

125. Bab-el-Mandeb is the strait at the entrance to the Red Sea and means Gate of Sorrow. Marion Kaplan, "Djibouti, Tiny New Nation on Africa's Horn," in National Geographic, 154, 4, October 1978, p.519.

within the lover, rather than their complementarity. The third stanza introduces the new image, the 'homunculus' of 'this manikin eye', the wry, observing, rational self during coitus. The brooding 'eye' absorbs the rituals of love-making until, 'lost in contemplation, he surveys/Mountains of new imagination raise/Their heads of storm'. The bathos of the ending of the poem, 'There broods the terrible passion of your hair', dashes the theme from lyrical exposition of the release of the creative imagination through love-making to intellectual recognition of the physical reality of the act. In both 'Phallus' and 'The Cheek' humour leavens the observations but does not disguise the stresses arising from the complexity of self and of the competing passions within self. How complex the male self is during coitus is further analysed in 'Dragon Music' (pp.43-4), where the man is Seducer, Slave, Observer and Lover. The Seducer wants to make love to satisfy his male ego and so his heart is immune to the act itself - his ego may even replace his heart. The Slave's feelings are so tender and his ego so frail as to make him vulnerable to jealousy and his heart bursts. Detached from the act by reason, the Observer shows no sign of having a heart. The Lover as lover experiences the ecstasy which comes to those who are transported beyond desire by passion and his heart 'dies'. The temporary death of the heart corresponds to the absence of the spirit from the body during *ekstasis* but the point is not made in this poem.

In reviewing the newly-published The Wandering Islands, Arthur Phillips was moved to comment that 'one cannot quite suppress a flippant desire to send him [Hope] a nice dream for Christmas'.¹²⁶ Not all the poems commented upon in the discussion above appeared in The Wandering Islands but Phillips' remark applies as well to poems such as "Private

126. Arthur Phillips, "Poetry Chronicle," rev. of The Wandering Islands, by A.D. Hope, Meanjin, 14, 4, 1955, p.569.

Screening" and "The End of a Journey" as to others which are in The Wandering Islands. The ironies of sexual love plagued Hope's consciousness so repeatedly, to judge from his poetry of the 1940s and the 1950s, that a deeper cause than personal and private dissatisfaction would seem to be exacerbating those dissatisfactions. In "Imperial Adam" (pp.183-4) there is an equation of sexual union with the loss of Eden; the gaining of sexual activity by Adam and Eve is shown to be at once life-giving and death-giving. The poem reflects a view of woman as the source of evil, a view which underlies many other Hope poems.

To comment on "Imperial Adam" is daunting, because Hope has devoted an essay, "The Practical Critic",¹²⁷ to his estimation of the poem and to the errors he perceived in the critical comments made on "Imperial Adam" by McAuley, Buckley and Goldberg, 'three of Australia's best and best-known critics'.¹²⁸ Despite Hope's strenuous protests in "The Practical Critic", the poem does not read as a '*jeu d'esprit*'.¹²⁹ Even though Hope adds imagined but credible details of voluptuous coupling and resultant childbirth, and freely coalesces certain events in Genesis, the story the poem tells is true to the Bible myths of Eve's creation and the birth of Cain. Cain was the first-born of the first human love-story and Cain did grow up to be the first murderer, though whether he was born a murderer could raise a debate. The irony of the last line, 'And the first murderer lay upon the earth', is savage, true and far from 'amusing',¹³⁰ and it is more than just 'a trick ending'.¹³¹ Hope did not invent the irony but he underscores it. He has recorded that the poem was written as 'a sort of holiday relief' from weeks of work on the 'serious issues' of Paradise Lost. By

127. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, pp.76-90.

128. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.77.

129. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.80.

130. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.79.

131. Dutton, The Innovators (South Melbourne : The Macmillan Company of Australia Pty Ltd, 1986), p.146.

making Eve a combination of the first woman, the forbidden fruit and Satan, 'as she was in medieval theology',¹³² Hope departs from the orthodox Christian attitudes to events in Genesis which Paradise Lost displays. Dutton has argued that "Imperial Adam" does not present woman as the *fons et origo* of evil¹³³ but the version of the Adam and Eve myth given in "Imperial Adam" leaves no room for argument about whether Eve is the source of evil. It also leaves no room for argument as to whether the sexual activity of Adam and Eve was in their fallen or unfallen state. Rather than being an escape from 'the moral, theological and human problems concerned in the Fall of Man',¹³⁴ the poem is an acknowledgement of the moral and human problems, wrung from the poet's subconscious fascination with the issues. The admixture of joy with horror in the story is also the admixture of the notions of sexual love and sin; pain is the outcome of pleasure, evil of good. Hope's poem presents the postulate that evil is the product of man's acceptance of that which God decreed good for him, woman. There is emphasis on sexual union as the expression of evil, for the poem ends with the physical reality of evil that was Cain, born after 'Adam knew Eve his wife' (Genesis 4.1). Sexual love made the reality of evil permanently recurrent. There is grief in "Imperial Adam" over the two-sided nature of human experience but the tone of the poem confuses the issue. Some of the controversy about the poem has originated from the disparity between the sardonic surface tone of the poem and the tone of horror, dismay and deepest regret in what is said in the poem. The opening line illustrates the point: 'Imperial Adam, naked in the dew'. The surface tone is of ridicule at the absurdity of Adam's human state.

132. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.80.

133. Dutton, The Innovators, p.146.

134. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, pp.78-9.

Dignity and compelling presence do not emanate from a man who is 'naked in the dew'. A God-created being, Adam was put by God 'into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it' (Genesis 2.15); he became the failed and tragic ex-emperor of Paradise, rendered unaccommodated by Original Sin. Nevertheless, Adam is 'the founder of the empire of man upon the earth and of all that history records of that empire'.¹³⁵ Hope's poem suggests it is not much of an empire and not much of a replacement for Eden. The word 'Imperial' carries a deep regret into the poem, at the same time as it invites the reader to grin at the absurdity of mankind's predicament. The poem is permeated with the contradiction between what man has become and what man might have remained. The description of Eve's body in stanza four is deliberately lascivious. Love-making as 'the jolly deed of kind' is as natural as the sun but man is not just a natural being. Unlike the sun, he is not 'innocent'; implicit in the poem is the idea that sexual union is the expression of man's inclination to evil and illicit knowledge of evil. Since love-making gives man 'joy', it must follow that the consequences are fearful.

McAuley's reading of the poem is that "Imperial Adam" points to the coitus of our first parents as the cause of evil and death and to Eve's body as the source of evil.¹³⁶ Hope objects to McAuley's interpreting the poem in the light of his personal observation that 'the adult Hope is an unbeliever, an atheist Manichee',¹³⁷ noting that McAuley ascribed to the poem ideas that are not in it. Manichean doctrine held that Satan is coeternal with God but Hope does not point out that one could not be an

135. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.79.

136. McAuley, "The Pyramid in the Waste," pp.106-7; quoted in part by Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, pp.82-3.

137. McAuley, quoted by Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.83.

atheist and a Manichee, nor does he take up the point as to whether he is an atheist. The issue he considers is the implication of the term Manichean. Part of his estimation of the meaning of the label describes an idea obliquely projected in "Imperial Adam", that the human body is 'essentially evil and a source of danger and corruption to the soul',¹³⁸ but Hope insists that idea is not in the poem.

So urgent is Hope's desire to discount Vincent Buckley's opinion,¹³⁹ that one of the concerns of the poem is 'the paradoxical way in which joy seems to beget horror',¹⁴⁰ that he falls into the error he discerns in McAuley's reading.¹⁴¹ He goes outside the poem to find evidence for the point he is claiming is in the poem, pointing out that 'Abel was a good man, though tactless; Cain was a bad man. Both were children of Eve.'¹⁴² The poem makes no reference to Abel. It raises the issue of good and evil but it deals only with the coming into being of evil and death for mankind. In his discussion of Goldberg's critical comments on "Imperial Adam",¹⁴³ Hope argues that a poem is what it is; if it presents a problem but offers no solution, then critics have no call to quibble about that. He does not argue with Goldberg's evaluation of the last line, that it insists on 'the destructive outcome of sexual passion' (the quoted words are Hope's).¹⁴⁴

The commentators on whose critiques of the poem Hope writes in "The Practical Critic", and Hope himself, were uneasy about the implications of the poem; all three critics indicate the last line as a source of their unease.

138. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.84.

139. Vincent Buckley, "A.D. Hope : the Unknown Poet," in Essays in Poetry, pp.146-47.

140. Vincent Buckley, "A.D. Hope," in Essays in Poetry, p.146.

141. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.84.

142. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.86.

143. S.W. Goldberg, "The Poet as Hero," pp.218-19.

144. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.88.

Hope's defensive attitude about the poem can be explained in Freudian terms, especially in the light of his statement that 'The last line came as a surprise. The poem was never intended to lead up to it and I only thought of it at the last moment.'¹⁴⁵ The underlying problem with the poem becomes clearer in the light of Freud's comment in Civilization and Its Discontents:

Those who love fairy-tales do not like it when people speak of the innate tendencies in mankind towards aggression, destruction and, in addition, cruelty. For God has made them in his own image, with his own perfections; no one wants to be reminded how hard it is to reconcile the undeniable existence - in spite of all the protestations of Christian Science - of evil with his omnipotence and supreme goodness. The devil is, in fact, the best way out in acquittal of God ...¹⁴⁶

Hope's poem gives us Eve as Satan, possibly in acquittal of God, more probably in acquittal of Adam.

McAuley reminds us that the orthodox Christian view of man is that 'matter and spirit, body and soul, are both good, since created by God; and though body and soul are in a fallen state both are redeemable and are pre-destined to a final transfiguration';¹⁴⁷ nonetheless, the sense of guilt about sexual activity which lies behind "Imperial Adam" can be explained as arising from attitudes inculcated in society by the Church, beginning with Paul and especially marked in the teaching of the Doctors of the fourth and fifth centuries, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine. By making Eve also the serpent, in "Imperial Adam" Hope transfers to woman the blame for our human condition, following in the misogynist tradition in the Church. Manifestations of the notion of Eve as the cause of evil are in the many art works which show the serpent with

145. Hope, "The Practical Critic," in Cave and Spring, p.80.

146. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. Joan Riviere (London : Hogarth Press, 1946), pp.99-100.

147. McAuley, "The Pyramid in the Waste," pp.103-4.

a woman's head or torso;¹⁴⁸ and Joyce has Stephen think, 'Eve. Naked wheatbellied sin. A snake coils her, fang in's kiss.'¹⁴⁹ The connection of sex and sin is not the prerogative of Christians. It is made in the myths of primitive cultures¹⁵⁰ and in Talmudic law Eve's curiosity is blamed for 'extinguishing the "Soul of the World"'.¹⁵¹ The treatment of Eve in "Imperial Adam" is part of a wide tradition. In it is also the Protestant flavour of the argument against rule by women used by John Knox in The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women.¹⁵² "Imperial Adam" does not raise the issue of Eve's free will but the rest of Knox's charge to Eve, 'thy free will hath brought thyself and mankind into the bondage of Satan', expresses a main point made by Hope's poem. By making Eve also the 'Delicious pulp of the forbidden fruit', Hope expresses 'the ambiguity of sexual passion' which Goldberg identifies as the theme of "Imperial Adam". It is a passion which is at once directed towards Eros - 'the power in nature working towards the creation and renewal of life'¹⁵³

-
148. Numerous examples are reproduced by Robert Hughes, Heaven and Hell in Western Art, e.g. "The Haywain," by Hieronymus Bosch, p.81; "Adam and Eve," engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael, and Hugo von de Goes, "The Temptation," in Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, p.78; "The Expulsion from Paradise," by Pol de Limbourg, from Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, in Musée Condé, Clantilly, and Michelangelo, "Temptation and Expulsion," in Sistine Chapel, Rome, p.80.
149. Ulysses, p.187.
150. e.g. "How men lost immortality," in Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked : Introduction to a Science of Mythology, trans. John and Dorothy Weightman (1964; this trans. 1970; rpt Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1986), p.155.
151. Will Durant, The Age of Faith, vol. 4 of The Story of Civilization (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1950), p.363.
152. John Knox, The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women (Geneva : 1558; Amsterdam Theatrvm Orbis Terrarvm Ltd and De Capo Press, 1972), p.14^v. Hope quotes from The First Blast in A Midsummer Eve's Dream (Canberra : Australian National Univ. Press, 1970), p.199.
153. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, footnote 1, p.100.

- and towards destruction. Its duality occasions guilt, which Freud defines as 'the expression of the conflict of ambivalence, the eternal struggle between Eros and the destructive or death instinct.'¹⁵⁴

The question of the nature of woman, prominent in Hope's early mature poetry, continues to appear in his work. Some later writings reveal an attitude to women of fair-minded, perhaps even objective, concern for woman's status.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, those later writings leave the reader with the suspicion that, even with an intellectually-derived goodwill, Hope could never take seriously the proposition that women, except maybe women poets, are capable of responding to the spiritual dimension of the human experience in the same way or in the same degree as men. A number of Hope's poems of the early mature period convey a distrust of woman's sexual mysteries and overturn the conventional idea of woman as being dependent in nature. The roles of the wielder of power and the victim of power are reversed in the course of "Massacre of the Innocents" (p.16). The mother has created a life but, in his brutish frustration, the soldier can achieve only destruction. The woman arouses in the soldier conflicting perceptions of her: 'she displays/The pale, ripe carcass of the odalisque,/Now the brood-female in her mastoid grace.' His 'love-dream' is foiled by her maternal self-sufficiency and he responds by murdering her infant. The creator in "Pygmalion" (pp.7-10) finds his love dream frustrated by the independent femininity of his creation and there is an atavistic, primitive distrust of woman's biological cycle in 'Menstrual, remote'. "Pygmalion", written in the first years of Hope's marriage, treats the imperfections of physical union between a man and a woman. In the myth, the sculpted

154. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p.121.

155. e.g. "'Shee for God in him', or Milton and Tennyson and the Tree of Knowledge," in Autolycus, pp.169-86, and "Botany Bay or The Rights of Woman," in The Age of Reason, pp.117-36.

likeness of the goddess of love is brought to life and taken in marriage by her creator. In the poem, the woman taken in physical union is summoned into being by her lover's imagination. The woman of both myth and poem begins as a work of art, fashioned by her maker's mind (as Adam's dream fashioned Eve) and planned to that end but it is an end which is but a beginning. As an art object, she exists in her own right and she also has the power to enslave the passions of her creator. The first person opening movement introduces an idea about woman which Hope takes up in his later period poetry,¹⁵⁶ that woman's body is Eucharistic sacrifice made for man. The woman is to be her maker's 'redeemer', who will reveal to the man his full self : 'And in myself this man I have willed to know/Wakes at long last'. The second movement is third person observation of the loss of singularity which marriage necessitates:

They cannot wake back to those selves again;
By any intellectual vision learn
What precious thing frets in the weeping urn
Of their content.

The final movement, again in the first person, details how the woman-creature, created by the man's imagination, continues to grow, both in his imagination and in herself: 'And things outlived and lost and left behind/Do not remain unchanged within the mind'. In growing, she renews her singularity and becomes 'remote' but her sexuality demands her lover's attention, threatens to engulf him, so that he flees from 'the sprouting cannibal plant' of love. Through woman's sexuality and fecundity, 'The accent of life', the man is trapped in spirit-sapping domesticity. He chooses to break free and to respond to his 'need of loss', the loss of the vision of spiritual growth with which he began the relationship. The resolution sounds hollow. The man seems as doomed by his need of love as Byron was.

156. e.g. II. "The Dream," in "The Countess of Pembroke's Dream," in A Late Picking, p.32; "What the Serpent Really Said," in A Late Picking, p.43.

The intensity of Hope's preoccupation in much of the early mature poetry with the theme of love as the source of horrors is such that it is with delight that the reader approaches "The Dream" (pp.52-5). This promises to be a love tale of faith and valour sustained against enormous odds and finally rewarded but the outcome of loving union is 'despair' and 'hurt'. The long subjection of the lovers to trials and temptations comes to an end:

But the bright warmth she gave became
A fever of heat. In wonder and dismay
She felt him filled with fire; her flesh was burned
And from his mouth an unendurable flame
Scorched her ...

The man's spiritual release through physicality is too strong for the human situation. His passion released, he becomes monstrous, 'kindling hurt and ruin at his touch.' Dutton's comment, 'in Hope's poetry ... in man, the passion is there but not the gift of love',¹⁵⁷ is true of the early mature poetry, except perhaps of "The Judgement" (1948-56, pp.75-6), a poem about lost love.

The threat which a male's sexuality poses to his spiritual independence is a theme of the cryptic "Morning Coffee" (p.24), "a deliberate riddle poem",¹⁵⁸ in which the theme of bondage is conveyed by the several references to the story of Moses. Like Dunbar's "Twa Mariit Wemen", it does not give 'the conventional view of woman as the gentler sex'.¹⁵⁹ The 'temporary Tantalus' who waits for the girl still has to wait when she comes, for she

Sits deftly, folding elegant thighs, and takes
Her time. She skins her little leather hands,
Conscious that wavering towards her like tame snakes
The polyp eyes converge ...

157. Dutton, The Innovators, p.145.

158. Hope, quoted by L. Kramer, A. D. Hope, p.13.

159. Hope, Midsummer Eve's Dream, p.266.

The ending of the poem conveys that if the woman accepts the man's overtures he will suffer manifold trials, as did Moses. Moses did not enter the Promised Land. One riddle answer is that the man, in bondage to the woman because of his sexual appetite, will not gain satisfaction of his spiritual needs. The church imagery, with its parody of the Mass, makes a parallel between the delusive attractions of religion and woman.

Written in 1942, "Morning Coffee" raises specific aspects of the issue of freedom which was at that time of particular interest in Sydney intellectual circles, because of the war and because of the challenges of Modernity and the re-banning of Ulysses. In 1941 Hope responded to Anderson's "Art and Morality" with "Childe Anderson"; 1943 saw the appearance of Anderson's essay, "The Servile State". It is of passing interest to note that in "James Joyce: Finnegans Wake," an address he gave in 1940, Anderson commented that Joyce

insists that it is necessary for the artist to escape from what is current - to escape, for example, from the notions of patriotism and religion, both accepted by the herd. Those who do not escape remain servile beings degraded like the companions of Ulysses who became Circe's swine.¹⁶⁰

When Hope takes up the myth of Circe in 1948 ("Circe", p.71), he continues the theme that love reduces males to a state of servility but he also uses the myth to comment on the lack of fulfilment from love which females suffer, assumedly because of male reduction to animality. Dutton cites "Circe" as evidence of Hope's 'understanding of the female ache for sexual love' and he reads 'pity...for that ache' in the poem.¹⁶¹ Circe has traditionally symbolised the power of females to turn men into beasts. In Paradise Lost, Milton compares Eve with Circe : the beasts are 'more duteous to her call/Than at the Circean call the herd disguised'.¹⁶²

160. John Anderson, "James Joyce : Finnegans Wake," in Art and Reality, p.114.

161. Dutton, Innovators, p.146.

162. Paradise Lost, IX, ll.521-2.

Hope's poem offers no revision of the symbolism. The ideas about male-female sexuality are similar to those of Joyce when he uses the Circe myth in the brothel scene in Ulysses. Bloom responds to Zoe's advances:

BLOOM

Laughing witch! The hand that rocks the cradle.

ZOE

Babby!

BLOOM

(In babylinen and pelisse, bigheaded, with a caul of dark hair, fixes big eyes on her fluid slip and counts its bronze buckles with a chubby finger, his moist tongue lolling and lisping.) One two tlee: tlee two tclone.

THE BUCKLES

Love me. Love me not. Love me.

ZOE

Silent means consent. (With little narted talons she captures his hand, her forefinger giving to his nalm the passtouch of secret monitor, luring him to doom.) Hot hands cold gizzard.

(He hesitates amid scents, music, temptations. She leads him towards the steps, drawing him by the odour of her armpits, the vice of her painted eyes, the rustle of her slip in whose sinuous folds lurks the lion reek of all the male brutes that have possessed her.)

THE MALE BRUTES

(Exhaling sulphur of rut and dung and ramping in their loosebox, faintly roaring, their drugged heads swaying to and fro.) Good!¹⁶³

What makes Hope's "Circe" more than just a versified version of the story is that it shows Circe as also the victim of her sexuality; 'Her uncontrollable aching cry of love' echoes round the island as, made eloquent by her power over the sailors-made-beasts and her sexual excitation, she grieves for the loss of humanity in her lovers. The poem is informed by pity for Circe but there is also a counterpoint, strengthened by the last

163. Ulysses, p.476.

line, of male fear of female sexual power. In "Circe", Hope expresses a very different attitude to coitus from that in his poems about release of imagination through sexual intercourse. In Hope's thinking, rationality and speech are linked in a significant partnership, for they are the attributes which distinguish man from beast. The functions of the speech organs and the brain have evolved in man beyond the primary function of aiding 'the creature's ability to pursue its practical ends of survival'.¹⁶⁴ In "'Shee for God'", Hope notes that Milton's Eve observed how Satan, on eating the forbidden fruit, had been 'raised to more than human knowledge and eloquence'.¹⁶⁵ Circe sees the opposite process occur in her victims, 'as on snout and beak and muzzle dies/The melancholy trace of human speech', but not only Circe's victims are spellbound, for she is 'Herself transfigured by the hideous spell'. Hope's poem offers that, in the process whereby a male loses his rationality and speech, and his spirituality is so deadened that he becomes no more than a beast, a woman's understanding and her emotional capacities enlarge : 'For the first time her heart is rich with words/And with her voice she disenchants the grove.' The only answers Circe receives are 'barks and howls'. A woman suffers in love-making because the object of her feelings cannot respond adequately, a surprising alternative perspective on the act of love from a poet who had been wont to present love from a purely male perspective.

Dutton also sees 'pity' for 'the female ache for sexual love' in the sonnet, "Pasiphae" (pp.84-5), in which Hope re-tells the story of the unnatural coupling of Poseidon's wife and a white bull, up to the point of the conception of the Minotaur. As she is presented in the octave, Pasiphae is the type of any female who will 'have her will' and succeeds

164. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, p.21.

165. Hope, "'Shee for God,'" in Autolykus, p.172.

by trickery in obtaining satisfaction of her animal drives. Pity of a kind may be in the lines which say that the constraints of the 'mimic cow' in which Pasiphae is hidden prevent her from enjoying a total animality in the act: 'she wept to know/Her love unable to embrace its bliss/So long imagined'. The ending of the poem, that when she felt the act 'Fill her with monstrous life, she did not weep', conveys that conception, even of a monster, is of greater importance to her than the act of copulation. Hope manipulates the myth to express the idea that, for the female, fulfilment in copulation comes from conception. The 'monstrous life' conceived by Pasiphae is reminiscent of the 'first murderer' whom Eve conceives in "Imperial Adam". Both offspring are the result of the gaining of illicit carnal knowledge, the one by deliberate female intent, the other because Eve is a sexual being and Adam responds to her allures. Both poems are disturbing because they insist that, through her sexuality, woman reduces humanity. In two other poems about illicit coupling, "Lot and His Daughters I and II" (pp.76-9), abnormal intercourse is treated in ways which combine perspectives on woman in "Imperial Adam" and "Pasiphae".

Often reviews of Hope's poetry lack detail in the exegetical comments. Reviewers tend to respond to the tone of the work and to offer broad judgments. One reason for this in reviews of the poetry of the early mature period is that the subjects of many of the poems are taboo. As Judith Wright has written, Hope has 'an unsuitable habit of confronting the flesh and the spirit'.¹⁶⁶ In a 1955 talk, "Censorship and the University",¹⁶⁷ Hope explains that the 'curious obsession with sex that characterises the censorious mind' is the outcome of irrationally arrived at taboos:

The moral question has in fact very little to do with the protests...The fact is that sexual subjects and sexual words really disturb us because of the persistence in our

166. Judith Wright, Preoccupations, p.191.

167. Hope, "Censorship and the University," pp.52-6.

society of certain ancient and primitive taboos.

Now taboo is usually arbitrary in its choice of taboo subjects. In some societies things are taboo which to people of other societies are unexceptionable.¹⁶⁸

Hope's justification for the inclusion in university studies of literature which deals with taboo sexual matters implies justification for author as well as reader:

the nature of a university study is that it is critical enquiry into the whole of one of the divisions of knowledge. And together university studies embrace the whole range of knowledge, the complete nature of man and his universe.¹⁶⁹

Two of the many Hope poems which deal with taboo aspects of sex are "Lot and His Daughters I and II" (pp.76-9), which Judith Wright considers were 'written for the sake of the [sexual] detail, rather than the detail put in for the sake of the poem.'¹⁷⁰ S.L. Goldberg, on the other hand, judges "Lot and His Daughters" to be 'imaginatively barbed' and sees that the 'uneasy tensions' to be 'imaginatively reconciled'.¹⁷¹ The "Lot and His Daughters" poems are about incest but neither review says so. 'I' describes Lot's impregnation of one of the daughters and presents the comment that the woman, in her participation in the unnatural act, is less than animal. This daughter is Eve's daughter, for 'Black as the Syrian night, on her young head'Clustered the tendrils of the ancient vine'. Women's hair has a fascination for Hope and, in "'Shee for God in him'", he notes that, in Milton's Paradise Lost, 'Eve's hair is golden and hangs in loose tresses down to her waist, "Disshaveled, but in wanton ringlets wav'd/As the Vine curls her tendrils, which impli'd/Subjection."' Hope discounts 'the logic of this remarkable inference'.¹⁷² "Lot and His Daughters I", by its reference to 'the tendrils of the ancient vine', is not indicating the

168. Hope, "Censorship and the University," p.54.

169. Hope, "Censorship and the University," p.54.

170. Preoccupations, p.192.

171. S.L. Goldberg, "The Poet as Hero," pp.219-20.

172. Hope, "'Shee for God,'" in Autolycus, pp.169-70.

woman's subjection but her wantonness, inherited from Eve. The contrast between fallen and unfallen woman is in Hope's use of 'black', against Milton's use of 'golden'. Lot's babbling, 'I have two daughters...let them serve your need', is his recall in dream of the visit to Sodom of two angels (Genesis 19.1-22), in which pre-Christian precedent for the status of women in Christianity is exemplified. Having been given shelter in Lot's home, the angels were sought by the men of Sodom, 'that we may know them'. Lot offered his daughters instead: 'I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good to your eyes; only unto these men do nothing.'¹⁷³ Lot's proposal came to naught, for the angels intervened, a sequel not retold in the babbling given to Lot in Hope's poem. The dreaming and sleep-talking father is joined by the daughter. The notion is implicit that the girl had felt cheated of the sexual experience which was forestalled by the angels' intervention. At that point Hope does use the image of woman as earth to the male as sower of his seed but not in the way Docker has suggested.¹⁷⁴ Hope's concern is not with the perpetuation of the species. This is an act of incest, initiated by the daughters (Genesis 19.30-8) and which reminds Lot in his muzziness of a lioness who once had tried to hold him at bay from her young. The unemphasised comparison is that the woman has no care for what might be the product of the coupling, only for her own animal gratification by conception.

"Lot and His Daughters II" images the reign of libidinous love, in a parody of the scene in Paradise Lost when Raphael comes to lunch with Adam and Eve:

Meanwhile, at table Eve
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crowned. O innocence
Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,
Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been
Enamoured at that sight. But in those hearts
Love unlibidinous reigned ...¹⁷⁵

173. cf. Judges 19. 23-30, a similar situation.

174. Cultural Elites, p.52.

175. Paradise Lost, Bk. V, ll.443-9.

"Lot and His Daughters II" builds upon the vine image of "I". Lot's cave is sheltered by a vine on which are 'fat grapes bunched against the light'. His wine is 'out'; his 'big-bellied' daughters replenish the vessel. The analogy is lightly indicated but the daughters are Lot's vines of comfort for his lust. Their unborn babies are as unripe 'fat grapes'; these 'fat grapes', the illicit children, become in Lot's addled mind the future vintage of his seed-sowing. Lot, drunk, is yet aware of his sin and 'Crafty from fear', even though 'reckless with joy and greed'. He offers justification for being a 'bad old man' : his deeds are providential. The daughters have no guilt, though they recognise the source of Lot's guilt, so they give him more wine to keep him in 'that best wisdom' of amorality which is theirs and 'which is not to know'. By labelling Lot 'a bad old man' Hope is not being playful but exonerating Lot's wickedness with the implied argument that Lot was 'bad', that is, humanly inclined to evil, 'old', and so not fully *compos mentis*, and 'man', vulnerable to the sorcery of females. It is an argument no more convincing than Lot himself offers. The point is made in the last line, that the females know this relationship is wrong in the father's mind but do not regard it as wrong themselves. Their sexuality is gratified and they are content. The sexual detail in "I" and "II" (there is little in "II") is put in 'for the sake of the poem' because the poems are about female sexuality. The poems are 'imaginatively barbed' but not 'imaginatively reconciled', unless one accepts the thesis that woman has no conscience about how she satisfies her sexual needs, not even if it reduces the humanity and spirituality of the species by in-breeding.

The question of the status of humanity is not far below the surface of most of Hope's poems; "Imperial Adam", "Pasiphae" and "Lot and His Daughters" present one extreme of Hope's views on woman's impact on the equilibrium of that status. The other extreme is expressed in "The Gateway"

and "The Lamp and the Jar", where, through the sexuality of woman, the sensibility of the poet-lover is enabled to transcend the mundane. It is by such transcendence that humanity is able to inch forward to a greater spirituality, perhaps to come close to the divine. When Hope endorses Novalis' view (apparently in a paraphrase of Novalis made by Brennan), that 'Man's task is to spiritualise, idealise, humanize - the terms are all equivalent - to humanize the world',¹⁷⁶ by 'man' he means poets and poets are, with rare exceptions, men. Hope makes this point in the essay on Brennan when he writes that 'women are in general concerned with the maintenance of the human race, not with its transcendence'.¹⁷⁷ That woman can also debilitate the human race is expressed by "Pasiphae" and "Imperial Adam" and by those poems which show her sexuality as enticing man away from the restraints of reason into passionate physicality.

Thematic preoccupations in Hope's poetry have contributed to his theory of poetry. "The Dinner" (pp.49-50), "The Elegy" (pp.55-8) and "The Trophy" (pp.68-9) explore the theme of male-female love, from the horror of the implications of physicality in "The Dinner" to recognition, in "The Elegy", of the spiritual function of the human body. The poems evidence the uncertainties, over a decade, of the poet's attitudes to the act of love but they also show his movement towards definition of artistic creation as an act of love by the artist for his world. Partly out of this movement have come the concepts expressed in the essay, "The Three Faces of Love". "The Dinner" seems an unlikely work to hold a contribution to the development of Hope's aesthetic theory but it does, for the poem begins with an expectation that physical love will heighten

176. Hope, "Christopher Brennan," in Native Companions, p.153.

177. Hope, "Christopher Brennan," in Native Companions, p.155. This is Hope's observation, not his comment on a view held by Brennan.

the spirituality, if not of the lovers, then at least of the man. It is only in the first stanza that there is expectation that male-female love will confer grace, in the spiritual sense. In the rest of the poem that notion is negated and replaced by the idea that woman's body has fed mankind's despiritualising appetite for carnality since the beginning of the species. The poem is distinguished by the carefully constructed disintegration in tone, from elegant sensuality to Surrealistic horror. The last line, 'And know the flesh they rend and tear is you', says that woman, even the most delicate-seeming woman, is flesh. From the male lover's expectation of spiritual fulfilment through physical union, imaged in terms of the lunch scene in Paradise Lost when angels 'dined with men', comes a vision of love as a cannibalistic ritual. The scouring of the subconscious in "The Dinner" is representative of Hope's writing at its most Surrealistic. Although this was not the author's purpose, the poem gives evidence of the savage effects of Hope's subconscious on traditional and mythic concepts of sexual love.

"The Trophy" (pp.68-9) is about the act of love but its interest is in the poet's coupling of love with art. The inadequacy of copulation takes precedence as the poem's subject over the undeveloped notion that the loving skill of an artist is not productive of an object that is as close to perfection as planning could be expected to ensure. Depending on how the poem is read, it is either a lament for the shortcomings of physical love as experienced by the man or a dismayed response to the impossibility of a male lover's satisfying his partner's needs by the act of love. The disappointment of the voice in the poem, the lover's, is likened to the disappointment of a long-dead Roman soldier-captain who lost a battle and, even though the campaign was won, fell upon his sword.

The poem reads more clearly if the analogy is applied to the case where, even though the lover succeeds in his plan to make love to a woman and so wins his 'campaign', the single 'battle' to satisfy his partner at the moment of climax is lost and the victory is hollow : 'In the moment of success/Suddenly the heart stands still'. Similarly, so the poem hints, in the act of love an artist performs when he creates an art object, what is required for the perfecting of the object may not be available and 'the cry of love' which begs to be satisfied 'appals/All the energies of man'. In "The Three Faces of Love", which began as a talk given in 1965, Hope develops the idea, present but not developed in "The Trophy", of the creative act as an act of love: 'Creation is a separate mode of human activity ... it has its own separate and distinct sorts of pleasure, that which attends the process and that which consists of joy in fruition - its own mode of love.'¹⁷⁸ The lack of 'joy in fruition' was prominent in the poet's mind when he composed "The Trophy".

Begun in 1946 but not completed until 1955, "The Elegy" (pp.55-8), combines aspects of "The Dinner" and "The Trophy" but is appropriately lighter in tone, for it signifies resolution of the problem of physicality which informs "The Dinner". The linking of man's spirituality to his physical being reverses the grotesque view of male-female love in "The Dinner" and the image for love of a battle is without the sombreness of the image as it is used in "The Trophy". The opening point, that lovers must nourish both their spirits and their bodies, is echoic of Raphael's acceptance, in Paradise Lost, of Adam's invitation to lunch: 'Wonder not, then, what God for you saw good/If I refuse not, but convert, as you,/To proper substance.'¹⁷⁹ The central observation in "The Elegy", 'Nature is frugal in her ministers', is lyrically developed in the 1959 poem, "An Epistle : Edward Sackville to Venetia Digby" (pp.157-65), and explained

178. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, pp.24-5.

179. Paradise Lost, Book V, ll.491-3.

as aesthetic theory in "The Three Faces of Love".¹⁸⁰ The contribution of Hope's recognition of 'this noble irony of kind' ("The Elegy") to his theory of spiritual evolution is evident in "Christopher Brennan : An Interpretation", where Hope states that Blake and Novalis' idea, that man's task is to spiritualise the world, is not romantic nonsense. Even though they did not apply to the concept the fact that animals transform inorganic matter into organic matter, Blake and Novalis were formulating the myths on which may be built 'a new view of man's place and function in the universe, a view in which he is nature's growing point of transforming organism'.¹⁸¹ Having raised the question, 'But transforming itself into what?', Hope moves his discussion to aspects of several writers; we do not get Hope's answer, as we could not, since the transformation proceeds into the unknown.

"The Three Faces of Love" combines discussion of man's spiritual evolution with development of the suggestion in "The Trophy" that the creative act is an act of love. Hope proposes that, in addition to the active and contemplative modes of human life proposed by Aquinas in the Summa Theologica, there is a third mode, the creative way. The ends which followers of a particular mode pursue are the objects to which their love is directed:

As the mark of the active way of life is to possess the objects of desire, and the mark of the contemplative way of life is to enjoy the knowledge of the objects of desire, so the mark of the creative way of life is to bring new objects of desire into being.¹⁸²

Hope recalls that the idea about the third way of life began from his consideration of Dante's Purgatorio, rather than from Aquinas' theory of the divisions of life.¹⁸³ The development of the idea in "The Three Faces

180. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, pp.21-2.

181. Hope, "Christopher Brennan," in Native Companions, p.153.

182. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, p.24.

183. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, p.20.

of Love" is an extension of Aquinas' theories of knowledge and beauty but it is also a development of an observation Hope makes in "The Esthetic Theory of James Joyce", where he considers Joyce's sketchy theory of the soul. He sees Joyce's theory as being akin to that of Aquinas in that, 'For him, too, the soul's activity is a free intellectual activity and is contrasted with that other part of man's behaviour which is concerned with and bound by movements of desire and loathing, the instincts and appetites of his animal and social nature.'¹⁸⁴ The poetry shows Hope's development of the concept of free intellectual activity and in "The Three Faces of Love" the influence of Joyce, *via* Aquinas, on Hope's aesthetic theory is recognisable. From Hope's reading of Joyce's 'hint',¹⁸⁵ that the artist is able to create when he has achieved a harmony of 'the conflicting motives', came Hope's extension of Aquinas' theories. It is an extension bound to Hope's theory that man is evolving towards unknown levels of spiritual being: 'as we are concerned with man we can accept the controversial notion of a final cause.'¹⁸⁶ Hope places spiritual refinement or enlargement with the intellect but not to the exclusion of the body.¹⁸⁷ He considers, as he deemed Joyce to consider, that there are two types of intellectual activity, an apprehension which is tied to contemplative ends and a free activity of apprehension which is creative. In general, Hope explores aesthetic concepts in poetry before they are enlarged in prose as aesthetic theory. 'I have never felt,' he wrote in 1962, '...the need of any explicit theory of poetry in order to write poems.'¹⁸⁸

184. Hope, "Esthetic Theory," pp.100-01.

185. Hope, "Esthetic Theory," p.102.

186. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, p.20.

187. Hope, "X-Ray Photograph" (pp.41-2), places the soul in the brain.

188. Hope, "Notes on Poetry," p.164.

The concept in Hope's aesthetic theory that the creative act is an act of love by an artist for his world derives from the poet's awareness of the Fall and its consequences. The development of the concept took time. In the early mature poetry which treats sex as a threat to man's spirituality, Hope is writing in accordance with the orthodox Christian view that after the Fall, far from being raised above his previous capacities, Adam was a diminished being. As he develops his aesthetic theory, Hope apportions to poets the role of regenerating the spirituality weakened in man by Adam's lapse and he establishes the sacrosanct nature of the poet's vocation. In the same period in which he was expressing in poetry the dangers posed to spirituality by physicality, he also recognised that it is through love-making that the sons of Adam who are poets are enabled to contribute to man's spiritual refinement. An expression of the point is in the virtuoso piece of erotica, "A Blason" (p.148), a disquisition on the poet's penis, which ends, 'Now furrow my fallow, now trench my treasure,/Harvester, harbinger, harrow my heaven.'

In poems of Hope's early mature period, woman is the silent partner in the act of love and seemingly without aspiration towards or attitude for metaphysical enlightenment. Not until the 1957 poem, "Soledades of the Sun and Moon" (pp.106-10), is there recognition in Hope's poetry that there are women who are poets. His 1955 review of Judith Wright's The Two Fires recognises Judith Wright as a poet with a rare talent; there Hope writes that

The essential difference between men and women, perhaps, is the fact that the experience of men is that of a creature ephemeral, temporary and incidental in the biological process, and that the experience of women is fundamentally that of the experience of the biological process.¹⁸⁹

189. Hope, review of The Two Fires, by Judith Wright, in Native Companions, p.80.

Poems in which the poet or a *persona* rues the female's withdrawal into independence have comment on the rhythmic reminders of woman's part in the process of creation and raise the notion of the contrast between woman's fixed role and the nebulous, sometimes difficult, access to creativity of the poet. Those poems which convey a distrust of woman's sexuality leave an impression that the poet in Hope is quasi-envious, quasi-repelled by the female's part in procreation. However, Hope's interest is with the role of poets far more than with the generation of the species and his estimate of the poet's contribution to human existence is higher than his estimate of woman's contribution. In 1962, in "Notes on Poetry", he ruminates about why, although the gods in Greek myths often took animal form when they chose to consort with mortal women, 'and the women did not protest', goddesses who chose mortal men always did so 'in their own sublime and charming persons'.¹⁹⁰ He conjectures that the answer must be 'in terms of the poetic imagination, something of which the sexual and social fact is only the key to the door of metaphysical vision'. The implication is that women are capable of appreciating only the physical aspects of sexuality, whereas for men who are gifted with poetic imagination sexuality is the means of transcendence of physicality.¹⁹¹ By the mid-1950s, in Hope's developing vision the human genders are complementary but unequal: the elect, poets, belong predominantly to the male sex. The carrying out of the office of the elect is difficult. In "Invocation" (pp.65-9), Hope writes, 'in me again/The spirit elect works out its mighty plan' and adds, 'Yes, but the birth is hard.'

The soul, says Joyce, has 'a slow and dark birth',¹⁹² and the idea of the dark birth of the soul of society is as central to Hope's "Flower Poem" (p.14) as the idea of the dark birth of the poet's soul is to

190. Hope, "Notes on Poetry," p.164.

191. cf. Hope, "Christopher Brennan," in Native Companions, p.155.

192. Portrait, p.188.

"Ascent into Hell". The congruity of these ideas rests in the concept that, just as the development of the individual soul is beset by irrational fears and moral strictures, so is bedevilled the artist's task in bringing about the spiritualisation of the world. "Flower Poem" is a recognition that not only does the artist have to work against the ingrained erroneous attitudes which people bring to bear on his work but that the breaking down of misconceptions is part of his difficult task of directing the birth of the soul of the species. We are 'bleeding from' our civilisation, for it imposes wrong values on us. We acknowledge a false idea of what is beautiful and make acknowledgement of sexuality the sign of a 'dirty mind'.¹⁹³ The beauty of a work of art lies in the completeness of its presentation of its subject, man, for the bringing of man's soul to a state of 'scent and glory' is the purpose of art. "Flower Poem" is a protest, indirectly expressed, against the wrong conditioning imposed on us by civilisation. "Massacre of the Innocents" (p.16) and "Flower Poem", both written in 1940, direct us to look at a work of art as a whole and not to concentrate on details of technique or separate aspects of content, a difficult admonition to heed with a poem such as "Imperial Adam".

Under Sir Herbert Read's editorship, Surrealism,¹⁹⁴ a 'definitive manifesto',¹⁹⁵ was produced in response to the interest of viewers in the International Surrealist Exhibition in London in 1936. The Exhibition 'broke over London, electrifying the dry intellectual atmosphere, stirring our sluggish minds to wonder, enchantment and derision.'¹⁹⁶ Read's description of the event is soon after paralleled in Australian art history¹⁹⁷

193. Lionel Lindsay, Addled Art, p.65, refers to 'Freud's dirty mind.'

194. Surrealism, ed. and intro. Herbert Read (London : Faber and Faber, 1936), contributions by André Breton, Hugh Sykes Davies, Paul Eluard, Georges Hugnet.

195. Read, Introduction, Surrealism, p.20.

196. Read, Introduction, Surrealism, p.19.

197. See, e.g. Geoffrey Serle, From Deserts the Prophets Come, p.161.

in records of the first public exhibition here of a collection of modern paintings from overseas. The Herald Exhibition of Modern Art was shown in Adelaide,¹⁹⁸ Melbourne and Sydney in 1939.¹⁹⁹ Dali's "L'Homme Fleur"²⁰⁰ was the painting which made the greatest impact. In 1936, Dali 'stated his concepts of "the aesthetic health of the spirit", which could not exist without the participation of the body; one must touch, truly "eat and chew"'.²⁰¹ Lionel Lindsay was so aghast at "L'Homme Fleur" that he devoted to it most of his chapter, "Surrealism", in Addled Art.²⁰² One of the targets of Lionel Lindsay's anti-Semitic, anti-Modernist attack was Freud, 'whose monstrous theories have been discredited.'²⁰³ At the other extreme of reactions was James Gleeson, who exhibited Surrealist works at the first Contemporary Art Society exhibition in Melbourne a few months before the overseas exhibition opened.²⁰⁴ McQueen records that 'When Dali's

198. Robert Hughes, The Art of Australia, rev. ed. (Ringwood : Penguin, 1970).

199. The Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art was the name given to the exhibition in Melbourne; it became the Daily Telegraph Exhibition when the paintings were taken to Sydney but is generally referred to as the Herald Exhibition. Comment on the exhibition pertinent to this study is made in Haese, Rebels and Precursors, pp.10, 12, 49, 61-5, 92, 248-9, McQueen, Black Swan, pp.36, 81, Geoffrey Serle, From Deserts the Prophets Come, pp.163-4, Dutton, Innovators, p.57, Hughes, Art of Australia, pp.141-2.

200. Reproduction of "L'Homme Fleur", with two details, in Lionel Lindsay, Addled Art, between pp.34-5.
The painting is reproduced in colour, with one study, as "Memory of the Child-Woman," 1932, in Robert Descharnes, Salvador Dali : The Work The Man, trans. Eleanor R. Morse (New York : Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), p.125. Morse Charitable Trust, on loan to Salvador Dali Museum, St Petersburg, Florida.

201. Descharnes, Salvador Dali, p.159. Descharnes quotes from Dali, "The Spectral Surrealism of the Eternal Feminine Pre-Raphaelite," in Minotaure, 8, Paris, 1936.

202. Lionel Lindsay, "Surrealism" and Appendix, "Analysis of 'L'Homme Fleur' by Salvador Dali," in Addled Art, pp.27-33, 64-5.

203. Addled Art, p.65.

204. Haese, Rebels and Precursors, p.90; McQueen, Black Swan, p.30.

"L'Homme Fleur" was shown in 1939, Gleeson was the local authority.²⁰⁵ Robert Hughes has described Gleeson as the Australian artist who 'worked closest to the accepted idea of surrealism - that is to say, he imitated Dali so closely that he became a *pasticheur*', but Hughes adds that Gleeson remained, 'fundamentally, a painter of allegories and literary symbols', for whom 'irrational processes were not of prime importance'.²⁰⁶ In 1940, Gleeson put the case that, 'Far from being a degenerate movement in art, surrealism is a vigorous attempt to solve the problems that are facing us to-day by drawing attention to the fact that the roots of these evils lie in our own minds',²⁰⁷ a conception of the function of Surrealist art matched in its idealism by Hope's conviction that artists must revitalise the damaged human spirit. Dutton comments that 'Hope would certainly have been aware of Gleeson's work, an awareness that sharpened his attacks on surrealism in verse and prose',²⁰⁸ and Dutton may have made his comment from knowledge that Hope's anti-Surrealist remarks were partly provoked by an antipathy to Gleeson's work. The point cannot be supported by reference to Hope's anti-Surrealist comments, for in those he makes no reference to Gleeson. Hope refers to Gleeson, in a 1955 letter to Clem Christesen,²⁰⁹ in relation to a proposed ABC discussion series on the role of the artist in society, but without emotive or evaluative comment. When Hope attacked Max Harris with "Rainbow Cake",²¹⁰ his attack may have been sharpened by his understanding from discussion with Gleeson of what intellectually directed use of Surrealist methods aimed to achieve. "Flower Poem" shows that in 1940 Hope was sympathetic to the work of painters such as Dali and

205. Black Swan, p.83.

206. Hughes, Art of Australia, pp.142, 144.

207. Gleeson, "What is Surrealism?" p.29.

208. Innovators, p.131.

209. Hope. Letter to Clem Christesen, 10 March 1955. Meanjin Archive, 1/1/78.

210. Hope, "Rainbow Cake," Number Two, 1944, n. pag.

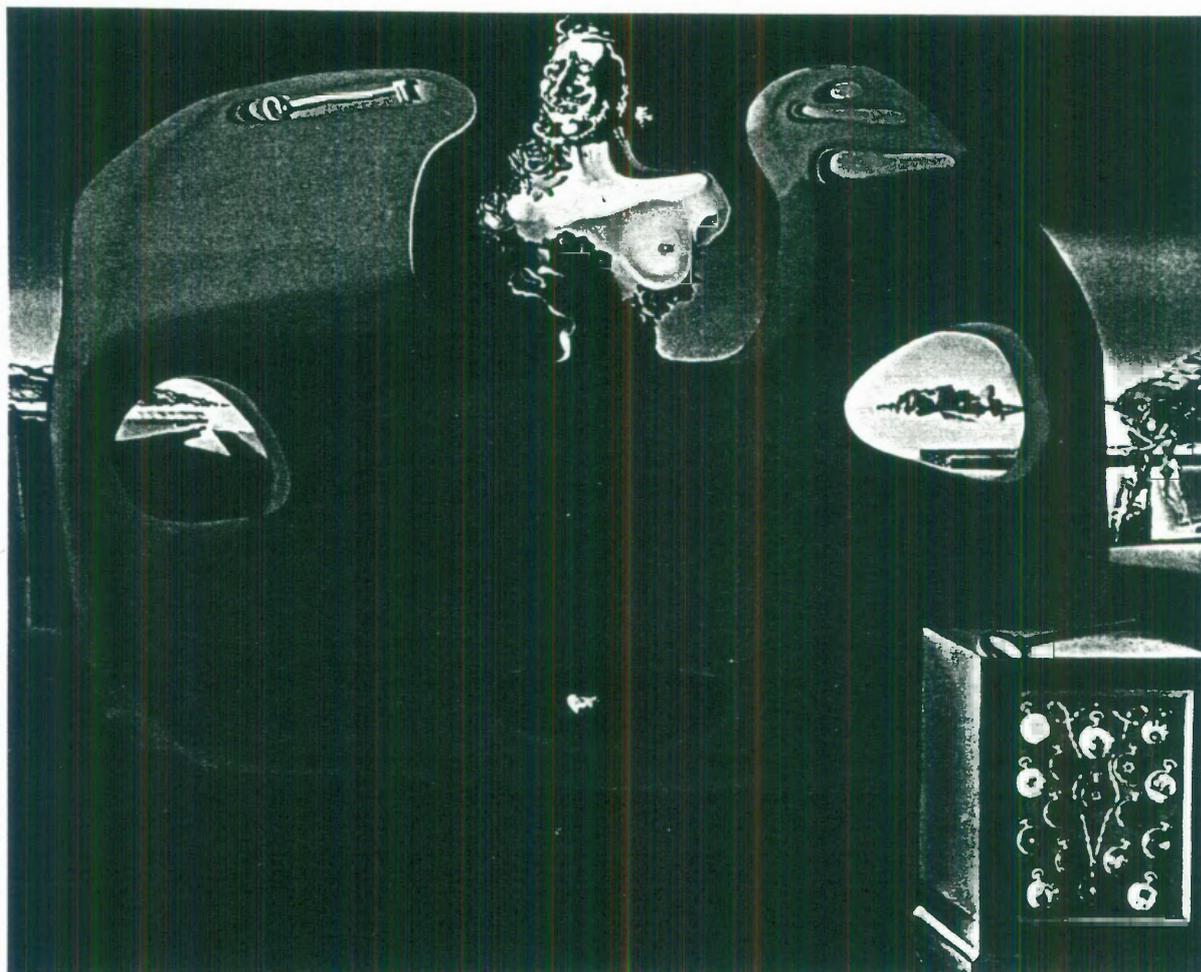


Fig. 3 Salvador Dalí, "L'Homme Fleur" or "Memory of the Child-Woman", on loan to Salvador Dalí Museum, St Petersburg, Florida

that he equated the reactions of Australians to "L'Homme Fleur" with the reactions to poetry of academic literary critics and lazy readers. The immediate stimulus for Hope to write "Flower Poem" would appear to be the showing in Australia of "L'Homme Fleur" but it is also an interpretation of Baudelaire's Fleurs du Mal. As a poem of protest, "Flower Poem" is also didactic and, although it particularises the wrong-headed approach to poetry of academics and students, its message is that people base their efforts to appreciate art works on the false premises on which our so-called civilisation is based and which lead to social evils.

Lionel Lindsay allows the technical competence of Dali;²¹¹ even so, he labels the use of the technique of collage in a detail of "L'Homme Fleur" as 'mendacity without splendour',²¹² which illustrates in a minor way the shock of the new which the advent of Modernism caused. With "Flower Poem", Hope transposes the scene from gallery to lecture-room, replacing paintings with poems. He uses the flowers of Dali's painting as a multiple image, for a poem in itself, which the title offers, and for the 'cut heads' of both individual poems and isolated details of a poem, where the 'entire plant' is the poem. "Flower Poem" begins with a protest against the concentration of some viewers on 'these cut heads', the image deriving from the porcelain-like painted roses swathed round the bust in the upper central focus of Dali's painting. These are the pretty parts of the work, gawped at by some viewers, praised by some 'connoisseurs' who become, in Hope's poem, the students and the professor with his 'scalpel of reason'. Hope's initial 'Not' also reproves those who concentrate on erotic detail. Both types of viewers 'feed grublike' on the work, destroying its meaning. Dali's embracing pair, on the right side of the painting,

211. Addled Art, pp.28-9.

212. Addled Art, p.30.

by their abnormal genitalia suggest epicene relationships or the sexual perversions and inadequacies that are problematical in society. Hope's 'lusting virgins' may correspond to them but they image those who gain sexual satisfaction by responding lasciviously to art works, not daring to meet the challenge of their sexuality in a wholesome way. The dominance of the pelvic shape in Dali's painting emphasises the importance of sexuality to "'the aesthetic life of the spirit"'.²¹³ "Flower Poem" is a protest against unbalanced appraisals of works such as "L'Homme Fleur" which concentrate on technical, pretty or erotic details. Rationally rigid academic dissections destroy the significance of art works, a point about pure rationality which, in the post-1970 poetry, Hope applies to scientific discoveries in which observers fail to appreciate the mystical significance. From 'Not this cut flower but the entire plant/Achieves its miracle from soil and wind,/Rooted in dung, dirt, dead men's bones', we are to understand the scataphagous and cyclical aspects of creativity, that out of lust and obscenity and death, life and beauty emerge. The last two stanzas exemplify the central notion of Baudelaire's Fleurs du Mal. The salvific beauty of an art object is in its truth : 'the scent/and glory not in themselves an end; the end:/Fresh seeding in some other dirty mind,/The ache of its mysterious event'. Properly contemplated, an art work excites erotic responses that are directed creatively, unlike the decadent eroticism of 'dirty minds'. To dissect out specific features in terms of conventional ideas of beauty is to ignore the meaning of the work, just as to ignore or concentrate on erotic content is to titillate and distort erotic responses in a decadent way.

Hope's inclusion of "Flower Poem" in The Wandering Islands indicates his assessment of its worth. It appears to be his earliest extant poetic

213. Dali, "The Spectral Surrealism of the Eternal Feminine Pre-Raphaelite," as quoted by Descharnes, Salvador Dali, p.159.

statement that sexuality and art are linked, an idea as important to Hope as the necessity for poetic clarity and discipline, yet "Flower Poem" was not published until fifteen years after it was written. It is probable that Hope delayed its publication because the poem endorses the operation, in life and art, of the 'subsoil' of the subconscious and sexuality, Freudian concepts to which Hope was ambiguously drawn. In the early 1940s, "Flower Poem" would have been recognised as the partial exercise in the Surrealist manner and the pro-Freudian statement it is and, in those years, Hope was ambivalent in his attitudes to Surrealism and Freudianism. He could not reconcile his aversion to undisciplined subjectivism with his intellectual acceptance that there is a framework of truth supporting Freud's ideas and that Surrealist approaches to art extend the concept of the imagination.

Max Harris wrote his tribute to Dali, "The Pelvic Rose", in 1940 and published it the following year. The similarity between "The Pelvic Rose" and "Flower Poem" is in a shared understanding of Dali's painting. Obscure in parts, Harris' poem makes a lucid enough statement about the role of sexuality in artistic production:

The pelvic rose unfolding in the flesh
 gropes its roots into the germs of life,
 esoteric being about the hair roots of the cells,
 spreads wide the set limb, unanswering
 the petal's voice, and through the silent orgasm
 makes a passage to the precise cross-winds
 of thought...²¹⁴

Even if Hope's antipathy to Harris had not begun by 1941, as it may not have, he perhaps preferred to withhold "Flower Poem" from publication as being too obviously close, in genesis and a central concept, to a poem already published by someone else. The Ern Malley affair would have

214. Harris, "The Pelvic Rose," p.23.

increased any reservations Hope may have had about publishing "Flower Poem", for the target of the hoax was Modernism, in whatever form it was manifest, and the last two stanzas of "Flower Poem" affirm the necessity for the operation of subconscious forces in the making of poetry. A similar affirmation is made in "The Return from the Freudian Islands" (pp.18-21), written and published in 1942, but the overriding impression made by "Freudian Islands" is of the poet's repudiation of psychoanalysis, as a process detrimental to the soul. There is a secondary repudiation in "Freudian Islands", for the poem is in part a riposte to Harris' "The Pelvic Rose". In his prefatory explanation to his choice of imagery in "The Pelvic Rose", Harris says that 'the processes of biology provide a field of great beauty and spiritual significance for the creative imagination.'²¹⁵ Hope's "Return from the Freudian Islands" presents 'the processes of biology'; the watchers at the Fertility Festival see

The soft wet mottled granite of the lung
 Bulge and collapse, the liver worn askew
 Jauntily quiver, the plump intestines hung
 In glistening loops ... (p.20)

Primarily, "The Return from the Freudian Islands" is a rejection of Freud's theory of the sexual etiology of psychoses and lampoons the seeking of 'The Visible Inside' in the 'Brave Nude World'. By taking the notion to its absurd extreme, Hope presents the opinion that Freud's explanation results in 'The Basic Freudian Man', 'The Human L.C.M. ...', man devoid of individuality and dispossessed of the mystery of sexuality, for whom the revelation of the purely physiological mechanics of the body leaves possible nothing but the death-wish. It is, significantly, the poet who is the first to button on his skin again. The answers of science are inadequate to human needs. The poet realises that it is through subjectively apprehended

215. Harris, "The Pelvic Rose," p.22.

sensory experiences that human life has meaning, an idea which has remained central to Hope's thinking. There is, too, the underlying notion that men's 'worship of their fathers' ghosts', their reverent awareness of the timeless mystical and spiritual dimension of human experience, is necessary to man. In this lies a partial explanation for Hope's intellectual commitment to Classicism, linking with the idea that there are inheritable cultural forms, which, in "An Epistle : Edward Sackville to Venetia Digby" (pp.157-65), are presented as 'those royal poems' of antiquity, not preserved in books but 'in the hearts and minds of men'. In his 1950 poem, "Private Dick",²¹⁶ Hope takes up both ideas, the inherited, mystical significance of human experience held in myth and the inadequacies of psychoanalysis. With "Private Dick", Hope goes further than the earlier rejection of the pioneer of psychoanalysis as a saviour; he presents the practice of psychoanalysis as a folly which is beyond toleration even in Hell. Private Dick psychoanalyses the Devil, which reveals to the Devil that 'Mr Analyst' is the source of his disturbances. Having exposed Private Dick, the Devil dematerialises him (and, assumedly, despiritualises him) and then chuckles over his reversal of the psychoanalyst's sway of mind over matter, for his is the 'final triumph of mind over matter', a reference to Lucifer's persuasion of Eve, as well as to his 'final' annihilation of psychoanalysis.

"Private Dick" is an amusing presentation of the anti-analysis case, with narrative in the place of argument, but the notion of uninhibited sexuality as sinful is pervasive. The Devil has a vested interest in Original Sin; and when sexuality is reduced by psychoanalysts to 'well-planned sex', his malaise manifests itself in the form of dreams in which 'he's playing a harp up yonder'. Hope's obsession with the Fall and its

216. Hope, "Private Dick," in A.D. Hope (Sydney : Angus and Robertson, 1963), pp.8-11.

consequences patterns "Private Dick". The 'tree' that is a 'Phallic symbol' is in I, the Judgment is the subject of II and, at the start of III, Lucifer has concluded that his upset is caused by 'a thing he ate'. Hope is as determined to re-state the truth of the myth as he is intent on unmasking the untruth of psychoanalysis. He connects Freudian analysis with denial of the Eden myth and turns the tables on analysis by having both the Recording Angel and the Devil discount it. There is play on 'Private Dick', an attempt to make it work as a double image, so that the expression figures as psychoanalysis and as sexuality. Although the image is not wholly effective as an image for sexuality, because it is overshadowed by the psychoanalytic connotation, the theme emerges that sexuality does not dominate man's consciousness in the way that 'Dick, P.D.', says it does, in bizarre but suppressed urges. The ideas about sexuality, and Private Dick as an image for sexuality, are imperfectly worked out. Hope has comment to make about the way sexuality must dominate man's consciousness because of the Fall but what emerges is the poet's own sensitivity to the implications of sexuality. Hope lampoons "Ascent into Hell" in III of "Private Dick", in what could be a planned repudiation of the earlier poem, but "Ascent into Hell" appears in The Wandering Islands, whereas the less deft "Private Dick" does not. Private Dick takes the Devil 'back to the secret cause of it all', till the Devil remembers the cause, but the *double entendre* of 'PRIVATE DICK' goes astray at that point. Psychoanalysis becomes the single force of the image and the poem ends on the theme of the dismissal of psychoanalysis. "Private Dick" is an example of the experience of composition, to which Hope refers in the essay, "Poems in the Making", of two poems jostling at the same time for creation,²¹⁷ in this case one about Freudian analysis, one about sexuality.

217. Hope, "Poems in the Making," in Cratylus, p.98.

It evidently was intended to be, as it ends, a rejection of Freudian analysis. The second theme, of sexuality and its implications, reaches fruition unhampered by explicit anti-psychoanalytic comment in those other and distinctive 1950 poems about sexuality, "Lot and His Daughters, I and II", "The Lamp and the Jar" and "Sportsfield".²¹⁸ In those, and later poems about metaphysical aspects of physical love, Hope leaves aside engagement with psychoanalytic theory and examines sexuality as he observes it to be manifest. The scotching of the theory of the sexual etiology of psychoses is dropped and Hope's attention is given to his observations about sexuality and its relation to poetic creativity, in which he incorporates Freud's theories about dreams.

In the satires of 1940-46 there is little evidence that Hope is working systematically to a developed programme aimed at the spiritual regeneration of mankind. As areas of man's failure to nurture his spirituality take the poet's attention he deals with them according to his conception, at that time, of his poetic role, that is, as a satirist. "The Explorers" (pp.11-12) and "The Lingam and the Yoni" (pp.39-41) indicate marriage as a source of spiritual decay; other satires of those years deal with the non-heroic in man and the hollowness of the promises of Christianity. The failure of both man and Christianity is Hope's target in "Easter Hymn" (p.15) and "The House of God" (pp.51-2). "Easter Hymn" is so full of disillusionment that bitterness reduces the satiric impact. It is a sermon directed at 'you', the Son of God, and pronounces the impossibility of man's redemption. Deep anxiety, even despair, is in the poem. The threatening opening line, 'Make no mistake : there will be no forgiveness', is bluntly blasphemous. There will be no forgiveness

218. Joy Hooton, A.D. Hope, p.36, gives "'Sportsfield'". Comp. 1949.' It appears in Contents, Selected Poems, p.xix, under 1950.

available to man but neither will man forgive God. Syllabic verse, a variation of iambic pentameter which Hope discusses in The Structure of Verse and Prose,²¹⁹ is employed with effect. Lines one and three of the stanza have an extra, unstressed syllable, which causes emphasis to fall on the end words of lines two and four and helps to create the cadence and heavy tone of a sermon. Hope's breaking of the pentameter, in "Easter Hymn" and elsewhere, has escaped notice of commentators; in 1984, for example, Andrew Taylor wrote that Hope has 'scrupulously resisted Pound's injunction to "break the pentameter"'.²²⁰

"Easter Hymn" is a declaration that Christ's time on earth failed to redeem mankind from the punishment brought by Original Sin. God remains 'fenced by the magic of deliberate darkness' and, in his unavailability, is in danger of becoming non-existent, for man looks at the aftermath of Christ's coming and it seems that God must be dead; the poem warns God, 'You walk on the sharp edges of the wave'. 'No voice can harm you and no hand can save' twists the paradox of Christian belief that the Son of God is immortal and yet died; in Hope's poem, God, in his immortality, is absent from the world and does not exist for man. Most of the poem is couched in future tense, giving the sermon the flavour of a prophecy addressed to Christ in Jerusalem. Religious wars, religious intolerance and murder as martyrdom will be the ironic outcomes of the coming of the Messiah. St Augustine's account of the City of God describes it as a society of the elect who have gained knowledge of God through Christ; there is no case to bring against the Christian profession, writes Augustine, 'in respect of the imprisonment of its saints, who look for

219. Structure of Verse and Prose, pp.5-6.

220. Andrew Taylor, "A.D. Hope : The Double Tongue of Harmony," Southern Review, Adelaide, 17, 1, 1984, p.81.

a heavenly country with true faith and know that even in their own homes they are no more than sojourners.'²²¹ Hope points out that the City of God is an earthly city and that those who know Christ on earth will include Judas, Caiaphas and Pilate. Life on earth will be so difficult that Christ 'will be glad of Pilate's casting vote.' Virgins who are so unworldly as not to realise the foolishness of their devotion to an absent God are the 'truest lovers' Christ has. People who are polite to Christ's 'official guests', the Church, are spying on the Son of God; man is watching the Son of God from the 'darkened gardens' in which Original Sin left them. Man is beyond redemption but the Son of God is beyond man's forgiveness. "Easter Hymn" is redolent with Nietzsche's cry of 'God is dead'. It also smacks of the defiance of the small boy of "Ascent into Hell", who dreams of doing wicked acts as solace for hurt received through punishment. McAuley's comment, 'Hope was a late developer',²²² is a comment on Hope's development as a poet but it could apply to his psychological development, insofar as the poetry reflects it.

The mutual failure of Christianity and man is also the theme of "The House of God" (pp.51-2), an apparently playful thrust but it carries a barb. Churchgoers are presented as God's domesticated cats. At first reading, the conceit of the cats appears to be imperfectly worked out, for they are both feline and human. This seems to split the force of the 'shower of little mice' of the last line, for mice are good for cats but bad for human beings, but it is the key to the poem, which is about the failure of Christianity to answer the needs of men and, conversely, human

221. Augustine, Concerning The City of God against the Pagans, 1467, trans. Henry Bettenson, Intro. David Knowles (1972; Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1976), Bk I, Ch. 15, p.26.

222. McAuley, "A.D. Hope," in Map of Australian Verse, p.178.

failure to meet the requirements of religion. What appears to be an irreverent bit of fun, told in the style of children's verse, has much the same anguished comment to make as "Easter Hymn" but the poem is satire, for it concentrates on pointing out that the foolishness of men's behaviour and their lip-service to repentance necessarily bring retribution. Man gets what he deserves; he shapes his destiny; in this, the thought is Existential. These satires on Christianity share the theme of mankind's spiritual desolation and link with "The Wandering Islands", where men are described as investing 'no fear in ultimate forgiveness' (p.26). The climactic poem in this strain of defiance against Christianity's significance in men's lives comes with "A Commination" (pp.148-51), which ends with a prayer to God to 'let Noah build his boat,/And me and mine, when each has laughed his fill,/View thy damnation and depart in peace.'

A review of Collected Poems by Martin Haley in a Catholic paper gives Haley's opinion that 'Whatever his [Hope's] purpose was ... in penning "The Martyrdom of St. Teresa", a Catholic will find the poem repugnant despite its skill'.²²³ That is a reasonable opinion, because "The Martyrdom of St Teresa" (pp.63-4) lampoons religious belief and fervour. When the body of the sixteenth century mystic, St Teresa of Avila, was put into a grander tomb, relic-hunters plundered Teresa's bones.²²⁴ In Hope's poem, at her death,

through all Spain mysterious thunder
Woke cannibal longings in the blood,
Inviting man to put asunder
The flesh that had been joined with God.

-
223. M.H[aley], "Poems by A.D. Hope," review of Collected Poems 1930-1965, by A.D. Hope, The Advocate, Melbourne, 28 April 1966, p.18. Haley believed the body of St Teresa to be 'still entire'.
224. William Thomas Walsh, Saint Teresa of Ávila : A Biography (1943; rpt Milwaukee : Bruce Publishing Company, 1954), p.582, records dismemberment of the body over time.

Her 'martyrdom' was not the end of her earthly life but, figuratively, was posthumously achieved when zealots tore her remains apart. Hope's lines which draw attention to the desecration of Teresa's body point to a dehumanising influence emanating from religious belief and continue the exposure of taboo areas of spiritual decadence in human activity. Underlying the lines is his preoccupation with 'The flesh' as an animalistic force threatening to break man's link with the divine. The duality of responses to his poetic subjects which becomes the basis of Hope's controlled explorations in many of the poems from the 1950s is, in "St Teresa" and other poems of the 1940s, somewhat random, even accidental, and its dualism only partly recognised by the poet. "The Martyrdom of St Teresa" is Hope at a peak of ghoulishness, written in the same year as "The Dinner" (pp.49-50) and "The Dream" (pp.52-5); all three poems reflect a fascination, even an obsession, with the fact of the human body. When Martin Haley reviewed "St Teresa" twenty years after it was written, he had before him also the 'splendid ode', "Ode on the Death of Pius the Twelfth" (pp.209-11), so it is strange that he registered a regret that Hope had not 'gone from the carnal and on to the Incarnational and the Spiritual', a development which is evident in Hope's poetry after the mid-1950s. Haley disputes that Teresa's body was dismembered, a point which leads him to make an astute observation:

St Teresa, with her sense in humour, will no doubt be amused and take upon the poet due vengeance, returning good for evil and, with Pope Pius, bringing him into the Faith, that his essays have revealed him as respecting deeply.

Hope's middle period and later poetry shows such an awareness of God as to suggest his earlier satires against Christianity were rooted in chagrin at the seeming absence of God from the world and disgust at the accidentals of sentimental religious practices.

It was also in 1946 that Hope began "An Epistle from Holofernes" (pp.58-62) which, though it develops into an important work of comment on the function of myths, begins with the macabre murder of Holofernes. In legend, Holofernes' ghost threatens to visit Judith; Hope presents the threatened appearance as taking place in the fashion Duncan's ghost appears to Macbeth. Unless she makes a blood sacrifice, Judith will,

wher'er you walk,
Hear his blood dripping from your bag of meat
And, at your table, sitting in your seat,
See the Great Captain's carcass.

These 1946 poems are treatments of the flesh as a metaphor for evil and horror and a cause of savagery, beside which the sanguinous impact of Rimbaud's 'banners of raw meat' is mild. The horror of the flesh predominates even where, as in "The Martyrdom of St Teresa", the primary theme is something else. "St Teresa" shares with "The House of God" the theme of the irrationality of Christian devotion; the notion of 'The mystic blood of martyrdom' is jeered at. Thirty years later, Hope addressed "Anniversary Ode (1577-1977)" to another sixteenth century Spanish mystic, the poet, Luis de León. In part of the last stanza of "Anniversary Ode", Hope declares, 'I reach towards the light,/That primal radiance you too strove to find.'²²⁵ He acknowledges that the searching spirit of the Christian Luis de León strove, as does Hope's spirit, to reach 'Beyond the sensory screen/And reach the source and pierce to the unseen.' Misconceptions held by mankind in the sixteenth century which appear in de León's writings are excused by Hope as resulting from the limitations of knowledge in his age. No such concessions are attempted in "The Martyrdom of St Teresa", an indication of the difference in Hope's

225. Hope, "Anniversary Ode (1577-1977)," in Antechinus, pp.70-2.

breadth of outlook between his early mature period and in his later years. More significantly, "Anniversary Ode" demonstrates a change in the older Hope's thinking about the irrational; the mystical in the universe becomes an important theme in the later poetry.

After publication of The Wandering Islands, S.L. Goldberg reviewed it under the title "Poet as Hero", in recognition of Hope's thesis on the role of the poet. Some of the poems written in the period represented by Hope's first volume of poetry attest his view that poets are the heroes needed in our time but these works are no more than assertions that persons of genius, that is, poets, must exercise Nietzschean will. More often, The Wandering Islands period poetry provides evidence of the poet's preoccupation with the non-heroic in man. During his childhood formulation of his 'myth of the world',²²⁶ Hope peopled his mental landscape with heroes of the Classical past. Without modification, the myth is applied in the poetry of The Wandering Islands period to the men of his age and they are found wanting in heroic stature. "William Butler Yeats" (p.72) honours the poet who 'Bred passion against the times, made wisdom strong', but it is the only poem in The Wandering Islands which honours a man of modern times. Voyager Poems, published in 1960,²²⁷ is a collection of epic verse by Australian writers which established what Thomas Shapcott has labelled the "Voyager Tradition in Australian Verse",²²⁸ a tradition to which Hope could not subscribe. Hope has published no epics, although at the age of fifteen he began 'An epic on the Doom of Man', which, in "Conversation with Calliope" (p.178), he ridicules as 'Made up in

226. Hope, "Meet Nurse!" in Native Companions, p.8.

227. Voyager Poems, ed. Douglas Stewart (Brisbane : Jacaranda Press, 1960).

228. Thomas Shapcott, "Developments in the Voyager Tradition of Australian Verse," in South Pacific Images, ed. Chris Tiffin (Brisbane : South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, 1978), pp.93-106.

Bathurst, New South Wales'. Thomas Shapcott postulates that 'Voyager poems begin from some sense of vision'.²²⁹ Hope has nurtured a sense of vision since childhood and, by the mid-1950s, his poetic vision was taking definition. However, in the 1940s and 1950s, his consciousness of the disparity between the ideal and the realities of the physical world precluded his writing epic poetry, even if he had wanted to do so. Instead, he wrote the "Dunciad Minimus",²³⁰ in which the Goddess Dullness decrees Funeral Games designed 'for the human mind,/The death of wit, the last eclipse of taste/And gales of nonsense howling through the waste.'²³¹ Hope sees that the age is not conducive to the writing of epics, for contemporary readers have neither the skills nor the habits to read them.²³² Further, there is no common standard of greatness, no common philosophical basis, on which an epic poet could build. Hope could not celebrate the founders of a nation 'Without songs, architecture, history', ("Australia", p.13); the people of his own nation are not heroic achievers. Hope's preoccupations in the 1940s and into the 1950s are the themes of Paradise Lost, sexuality, will and pride, but his twentieth century world lacks heroes and its men lack will and pride. Hope invests the poet with the mantle of hero. Ironically, the poet-hero must accept his sexuality and must exercise will and pride, the causes of Adam's downfall. Paradise Lost builds up to the start of the regeneration of man, to the point where Adam acknowledges 'my Redeemer ever blest.'²³³ Hope sees that the poet's task of carrying out man's regeneration is made difficult in the modern world by lack of time.²³⁴ He devotes his attention to the same issues as

229. Shapcott, "Voyager Tradition," in South Pacific Images, p.93.

230. Hope, "Dunciad Minimus," Books I-IV, forms part of Dunciad Minor : An Heroick Poem. Page and line references are to Dunciad Minor.

231. Dunciad Minor, Book IV, ll.76-78, pp.47-8.

232. Hope, "The Epic Theme : James McAuley's Captain Quiros," in Native Companions, p.175.

233. Paradise Lost, Book XII, l.573.

234. Hope, "The Study of English," Inaugural Lecture, Canberra Univ. College, 2 May 1952, mimeograph, p.3.

did Milton but in a manner suitable for a later world in which readers lack both intellect and time. In the mid-1950s, Hope was pointing out that to ignore taboo issues is not to exterminate them but to preserve primitive irrational moral judgments; critical inquiry must be directed to 'the whole range of knowledge, the complete nature of man and his universe'.²³⁵ By the late 1950s, Hope's poetry begins to indicate that the poet is aware such inquiry augurs a repetition of events in Eden. The fear of man's transgressing into areas of forbidden knowledge, which becomes insistent in the later poetry, had appeared in Hope's prose juvenilia, in "Echo" (Appendix II) and "A Letter to a Mathematician",²³⁶ but is not explicit in the poetry published before "On An Early Photograph of My Mother",²³⁷ composed in 1958 and first published in 1962.

The comment made in "The House of God", that man has failed to answer the prompting spirit, is an expression of Hope's dismay at the lack of heroic endeavour he observes. His interest in heroic endeavour appears in the 1940s in satires on the non-heroic in man and in poems in which the theme of the complexities of poetic endeavour merges with the theme of will. For the poet, the human ideal demands courage and vision but he sees in modern man a conjoint destitution of spirit and of lack of high purpose. The satire in "Heldensagen" (p.21) is directed, not only at the mendacity of spirit of the age, but also at the *persona* of the poem. Past ages, the poem says, have reproduced heroes who fled the easy options offered by society and so had 'Heldensagen' to tell. The *persona* laughs at himself as a representative of his age: 'My evening bus seeks out its north-west passage'. Journeying on the bus, he dreams of exploits in search of a modern Ithaca; reading the comic-strips in his newspaper, he superimposes himself as hero. Among the false

235. Hope, "Censorship and the University," p.54.

236. Hope, "Letter to a Mathematician," p.103.

237. Hope, "On An Early Photograph of My Mother," in A Late Picking, pp.1-2.

Messiahs of the modern age are psychologists, modern witch doctors, whose diagnoses of society's ills are false, either because they deny the soul of man or explain, without reference to soul, breakdowns in the progress of civilization as resulting from opposition between mankind's libidinal attraction of one to the other and mankind's natural instinct for aggression.²³⁸ That is an aspect of Freud's thought which, in a 1940 article, Anderson deplors as a defect in 'all Freud's "metapsychological" work. The delusion that social problems are to be settled in psychological terms seems, indeed, to affect all contemporary psychologists'.²³⁹ Anderson suggests the delusion might best be met by 'the independent development of social theory'. Hope's "Heldensagen" suggests no solution.

At the close of the poem, the satire is again directed against the *persona*. With an arresting but strident play on words, 'I am/Sinbad and on this Roc you will build no church!',²⁴⁰ the speaker in the poem repudiates false Messiahs and declares his independence of them but he is still on the bus. His only hero's tale is of himself as he dreams of defying false prophets. The *persona* is the modern man of vision who, in the midst of materialism, holds to noble ideals but does nothing heroic. It is not difficult to recognise the *persona* as the frustrated poet.

Hope makes a more complex statement about non-heroic modern man with "Meditation Music" (pp.27-9), where there is an underlying compassion for mankind's hunger for religious certainty and his helplessness in the face of political catastrophe. The ordinary human being is shown as a non-heroic escapist fool but also as the dupe of those with the power to 'play their

238. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p.102.

239. Anderson, "Freudianism and Society," p.50.

240. Lippard, Surrealists on Art, p.3, instances the pun as an example of the collage technique used by Surrealists, the making of a new situation by the bringing together of dissimilar objects.

Blind Man's Bluff'. The masses are presented from the viewpoint George Orwell used, a few years later, in his presentation of the Proles in Nineteen Eighty-Four. There is relatively little overt political comment in Hope's early mature poetry but the notion of heroic endeavour is political, because it embraces the idea that there are some who have the gift of vision, to be used on behalf of the species. Along with the overt criticisms of those who control commerce, 'the wheedling voice of retail trade', is a protest against bread-and-circus government, whether by Church or State.

Radio is a metaphor for the conditioning of the masses and for our trivial defences against fears that the Universe may be directionless, that "'I, GOD, do not exist!'", but the medium is also a subject of 'Meditation Music'. Hope was making regular radio broadcasts at the time he wrote 'Meditation Music', an association with radio which, by 1981, had continued 'off and on for 40 years',²⁴¹ and he has studied radio astronomy.²⁴² As they appear in 'Meditation Music', the poet's attitudes to radio are a mixture of fear and fascination. The insidious influence of 'The backless cupboard' is deplored and the power of the medium is recognised. There is distrust of the modern instrument of manipulation of minds, which 'Pulls down the curtain on the rotting face' of reality, and fascination with the possibilities of radio, which can probe 'the marrow of the Universe'. Hope's awareness that 'The isle is full of noises' has not abated in the years since 1943; its appearance in his poetry has increased since the beginning of the 1970s.

241. Hope, "Talking to the Void," p.2.

242. Hope, "O Be A Fine Girl," in A Late Picking, pp.64-5, is a play on mnemonics used by astronomers and radio astronomers: Notes, A Late Picking, p.92.

The compassion for the victims of the spiritual malaise of the age which is in "Meditation Music" is less evident in some other works where Hope treats the theme of modern man's lack of spiritual stamina. The sardonic humour of "Heldensagen" becomes almost straight comedy in "Conquistador" (pp.34-6).²⁴³ Hope has recalled that "Conquistador" began from John Crowe Ransom's "Captain Carpenter" : 'I had a comic poem of that sort in mind'.²⁴⁴ Hope's observation of the hotel lounge pick-up of a large blonde lady by a small man led to his fantasising about a possible outcome of the encounter and resulted in the story of Henry Clay. Probably coincidentally, Henry bears some resemblance to a real Henry Clay (1777-1852), a Kentucky statesman and home and garden loving man who unsuccessfully contested the U.S. Presidency in 1844. Hope's Henry Clay is somewhat like Kentucky's Henry Clay writ small, but he is 'remarkably like you and me', persons of the common clay. His sensible daily regimen is disrupted by heroic aspiration when he encounters the large lady. He adventures into bed with her and triumphs, only to be squashed flat by the object of his conquest, who turns his remains into a bedside mat. "Conquistador" fables Hope's early mature period concern with the male's death of singularity of self in a male-female love relationship. It contains much the same comment as "The End of a Journey", "Pygmalion" and "The Lingam and the Yoni", although its most evident theme is the meagreness of the proportions of modern man's heroism.

Writing in 1960, from his vantage point as poet, critic and friend of Hope, McAuley makes the observation that Hope's poems 'have

243. Paul Johnson, "Beware the Intellectuals," Weekend Australian, 24-25 January 1987, p.16, records that Freud often referred to himself as Conquistador.

244. Hope, "Daytime Thoughts," p.222.

their starting point from a high degree of dissociation and conflict within the personality',²⁴⁵ a remark applicable to the work of the early mature period. A 'conflict within the personality' is evident in an unpredictability of standpoint which occurs in the poetry of the late 1940s and early 1950s, where the poet considers and reconsiders mankind's and his own problems. Central stanzas of "Toast for a Golden Age" (pp.85-7), for example, surprise by support for the ideals of the 'green aesthete' who is rapped on the knuckles in "Standardization", but the poem is more surprising in its message that man must nurture his spirituality against 'Time', lest he miss the bus. We are not told to where the bus is going but Heaven would be its most likely destination. An important theme in "Sportsfield" (pp.80-1), that sexual love is an instrument in man's spiritual progress, offers a change of view from that given in "Conquistador". Love as a spiritualising agent becomes a recurrent theme in Hope's poetry but, in the early mature period, the theme of love as destructive of male spirituality is more frequent and more noticeable. The theme of sexual love as a spiritualising force is partly swamped in "Sportsfield" by the cleverness of the controlling metaphors of the sportsfield and the movie house but, unlike in "Heldensagen" and "Conquistador", a means of alleviating mankind's debility of heart and soul is indicated. In early middle age, Hope was concerned about the Doom of Man, as he was at the age of fifteen, and with "Sportsfield" he presents love as a solution to the problem. Other poems of the period show his working towards another possible solution for, at forty or so, he found heroic models, as he had done in childhood, in the ancients.

245. McAuley, "Pyramid in the Waste," in Australian Literary Criticism, p.103.

By viewing the ruthless rulers of antiquity as heroes he was able to marry two concepts : the aristocratic rulers were builders in stone of monuments which expressed their defiance of the passing of time; the poet as the builder of spirituality in this world must also exercise aristocratic will and pride. Out of this marriage of concepts Hope began to write poetry which was not designed to restore heroic ideals to all men of his age but to promote the poet as builder of the pyramid of spirituality in the waste of materialism. The formidable difficulties of obeying the Muse's call are surveyed in "The Muse", 1945. With "The Pleasure of Princes", 1947, Hope considers the satisfactions which may come from endeavour undertaken despite great problems. In "Pyramis or The House of Ascent", written the following year, the need for exercise of will and pride by the person of genius is examined.

Hope dedicates "The Muse" (p.48) to James McAuley, who has written that "'The Muse" is Hope's "infernal" or "demonic" riposte to my "celestial" account of creation'.²⁴⁶ Hope's explanation of how he composed his answer to McAuley's "The Muse" is given in A Book of Answers, where he describes it as 'a serious variation on a theme by another poet who accepted his [McAuley's] view of the art and was, indeed, deeply touched by it, but whose experience of the art was different.'²⁴⁷ Hope's close identification of himself as poet who is the heroic but harassed victim of the conflicting forces of good and evil is evident in the first stanza, with those conflicting forces imaged as a female who is alluring but poisonous. Here the Muse is Arachne, turned into a spider by the goddess of love because of rivalry in the art of weaving. There is the idea of conflict between woman as procreator and male as creator of art. The darkness of

246. McAuley, "Pyramid in the Waste," in Australian Literary Criticism, p.108.

247. Hope, "XXII James McAuley," in A Book of Answers, p.100; McAuley, "The Muse," in A Book of Answers, p.101.

evil is given to Arachne; Athena 'still with light/tortures the web' of Arachne. Love, light and good goad the dark and instinctual forces so that a web of poetry is produced. The two sides of a poet's nature are called into conflicting play in the creative process. An object of 'loveliness no wisdom could invent' results, matching the loveliness of the Muse; the subliminal forces stirred in the process wound the poet, and the Muse is 'conscious of the poison of her fangs.'

The stanza given to the Muse as Ariadne is a comment on the poetic upheavals caused by Modernism. Ariadne's thread gave Theseus his means of escape from the labyrinth; thereupon he deserted her. Given the thread of Classical order out of the labyrinth of subjectivity, modern poets who have returned to ordered practice soon forget the need to curb their feckless wanderings. Not only are poets inconstant to the poetic ideal; as Ariadne bedded with Dionysius, so will the Muse admit to her favours the poets of indiscipline : 'And she, though she remembers, will consent/ Soon to be tumbled by the drunken god.' A reference to McAuley may be intended.

In his Inaugural Lecture in 1952, Hope said that 'Poetry is the highest of the arts and it requires not less than a life-time's service to bring its practice to perfection'.²⁴⁸ That thought is the basis of the third stanza of "The Muse". The Muse, imaged as Penelope, is identified with the poet's self as being within his creative faculty. Just as Penelope wove and unwove her cloth, so the poet must practice his art, experiencing in the process the frustrations of unrealised aspiration; Penelope, as poet more than as Muse, 'must unravel the promise in her heart,/Subdue the monthly protest of the womb'. Delays and interruptions sap the poetic life of the artist so that, by the time he can fully devote

248. Hope, "The Study of English," p.3.

himself to his task, his imaginative fertility has ceased: 'And when her triumph comes, it comes too late.' The poet's equating of the processes of procreation and artistic creation is explicit in the imagery.

Hope's ideas on art and genius have been developed in a number of prose essays,²⁴⁹ the first of which was published in 1955, but they began to appear in his writing in the 1940s, tentatively approached in "The Esthetic Theory" and explored in verse in "The Pleasure of Princes" (pp.64-5). "Invocation" (pp.65-7) and "Pyramis or The House of Ascent" (pp.67-8). The question of will is foremost in those poems. "The Pleasure of Princes" concerns men who have the genius to rule but it is confined to a consideration of rulers who exercise great will for personal satisfaction. Attention is drawn to the pleasures of dubious value which come to worldly rulers who are able to exert the great will-power needed for them to retain their dominance over others. Their greatest pleasure is in the challenge of the situation but they employ their genius to no worthwhile end. It is doubtful that Hope's intention was to point to that conclusion, particularly when the poem is considered alongside "Pyramis or The House of Ascent". It is more likely that the poet meant to highlight the satisfactions of acceptance of great challenges. A contrasting consideration of will and power is given in "Invocation". The *persona*, the poet, prays to God or his daemon or the Muse and acknowledges one, 'Whose will, against my will, at need is done!' The poet is in a position of power but, unlike 'great princes', he is aware that his power has spiritual significance for mankind. He is challenged

249. e.g. "Henry Handel Richardson's Maurice Guest," Meanjin, 14, 2, 1955, pp.186-99, as "Inspiration and Possession : Henry Handel Richardson's Maurice Guest," in Native Companions, pp.246-61; "Knowing Where to Stop : Martin Boyd's Lucinda Brayford, in Native Companions, pp.204-15; "The Argument of Arms," in Cave and Spring, pp.117-28.

by both men and gods. In him 'the spirit elect works out its mighty plan' but he is uncertain of the task. There is a great division between the poet-speaker's reason and his spirit. He is at once aware of himself as one who fears in human terms the possible after-death consequences of his temporal deeds and as one of the elect of the gods who feels the compulsion to be true to the vision vouchsafed him. The weight of the burden of ordering the stuff of the universe by those who are the elect of the gods, marked by genius to be true lovers of wisdom, is emphasised. The builder of order through strife is working towards an un-preknowable end which either is, or is in, the overview of the gods, yet he must live in the temporal world and be accountable to his fellows; so he begs, 'Show the meaning, not the end'. He fears to be like the oyster-diver of "The Coasts of Cerigo" (pp.154-5), who finds the fabulous Labra but dies because he has had to dive so deeply to find her.

The most noted of the 1947-8 poems on the theme of genius and heroic will is "Pyramis or The House of Ascent" (pp.67-8). It is an acclamation of the autocratic rights of those endowed with 'demonic minds' and, more than any other poem, or the essays on genius, has acquired for Hope the tag of 'Nietzschean'. The opening lines could be Australian in their imagery, 'A lone man digging, a nation piling stones/Under the lash of fear, in sweat, in haste', but Hope has said the poem was prompted by meditation on the Pharaohs.²⁵⁰ Hope assigns to the Pharaohs Protagoras' doctrine that 'Man is the measure of all things'. The meditation is an application of the doctrine in accordance with Plato's interpretation of 'Man is the measure' in the Theaetetus, that truth is relative. Hope puts the case that the onus to seek and grasp reality is on those gifted

250. Hope, Notes, A. D. Hope, p.56.

to undertake the task and that such men are fitted by destiny to subjugate lesser mortals. In a low-key line, 'And to subdue men seems a little thing', the poet's voice mumbles and then breaks into lines of rhetorical justification of the stance. By their subjugation of others, men of genius bring to fruition their godlike visions, earning on behalf of mankind the mantle of greatness which the gods will honour: 'for thus the King/Takes, for all men, his apotheosis.' An arresting trio of revolutionaries, Blake, Milton and Swift, is cited but Hope's interest in heroes is not with developing myths of the greatness of human achievement; he seeks understanding of the qualities of men of vision. The answer that comes in "Pyramis" is that they are marked by 'Intemperate will and incorruptible pride.' In exercising will and pride, heroes show themselves beyond frailty and the merely human and take on godlike qualities. It is a fragile notion. The poet as hero is also a man, a realisation about heroes explicit in Hope's student dramatic piece, "Heroes of Heorot"; the problems of the poet-hero-man are presented in the 1969 poem, "As Well as They Can" (p.256).

Hope's early mature period engagement with the theme of heroic struggle reflects his divided consciousness. He is concerned with the transcendence of the human state but the human state is a reality. Man is in the human state because of Adam's sexuality and, from one point of view, his will and pride, from another, his loss of will and pride. Hope identifies himself as one chosen to help mankind to surmount the fallen state and the means he recognises as enabling him to do so are either sexuality - particularly in "The Lamp and the Jar" - or will and pride, but there are contradictions between sexuality and will and pride. Sexuality is an inheritance from Adam, with all the implications of loss of will and pride that entails, and in Hope's early mature period poetry

he alternates between recognition of his human limitations to identification of himself as a human being who has a spiritual mandate for humanity.

"Pyramis" is unique as an unalloyed celebration of the 'procreant will'. The unconditional celebration of the release of the poet from the mundane self through sexuality that is given in "The Lamp and the Jar" is rare. Underlying much of the poetry to 1955, and sometimes quite explicit, is Hope's connection of sexual intercourse with the non-exercise of will that lust accomplishes. "Ascent into Hell" begins with the statement that the poet has no achievement of which to be proud and traces his failure to achieve to his conception. Adam's loss of imperial status ('Imperial Adam') followed from his natural lust. Hope's partial solution is to identify the poet as one who is lent the will and pride of the gods but in "Invocation" he records that, for a mortal, godlike qualities are burdensome in the extreme. The line from "Pyramis", 'And to subdue men seems a little thing', takes on a different significance in the context of Hope's conception of the poet as one of 'the few, the free', of "Invocation", for the poet is working at the behest of a non-temporal will greater than his own merely human will. Not surprisingly, Hope does not bring together in one poem considerations of sexuality and loss of will, sexuality as a means of transcendence and the superiority of the will and pride of geniuses. He examines those conflicting themes separately and, as the section titles of The Wandering Islands indicate, holds them all in his awareness but without resolution.

In 1909, Bernard O'Dowd published Poetry Militant, a polemical document in which he proposes that, in an imperfect world, art ought to be directed to a useful function and ought to promote social causes.²⁵¹

251. Bernard O'Dowd, Poetry Militant (Melbourne : T.C. Lothian, 1909), e.g. p.12.

As much as that idea is anathema to Hope, who holds that activism is the enemy of art,²⁵² he shares O'Dowd's concept of the poet as 'the true Permeator, the projector of cell-forming ideals into the protoplasmic future'.²⁵³ In "The Activists" Hope also uses the image of organicism : 'This is the task of the arts, then, to grow, to evolve new forms, to spread over the barren landscape of merely social man the mantle of their rich and various vegetation.'²⁵⁴ However, where O'Dowd sees the poet as 'the living catalyst in the intellectual laboratory', Hope holds the view that artists of genius, a rare species, go beyond intellectual planning. The plans of genius 'serve merely as a prelude to something beyond any possible anticipation - so much so that this has often been described as a divine intervention or inspiration : the descent of divine energy into the human agent.'²⁵⁵ For Hope, the artist of genius is an agent of spirituality in the world; his concept of the poet of genius has a partial resemblance to Love as described by Socrates in Plato's Symposium. Socrates reports his instruction by Diotima that Love is between mortal and immortal; he interprets 'between gods and men and is the mediator who spans the chasm which divides them'.²⁵⁶ Hope is not concerned with ferrying the ideas of men to the gods. He shares with O'Dowd the idea of the poet as a provider of ideals to society but where O'Dowd sees the function of poets as being 'to chart the day and make it habitable',²⁵⁷ Hope's view is that poets add to our being.²⁵⁸ Hope does

252. Hope, "The Activists," in Cave and Spring, p.36.

253. Poetry Militant, pp.15-16.

254. Hope, "The Activists," in Cave and Spring, p.36.

255. Hope, "The Activists," in Cave and Spring, p.37.

256. Plato, Symposium, in The Works of Plato, trans. Benjamin Jowett, ed. and intro. Irwin Erdman (1928; rpt New York : Random House Inc., 1956), p.369.

257. O'Dowd, Poetry Militant, p.17.

258. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, p.25,

discount the importance of the day; the poet's vision must be adaptable to both light and dark : 'And we must learn to live, as yet we may, / Vision that keeps the night and saves the day' ("An Epistle from Holofernes", p.62). The emphasis on will and the requirement of submission from lesser mortals in "Pyramis" indicate Hope's commitment at that time to the heroic ideal to be Homeric rather than humanist. H.D.F. Kitto, in The Greeks, defines the Homeric hero : 'What moves him to deeds of heroism is not a sense of duty as we understand it - duty towards others: it is rather duty towards himself. He strives after that which we translate "virtue", but is in the Greek *aretê*, "excellence".'²⁵⁹ Hope's anti-authoritarian stance in "Childe Anderson Comes to the Dark Tower", in its emphasis on the freedom of the individual, is taken in this spirit. The attitude is clarified in the later essay, "The Argument of Arms", on Marlowe's Tamburlaine, where Hope explains that

The metaphysical conception on which the play is based is this theory of a universe in which order is the creation of strife and values are determined by strife. It is not a modern theory of 'might is right'; it is not a Nietzschean view of the will to power. It is based on the Aristotelian view that every creature strives towards the perfection of its nature. Man is the highest of the creatures and the perfection of his nature is to rule his world.²⁶⁰

Hope's explanation of the metaphysical basis of Tamburlaine must be accepted; however, in essays on Lucinda Brayford and Maurice Guest,²⁶¹ he aligns himself with Nietzsche's identification of the creative artist as being beyond good and evil, at least when in the grip of inspiration. A Nietzsche passage which Hope quotes in "Henry Handel Richardson's

259. H.D.F. Kitto, The Greeks (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1951), p.58.

260. Hope, "The Argument of Arms," in Cave and Spring, p.120.

261. Hope, "Knowing Where to Stop : Martin Boyd's Lucinda Brayford" and "Inspiration and Possession : Henry Handel Richardson's Maurice Guest," in Native Companions, pp.204-15 and 246-61.

Maurice Guest"²⁶² is used by Hope to support the point that 'When this divine and imperious voice [of inspiration] rings in the artist's ears, he can afford to hear no other'.²⁶³ The case as far as Nietzsche is concerned does not wholly rest with the description, quoted by Hope, of the mood in which Thus Spake Zarathustra was composed. In Human, All Too Human, Nietzsche had already written:

Belief in inspiration. Artists have an interest in others' believing in sudden ideas, so-called inspirations; as if the idea of a work of art, of poetry, the fundamental thought of a philosophy shines down like a merciful light from heaven. In truth, the good artist's or thinker's imagination is continually producing things good, mediocre, and bad, but his power of judgment, highly sharpened and practiced, rejects, selects, joins together ...²⁶⁴

Hope endorses both views of Nietzsche.²⁶⁵

In Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, published in 1965, Judith Wright sums up the ambiguities and dualities in Hope's poetry as stemming from his being 'torn between a loathed reality, and a vision of eternal meaning'.²⁶⁶ That is a most apposite comment but the restlessness of Hope's early mature intellectual evaluation of his experience of being human is such that we are not always able to be sure that reality is so loathsome. His satires, even some which stem from the poet's private distresses, give the impression that Hope is enjoying his perceived position as the watcher who applies his superior vision to the limitations of other mortals. The poems under the group-title, "Contemporaries", which appeared in Number Two, 1944,²⁶⁷ merely assert the superiority of the poet's perceptions about literary concerns and style but there are

262. Passage quoted by Hope, "Henry Handel Richardson," in Native Companions, pp.260-1.

263. Hope, "Henry Handel Richardson" in Native Companions, p.261.

264. Nietzsche, Human, All Too Human, 155, p.107.

265. e.g. Hope, "Nature's Golden World : Shaw Neilson," in Native Companions, p.129, and "Daytime Thoughts," p.221.

266. Preoccupations, p.190.

267. "Jindyworobak Vista," "Rainbow Cake," "Le Coucher Du Soleil Romantique."

satires in which the central theme of "Flower Poem" is argued : goodness, beauty and nobility are tied to the existence of the contraries of evil, ugliness and brute values.

With Dunciad Minor, Hope presents himself as poet-as-hero and poet-as-aristocrat. The admonition, 'Spare your poet pious groans!' ("Rawhead and Bloody Bones", p.41) is appropriate, for in his Dunciad Hope hugely enjoys 'loathed reality' as he attacks literary hacks with the same iconoclastic glee that he demonstrates in the reviews of the 1940s and 1950s. The work is incisive and witty and is a register of the preoccupations of Hope as literary critic and teacher of English, viewed from the standpoint of Hope as poet. An extract from Book III (one of the Books of "Dunciad Minimus"), partly a reworking of "Flower Poem," illustrates the temper of the satire. The argument is offered by Hope's recreated Pope:

'So all bad critics, pedants, hacks, inane
And feeble scribblers ought not to complain
That, innocent of harm, they serve my need.
By Nature and by Providence decreed
For satire, let them live and ply their trade,
And own that for this purpose they were made!
So from the dung and dirt in which it grows
Evolves the flawless, breathless, living rose;
So pearls encrust themselves about a worm
And grubs enriched in amber cease to squirm...'²⁶⁸

Literary figures are sorted into heroes and villains, literary geniuses and 'the Critic tribe',²⁶⁹ a sharp division. Some extenuation of the sharpness is to be found in the circumstances of the making of the original poem, for Hope completed it with 'no intention of publishing what was intended as a private interchange'.²⁷⁰ Some explanation, even extenuation, can be advanced from consideration of Hope's apprehension of the heaviness

268. Dunciad Minor, Book III, ll.375-84, p.43.

269. Dunciad Minor, Book V, l.2, p.58.

270. Preface, Dunciad Minor, p.vii.

of the burden of the poet-as-hero and of his sensitivity to the implications of the Eden myth. The finale, the ascension of vapidty to an appropriate kind of immortality and the inevitable consequences of 'the eclipse of mind',²⁷¹ is expressed in terms of perceptions most apparent in Hope's post-1955 poetry. Great Arthur offers sacrifice before he ascends and the light of Pope's intellect briefly illumines the world:

Then on the pyre the works of Pope he cast -
 There was a sudden, bright, ethereal blast;
 A pure, intense reverberating light
 One instant gave the purblind creatures sight :
 One instant all the deep of heaven lay bare,
 They saw and understood the vision there;
 The mystic harmony, the primal law
 And Art with Nature joined in dance they saw...²⁷²

'The mystic harmony, the primal law' is expressive of Hope's thinking in "Soledades of the Sun and Moon" (pp.106-10) and later poems. In the post-1970 poetry, the mystical in the harmony of the universe becomes a dominant preoccupation as the poet questions whether human rationality is sufficient for man to be able to evaluate the metaphysical significance of experience in temporality.

The bearing that man's capacity for reasoning may have on the outcome of the partly-enacted human story, a theme in some of the poetry of The Wandering Islands period, is effectively discounted in "Standardization" (1958-42, pp.10-11). The poem is a reflection on the permanence of the human condition and links both beauty and ugliness in our lives to the events in Eden : Earth 'does not tire of the pattern of a rose' and man's guilt 'merely repeats Original Sin.' A comparatively early poem, it is typical of Hope's early mature period poetry in that it carries the idea that mankind is bound by the consequences of the Fall and in its ambivalences but the expression of ideas about Nature is unusual for Hope.

271. Dunciad Minor , Book VI, l.160, p.83.

272. Dunciad Minor, Vook VI, ll.35-42, p.78.

Satire is directed at 'the green aesthete' and 'Nature poets' who deplore the uniformity brought about by technological mass production. Mass production is an image of the processes of the Earth of which man is a part; man is 'tethered', by his inheritance from Eden, to the 'brains' of his ancestors. The poem is a comment on the inevitability of processes which allow no progress to mankind. Underlying "Standardization" is the theory that Adam and Eve, by their aspiration to knowledge not intended for them, brought their descendents into the *stasis* that is the world of Nature. Even beauty is static. By the late 1940s, Hope was no longer applying to all mankind the notion of a standardised state. The subject of the 1949 poem, "Toast for a Golden Age" (pp.85-7), is 'Not one of the masters of the human spirit,/But the common denominator of the mass'. The dictum, 'man is the measure of all things' is turned against the playboy-despoiler and his too-literal use of it as self-justification, for man is not 'all things' and, against the totality of creation, the subject of the poem measures poorly. Counters to him are 'Those terrible souls' of "Pyramis or The House of Ascent" (pp.67-8) who take, 'like genius, their prerogative/Of blood, mind, treasure'. Man may be the measure of things human but there are those who are distinguished from the mass because they are superior in 'blood, mind'. They are other than 'men'.

Applied to artists, that Nietzschean train of thought is the *raison d'être* of Dunciad Minor. As Heroes are greater than the monsters they slay, Pope declares,²⁷³ works of art are greater than the 'mortal substance' from which came their creators' inspiration and inept writers are the substance from which satirists take their material. It is

273. Dunciad Minor, Book III, ll363-84, pp.42-3.

difficult to reconcile the arguments spoken by Pope. In 1957, S.L. Goldberg rightly read in the defence of satire,²⁷⁴ as it appears in "Dunciad Minimus" - which is also as it is in Dunciad Minor - 'a desperate Aestheticism : life for art's sake'.²⁷⁵ Lines given to Pope²⁷⁶ before the 'Satire is an Art' section are an argument that satire directed at writers who have attacked writers of genius, but not directly attacked the satirist, is justified because any attack on genius is detrimental to mankind : 'The wound is mine and yours and all mankind's.' Hope's concern is with the spiritual status of mankind but it is not sufficient to overcome a perverse pleasure in the idea of satirising 'feeble scribblers'. The 'Satire is an Art' section slips over the arguments against the admission of Arthur to the immortality of Pope's Dunciad which have been advanced by Arbuthnot²⁷⁷ and Swift.²⁷⁸ Arbuthnot warns Pope of the 'dangerous kind of Ass' that Arthur seems to be and Swift cautions, 'So nugatory an ass/If mentioned has some weight, some power'. The 'grubs enriched in amber' argument²⁷⁹ is brilliant in expression but is specious. It allows Hope to advance a case for satire but does not answer the objections of Arbuthnot and Swift. The problem is partly overcome by having Arthur granted only immortality of a kind, a footnote in Pope's Dunciad and the throne in the Elysium of Dullness. The last three books of Dunciad Minor support the arguments of Arbuthnot and Swift, not the 'Satire is an Art' argument. In Book IV of Dunciad Minor, added with Book V after 1950, the Goddess of Dullness points out that the Funeral Games are not for Arthur, "'but for the human mind,/The death of wit, the last eclipse of taste"'.²⁸⁰ Her comment is

274. Dunciad Minor, Book III, ll.360-4, pp.42-3.

275. Goldberg, "Poet as Hero," p.216.

276. Dunciad Minor, Book III, ll.350-6, pp.41-2.

277. Dunciad Minor, Book II, ll.154-72, pp.20-1.

278. Dunciad Minor, Book II, ll.190-204, p.22, Book III, ll.299-300, p.40.

279. Dunciad Minor, Book III, ll.384, p.43.

280. Dunciad Minor, Book IV, ll.75-8, pp.47-8.

appropriate to the conclusion of the story, in both Dunciad Minimus and Dunciad Minor,²⁸¹ but it further weakens the argument that 'grubs enriched in amber cease to squirm'. It also underscores Hope's concern about the use to which man puts his intelligence.

The idea argued in both versions of Hope's Dunciad, that beauty is created in response to the stimulus of ugliness, is adapted in "The Age of Innocence" (pp.90-3) to the concept that extremes of spirituality, perhaps good and evil, are necessary for the spiritual vigour of mankind. The *persona* of "The Age of Innocence", a lecturer, takes as his theme the evolution of the soul. Once upon a time two species - maybe the descendents of Abel and Cain - flourished on Earth : 'One type was white and dazzling to the view;/One a soft black —'. Angels fed on the white souls, devils on the black, but 'none for the rare greys showed any zest.' The greys flourished. In our Age of Innocence the hybrid vigour of man's spirit is lacking. Darwinian theory is nicely turned to the poet's purpose. Souls least suited to Heaven or Hell are fitted to survive in the world to which man belongs, a repetition of the idea in "Standardization" that man belongs to Nature. The satire in "The Age of Innocence" is directed at the 'grey eye of Science', which sees life empirically. As discouraging a prognosis for man's spiritual dynamism is made by means of "The Age of Innocence" as by Dunciad Minor.

Hope's images of light and dark in "The Age of Innocence" are more complex than in traditional usage.²⁸² The poem raises curious oppositions and there is no identification of the bearers of one pure strain of soul as good and those of the other as evil; the imagery

281. Book IV of Minimus, with slight revision, is Book VI of Minor.

282. See, e.g., Robert Hughes, Heaven and Hell in Western Art, pp.114, 211.

exemplifies the involved nature of the poet's considerations of standardised human values. There is less complex use of light/dark imagery in "The Death of the Bird" (pp.69-71), composed some years before "The Age of Innocence". "The Death of the Bird" is a presentation of the theme of the rightness in man's temporal experience of complementary opposites. The bird is safe while light is there to guide her; the final, instinctual drive to be 'home', though, is great and she is 'Alone in the bright host of her companions'. Her animal instinct fails. Engulfed in 'darkness', she dies. The poem may be read as an analogy for the impulse to poetry and the natural cessation of the impulse, or for the endurance of love and its eventual extinction by loss of understanding of the object of love. It may also be read as a meditation on life and death. The bird of the poem traverses the unknown, guided by love. 'Love pricks the course in lights across the chart' preshadows the idea of love in "The Three Faces of Love" : 'Love is what moves anything in the direction of another, not only man to his kind and man to God, but the stone towards the ground when it falls, or the fire towards the sky as it burns.'²⁸³ Love draws the bird to undertake her last flight but instinct deserts her, and she is defeated by the immensity of the universe. During life the bird is tied to time through the rhythms of the seasons; lost in the space to which her instinct has drawn her, she dies, freed of time but with her body remaining as a tiny part of matter for ever. "The Death of the Bird" contrasts with "Pyramis or The House of Ascent", written in the same year, where 'No act of time limits the procreant will'. As a parable of the endurance of artistic inspiration and its sudden

283. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, p.20.

extinction, "The Death of the Bird" presents a view of the creative process analogous to that Hope later gives, in prose, as 'one of the natural creative forces, like love.'²⁸⁴

In a number of poems, Hope uses birds to convey a central idea about the creative process. Harmony is imaged as birdsong in the early poem, "Wytham Woods", and the important poem of the middle period, "Vivaldi, Bird and Angel" (pp.263-78). The relatively late piece, "Tasmanian Magpies",²⁸⁵ has melodic magpie calls as the image for the magical quality of word sounds. Hope's interest in birds is more than casual. The 1953 explanation Hope gives concerning "The Death of the Bird" and a theory about how birds might navigate during migration²⁸⁶ is followed by a 1972 note : 'It is now known that they navigate by the sun by day and by the stars by night.' This may suggest that Hope has an enquiring observation which registers arcane details but his interest in ornithology is not random. The 1972 note continues, 'The poem does not refer to any particular species of migrating bird though when I wrote it I had the barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica* or its Australian counterpart *Hirundo neoxena*) mainly in mind.'²⁸⁷ Hope's interest in birds, creatures of both earth and sky, links with his interest in astronomy, for to man the stars visibly symbolise the enticing unknown: 'and yet on high/Figures of courage glitter in the sky' ("An Epistle from Holofernes", p.62).

"The Death of the Bird" ends on an anti-climactic note that is uncharacteristic of the early mature poetry. Death marks the end of the

284. Hope, "Nature's Golden World," in Native Companions, p.129.

285. Hope, "Tasmanian Magpies," in Antechinus, p.15.

286. Hope, Notes, in A.D. Hope, p.56.

287. Hope, Notes, A.D. Hope Reads from his Own Work : Poets on Record 8, gen. ed. Thomas W. Shapcott (St Lucia : Univ. of Queensland Press, 1972), p.13.

bird's compulsion to submit itself to the unknown. Compared with "Pyramis", and with the satires in which Hope remonstrates with modern man for his neglect of spirit, "The Death of the Bird" represents an unexpected understanding of the eventual impossibility of life's continuance in the dark of unknowingness. Judith Wright notes that "The Death of the Bird" allows, for the first time in Hope's poetry, 'the entrance of eternity into mortality, of essence into existence, of the world of legend into the world of corruption.'²⁸⁸ The poem is, for the reasons given by Judith Wright, a particularly significant work of Hope's early mature period but it is not Hope's first poetic treatment of the entrance of 'eternity into mortality, of essence into existence'. Twenty-five years earlier, the schoolboy Hope ended "The Last Sonnet" :

Oh, splendour of desire,
 How have I sought thee with a lover's soul!
 And now I die a lover's death, a fire
 Burns strong and clear within me; flaming them²⁸⁹
 With momentary radiance at the goal,
 It flickers out - So I lay down the pen.
 (Appendix II)

The mature period poem conveys the compelling quality of the unknown which operates during life, whether the life of the mind or of the whole sensibility, and of which the schoolboy wrote in "The First Sonnet", when he reminds his soul that 'life must be thy shining bride today' (Appendix II). The adult poet extends ideas of the "First" and "Last" sonnets and adds that the life force operates within a recurrent and certain, ordered pattern, which includes the end of compulsion to encounter the unknown.

The dramatic form is used in "The Death of the Bird" with admirable control and the several parallels which may be drawn from the story are

288. Preoccupations, pp.195-6.

289. 'them' are his fingers.



Fig. 4 Photo and Persephone in the Kingdom of Hades,
MS illumination, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

readily suggested. "The Sleeper" (p.74), written the same year as "The Death of the Bird", and which also has life and death as the subject, is in contrast, in tone and method. Staccato, trimeter lines reinforce the tone of extreme disquiet which marks the sentiments of the speaker in the poem as he considers the arguments for suicide and the counter-argument, that death is the entry to reality. The poet indulges his penchant for coming to grips with things taboo and, partly because the taboo subjects of life's chaos and death's terrors are discomfoting for the reader, "The Sleeper" appears as a neurotic and histrionic outburst. However, reversal of the usual significance of images of dark and light, with, for example, after life being imaged as 'daylight', creates a strong presentation of human life as the shadow of reality. "The Death of the Bird" begins to look as though it is simply about the death of a bird, about the simplicity of cessation of animal life. The poem which dismisses any doubts that "The Death of the Bird" might be a parable for the rightness of death in human experience is "The Return of Persephone" (pp.88-9). Hermes, the agent of change, arrives in Hades to remind Persephone that it is time for her to return from darkness to light. Dis, her unloved husband, god of the netherworld, waits in silent despair, 'foreknowing all bounds of passion, of power, of art'. Persephone then realises she loves 'her grim ravisher'. By her emotional submission to Dis is expressed the operation of the dark side of the psyche which is attracted to seek through death the knowingness which is unattainable in life.

"The Return of Persephone" and "The Death of the Bird" illustrate acceptance of the limitation of understanding that is available in temporality and of the rightness of death, which allows the spirit to know 'the bounds of passion, of power, of art.' In his essay on Demeter and Persephone, Walter Pater writes that Persephone is 'the goddess of death,

yet with a promise of life to come'.²⁹⁰ Pater further comments:

From being the goddess of summer and flowers, she becomes the goddess of night and sleep and death ... She is a twofold goddess, therefore, according as one or the other of these two contrasted aspects of her nature is seized, respectively. A duality, an inherent opposition in the very conception of Persephone, runs all through her story, and is part of her ghostly power. There is ever something in her of a divided or ambiguous identity.²⁹¹

Hope's "Persephone" endorses the duality of Persephone's character but the submission to Dis is so unequivocal, when it comes, that the poem emphasises her role as 'the goddess of death, yet with a promise of life to come'. "The Death of the Bird", "The Sleeper" and "The Return of Persephone" indicate that Hope had reached a point in his thinking where life and death ceased to be seen in contradiction. He had arrived at the viewpoint which André Breton put in a definition of Surrealism:

SURREALISM. 'Everything leads us to believe that there exists a certain point of mind at which life and death, real and imaginary, past and future, communicable and incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived in contradiction. One would search surrealist activity in vain for another motive than the hope of determining this point.' (AB)²⁹²

A quarter of a century after Breton's statement, Hope published, in "Notes on Poetry", his consideration of the poet who has always 'the passion for a synoptic view'; it is the view of experience which Breton, in the definition quoted, held to be the basis of Surrealist activity. Hope incorporates his Note, with little modification, in the essay, "Poetry, Prayer and Trade".²⁹³ Below is the 1962 Note:

290. Walter Pater, "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone," in Greek Studies (1895; rpt London : Macmillan and Co., 1928), p.79.

291. Pater, Greek Studies, p.94.

292. André Breton, in "The Abridged Dictionary of Surrealism," published in connection with the International Surrealist Exhibition at the Galerie Beaux-Arts, Paris, January-February 1938, selected definitions from which are in Surrealists on Art, ed. Lucy R. Lippard, pp.207-11; the definition quoted above, pp.210-11.

293. Hope, "Poetry, Prayer and Trade," in Cave and Spring, p.96.

A man who has continually before him a vision of the world as a whole, or whose mind is continually occupied with great questions which involve the variety, the complexity or the mystery of the whole world of man, a sense of the past, the future and the present as one process - in short, a man obsessed with the passion for a synoptic view - cannot write the slightest of poems on the most particular of themes without reflecting this ruling passion. Its influence may appear quite unconsciously and perhaps the better the less deliberate its infusion. But such poems, though not metaphysical or even reflective, will almost inevitably have a profound metaphysical force, a power of presenting even trivial subjects under the aspect of eternity. Eternity will probably not be mentioned nor will it, even by implication, be part of the subject or the treatment. It will be the light, itself unseen, by which are seen the lasting quality and essence of the subject. It is implied by the level of comprehension with which the subject is presented.²⁹⁴

The juvenile "First" and "Last" sonnets show that by 1962 Hope had been aware for fifty years of the variety, complexity and mystery of the world of man and of patterns of change within the absolute of eternity.

The poet's role in providing for man 'Vision which keeps the night and saves the day' is part of the subject of "An Epistle from Holofernes", (pp.58-62), which was begun in 1946 and completed in 1955. The beginning of "Holofernes" matches, in its preoccupation with flesh and gore, other Hope poems composed in 1946 but the importance of the poem is in the later and related section, the consideration of myth and the theme of sexuality. These sections, the bulk of the poem, are distinguished by the grave, serene tone and a clarity of perception which also mark "The Death of the Bird" and "The Return of Persephone". "Holofernes" confirms that, having traversed in poetry the dark thickets of his own and man's guilts and weaknesses, Hope as poet has arrived at a clearing. "An Epistle from Holofernes", a fictive letter to Judith, begins with Holofernes' quoting

294. Hope, "Notes on Poetry," p.169.

of Hope's imaginative construction of the fabled speech which Holofernes' ghost made to Judith after she murdered him in order to save her people. The mythical speech adjures her to offer a blood sacrifice to appease the "'spirit unpacified"' of Holofernes. The quotation ended, Holofernes, the persona, begins to bring the meaning of the fable up to date but his presence fades as the voice of the poet takes over, speaking on the function of myth. Times have changed. Blood sacrifices are no longer made to pacify spirits and to allow the guilty to 'take cover against the sickness of the will'. Though the prescriptions against spiritual ills which myths offer are no longer appropriate, man's spiritual needs remain and myths still function as established reference points by which to confirm our intuitions. This is the first use of myth, the provision of patterns of life-sustaining behaviour: 'Myths formed the rituals by which ancient men/Groped towards the dayspring and were born again.' The second function of myth is to provide challenge, inspiration, the suggestion of possibilities, for 'when we take our legend for our guide/The firmament of vision opens wide.' There is the Romantic voice of Hope. His Classicist voice sounds in the warning that 'those who trust the fables over much/Lose the real world, plain sight and common touch'; this is the voice which insists in "Poetry and Platitude" that the poetry of the great commonplaces has 'the function of asserting what is the case'.²⁹⁵

Although in Book V of Dunciad Minor, one of the later, added Books, Hope ridicules Jung's ideas on myth,²⁹⁶ his ideas on myth in "Holofernes" to some extent accord with those of Jung. The notion of myth as providing patterns of human behaviour is accepted by both Jung and Hope but Jung does not allow the universe-expanding dimension of myth which is an important aspect of Hope's view. Jung writes:

295. Hope, "Poetry and Platitude," in Cave and Spring, p.15.

296. Dunciad Minor, Book V, ll.185-8, p.66.

Human knowledge consists essentially in the constant adaptation of the primordial patterns of ideas that were given us a priori. These need certain modifications, because, in their original form, they are suited to an archaic mode of life but not to the demands of a specifically differentiated environment. If the flow of instinctive dynamism into our life is to be maintained, as is absolutely necessary for our existence, then it is imperative that we remold these archetypal forms into ideas which are adequate to the challenge of the present.²⁹⁷

Hope sees that the poet must 're-create the fables' if they are to 'revive in men the energies by which they live' but Jung's conception of human knowledge is very different from Hope's. Jung's conception that 'conscious activity is rooted in instinct'²⁹⁸ contrasts with Hope's view that, because the human brain has evolved beyond its original, animal function of directing the survival instinct, it is an organ which 'has its own specific impulse "to know"'.²⁹⁹ For Jung, the unconscious is the important force; for Hope, the important force would seem to be consciousness. Yet Hope does not disallow the inheritances of the mind; instinctive impulses remain to propel men to adopt certain modes of life³⁰⁰ and man is not free from truths which have been elucidated in the past and which remain in his present in myth. However, the will of man must exercise its shaping force on the stuff of myth, for 'Our wills must re-imagine what they act/And in ourselves find what the fable lacked.' This is the poet's role: '*verbum caro factum* is our part.'

Holofernes' voice takes over from that of the poet. He seeks for terms in which to update the legend of himself and Judith but finds none. The virtue of Judith's actions and the brutality he exercised against her people are factual. He rehearses the choices he had to consider at their feast, to retreat ignobly from battle and without conquest of Judith's body or to bed with her, the 'one event' which led to his beheading.

297. The Undiscovered Self, p.70.

298. The Undiscovered Self, p.70.

299. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, p.22.

300. Hope, "Three Faces," in Cave and Spring, p.21.

Holofernes' dilemma is one to which Hope returns in "Antechinus";³⁰¹ in neither poem is it resolved. In "Epistle from Holofernes" there is another dilemma, which Holofernes faces with Judith, one 'Pitched in the landscape of the mind', for each can justify his actions, yet by their actions they lost each other. Scripture offers no myth to guide them; their position at the feast was that of Adam and Eve in Eden, to choose between a life of innocent blandness or to act and suffer. The means to relief lies in the mysterious and revelatory experience of sex, which 'Gives grace and power and meaning to the day'. Sex is the link between the physical and the spiritual : 'Reach me your hand; the darkness, gathering in,/Shrouds us - for now the mysteries begin'. It is a curious turn of thought, considering the manner of Holofernes' loss of physicality, but the point is unintended by the poet. At the end of "Holofernes", Hope admits the real and the ideal to the common ground of lovers' bodies, Holofernes being spirit and Judith flesh. The fact of the flesh is given understanding acknowledgement, as it is in "The Lamp and the Jar", but in the merging of the flesh, both its delights and weaknesses, with the spirit, a vulnerable and questing force, "An Epistle from Holofernes" is of special significance for the thematic development of Hope's middle period poetry. The poet begins to look less towards making immortality from the vast unknown and more towards finding the vast unknown through experience in the temporal world.

301. Hope, "Antechinus," in Antechinus, pp.18-20.